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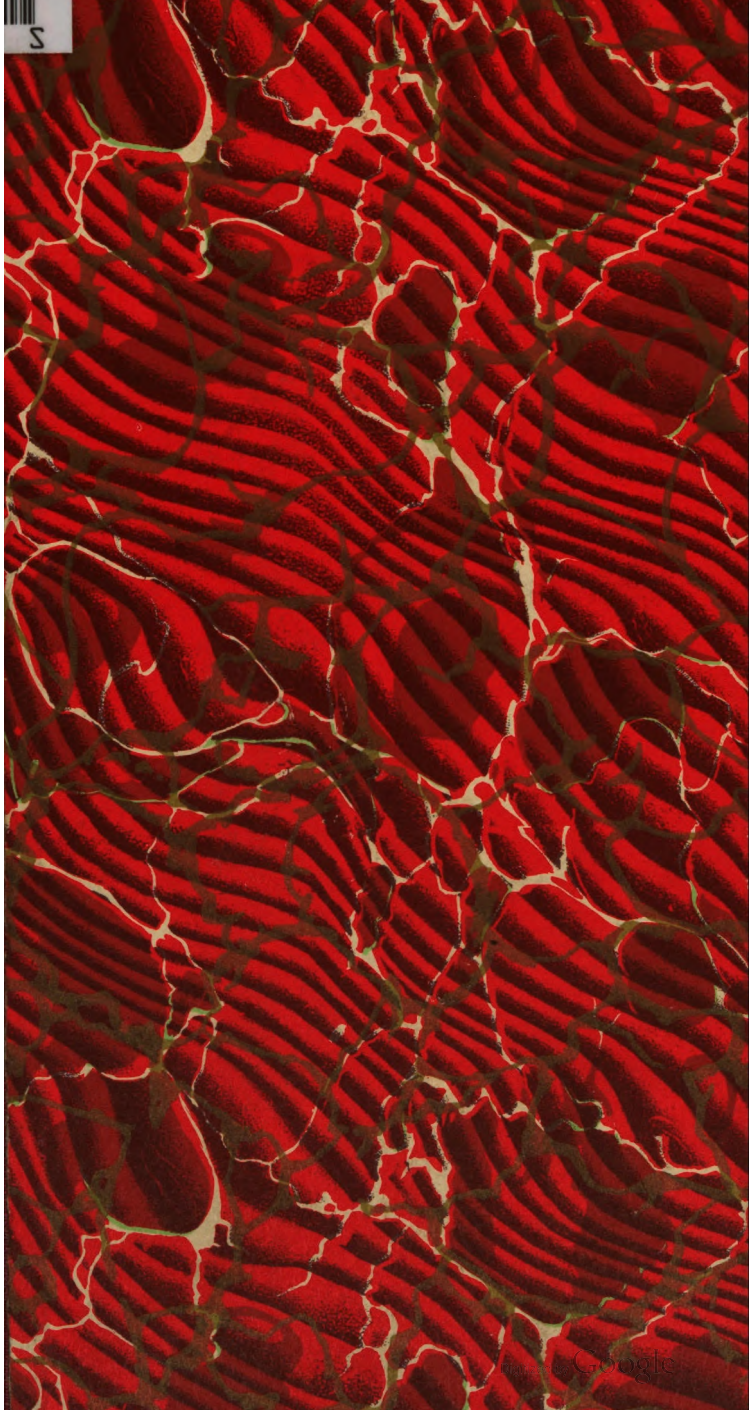
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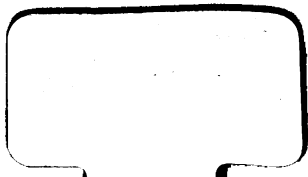
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CONSUELO.



# C O N S U E L O :

BY

G E O R G E S A N D .

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL II.

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TRANSLATED BY  
FRANCIS G. SHAW.

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B O S T O N :  
WILLIAM D. TICKNOR AND COMPANY.

M D C C C X L V I I .

KD42717



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# CONSUELO.

VOL. II.

## CHAPTER XLI.

“O, my mother,” cried she, “open thine arms for me! O Anzoleto, I love thee! O my God, recompense me in a better life!”

Hardly had she uttered towards Heaven this cry of agony, when she stumbled and struck upon an unforeseen obstacle. O surprise! O divine goodness! It was a narrow and steep staircase, issuing from one of the walls of the gallery, up which she rushed on the wings of fear and of hope. The vault rises before her; the torrent precipitates itself, strikes the staircase which Consuelo has had time to clear, swallows up the first ten steps, wets to the ankle the agile feet which fly before it, and filling at last the elliptic arch which Consuelo has left behind her, engulfs itself in the darkness, and falls with a horrible din into a deep reservoir, which the heroic child looks down upon from a little platform she had reached on her knees and in darkness.

For her candle had been extinguished. A violent rush of wind had preceded the irruption of the mass of waters. Consuelo fell prostrate upon the last step, sustained hitherto by the preserving instinct of life, but ignorant if she was saved, if this din of the cataract was not a new disaster which would overtake her, if the cold rain, which rebounded even to her, and bathed her hair, was not the chilling hand of death stretched out upon her head.

Still the reservoir was filled by degrees to the height of other deeper waste ways, which carried still further into the bowels of the earth the current of the abundant fountain. The noise diminishes; the vapors are dissipated; a sonorous murmur, rather harmonious than frightful, spreads itself through the caverns. With a convulsive hand, Consuelo has succeeded in relighting her candle. Her heart still beats

violently against her bosom, but her courage is restored. **On** her knees, she thanks God and her mother. Finally **she** examines the place in which she is, and throws the trembling light of her lantern upon surrounding objects. A vast grotto, hollowed by the hand of nature, serves as vault to an immense abyss which the distant fountain of the Schreckenstein supplies, and where it is lost in the bosom of the rock. This abyss is so deep that the water which engulfs itself therein cannot be seen; but when a stone is thrown in, it rolls for the space of two minutes, and in falling produces an explosion like that of a cannon. The echoes of the cavern repeat it for a long while, and the sinister dropping of the water lasts still longer. It might be taken for the howlings of the infernal pack. Upon one of the walls of the grotto, a narrow and difficult path, worked in the rock, borders the precipice, and buries itself in another dark gallery, where the work of man ceases entirely, and which turns from the currents of water and their fall, in rising to more elevated regions.

This is the road which Consuelo must take. There is no other; the water has closed and entirely filled that by which she came. It is impossible to await Zdenko's return in the grotto. Its dampness is fatal, and already the flame of her candle pales, flickers and threatens to go out, without the possibility of being relighted.

Consuelo is not paralyzed by the horror of her situation. She thinks indeed that she is no longer on the road to the Schreckenstein. These subterranean galleries which open before her are a freak of nature, and conduct to places which are impassable, or to a labyrinth from which she may not find an exit. Still she will venture in them, were it only to seek a more salubrious asylum until the next night. The next night, Zdenko will return; he will stop the current, the gallery will be emptied, and the captive can retrace her steps and again see the light of the stars.

Consuelo therefore buried herself in the mysteries of the subterranean with fresh courage, attentive this time to all the accidents of the soil, and careful always to follow the ascend-



ing inclinations, without allowing her course to be diverted by galleries, apparently more spacious and more direct, which presented themselves every moment. By this means she was sure of not again meeting any currents of water, and of being able to retrace her steps.

She advanced in the midst of a thousand obstacles; enormous stones encumbered her path; gigantic bats, awakened from their gloomy slumbers by the light of the lantern, came striking against it in squadrons, and whirling like spirits of darkness about the traveller. After the first emotions of surprise, she felt her courage increase at each new terror. Sometimes she crawled over immense blocks of stone which had been detached from the huge cracked vaults, displaying other threatening blocks hardly retained in their places, with large cracks all around them, twenty feet above her head; at other times the vault was narrowed and lowered so much that Consuelo was obliged to crawl in a rarefied and heated atmosphere in order to force a passage. Thus she went on for half an hour, when, at the turning of a sharp angle which her light and supple form could hardly pass, she fell from Charybdis into Scylla, on finding herself face to face with Zdenko; Zdenko, at first petrified by surprise and frozen by terror, but soon indignant, furious and menacing, as she had before seen him.

In this labyrinth, among such numberless obstacles, by the flickering light of a flame which the want of air smothered every moment, flight was impossible. Consuelo thought of defending herself hand to hand against his murderous attempts. Zdenko's wandering eyes, his foaming mouth, sufficiently announced that this time he would not confine himself to threats. Suddenly he took a strangely ferocious resolution: he began to gather great stones and place them one upon the other, between himself and Consuelo, in order to wall up the narrow gallery in which she was. In this way he was sure, by not emptying the cistern for several days, to make her perish with hunger, as does the bee, who encloses the incautious hornet in his cell, by stopping up the mouth with wax.

But it was with granite that Zdenko built, and he carried on his work with astonishing rapidity. The athletic strength which this man, so thin and apparently so weak, displayed in collecting and arranging the blocks, proved to Consuelo that resistance would be vain, and that it was better to hope to find another exit, by retracing her steps, than to drive him to the last extremities by irritating him. She tried to move him, to persuade and overrule him by her words. "Zdenko," said she to him, "what are you doing there, foolish one? Albert will reproach you with my death. Albert expects and calls me. I am his friend, his consolation, his safety. You destroy your friend and your brother in destroying me."

But Zdenko, fearing to be over-persuaded, and resolved to continue his work, began to sing in his own language to a lively and animated air, while building his cyclopean wall with an active and powerful hand.

One stone only was wanting to secure the edifice. Consuelo saw him place it with consternation. "Never," thought she, "shall I be able to demolish this wall. I should require the hands of a giant." The last stone was placed, and soon she saw Zdenko building another, behind the first. It was a whole quarry, a whole fortress, which he meant to heap up between her and Albert. He continued to sing, and seemed to take an extreme pleasure in his work.

A wonderful inspiration at last came to Consuelo. She remembered the famous heretical formula she had made Amelia explain to her, and which had so shocked the chaplain. "Zdenko!" cried she in Bohemian, through one of the openings of the badly joined wall which already separated her from him; "friend Zdenko, *may he who has been wronged salute thee!*"

Hardly had these words been pronounced, when they operated upon Zdenko like a magic charm; he let fall the enormous block he held, uttered a deep sigh, and began to demolish his wall with even more promptitude than he had displayed in building it; then reaching his hand to Consuelo, he assisted her in silence to pass the ruin, after which he looked at her

attentively, sighed strangely, and, giving her three keys tied together with a red ribbon, pointed out the path before her, and said: "May he who has been wronged salute thee!"

"Will you not serve me as guide?" said she to him. "Conduct me to your master." Zdenko shook his head, saying, "I have no master; I had a friend. You deprive me of him. The destiny is accomplished. Go whither God directs you; as for me, I shall weep here till you return."

And seating himself upon the rubbish, he buried his head in his hands, and would not say another word. Consuelo did not stop long to console him. She feared the return of his fury, and profiting by this moment when she held him in respect, certain at last of being on the route to the Schreckenstein, she hurried on her way. In her uncertain and perilous journey, Consuelo had not made a great advance; for Zdenko, coming by a much longer route which was inaccessible to the water, had met with her at the point of junction of the two subterranean passages, which made the circuit of the chateau, of its vast outbuildings, and the hill on which it stood; one, by a well arranged winding, worked in the rock by the hand of man, the other frightful, wild, and full of dangers. Consuelo did not by any means imagine that she was at that moment under the park, and yet she passed its gates and ditches by a path which all the keys and precautions of the canoness could no longer close against her.

After having traversed some distance on this new route, she thought of turning back, and renouncing an enterprise which had already been so difficult and almost fatal to her. Perhaps new obstacles awaited her. Zdenko's ill will might be excited anew. And if he should run after her? If he should raise a fresh wall to prevent her return? Whereas, by abandoning her project, by asking him to clear the way to the cistern, and empty it again that she might ascend, she had a great chance of finding him gentle and benevolent. But she was still too much under the influence of her recent emotion to resolve again to see that eccentric personage. The

terror he had caused her, augmented in proportion as she removed herself from him; and after having escaped his vengeance by an almost miraculous presence of mind, she felt herself sink on thinking of it. She therefore fled from him, having no longer the courage to attempt what might be necessary to render him favorable, and wishing only to find one of those magic doors, the keys of which he had given her, in order to place a barrier between herself and the return of his fury.

But was she not going to seek Albert, that other madman whom she rashly persisted in believing kind and tractable, in a position analogous to that of Zdenko towards her? There was a thick veil over all this adventure, and relieved from the romantic attraction which had contributed to urge her into it, Consuelo asked herself if she were not the most crazy of the three, to have precipitated herself into this abyss of dangers and mysteries, without being sure of a favorable result and a fruitful success.

Still she followed the gallery, spacious and admirably excavated by the strong hands of the men of the middle ages. All the rocks were cut through by an elliptic arch of much character and regularity. The less compact portions, the chalky veins of soil, all those places where any caving was possible, were supported by finely worked arches of freestone, bound together by square keystones of granite. Consuelo lost no time in admiring this immense work, executed with a solidity which would still defy the lapse of many ages. Neither did she ask herself how the present owners of the chateau could be ignorant of the existence of so important a construction.

She could have explained it, by remembering that all the historical documents of the family and estate had been destroyed more than a century before, at the epoch of the reformation in Bohemia; but she no longer looked around her, and hardly bestowed a thought upon anything more than her own safety, satisfied with simply finding a level floor, an air which she could breathe, and a free space in which to move.

She had still a long distance to traverse, although this direct route to the Schreckenstein, was much shorter than the winding path of the mountain. She found it very long; and no longer able to determine the direction she pursued, she knew not if it led to the Schreckenstein, or to some more distant termination of her expedition.

After walking a quarter of an hour, she found the vault elevate itself anew, and the work of the architect cease entirely. Nevertheless, those vast quarries, those majestic grottoes through which she passed, were still the work of man. But invaded by vegetation, and receiving the external air through numberless fissures, they had a less gloomy aspect than the galleries, and there were a thousand means of hiding oneself, and escaping from the pursuit of an irritated adversary. But a noise of running water made Consuelo shudder; and if she had been able to jest in such a situation, she would have confessed to herself, that baron Frederick, on his return from the chase, had never had more horror of water than she experienced at that instant.

But she soon made use of her reason. She had continued to ascend since quitting the precipice at the moment of being submerged. Unless Zdenko had at his command an hydraulic machine of inconceivable power and extent, he could not raise towards her his terrible auxiliary, the torrent. Besides, it was evident, that she must somewhere encounter the current of the fountain, the sluice, or the spring itself; and if she could have reflected more, she would have been astonished not to have yet found upon her path, that mysterious water, that fountain of tears which supplied the cistern. The fact was, that the spring had its current in unknown veins of the mountain, and that the gallery, cutting it at right angles, did not encounter it, except just near the cistern, and afterwards under the Schreckenstein, as happened to Consuelo. The sluice-gate was far behind her, on the road which Zdenko had passed alone, and Consuelo approached the spring, which for ages had been seen by no one except Albert and Zdenko.

Soon she met with the current, and this time she walked along its bank without fear and without danger.

A path of fine and fresh sand ascended the course of the limpid and transparent stream, which ran with a generous murmur in a properly confined bed. There the work of man reappeared. The path was raised slopingly in fresh and fertile soil; for beautiful aquatic plants, enormous wall-flowers, and wild brambles flourishing in this protected place, without injury from the rigor of the season, bordered the torrent with a verdant margin. Enough of the outward air penetrated through cracks and crevices to support the life of the vegetation, but they were too narrow to afford passage to the curious eye which searched them from without. It was like a natural hot-house, preserved by its vaults from cold and snow, but sufficiently aired by a thousand imperceptible breathing holes. One would have said that a pleasing care had protected the lives of those beautiful plants, and freed the sand which the torrent threw upon its banks, of any gravel stones that could have hurt the feet; and there would have been no mistake in this supposition. It was Zdenko who had made the neighborhood of Albert's retreat so graceful, easy and secure.

Consuelo began to feel the beneficent influence which the less gloomy and already poetic aspect of external objects produced upon her imagination, confused by such cruel terrors. When she saw the pale rays of the moon glance here and there in the openings of the rocks, and reflect themselves upon the moving water; when she saw the motionless plants, which the water did not reach, agitated at intervals by the wind of the forest; when she perceived herself ascending more and more near to the surface of the earth, she felt renovated, and the reception which awaited her at the end of her heroic pilgrimage, was depicted upon her mind in less sombre colors. At last she saw the path turn sharply from the bank, enter a short gallery freshly built, and terminate at a little door, which seemed of metal, so cold was it, and which a great ground ivy gracefully enframed.

When she saw herself at the end of her fatigues and her

irresolutions ; when she rested her weary hand upon this last obstacle, which could be made to yield in a moment, for she had the key of the door in her other hand, Consuelo hesitated, and felt a timidity which was more difficult to conquer than all her terrors. She was about to penetrate alone, into a place closed to every eye, to every human thought, there to surprise, in sleep or in reverie, a man whom she hardly knew, who was neither her father, nor her brother, nor her husband ; who perhaps loved her, but whom she neither could, nor wished to love. " God has drawn and conducted me here," thought she, " through the most frightful dangers. It is by his will even more than by his protection, that I have reached this spot. I come with a fervent soul, a resolution full of charity, a tranquil heart, a disinterestedness proof against all things. Perhaps death awaits me, and yet the thought of it does not terrify me. My life is desolate, and I could lose it without much regret ; I experienced this an instant since, and for an hour I have seen myself devoted to a horrible death, with a tranquillity for which I was not prepared. This is, perhaps, a favor which God sends to me in my last moments. Perhaps I am about to perish under the blows of a madman, and I go forward to this catastrophe with the firmness of a martyr. I believe ardently in an eternal life, and feel that if I perish here, victim to a devotedness, perhaps useless but profoundly religious, I shall be recompensed in a happier life. What delays me ? and why do I experience an inexplicable perturbation, as if I were about to commit a fault, and blush before him I have come to save ?" Thus did Consuelo, too modest to understand her modesty, struggle with her feelings, and almost reproach herself for the delicacy of her emotion. Still it did not enter her mind that she might encounter dangers more frightful to her than death. Her chastity did not admit the thought that she might become a prey to the brutal passions of a madman. But she instinctively experienced the fear of appearing to obey a less elevated, a less divine sentiment, than that which



animated her. Still she put the key into the lock of the door ; but she tried to turn it ten times before she could resolve to do so. An overpowering fatigue, an extreme faintness in her whole being, caused her to lose her resolution at the very moment of receiving the reward ; upon earth by a great deed of charity ; in heaven by a sublime death.

## CHAPTER XLII.

NEVERTHELESS she made up her mind. She had three keys. She must therefore pass through three doors and two apartments, before reaching that in which she supposed Albert to be a prisoner. She would have time enough to stop, if her strength failed her.

She entered a vaulted hall, which had no other furniture than a bed of dried fern on which a sheep-skin was thrown. A pair of old-fashioned coverings for the feet, very much worn, served as an indication by which she recognized Zdenko's chamber. She recognized also the little basket which she had carried full of fruits to the stone of horror, and which, after two days, had at last disappeared. She decided upon opening the second door, after having closed the first with care; for she still thought with terror of the possible return of the intractable owner of this dwelling. The second apartment which she entered was vaulted like the first, but the walls were protected by mats and trellises covered with moss. A stove diffused a pleasant heat, and it was doubtless its funnel opening in the rock, which produced the fleeting light seen by Consuelo on the summit of the Schreckenstein. Albert's bed, like Zdenko's, was formed of a heap of leaves and dried herbs; but Zdenko had covered it with magnificent bear-skins, spite of the absolute equality which Albert exacted in their habits, and which Zdenko accepted in all that did not interfere with the passionate tenderness he felt for him, and with the preference of care which he bestowed upon him over himself. Consuelo was received in this chamber by Cynabre, who hearing the key turn in the lock, had posted himself upon the threshold, with raised ear and anxious eye. But Cynabre had received a peculiar education from his master; he was a friend and not a guardian. In his youth

he had been so strictly forbidden to howl and to bark, that he had entirely lost the habit so natural to all beings of his species. If any one had approached Albert with evil intentions, he would have found his voice; if any one had attacked him, he would have defended him. But prudent and circumspect as a hermit, he never made the slightest noise without being sure of what he was about, and without having carefully examined and smelt of those who approached him. He walked up to Consuelo with a look that had something human in it; smelt of her dress, and especially of her hand which had held for a long time the keys touched by Zdenko; and completely reassured by this circumstance, he abandoned himself to the benevolent remembrance he had retained of her, and placed his great velvet paws upon her shoulders, with an affable and silent joy, while he slowly swept the earth with his superb tail. After this grave and honest welcome, he returned to his bed on the corner of the skin which covered his master's couch, and stretched himself upon it with the carelessness of old age, but still followed with his eyes Consuelo's every step and movement.

Before daring to approach the third door, Consuelo cast a glance around this hermitage, in order to gather from it some indication of the moral condition of the man who occupied it. She found no trace of madness nor despair. A great neatness, a kind of order prevailed throughout. There was a cloak and other garments hanging from horns of the urus, curiosities which Albert had brought from the depths of Lithuania, and which served for clothes-pegs. His numerous books were regularly arranged in a book-case of rough boards, which were supported by great branches artistically fashioned by a rustic and intelligent hand. The table, the two chairs, were of the same material and the same workmanship. A hortus siccus and some old books of music, entirely unknown to Consuelo, with titles and words in the Sclavonic language, completed the revelation of the peaceful, simple and studious habits of the anchorite. An iron lamp, curious from its antiquity, was suspended from the middle of the

vault, and burned in the eternal night of this melancholy sanctuary.

Consuelo remarked that there were no arms in the place. Notwithstanding the taste of the rich inhabitants of those forests for the chase and for the objects of luxury which accompany its enjoyment, Albert had no gun, not even a hunting knife, and his old dog had never learnt the *grande science*; for which reason Cynabre was the object of baron Frederick's contempt and pity. Albert had a horror of blood; and though he appeared to enjoy life less than any one, he had a religious and boundless respect for the idea of life in general. He could neither kill nor see killed, even the lowest animals of creation. He would have delighted in all the natural sciences; but he stopped at mineralogy and botany. Even entomology seemed to him too cruel a science, and he never could have sacrificed the life of an insect to gratify his curiosity. Consuelo knew these particulars. She recalled them on seeing the attributes of Albert's peaceful occupations. "No, I will not be afraid," said she to herself, "of so gentle and peaceful a being. This is the cell of a saint, and not the dungeon of a madman." But the more she was reassured as to the nature of his mental malady, the more did she feel troubled and confused. She almost regretted not to find a crazy or a dying man; and the certainty of presenting herself before a real man made her hesitate more and more.

Not knowing how to announce herself, she fell into a reverie which lasted some minutes, when the sound of an admirable instrument struck her ear: it was a Stradivarius, playing a sublimely sad and grand air, under a pure and skilful hand. Never had Consuelo heard so perfect a violin, so touching and so simple a performance. The strain was unknown to her; but from its strange and simple forms, she judged it to be more ancient than all the ancient music she was acquainted with. She listened with rapture, and now explained to herself how Albert could have so well comprehended her from the first phrase he heard her sing. It was because he had the revelation of the true, the grand music.

He might not know the wonderful resources of the art; but he had within him the divine breath, the intelligence and the love of the beautiful. When he had finished, Consuelo, entirely reassured, and animated by a more lively sympathy, was about to risk knocking at the door which still separated her from him, when that door opened slowly, and she saw the young count advance, his head bowed down, his eyes bent upon the earth, with his violin and bow in his down-hanging hands. His paleness was frightful, his hair and dress in a disorder which Consuelo had not before seen. His absent air, his broken and dejected attitude, the despairing carelessness of his motions, announced, if not entire alienation, at least the disorder and abandonment of the human will. One would have said he was one of those spectres, mute and deprived of memory, in which the Slave people believe, who enter mechanically into the houses at night, and are seen to act without connection and without aim, obeying as by instinct the ancient habits of their lives, without recognizing and without seeing their friends and terrified servants, who fly from or look at them in silence, frozen by astonishment and fear. Such was Consuelo on seeing count Albert, and perceiving that he did not see her, though he was not two steps from her. Cynabre had risen and licked his master's hand. Albert said some friendly words to him in Bohemian: then following with his eyes the movements of the dog, who carried his discreet caresses to Consuelo, he gazed attentively at the feet of the young girl, which were shod at this moment much like those of Zdenko, and without raising his head, said to her some words in Bohemian, which she did not understand, but which seemed a question, and ended with her name. On seeing him in this state, Consuelo felt her timidity disappear. Yielding entirely to her compassion, she saw only the unfortunate man with his lacerated heart, who still invoked without recognizing her; and placing her hand upon the young man's arm with confidence and firmness, she said to him in Spanish, with her pure and penetrating voice, "Here is Consuelo."

## CHAPTER XLIII.

HARDLY had Consuelo named herself, when count Albert, raising his eyes and looking in her face, immediately changed his attitude and expression. He let his violin fall to the ground with as much indifference as if he had never known its use, and clasping his hands with an air of profound tenderness and respectful sadness: "It is thou then whom I see at last in this place of exile and suffering, O my poor Wanda!" cried he, uttering a sigh which seemed to rend his chest. "Dear, dear and unhappy sister! Unfortunate victim, whom I avenged too late, and whom I knew not how to defend! Ah! thou knowest that the villain who outraged thee perished in torments, and that my pitiless hand was bathed in the blood of his accomplices. I opened the deep veins of the accursed church. I washed thy dishonor and my own and that of my people in rivers of blood. What more dost thou desire, O restless and revengeful spirit? The times of zeal and of anger have passed away; we live now in the days of repentance and of expiation. Ask from me tears and prayers; ask no more for blood. I have henceforth a horror of blood, and will shed no more. No, no, not a single drop! Jean Ziska will henceforth fill his chalice only with inexhaustible tears and bitter sobs."

While speaking this with wandering eyes and features animated by a sudden exaltation, Albert moved around Consuelo, and recoiled with a kind of horror each time she made a movement to arrest this strange conjuration. Consuelo did not require a long reflection to understand the turn which her host's insanity had taken. She had heard the history of Jean Ziska related often enough, to know that a sister of that formidable fanatic, a nun before the breaking out of the war of the Hussites, had died of sorrow and shame in her convent,

violated by an abominable monk; and that the life of Ziska had been a long and solemn vengeance of that crime. At this moment, Albert, recalled by I know not what association of ideas to his ruling fancy, believed himself Jean Ziska, and addressed her as the shade of Wanda, his unfortunate sister.

She resolved not to contradict his illusion too abruptly :

“ Albert,” said she to him, “ for your name is no longer Jean, as mine is no longer Wanda, look at me well, and see that I, as well as you, am changed in features and character. What you have just said, I came to recall to your mind. Human justice is more than satisfied, and it is the day of divine justice which I now announce to you. God commands us to forgive and to forget. These fatal recollections, this pertinacity of yours to exercise a faculty which he has not given to other men, this scrupulous and austere remembrance which you retain of your anterior existences, God is offended at, and withdraws from you, because you have abused them. Do you hear me, Albert, and do you understand me now ?”

“ O my mother,” replied Albert, pale and trembling, falling on his knees and looking at Consuelo with extraordinary terror, “ I do hear thee, and understand thy words. I see that thou transformest thyself, to convince and subdue me. No, thou art no longer Wanda of Ziska, the violated virgin, the weeping nun. Thou art Wanda of Prachalitz, whom men called countess of Rudolstadt, and who bore in thy bosom the wretched being they now call Albert.”

“ It is not by the caprice of men that you are so called,” returned Consuelo with firmness ; “ for it is God who has caused you to live again under other conditions and with new duties. Those duties, Albert, you either do not know, or you despise them. You reascend the course of ages with an impious pride ; you aspire to penetrate the secrets of destiny ; you think to equal yourself with God, by embracing in your view the present and the past. It is I who tell you this ; and it is truth, it is faith which inspires me ; this retroactive thought is a crime and a rashness. This supernatural



memory which you attribute to yourself, is an illusion. You have taken some vague and feeble glimmerings for certainty, and your imagination has deceived you. Your pride has built up an edifice of chimeras, when you assign to yourself the most important parts in the history of your ancestors. Beware lest you are not what you suppose. Fear lest to punish you, eternal wisdom should open your eyes for an instant, and cause you to perceive in your anterior life, less illustrious faults and less glorious objects of remorse than those on which you dare to pride yourself."

Albert heard this discourse with timid attention, his face hidden in his hands, and his knees buried in the earth.

"Speak, speak, O voice of Heaven, which I hear and no longer recognize," murmured he in stifled accents. "If thou art the angel of the mountain; if thou art, as I believe, the celestial figure which has so often appeared to me upon the stone of horror, speak; command my will, my conscience, my imagination. Thou well knowest that I seek for the light with anguish, and that if I lose myself in the darkness, it is from my desire to dissipate it in order to reach thee."

"A little humility, confidence and submission to the eternal decrees of wisdom, incomprehensible to man, that is the path of truth for you, Albert. Renounce in your soul, and renounce firmly, once for all, any wish to know beyond this passing existence which is imposed upon you; and you will again become acceptable to God, useful to man, tranquil in yourself. Humble your proud intellect; and without losing faith in your immortality, without doubting the divine goodness, which pardons the past and preserves the future, apply yourself to render fruitful and humane this present life which you despise, when you ought to respect it, and give yourself to it with all your strength, your self-denial, and your charity. Now, Albert, look at me, and may your eyes be unsealed. I am no longer your sister, nor your mother; I am a friend whom Heaven has sent to you, and whom it has conducted by miraculous means to snatch you from pride and from insanity.

Look at me, and tell me, on your soul and on your conscience, who I am and what is my name."

Albert, trembling and confused, raised his head and looked at her again, but with less wildness and terror than before.

"You cause me to leap over abysses," said he to her; "by your profound words you confound my reason, which (for my misfortune) I thought superior to that of other men, and you order me to know and understand the present time and human affairs. I cannot. To lose the remembrance of certain phases of my life, I must pass through a terrible crisis; and to seize the sentiment of a new phase, I must transform myself by efforts which lead me to the gates of death. If you command me, in the name of a power which I feel superior to mine, to assimilate my thoughts to yours, I must obey; but I know those horrible struggles, and I know that death is their termination. Pity me, you who operate upon me by a sovereign charm; aid me, or I sink. Tell me who you are, for I do not know. I do not remember ever to have seen you before: I do not know your sex, and you are there before me like a mysterious statue, the type of which I vainly strive to find in my memory. Help me, help me, for I feel that I am dying."

While speaking thus, Albert, whose face was at first flushed with a feverish brightness, became again of a frightful paleness. He stretched out his hands towards Consuelo; but immediately lowered them to the ground to support himself, as if overpowered by an irresistible faintness. Consuelo, becoming initiated by degrees into the secrets of his mental malady, felt herself revived, and as if inspired by new strength and intelligence. She took his hands, and obliging him to rise, she conducted him towards the chair which was near the table. He let himself fall into it, overpowered by an unheard-of fatigue, and bent forward as if about to faint. The struggle of which he spoke was but too real. Albert had the faculty of recovering his reason, and repelling the suggestions of the fever which consumed his brain; but he did not succeed without efforts and sufferings which exhausted

his organs. When this reaction was produced of its own accord, he issued from it refreshed, and as it were renewed; but when he promoted it by a resolution of his still powerful will, his body sank under the crisis, and all his limbs were affected by catalepsy. Consuelo understood what was passing within him: "Albert," said she, placing her cold hand upon that burning head, "I know you, and that suffices. I am interested in you, and that must be sufficient for you also at present. I forbid your making any effort of will to recognize or to speak to me. Only listen; and if my words seem obscure to you, wait till I explain myself, and be in no haste to discover their meaning. I ask of you a passive submission and an entire abandonment of your reflective powers. Can you descend into your heart, and there concentrate all your existence?"

"Oh! how much good you do me!" replied Albert. "Speak to me again, speak to me always thus. You hold my soul in your hands. Whoever you may be, retain it, do not let it escape; for it would go and knock at the gates of eternity, and would there be broken. Tell me who you are, tell me quickly; and if I do not comprehend, explain it to me: for, in spite of myself, I search and am agitated."

"I am Consuelo," replied the young girl, "and you know it, since you instinctively speak to me in a language which I alone of those near you can comprehend. I am a friend whom you have expected for a long while, and whom you recognized one day as she was singing. Since that day, you have left your family and hidden yourself here. Since that day, I have sought for you; you have appealed to me several times through Zdenko, but Zdenko, who executed your orders in certain respects, was not willing to conduct me to you. I have succeeded through a thousand dangers —"

"You could not have succeeded, had Zdenko been unwilling," returned Albert, raising his body, weighed down and sunk upon the table. "You are a dream, I see it well, and all that I hear is simply passing in my imagination. O my God! you lull me with deceitful joys, and suddenly the dis-

order and incoherence of my dreams are revealed to me, and I find myself alone, alone in the world with my despair and my madness! O Consuelo, Consuelo! fatal and delicious dream! where is the being that bears your name and is sometimes clothed with your form? No, you exist only in me, and it is my delirium which created you."

Albert fell again on his extended arms, which stiffened and became cold as marble.

Consuelo saw him approach his lethargic crisis, and felt herself so exhausted, so ready to faint, that she feared she could not avert it. She tried to reanimate Albert's hands in her own, which were hardly more alive. "My God," said she with a stifled voice and a wounded heart, "succor two unfortunate beings who can hardly do anything for each other!"

She saw herself alone, shut up with a dying man, dying herself, and expecting no help for herself or for him, except from Zdenko, whose return seemed to her more frightful than desirable.

Her prayer seemed to strike Albert with an unexpected emotion. "Some one is praying by my side," said he, trying to raise his overburdened head. "I am not alone! O no, I am not alone," added he, looking at Consuelo's hand, interwoven with his. "Succoring hand, mysterious pity, human, fraternal sympathy! You render my agony very gentle, my heart very grateful!" He glued his frozen lips to Consuelo's hand, and remained thus for a long while.

A modest emotion restored to Consuelo the sentiment of life. She did not dare withdraw her hand from the unfortunate; but divided between her embarrassment and her weariness, no longer able to remain standing, she was compelled to rest upon Albert, and to place her other hand upon his shoulder.

"I feel myself restored," said Albert after a few moments. "It seems to me that I am in the arms of my mother. O my aunt Wenceslawa! if it be you who are near me, forgive me for having forgotten you, you and my father and all my

family, whose very names had escaped my memory. I return to you, do not leave me; but restore to me Consuelo, Consuelo, whom I had so long expected, whom I had at last found—and whom I find no more, and without whom I can no longer breathe.”

Consuelo wished to speak to him; but in proportion as Albert's memory and strength seemed restored to him, Consuelo's life seemed to desert her. So many terrors, fatigues, emotions and superhuman efforts had so broken her down, that she could struggle no longer. The words expired upon her lips, she felt her knees yield, her eyes become confused. She fell upon her knees at the side of Albert, and her dying head struck the breast of the young man.

Immediately Albert, as if awaking from a dream, saw her, recognized her, uttered a deep cry, and arousing himself, pressed her in his arms with energy. Through the veil of death which seemed to spread over her eyelids, Consuelo saw his joy, and was not terrified. It was a holy joy, radiant with purity. She closed her eyes and fell into a state of prostration, which was not sleep nor waking, but a kind of indifference and insensibility to all present things.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

WHEN Consuelo recovered the use of her faculties, finding herself seated upon quite a hard bed, and not yet able to raise her eye-lids, she tried to collect her thoughts. But the prostration had been so complete, that her powers returned but slowly; and as if the sum of the fatigues and emotions, which she had experienced since a certain time, had surpassed her strength, she tried in vain to remember what had happened to her since she left Venice. Even her departure from that adopted country where she had passed such happy days, appeared to her like a dream; and it was a solace to her, (alas, too short!) to be able to doubt for an instant her exile and the misfortunes which caused it. She therefore imagined that she was still in her poor chamber of the Corte-Minelli, on her mother's pallet, that after having had with Anzoletto a violent and trying scene, the confused recollection of which floated in her memory, she returned to life and hope on feeling him near her, on hearing his interrupted breathing and the tender words he addressed to her in a low voice. A languishing and delicious joy penetrated her heart at this thought, and she raised herself with exertion to look at her repentant friend, and to stretch out her hand to him. But she pressed only a cold and unknown hand; and in place of the smiling sun, whose rosy brilliancy she was accustomed to see through her white curtain, she saw only a sepulchral light, falling from a gloomy vault and swimming in a humid atmosphere; she felt under her arm the rude spoils of savage animals, and in a horrible silence, the pale face of Albert bent towards her like a spectre.

Consuelo thought she had descended living to the tomb; she closed her eyes, and fell back upon the bed of dried leaves, with a melancholy groan. She required some minutes to re-

member where she was, and to what gloomy host she was confided. Terror, which the enthusiasm of her devotedness had hitherto combated and subdued, seized upon her, so that she feared to open her eyes lest she should see some horrible spectacle, the paraphernalia of death, a sepulchre open before her. She felt something upon her brow, and raised her hand to it. It was a garland of leaves with which Albert had crowned her. She took it off to look at it, and saw a branch of cypress.

"I believed you dead, O my soul, O my consolation!" said Albert, kneeling beside her, "and before following you to the tomb, I wished to adorn you with the emblems of marriage. Flowers do not grow around me, Consuelo. The black cypress offered the only branches whence my hand could gather your coronet of betrothal. There it is; do not despise it. If we must die here, let me swear to you, that if restored to life, I would never have had any other spouse than you; that I die united with you by an indissoluble oath."

"Betrothed, united!" cried Consuelo, casting terrified glances around her: "who has pronounced that decree? who has celebrated that marriage?"

"It is destiny, my angel," replied Albert with an inexpressible gentleness and sadness. "Think not to withdraw yourself from it. It is a strange destiny for you, and even more so for me. You forbade me a short time since to search into the past; you have prohibited to me the remembrance of those lapsed days which are called the night of ages. My being has obeyed you, and henceforth I know nothing of my anterior life. But my present life, I have interrogated it, I know it; I have seen it entire with one glance, it has appeared to me in the instant in which you reposed in the arms of death. Your destiny, Consuelo, is to belong to me, and yet you will never be mine. You do not love me, you never will love me, as I love you. Your love for me is only charity, your devotedness only heroism. You are a saint whom God sends, but you will never be a woman to me. I must die consumed by a love which you cannot partake; and yet, Consuelo, you will



be my wife as you are now my betrothed, whether we perish now, and your pity consents to give me that title of husband which no kiss will ever confirm, or whether we again see the sun, and your conscience commands you to accomplish the designs of God towards me."

"Count Albert," said Consuelo, endeavoring to rise from that bed covered with bear-skins, which resembled a funeral pall, "I know not if it be the enthusiasm of too vivid a gratitude, or the continuance of your delirium, which makes you speak thus. I have no longer the strength to dispel your illusions; and if they must turn against me, against me who have come at the peril of my life to succor and console you, I feel that I can no longer contend with you for my life or my liberty. If the sight of me irritates you, and if God abandons me, may God's will be done! You, who think you know so many things, do not know how my life has been poisoned, and with how little regret I should sacrifice it."

"I know that you are very unhappy, my poor saint! I know that you wear on your brow a crown of thorns, which I cannot tear away. The cause and occasion of your unhappiness I do not know, neither do I ask you for them. But I should love you very little, I should be little worthy of your compassion, if from the day when I first met you, I had not felt and recognized in you the sorrow which fills your soul and embitters your life. What can you fear from me, Consuelo, from my soul? You, so firm and so wise, to whom God has inspired words which subdued and restored me in an instant, you must feel the light of your faith and your reason strangely weakened, since you fear your friend, your servant, your slave. Recover yourself, my angel; look at me. See me here at your feet, and forever, my forehead in the dust. What do you wish, what do you command? Do you wish to leave this place on the instant, without my following you, without my ever appearing before you again? What sacrifice do you exact? What oath do you wish me to take? I can promise you everything, and obey you in everything. Yes, Consuelo, I can even become a tranquil man, submis-

sive, and in appearance, as reasonable as other men. Should I thus be less repulsive, less terrifying to you? Hitherto I have never been able to do as I wished; but hereafter everything you desire will be granted me. Perhaps I may die in transforming myself according to your will; but it is my turn to tell you that my life has always been poisoned, and that I should not regret losing it for you."

"Dear, generous Albert," said Consuelo, reassured and affected, "explain yourself better, and let me at last understand the depths of that impenetrable soul. You are in my eyes superior to all other men; and from the first moment that I saw you, I felt for you a respect and a sympathy which I have no reason to conceal. I have always heard it said that you were insane, but I have not been able to believe it. All that has been related to me of you added to my esteem and to my confidence. Still I was forced to see that you were overpowered by a deep and strange moral disease. I persuaded myself, presumptuously perhaps, but sincerely, that I could relieve your disease. You also have aided in making me think so. I have come to seek you, and now you tell me things respecting myself and you, which would fill me with a boundless veneration, if you did not mix up with them strange ideas drawn from a spirit of fatalism which I cannot share. Can I say all without wounding you and making you suffer?"

"Say all, Consuelo; I know beforehand what you have to say."

"Well! I will say it, for I had so promised myself. All those who love you, despair of you. They think they must respect, that is to say, spare, what they call your insanity; they fear to exasperate you by letting you see that they know it, lament and fear it. For myself, I cannot believe them, and cannot tremble in asking you, why, being so wise, you have sometimes the externals of an insane person; why, being so good, you perform deeds of ingratitude and pride; why, being so enlightened and religious, you abandon yourself to the reveries of a diseased and despairing mind; why, finally,

you are here alone, buried alive in a gloomy cavern, far from your family, who weep and search for you, far from your fellow-men, whom you cherish with an ardent zeal, far from me, in fine, whom you invoked, whom you say you love, and who have been able to reach you only by miracles of will and the divine protection?"

"You ask of me the secret of my life, the word of my destiny, and you know it better than I do, Consuelo! It is from you I expected the revelation of my being, and you interrogate me! O! I understand you; you wish to lead me to a confession, to an efficacious repentance, to a victorious resolution. You shall be obeyed. But it is not at this instant that I can know and judge and transform myself in this manner. Give me some days, some hours at least, to learn for myself and for you if I am mad, or if I enjoy the use of my reason. Alas! alas! both are true, and it is my misery not to be able to doubt it: but to know if I must lose my judgment and will entirely, or if I can triumph over the demon who besieges me, that is what I cannot do at this instant. Have pity upon me, Consuelo! I am still under the influence of an emotion more powerful than myself. I know not what I have said to you; I know not how many hours you have been here; I know not how you could be here without Zdenko, who did not wish to bring you; I know not even in what world my thoughts were wandering when you first appeared to me. Alas! I know not how many ages I have been shut up here, struggling with unheard-of sufferings, against the scourge which destroys me. Those sufferings even I remember no more, when they have passed; there remains of them only a terrible fatigue, a stupor as it were, a terror which I wish to drive away. Consuelo, let me forget myself, if it be only for a few moments; my ideas will become more clear, my tongue will be loosened. I promise it, I swear it to you. Temper for me this light of the reality, long eclipsed in horrible darkness, and which my eyes cannot yet endure. You have ordered me to concentrate all my life in my heart. Yes! you said that to me; my reason and my memory date no

farther back than the moment when you spoke. Well! that word has brought down an angelic calm into my bosom. My heart lives entirely now, though my spirit still sleeps. I fear to speak to you of myself; I might wander, and again terrify you by my vagaries; I wish to live only in feeling, and it is an unknown life to me; it would be a life of delights if I could abandon myself to it without displeasing you. Ah! Consuelo, why did you tell me to concentrate all my life in my heart? Explain your meaning, let me think only of you, see and comprehend only you—love you, in a word. O my God, I love! I love a living being, similar to myself! I love her with all the strength of my being! I can concentrate upon her all the ardor, all the holiness of my affection! It is enough happiness for me to be allowed this, and I have not the madness to ask for more.”

“Well! my dear Albert, repose your poor soul in this sweet sentiment of a peaceful and fraternal tenderness. God is my witness that you can do so without fear and without danger; for I feel a fervent friendship for you, a kind of veneration which the frivolous observations and vain judgments of the world cannot shake. You have comprehended, by a sort of divine and mysterious intuition, that my life is broken by sorrow; you said it, and it was divine truth which put that word into your mouth. I cannot love you otherwise than as a brother; but do not say that it is charity, pity alone, which guides me. If humanity and compassion have given me the courage to come here, sympathy, a particular esteem for your virtues, give me also the courage and the right to speak to you as I do. Abjure therefore, from this moment and forever, the illusion under which you labor respecting your own feelings. Do not speak of love, do not speak of marriage. My past life, my recollections, render the first impossible; the difference in our conditions would render the second humiliating and unacceptable to me. By returning to such reveries, you will make my devotedness to you rash, perhaps culpable. Let us seal by a sacred promise the engagement which I make to be your sister, your friend,

your consoler, whenever you are disposed to open your heart to me; your nurse, when suffering renders you gloomy and taciturn. Swear that you will not see anything else in me, and that you will not love me otherwise."

"Generous woman," said Albert, growing pale, "you rely a great deal on my courage, and you know well what is my love, in asking of me such a promise. I should be capable of lying for the first time in my life, I could debase myself so much as to pronounce a false oath, if you required it of me. But you will not require it of me, Consuelo; you will understand that this would be to introduce a new agitation into my life, and, into my conscience, a remorse which has not yet stained it. Do not be troubled at the manner in which I love you. I first of all am ignorant of it; I only know that, to deprive this affection of the name of love, would be to utter a blasphemy. I submit myself to all the rest; I accept your pity, your cares, your goodness, your peaceful friendship; I will speak to you only as you permit; I will not say a single word which can trouble you; I will not give you a single look which could make you veil your eyes; I will never touch your hand, if the contact of mine displeases you; I will not even graze your dress, if you fear being blemished by my breath. But you would be wrong to treat me with such mistrust, and you would do better to encourage in me this gentleness of emotion which vivifies me, and from which you can fear nothing. I well understand that your modesty might be alarmed at the expression of a love which you do not wish to share; I know that your pride would repel the testimonies of a passion which you do not wish either to excite or to encourage. Therefore be tranquil, and swear without fear to be my sister and my consoler: I swear to be your brother and servant. Do not ask me more; I will neither be indiscreet nor importunate. It is sufficient that you know you can command me and govern me despotically—not as one governs a brother, but as one disposes of a being who has given himself to you entirely and forever."

## CHAPTER XLV.

THIS language re-assured Consuelo for the present, but did not leave her without apprehension for the future. Albert's fanatical self-denial sprang from deep and invincible passion, respecting which the serious tendency of his character and the solemn expression of his countenance could leave no doubt. Consuelo, perplexed though gently affected, asked herself if she could continue to consecrate her cares to this man, so unreservedly and unchangeably in love with her. She had never treated this kind of relation lightly in her thoughts, and she saw that with Albert no woman could enter upon it without serious consequences. She did not doubt his loyalty and his promises; but the calmness she had flattered herself she should restore to him, must be irreconcilable with so ardent a love, and the impossibility she felt in herself of responding to it. With a sigh she stretched out her hand to him, and remained pensive, with her eyes fixed on the ground, and plunged in a melancholy meditation.

"Albert," said she to him at last, raising her eyes, and finding his filled with an expectation full of anguish and sorrow, "you do not know me, when you wish to impose upon me a character for which I am so ill-fitted. Only a woman who would abuse it, could accept it. I am neither coquetish nor proud; I think I am not vain, and I have no spirit of domination. Your love would flatter me, if I could share it; and if it were so, I would tell you immediately. To afflict you by the reiterated assurance of the contrary, in the situation in which I find you, is an act of cold-blooded cruelty which you ought to have spared me, and which is nevertheless imposed upon me by my conscience, though my heart detests it, and is torn in accomplishing it. Pity me for being obliged to afflict you, to offend you perhaps, at a moment when I

would willingly give my life to restore to you happiness and health."

"I know it, sublime maiden," replied Albert with a sad smile, "you are so good and so grand, that you would give your life for the least of men; but your conscience, I know very well, will not bend for any one. Fear not to offend me by disclosing to me that firmness which I admire, that stoical coldness which your virtue preserves in the midst of the most touching pity. As to afflicting me, that is not in your power, Consuelo. I have not deceived myself; I am accustomed to the most horrible sorrows; I know that my life is devoted to the most painful sacrifices. Do not treat me like a weak-minded man, like a child without heart and without courage, by repeating to me what I very well know, that you will never feel love for me. I know all your life, Consuelo, although I am not acquainted with your name, your family, or any outward fact which concerns you. I know the history of your soul: the rest does not interest me. You have loved, you still love, and you will always love, a being of whom I know nothing, of whom I wish to know nothing, and with whom I would not contend for you, unless you should so command me. But know, Consuelo, that you will never belong to him, nor to me, nor to yourself. God has reserved to you an existence apart, of which I neither seek nor foresee the circumstances,—but of which I perceive the object and the end. Slave and victim of your greatness of soul, you will not receive any other recompense in this life, than the consciousness of your strength and the sense of your goodness. Unhappy in the world's eye, you will be, in spite of all, the most serene and the most happy of all human beings, because you will always be the most just and the most virtuous. For the wicked and the cowardly only are to be pitied, O my beloved sister! and the words of Christ will be true so long as humanity is blind and unjust: *Happy are they that are persecuted!* Happy are those who weep and labor in suffering!"

The strength and dignity which glowed on the broad and majestic brow of Albert, exercised, at this moment, so power-

ful a fascination upon Consuelo, that she forgot the part of proud sovereign and austere friend which was imposed upon her, to bow before the power of this man inspired by faith and enthusiasm. She could hardly support herself, still weakened by fatigue and entirely overcome by emotion. She allowed herself to fall upon her knees already bending under the torpor of lassitude, and clasping her hands began to pray aloud with earnestness: "If it be thou, O my God!" cried she, "who utterest this prophecy by the mouth of a saint, may thy will be done and may it be blessed! In my childhood I asked thee for happiness under a smiling and puerile aspect, thou reservedst it for me under a rude and severe one, which I could not comprehend. Cause my eyes to be opened and my heart to submit itself. May I know how to accept this destiny which seemed to me so unjust, O my God! and to ask of thee only what man has a right to expect from thy love and thy justice: faith, hope, and charity."

While praying thus, Consuelo was bathed in tears. She did not try to repress them. After so much agitation and fever, she had need of this crisis, which relieved while it weakened her. Albert prayed and wept with her, blessing those tears he had so long shed in solitude, and which were at last mingled with those of a pure and generous being.

"And now," said Consuelo rising, "we have thought enough of ourselves. It is time to think of others, and to remember our duties. I have promised to restore you to your parents, who mourn in desolation, and who already pray for you as for one dead. Will you not restore peace and joy to them, my dear Albert? Will you not follow me?"

"So soon!" cried the young count with bitterness; "so soon be separated! So soon quit this consecrated asylum in which God alone is between us; this cell which I cherish since you have appeared to me in it; this sanctuary of a happiness which perhaps I shall never again find, to return into life, cold and false as it is with its prejudices and expediences! Ah! not yet, my soul! my life! Let me have yet one day, one age of delights. Let me here forget that there exists a



world of lies and wickedness, which pursues me like a fatal dream; let me return slowly and by degrees to what they call reason. I do not yet feel myself strong enough to bear the sight of their sun, and the spectacle of their craziness. I need to contemplate, to hear you yet longer. Besides, I have never quitted my retreat by a sudden resolution, and without long reflections; my horrible but beneficent retreat; this place of terrible and salutary expiation, where I arrive running, and without turning my head, into which I plunge with a savage joy, and whence I always withdraw myself with too well founded hesitations and too enduring regrets! You do not know that there is here a myself which I leave behind, which is the true Albert, and which cannot quit it; a self which I always again find here, and whose spectre besieges and recalls me whenever I am elsewhere. Here is my conscience, my faith, my light, my serious life, in fact. I bring hither despair, fear, madness; often they rush in after me, and compel me to a violent struggle. But look, behind that door is a tabernacle where I subdue them, and renew myself. I enter stained, and assailed by dizziness; I issue purified, and no one knows at the cost of what tortures I recover patience and submission. Do not drag me hence, Consuelo; suffer me to withdraw by slow degrees, and after having prayed."

"Let us enter and pray together," said Consuelo. "We will depart immediately after. Time flies, and perhaps the day is about to dawn. The means by which you return to the chateau must not be known; you must not be seen to enter, and perhaps we must not be seen to enter together: for I do not wish to betray the secret of your retreat, Albert, and hitherto no one has any notion of my discovery. I do not wish to be questioned, I do not wish to lie. I must have the right of maintaining a respectful silence towards your parents, and of letting them believe that my promises were only presentiments and dreams. If I were seen to return with you, my discretion would pass for rebellion; and though I am capable of braving all for you, Albert, I do not wish

unnecessarily to alienate the confidence and the affection of your family. Let us hasten; I am exhausted with fatigue, and if I remain long here, I shall lose the little remnant of strength which I need to make the passage anew. Go and pray, and let us depart."

"You are exhausted with fatigue? Then rest yourself here, my well-beloved. Sleep; I will watch over you religiously; or if my presence disturbs you, you shall shut me up in the neighboring grotto. You shall close that iron gate between us; and until you recall me, I will pray for you in *my church*."

"And while you are praying, and I yield myself to repose, your father will still endure long hours of agony, pale and motionless, as I once saw him, bent under the weight of old age and sorrow, pressing with his feeble knees the pavement of his oratory, and seeming to expect the news of your death to draw from him his last breath! And your poor aunt will be excited by a state of fever to ascend continually the highest towers, in order to search for you with her eyes in all the paths of the mountain! And this morning again, the family will meet in the chateau, and separate when night comes, with despair in their eyes and death in their souls! Albert, you cannot love your parents, since you make them languish and suffer so much, without pity and without remorse."

"Consuelo! Consuelo!" cried Albert, appearing to waken from a dream, "do not speak thus; you pain me horribly. What crime have I committed? what disasters have I caused? why are they so uneasy? how many hours have elapsed since that in which I left them?"

"Do you ask how many hours? Ask rather how many days, how many nights, and almost, how many weeks!"

"Days, nights! Be silent, Consuelo, do not disclose to me my misery. I knew that I here lost the true notion of time, and that the memory of what passes on the face of the earth did not descend into this sepulchre. But I did not believe that the duration of this forgetfulness and of this ignorance could be reckoned by days and weeks."

“Is it not a voluntary forgetfulness, my friend? Nothing here recalls to you the days which pass and are renewed; eternal darkness maintains the night. You have not even a sand-glass, I believe, to mark the hours. Is not this care to exclude the means of measuring time, a savage precaution to escape from the cries of nature and the reproaches of conscience?”

“I confess that when I come here, I feel the necessity of abjuring everything purely human within me. But I did not know, O my God! that sorrow and meditation could so absorb my soul as to make long hours appear indistinctly like days, or the rapid days like hours. What kind of a man am I then, and why have I never been enlightened as to this new misfortune of my organization?”

“On the contrary, this misfortune is the proof of great intellectual power, diverted from its true employment and given up to fatal reveries. Your friends imposed upon themselves the task of hiding from you the evils of which you were the cause; they thought themselves obliged to respect your sufferings, by concealing from you those of others. But, in my opinion, it was treating you with too little esteem, it was doubting the goodness of your heart; and I who do not doubt it, Albert, conceal nothing from you.”

“Let us go, Consuelo, let us go!” said Albert, hurriedly throwing his cloak upon his shoulders. “I am a wretch! I have caused suffering to my father whom I adore, to my aunt whom I love! I am hardly worthy to see them again! Ah! rather than again be guilty of such cruelties, I would impose upon myself the sacrifice of never returning here! But no, I am happy; for I have found the heart of a friend to warn and to restore me. Some one has at last told me the truth respecting myself; and will tell it to me always: is it not so, my beloved sister?”

“Always, Albert, I swear it to you.”

“Divine goodness! and the being who comes to my relief is that one, whom alone I could have heard and believed. God knows what he does! Ignorant of my own insanity, I

have always blamed that of others. Alas! had my noble father himself told me what you have just said, Consuelo, I should not have believed him! It is because you are truth and life, it is because you alone can bring conviction to my mind, and give to my unquiet spirit the celestial security which emanates from your own."

"Let us go," said Consuelo, assisting him to clasp his cloak, which his convulsive and distracted hand could not arrange upon his shoulders.

"Yes, let us go," said he, looking at her with a tender eye, as she performed this friendly office; "but first swear to me, Consuelo, that if I do return here, you will not abandon me; swear that you will again come to search for me, were it only to overwhelm me with reproaches, to call me ingrate, parricide, and to tell me that I am unworthy of your solicitude. O! leave me no longer a victim to myself! You must see that you have entire control over me, and that one word from your mouth persuades and cures me, better than ages of meditation and prayer."

"You yourself will swear to me," replied Consuelo, resting upon his shoulders her hands emboldened by the thickness of the cloak, and smiling frankly upon him, "never to return here without me?"

"Then you will return with me?" cried he, looking at her with intoxication, but not daring to clasp her in his arms; "swear that to me, and I will take an oath, never to quit my father's roof without your order, or your permission."

"Well, may God hear and receive this mutual promise," replied Consuelo, transported with joy. "We will return to pray in *your church*, Albert, and you will show me how to pray; for no one has taught me, and I feel a necessity of knowing God, which consumes me. You shall reveal heaven to me, my friend, and I will remind you, whenever you require it, of terrestrial concerns and the duties of human life."

"Divine sister!" said Albert, his eyes drowned in delicious tears, "I have nothing to teach you, and it is you who must

confess me, know and regenerate me! It is you who will teach me all, even prayer Ah! I need no more to be alone, in order to raise my soul to God. I need no more to prostrate myself upon the bones of my fathers, in order to comprehend and feel my immortality. It is enough that I look upon you, for my revived soul to ascend towards heaven, as a hymn of gratitude and an incense of purification."

Consuelo drew him away; she herself opened and closed the doors. "Come, Cynabre," said Albert to his faithful companion, holding towards him a lantern, better constructed than that with which Consuelo was furnished, and more appropriate to the kind of journey in which it was to be used. The intelligent animal took the handle of the lantern with an air of satisfied pride, and began to walk in front with a steady step, stopping every time that his master stopped, hastening or slackening his pace as he did, and keeping the middle of the path, so as never to risk injuring his precious charge by hitting it against the rocks or bushes.

Consuelo found much difficulty in walking; she felt herself bruised; and without the arm of Albert, who supported and carried her along every instant, she would have fallen ten times. They re-descended together the course of the stream, following its graceful and fresh margin. "It is Zdenko," said Albert to her, "who lovingly tends the Naiad of these mysterious grottoes. He smooths her bed, often encumbered with gravel and shells. He cherishes the pale flowers which grow beneath her steps, and protects them against her kisses, which are sometimes rather rough."

Consuelo looked at the sky through the openings of the rock. She saw the glittering of a star. "It is Aldebaran, the star of the Zingari," said Albert to her. "There is yet an hour before dawn."

"It is my star," replied Consuelo; "for I am, not by race, but by calling, a kind of Zingara, my dear count. My mother had no other name in Venice, although she revolted against this appellation, which was insulting, according to her Spanish

prejudices. And as for me, I was and am still known in that city under the surname of the Zingarella."

"Why are you not in fact a child of that persecuted race!" replied Albert; "I should love you still more, if it were possible!"

Consuelo, who had thought to do well, by reminding the count of Rudolstadt of the difference in their birth and condition, remembered what Amelia had told her of Albert's sympathies for the poor and the vagabond. She feared lest she had involuntarily abandoned herself to a sentiment of instinctive coquetry, and she kept silence.

But Albert broke it after a few moments: "What you have just told me," said he, "has awakened in me, by I know not what association of ideas, a remembrance of my youth, quite childish indeed, but which I must relate to you, because since I have seen you, it has presented itself many times to my memory with a kind of pertinacity. Lean more heavily upon me, while I speak, dear sister.

"I was about fifteen years old; I was returning alone one evening, by one of the paths which border the Schreckenstein and wind among the hills, in the direction of the chateau. I saw before me a tall and thin woman, miserably clad, who was carrying a burden on her shoulders, and who stopped from rock to rock, to seat herself and take breath. I accosted her. She was handsome, though burned by the sun and haggard with misery and care. There was a sort of sad dignity under her rags; and when she stretched out her hand to me, it was rather with an air of commanding, than of imploring my pity. I had nothing left in my purse, and I asked her to come with me to the chateau, where I could offer her assistance, food, and a lodging for the night.

"'I like it better so,' replied she with a foreign accent, which I took for that of the vagabond Egyptians, for at that time I did not know the languages I afterwards acquired in my travels. 'I shall be able to pay you for the hospitality you offer, by singing some of the songs of the different countries through which I have travelled. I rarely ask for charity. I must be forced to do it by extreme distress.'

“‘Poor woman!’ said I to her, ‘you are carrying a very heavy burthen; your poor feet, which are almost bare, are wounded. Give me the bundle, I will carry it to my home, and you can walk more freely.’

“‘This burden becomes every day more heavy,’ replied she with a melancholy smile, which made her quite beautiful; ‘but I do not complain. I have carried it for many years, and have travelled hundreds of leagues with it, without regretting my labor. I never trust it to any one; but you have the appearance of so good a child, that I will lend it to you so far.’

“At these words she unclasped the cloak, which covered her entirely, and only allowed the handle of her guitar to peep out. Then I saw a child five or six years old, pale and tanned like her mother, but of a gentle and calm countenance which filled my heart with tenderness. It was a little girl, all in rags, thin but strong, and who slept the sleep of angels upon the burning and bruised back of the wandering singer. I took her in my arms, but had much trouble to keep her, for she woke, and finding herself upon a strange bosom, she struggled and cried. Her mother spoke to her in her own language to comfort her. My caresses and my cares consoled her, and we were the best friends in the world when we reached the chateau. When the poor woman had supped, she put her child into a bed I had had prepared for her, made a kind of strange toilet, more sad than her rags, and came into the hall where we were eating, to sing Spanish, French, and German songs, with a beautiful voice, a firm accent, and a truthfulness of feeling which charmed us. My good aunt bestowed a thousand cares and attentions upon her. She appeared grateful for them, but did not lay aside her pride, and made only evasive answers to our questions. Her child interested me even more than she did. I could have wished to see her again, to amuse her and even to keep her. I know not what tender solicitude was awakened in me for that poor little being, a wretched traveller upon the earth. I dreamt of her all night long, and ran to see her at the break of day. But the Zingara had already departed, and I scaled the moun-

tain without being able to discover her. She had risen before day, and had taken the road to the south, with her child and my guitar, which I had given her, her own being broken, to her great sorrow."

"Albert! Albert!" cried Consuelo, seized with an extraordinary emotion. "That guitar is at Venice in the hands of my master Porpora, who is keeping it for me, and from whom I will request it, never again to part with it. It is of ebony, with a cipher incrusting in silver, a cipher which I remember very well, 'A. R.' My mother, whose memory failed her, because she had seen too many things, could not remember your name, nor that of your chateau, nor even that of the country in which this adventure had happened to her. But she often spoke to me of the hospitality she had received at the house of the owner of the guitar, and of the touching charity of a young and handsome nobleman, who had carried me half a league in his arms, talking with her as with an equal. O my dear Albert! I also remember all that! At every word of your recital, these images, long slumbering in my brain, were awakened one by one; and this is why your mountains could not seem absolutely new to my eyes; this is why I strove in vain to know the cause of the confused recollections which have assailed me in this country; this is why especially, I felt my heart beat, and my head bend itself respectfully before you at the first sight, as if I had rediscovered a friend and protector, long lost and regretted."

"Do you believe, Consuelo," said Albert, pressing her to his bosom, "that I did not recognize you at the first instant? In vain have you grown, in vain have you been transformed and beautified by years. I have a memory (wonderful though often fatal present,) which needs neither eyes nor words to exercise itself through ages or days. I did not know that you were my cherished Zingarella; but I well knew that I had already known you, already loved you, already pressed you to my heart, which from that moment, had attached and identified itself with yours, without my knowledge, for my whole life."



## CHAPTER XLVI.

WHILE conversing thus, they arrived at the branching of the two paths, where Consuelo had encountered Zdenko, and from a distance they saw the glimmer of his lantern which he had placed on the ground beside him. Consuelo, knowing the dangerous caprices and athletic strength of the *innocent*, involuntarily pressed closer to Albert, as soon as she perceived this indication of his vicinity.

"Why do you fear that harmless and affectionate creature?" said the young count, surprised yet pleased at this emotion. "Zdenko loves you, although since last night an unpleasant dream has made him backward in fulfilling my desires, and somewhat hostile to the generous project which you had formed of coming to search for me; but he has the submission of a child when I insist with him, and you will see him at your feet if I say the word."

"Do not humiliate him before me," replied Consuelo; "do not aggravate the aversion with which I inspire him. When we have passed him, I will tell you what serious reasons I have for fearing and avoiding him henceforth."

"Zdenko is an almost celestial being," returned Albert, "and I can never believe him formidable to any one. His state of perpetual ecstasy gives him the purity and charity of the angels."

"That state of ecstasy, which I myself admire, becomes a malady, Albert, when prolonged. Do not deceive yourself in that respect. God does not wish man thus to abjure the sentiment and consciousness of his real life, in order to elevate himself too frequently into the vague conceptions of an ideal world. Insanity and madness are at the end of this kind of intoxication, as a punishment for pride and idleness."

Cynabre stopped before Zdenko, and looked at him with an

affectionate air, expecting some caresses, which that friend did not deign to bestow upon him. He sat with his head buried in his hands, in the same attitude and on the same rock, as when Consuelo left him. Albert addressed him in Bohemian, and he hardly answered. He shook his head with a discouraged air; his cheeks were bathed in tears, and he did not wish even to look at Consuelo. Albert raised his voice and addressed him with determination; but there was more of exhortation and tenderness, than of command and reproach, in the inflections of his voice. Zdenko rose at last, and offered his hand to Consuelo, who clasped it trembling.

"Now," said he in German, looking at her kindly, though sadly, "you must no longer fear me; but you do me a great injury, and I feel that your hand is full of misfortune for us."

He walked before them, exchanging a few words with Albert from time to time. They followed the spacious and solid gallery which Consuelo had not yet traversed at this extremity, and which led them to a circular vault, where they again met the water of the fountain, flowing into a vast basin formed by the hand of man, and bordered with hammered stone. It escaped thence by two currents, one of which was lost in the caverns, the other directed itself towards the cistern of the chateau. It was this which Zdenko closed by replacing three enormous stones with his herculean hand, when he wished to dry the cistern to the level of the arcade, and of the staircase which led to Albert's terrace.

"Let us seat ourselves here," said the count to his companion, "in order to give the water of the cistern time to drain off by a waste way—"

"Which I know but too well," said Consuelo, shuddering from head to foot.

"What do you mean?" asked Albert, looking at her with surprise.

"I will tell you by-and-by," said Consuelo, "I do not wish to sadden and agitate you now by the idea of the perils which I have surmounted—"

“But what does she mean to say?” cried Albert, terrified, looking at Zdenko.

Zdenko replied in Bohemian with an air of indifference, while kneading, with his long brown hands, lumps of clay, which he placed in the interstices of his sluice-way, in order to hasten the draining of the cistern. “Explain yourself, Consuelo,” said Albert, much agitated. “I can comprehend nothing of what he says. He pretends that he did not conduct you to this place, that you came by subterranean passages, which I know to be impassable, and where a delicate woman could never have dared to venture, nor have been able to direct herself. He says, (great God! what does not the unfortunate say?) that it was destiny which conducted you, and that the archangel Michael, whom he calls the proud and domineering, made you pass through the water and the abysses.”

“It is possible,” said Consuelo, with a smile, “that the archangel Michael had something to do with it; for it is certain that I came by the waste-way of the fountain, that I fled before the torrent, that I thought myself lost two or three times, that I traversed caverns and quarries where I expected to be swallowed up or smothered at every step; and yet these dangers were not more fearful than Zdenko’s anger, when chance or Providence made me find the true route.” Here Consuelo, who always expressed herself in Spanish with Albert, related to him, in a few words, the reception which his pacific Zdenko had given her, and the attempt to bury her alive, which he had almost entirely accomplished, at the moment when she had the presence of mind to appease him by a singularly heretic formula. A cold sweat burst out upon Albert’s forehead, on hearing these incredible details, and he often darted terrible glances at Zdenko, as if he would have annihilated him. Zdenko, on meeting them, assumed a strange expression of revolt and disdain. Consuelo trembled to see these two insane persons excited against each other; for notwithstanding the deep wisdom and the exquisite sentiments which inspired the greater part of Albert’s conversa-

tion, it was evident to her that his reason had sustained a severe shock, from which perhaps it would never entirely recover. She tried to reconcile them, by addressing affectionate words to each. But Albert rising, and giving the keys of his hermitage to Zdenko, said to him a few cold words, to which Zdenko submitted on the instant. He resumed his lantern and went his way, singing very strange airs with incomprehensible words.

"Consuelo," said Albert, as soon as he had lost sight of him, "if this faithful animal which lies at your feet should become mad; yes, if my poor Cynabre should endanger your life by an involuntary fury, I should surely be obliged to kill him; and believe that I would not hesitate, though my hand has never shed blood, even that of beings inferior to man—be tranquil therefore, no danger will menace you hereafter."

"Of what are you speaking, Albert?" replied the young girl, troubled at this unforeseen allusion. "I fear nothing now. Zdenko is still a man, though he has lost his reason by his own fault perhaps, and by yours a little likewise. Speak not of blood and punishment. It is your duty to restore him to the truth, and to cure him, instead of encouraging his insanity. Come, let us go; I tremble lest the day should dawn, and surprise us on our arrival."

"You are right," said Albert, resuming his route. "Wisdom speaks by your mouth, Consuelo. My insanity has been contagious to that unfortunate, and it was quite time for you to come, and save us from the abyss to which we were both hastening. Restored by you, I will endeavor to restore Zdenko. And yet if I do not succeed, if his insanity again puts your life in danger, although Zdenko be a man before God, and an angel in his tenderness for me, though he be the only true friend I have hitherto had upon the earth—be assured, Consuelo, I will tear him from my heart, and you shall never see him again."

"Enough, enough, Albert!" murmured Consuelo, incapable, after so many terrors, of supporting a new one; "do not fill your mind with such suppositions. I would rather lose

my life a hundred times, than inflict upon yours such a necessity and such a despair."

Albert did not hear her, and seemed absent. He forgot to support her, and did not perceive that she failed and stumbled at every step. He was absorbed by the idea of the dangers she had incurred for his sake; and in his terror at retracing them, in his ardent solicitude, in his excited gratitude, he walked rapidly, making the gallery resound with his hurried exclamations, and leaving her to drag herself after him with efforts which became more and more painful. In this cruel situation, Consuelo thought of Zdenko who was behind her, and who might retrace his steps; upon the torrent which he always held, so to speak, in his hand, and which he could again unchain at the moment when she was ascending the well alone, deprived of Albert's assistance; for the latter, victim to a new fancy, seemed to see her before him, and to follow a deceitful phantom, while he abandoned her in darkness. This was too much for a woman, and for Consuelo herself. Cynabre walked as fast as his master, and fled, carrying the lantern. Consuelo had left hers in the cell. The road made numerous angles, behind which the light disappeared every instant. Consuelo struck against one of those angles, fell, and could not rise again. The chill of death ran through all her limbs. A last apprehension finally presented itself to her mind. Zdenko had probably received orders to open the sluice-gate after a certain time, in order to conceal the staircase and the issue of the cistern. So that even if hatred did not inspire him, he would from habit obey this necessary precaution. "It is then accomplished," thought Consuelo, making vain attempts to drag herself forward on her knees. "I am the victim of a pitiless destiny. I shall never escape from this subterranean; my eyes will not again behold the light of day."

Already a thicker veil than that of the outward darkness spread itself over her sight; her hands became numb, and an apathy, which resembled the last sleep, suspended her terrors. Suddenly she felt herself pressed and raised in powerful arms,

which seized and drew her towards the cistern. A burning bosom beats against hers, and warms it; a friendly and caressing voice addresses her with tender words; Cynabre bounds before her, shaking the light. It is Albert, who, restored to himself, seizes and saves her with the passion of a mother who has lost and found her child. In three minutes they arrived at the canal whence the water of the fountain had run out, they reached the arcade and the staircase. Cynabre, accustomed to this dangerous ascent, leaped forward first, as if he feared to encumber his master's steps, by remaining too near him.

Albert, carrying Consuelo on one arm, and clinging with the other to the chain, ascended the spiral staircase, at the bottom of which the water already began to mount also. This was not the least of the dangers which Consuelo had encountered, but she felt no fear. Albert was endowed with a muscular strength, in comparison with which Zdenko's was as a child's, and at this moment he was animated with supernatural power. When he had deposited his precious burden upon the margin of the well, in the light of the breaking dawn, Consuelo, at last breathing freely, and rising from his panting breast, wiped with her veil his broad forehead bathed in sweat. "My friend," said she to him tenderly, "without you I should have died, and you have repaid all that I have done for you; but I now feel your fatigue more than you do yourself, and it seems to me that I shall sink under it in your place."

"O my little Zingarella!" said Albert to her with enthusiasm, kissing the veil which she rested upon his face, "you are as light in my arms as on the day when I descended from the Schreckenstein to carry you to the chateau."

"Which you will not again leave without my permission, Albert; do not forget your oath!"

"Nor you yours," replied he, kneeling before her. He helped her to envelope herself in the veil, and to cross his chamber, whence she escaped stealthily to regain her own. The family began to wake in the chateau. Already from the

lower story, the canoness sounded a dry and piercing cough, the signal of her rising. Consuelo had the happiness not to be seen or heard by any one. Fear gave her wings to recover the shelter of her apartment. With an agitated hand she freed herself from her stained and torn clothes, and hid them in a trunk from which she took away the key. She retained sufficient strength and memory to conceal every trace of her mysterious journey. But hardly had she let her wearied head fall upon the pillow, when a heavy and burning sleep, full of fanciful dreams and horrible adventures, nailed it there, under the weight of an overpowering and inexorable fever.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

STILL the canoness Wenceslawa, after half an hour's prayers, ascended the staircase, and according to her custom, consecrated the first care of the day to her dear nephew. She directed her steps to the door of his chamber, and bent her ear to the key-hole, though with less hope than ever of hearing the slight noise which would announce his return. What was her surprise and her joy on perceiving the regular sound of his breathing during sleep! She made a great sign of the cross, and ventured to unlatch the door, and enter gently on tiptoe. She saw Albert peacefully slumbering in his bed, and Cynabre curled up on the neighboring arm-chair. She waked neither of them, and ran to find count Christian, who, prostrate in his oratory, prayed with his accustomed resignation that his son might be restored to him, either in heaven or upon earth.

"My brother," said she to him in a low voice, and kneeling beside him, "suspend your prayers, and search your heart for the most fervent thanksgiving. God has heard you."

There was no necessity that she should explain herself further. The old man, turning towards her, and meeting her small clear eyes, animated with a profound and sympathizing joy, raised his dry hands towards the altar and cried with a smothered voice, "O my God, thou hast restored to me my son!"

And both, by the same inspiration, began to recite alternately in a half voice, the verses of the beautiful song of Simeon; *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*

They resolved not to awaken Albert. They called the baron, the chaplain and all the servants, and devoutly heard the mass for the return of thanks in the chapel of the chateau. Amelia learned the return of her cousin with sincere joy;



but she considered it very unjust, that in order to celebrate piously this happy event, she should have to undergo a mass during which she had to stifle many yawns.

"Why has not your friend, the good Porporina, united with us in thanking Providence?" said count Christian to his niece, when the mass was ended.

"I have tried in vain to awaken her," replied Amelia. "I called her, shook her, and used every means; but I could not succeed in making her understand, or even open her eyes. If she were not burning hot, and red as fire, I should think her dead. She must have slept very badly last night, and she certainly has a fever."

"Then that worthy person is ill!" returned the old count. "My dear Wenceslawa, you should go and administer such remedies as her condition may require. God forbid that so happy a day should be saddened by the suffering of that noble girl!"

"I will go, my brother," replied the canoness, who no longer said a word, nor took a step respecting Consuelo, without consulting the chaplain's looks. "But do not be uneasy, Christian: it will be nothing. The signora Nina is very nervous; she will soon be well."

"Still is it not a very singular thing," said she to the chaplain, when she could take him aside, "that this girl should have predicted Albert's return with so much assurance and truth? Sir chaplain, perhaps we have been deceived respecting her. Perhaps she is a kind of saint who has revelations."

"A saint would have come to hear mass, instead of having the fever at such a moment," objected the chaplain with a profound air.

This judicious remark drew a sigh from the canoness. She nevertheless went to see Consuelo, and found her in a burning fever, accompanied by an invincible stupor. The chaplain was called, and declared that she would be very ill, if the fever continued. He questioned the young baroness to know if her neighbor had not passed a very agitated night.

"On the contrary," replied Amelia, "I did not hear her move. I expected, from her predictions and the fine stories she has been telling for some days past, to have heard the *sabbat* danced in her apartment. But the devil must have carried her a great way off, or she must have had to do with very well educated imps, for she did not move, so far as I know, and my sleep was not disturbed a single instant."

These pleasantries appeared to the chaplain to be in very bad taste; and the canoness, whose heart redeemed the failings of her mind, considered them misplaced at the bedside of a friend who was seriously ill. Still she said nothing, attributing her niece's bitterness to a too well founded jealousy; and she asked the chaplain what medicines ought to be administered to the Porporina.

He ordered a sedative, which they could not make her swallow. Her teeth were locked, and her livid mouth repelled all drink. The chaplain pronounced this to be a bad sign. But with an apathy which was unfortunately too contagious in that house, he deferred to a new examination the judgment he should have pronounced upon the patient: *we will see; we must wait; we can decide nothing as yet*: such were the favorite sentences of the tonsured Esculapius. "If this continues," repeated he on quitting Consuelo's chamber, "we must *think* of calling a physician, for I would not take upon myself the responsibility of treating an extraordinary case of nervous affection. I will pray for this young lady; and perhaps in the state of mind which she has manifested during these last days, we must expect from God alone assistance more efficacious than that of art."

They left a maid-servant by the bedside of Consuelo, and went to prepare for breakfast. The canoness herself kneaded the finest cake that had ever been produced by her skilful hands. She flattered herself that Albert, after a long fast, would eat with pleasure of this favorite dish. The beautiful Amelia made a toilet charming in freshness, thinking that her cousin might feel some regret at having offended and irritated her, when he saw her so bewitching. Every one

thought of preparing some agreeable surprise for the young count; and they forgot the only one who ought to have interested them, the poor Consuelo, to whom they were indebted for his return, and whom Albert would be impatient to see again.

Albert soon woke, and instead of making useless attempts to recall the occurrences of the preceding night, as was always the case after those fits of insanity which drove him to his subterranean abode, he promptly recovered the recollection of his love, and of the happiness which Consuelo had bestowed upon him. He rose, quickly dressed and perfumed himself, and ran to throw himself into the arms of his father and his aunt. The joy of those good relatives was at its height, when they saw that Albert had full possession of his reason, that he had a consciousness of his long absence, and that he asked their forgiveness with an ardent tenderness, promising never again to cause them so much trouble and uneasiness. He saw the transports excited by his return to the knowledge of the reality. But he remarked the care they persisted in taking to conceal his situation from him, and he was somewhat humbled at being treated like a child, when he felt that he had again become a man. He submitted to this punishment, too trifling for the evil he had caused, saying to himself that it was a salutary warning, and that Consuelo would be pleased at his comprehending and accepting it.

As soon as he was seated at table, in the midst of the caresses, the tears of happiness, and the earnest attentions of his family, he anxiously sought with his eyes for her who had become necessary to his life and his tranquillity. He saw her place empty, and dared not ask why the Porporina did not descend. Still the canoness, who saw him turn his head and start, every time the door opened, thought herself obliged to relieve him from all anxiety by saying, that their young guest had slept badly, that she was reposing, and expected to keep her bed a part of the day.

Albert understood very well that his liberator must be overpowered by fatigue, and yet terror was depicted on his coun-

tenance at this news. "My aunt," said he, no longer able to restrain his emotion, "I think that if the adopted daughter of Porpora were seriously indisposed, we should not all be here, quietly engaged in eating and talking around the table."

"Reassure yourself, Albert," said Amelia, reddening with vexation, "Nina is busy dreaming of you, and hoping for your return, which she expects in sleep, while we here celebrate it in joy."

Albert became pale with indignation, and darting a withering glance at his cousin, "If any one here has expected me in sleep, it is not the person whom you name who should be thanked for it; the freshness of your cheeks, my beautiful cousin, testifies that you have not lost an hour of sleep during my absence, and that you have at this moment no need of repose. I thank you with all my heart; for it would be very painful for me to ask your forgiveness, as I do that of all the other members and friends of my family."

"Many thanks for the exception," returned Amelia, scarlet with anger; "I will endeavor always to deserve it, by keeping my watchings and anxieties for some one who will feel obliged for them, and not turn them into a jest."

This little altercation, which was by no means a new thing between Albert and his betrothed, but which had never been so bitter on the one side or the other, cast sadness and restraint over the rest of the morning, notwithstanding all the efforts which were made to divert Albert's attention.

The canoness went to see her patient several times, and found her always more feverish and more oppressed. Amelia, whom Albert's anxiety wounded as if it were a personal affront, went to weep in her chamber. The chaplain pronounced himself so far as to say to the canoness that a physician must be sent for in the evening, if the fever did not turn. Count Christian kept his son by him, to distract him from an anxiety which he did not comprehend, and which he believed still diseased. But while chaining him to his side by affectionate words, the good old man could not find the least subject of conversation and intimacy with that spirit, which he had never

wished to sound, from the fear of being conquered and subdued by a reason superior to his own, in matters of religion. It is true that count Christian called by the names of madness and rebellion that bright light which pierced through the eccentricities of Albert, and the splendor of which the feeble eyes of a rigid catholic could not endure ; but he resisted the sympathy which impelled him to question him seriously. Every time he had tried to correct his heresies, he had been reduced to silence by arguments full of justice and firmness. Nature had not made him eloquent. He had not that animated facility which maintains a controversy, and still less that charlatanism of discussion, which, in default of logic, imposes by an air of science and pretended certainty. Simple and modest, he allowed his mouth to be closed ; he reproached himself with not having turned his younger days to profit, by studying those profound things which Albert opposed to him ; and certain that there were in theological science treasures of truth, by means of which one more learned and skilful than himself could have crushed Albert's heresy, he clung to his shaken faith, and in order to excuse himself from acting more energetically, threw himself back upon his ignorance and simplicity, which emboldened the rebel, and did him more harm than good.

Their conversation, interrupted twenty times by a kind of mutual fear, and twenty times resumed with effort on one side and the other, at last failed of itself. Old Christian fell asleep in his arm-chair, and Albert left him to go and obtain information respecting Consuelo's condition, which alarmed him the more, the more they tried to conceal it from him.

He spent more than two hours wandering about the corridors of the chateau, watching for the canoness and the chaplain on their passage, to ask news from them. The chaplain persisted in answering him concisely and briefly ; the canoness put on a smiling face as soon as she perceived him, and affected to speak of other things, in order to deceive him by an appearance of security. But Albert saw that she began to be seriously anxious, that she continually made more and more

frequent visits to Consuelo's chamber; and he remarked that they did not fear to open and close the doors every moment, as if that sleep, which they pretended was quiet and necessary, could not be disturbed by noise and agitation. He was bold enough to approach that chamber into which he would have given his life to penetrate for a single instant. It was entered through another room, and separated from the corridor by two thick doors through which neither sight nor sound could penetrate. The canoness, remarking this attempt, had shut and locked both, and no longer visited the patient except by passing through Amelia's chamber, which was adjoining, and where Albert would not have sought information, without a mortal repugnance. At last, seeing him exasperated, and fearing the return of his disease, she took upon herself to lie; and while asking forgiveness of God in her heart, she announced to him that the invalid was much better, and that she promised to come down and dine with the family.

Albert did not mistrust the words of his aunt, whose pure lips had never sinned against truth so openly as they had just done; and he rejoined the old count, hastening with all his prayers the hour which was to restore to him Consuelo and happiness.

But the hour struck in vain. Consuelo did not appear. The canoness, making a rapid progress in the art of lying, related that she had risen, but that she found herself still somewhat feeble, and preferred dining in her chamber. She even pretended to send up selected portions of the most delicate dishes. These artifices triumphed over the terror of Albert. Although he experienced an overpowering sadness, and as it were a presentiment of some horrible misfortune, he submitted, and made efforts to appear calm.

In the evening, Wenceslawa came with an air of satisfaction which was hardly at all assumed, to say that the Porporina was better; that her skin was no longer burning, that her pulse was rather weak than full, and that she would certainly pass an excellent night. "Why, then, am I frozen with terror, notwithstanding these good news?" thought the young

count, as he took leave of his relatives at the accustomed hour.

The fact is, that the good canoness, who, notwithstanding her emaciation and deformity, had never been ill in her life, understood nothing of the maladies of others. She saw Consuelo pass from a fiery redness to a livid paleness, her agitated blood congeal in her arteries, and her chest, too much oppressed to be raised under the effort of respiration, appear calm and motionless. For an instant she had thought her relieved, and had announced this news with a childlike confidence. But the chaplain, who knew some little more, saw well that this apparent repose was the forerunner of a violent crisis. As soon as Albert had retired, he gave the canoness notice that the hour had come to send for a physician. Unfortunately the city was far distant, the night dark, the roads detestable, and Hanz very slow, notwithstanding his zeal. The storm arose, the rain fell in torrents. The old horse which carried the old servant, stumbled twenty times, and finished by losing himself in the woods with his terrified rider, who took every hill for the Schreckenstein, and every flash of lightning for the flaming flight of an evil spirit. It was not till broad daylight that Hanz again found his road. With the longest trot into which he could urge his steed, he approached the town where the physician was sleeping; the latter was awakened, dressed himself slowly, and at last set forth. Four and twenty hours had been lost in deciding upon and effecting all this.

Albert tried in vain to sleep. A consuming anxiety and the unpleasant noises of the storm kept him awake all night. He dared not descend, fearing again to scandalize his aunt, who had lectured him in the morning on the impropriety of his continual presence near the apartment of the two young ladies. He left his door open, and frequently heard steps in the lower story. He ran to the staircase; but seeing no one, and hearing nothing more, he tried to reasssure himself and to place to the account of the wind and the rain the deceitful noises which had terrified him. Since Consuelo had required

it, he nursed his reason, his moral health, with patience and firmness. He repelled agitations and fears, and strove to raise himself above his love by the strength of that love itself. But suddenly, in the midst of the roaring of the thunder and the creaking of the old timbers of the chateau, which groaned under the power of the hurricane, a long heart-rending cry raises itself even to him, and penetrates his bosom like the stroke of a poniard. Albert, who had thrown himself all dressed upon his bed with the resolution of going to sleep, bounds up, rushes forward, clears the staircase like a flash of lightning, and knocks at Consuelo's door. Silence was reëstablished; no one came to open it. Albert thought he had dreamed again; but a fresh cry, more dreadful, more horrible than the first, rent his heart. He hesitates no longer, makes the turn of a dark corridor, reaches the door of Amelia's chamber, shakes it and names himself. He hears a bolt pushed, and Amelia's voice imperiously orders him to begone. Still the cries and shrieks redouble. It is the voice of Consuelo, who is suffering intolerable agony. He hears his own name breathed with despair by that adored mouth. He pushes the door with rage, makes latch and lock fly, and repelling Amelia, who plays the part of outraged modesty, on being surprised in a damask dressing-gown and lace cap, makes her fall back upon her sofa, and rushes into Consuelo's chamber, pale as a spectre, his hair erect upon his head.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

CONSUELO, victim to a horrible delirium, was struggling in the arms of the two most vigorous maid-servants of the house, who could hardly prevent her from throwing herself out of the bed. Tormented, as happens in certain cases of brain fever, by unheard-of terrors, the unhappy child wished to fly from the visions by which she was assailed; she thought she saw, in the persons who endeavored to restrain and relieve her, savage enemies, monsters bent upon her destruction. The terrified chaplain, who considered her about to fall stricken by her disease, was already repeating by her side the prayers for the departing; she took him for Zdenko chanting his mysterious psalms, while he built the wall which was to enclose her. The trembling canoness, who joined her feeble efforts with those of the other women to retain her in the bed, seemed to her like the phantom of the two Wandas, the sister of Ziska and the mother of Albert, appearing by turns in the grotto of the recluse, and reproaching her with usurping their rights and invading their domain. Her exclamations, her shrieks and her prayers, delirious and incomprehensible to those about her, were in direct relation with the thoughts and objects which had so violently agitated and affected her the night before. She heard the roaring of the torrent, and imitated the motions of swimming with her arms. She shook her black tresses scattered over her shoulders, and thought she saw floods of foam falling about her. She continually perceived Zdenko behind her, engaged in opening the sluice, or before her, earnest to close the path. She talked of nothing but water and stones, with a continuation of images which made the chaplain shake his head and say: "What a long and painful dream! I cannot conceive why her mind should have been so occupied lately with that cistern; it was doubt-

less a commencement of fever, and you see that her delirium has always that object in view."

At the moment when Albert entered her room aghast, Consuelo, exhausted by fatigue, was uttering only inarticulate sounds which ended in wild shrieks. Her terrors being no longer subdued by the power of her will, as at the moment when she encountered them, she experienced their retroactive effect with a horrible intensity. Still she recovered a sort of reflection drawn from her very delirium, and began to call Albert with so full and so vibrating a voice that it seemed as if the whole house must be shaken to its foundations; then her cries were lost in long sobs which seemed to suffocate her, though her haggard eyes were dry and of a frightful brightness.

"Here I am! here I am!" cried Albert, rushing towards the bed. Consuelo heard him, recovered all her energy, and imagining that he fled before her, disengaged herself from the hands that held her, with that rapidity of movement and that muscular force which the delirium of fever gives to the weakest beings. She bounded into the middle of the room, her hair dishevelled, her feet bare, her body enveloped in a thin white and rumpled night dress, which gave her the air of a spectre escaped from the tomb; and at the moment they thought again to seize her, she leaped with the agility of a wild-cat upon the spinet which was before her, reached the window, which she took for the opening of the fatal cistern, placed a foot upon it, extended her arms, and again crying out the name of Albert in the midst of the dark and stormy night, was about to precipitate herself, when Albert, even more agile and strong than she, encircled her in his arms, and carried her back to her bed. She did not recognize him, but she made no resistance, and ceased crying out. Albert lavished upon her in Spanish the most tender names, and the most fervent prayers; she heard him with her eyes fixed, and without seeing or answering him; but suddenly rising and placing herself on her knees in the bed, she began to sing a stanza of Handel's *Te Deum*, which she had recently read

and admired. Never had her voice possessed more expression and brilliancy. Never had she been more beautiful than in that ecstatic attitude, her hair flowing, her cheeks lighted with the fire of the fever, and her eyes seeming to read the heavens opened for them alone. The canoness was so much moved that she knelt at the foot of the bed and burst into tears; and the chaplain, notwithstanding his want of sympathy, bent his head and was seized with a religious respect. Hardly had Consuelo finished the stanza, when she uttered a deep sigh; a divine joy shone in her countenance. "I am saved!" cried she; and she fell backwards, pale and cold as marble, her eyes still open but fixed, her lips blue and her arms stiff.

An instant of silence and stupor followed this scene. Amelia, who, erect and motionless at the door of her chamber, had witnessed the frightful spectacle without daring to move a step, fainted away with horror. The canoness and the two women ran to help her. Consuelo remained stretched out and livid, resting upon the arm of Albert, who had let his head fall upon the bosom of the dying one, and did not appear more alive than she was. The canoness had no sooner seen Amelia laid upon her bed, than she returned to the threshold of Consuelo's chamber. "Well, sir chaplain?" said she dejectedly.

"Madam, it is death!" replied the chaplain in a deep tone, letting fall Consuelo's arm, the pulse of which he had been examining attentively.

"No, it is not death! no! a thousand times no!" cried Albert, raising himself impetuously. "I have consulted her heart better than you have consulted her arm. It still beats; she breathes, she lives. O! she will live! It is not thus, it is not now that her life is to end. Who has had the rashness to believe that God had decreed her death? Now is the time to attend her efficaciously. Sir chaplain, give me your box of medicines. I know what is required, and you do not. Wretch that you are, obey me! You have not helped her; you might have prevented this horrible crisis; you did not do

it; you have concealed her illness from me; you have all deceived me. Did you wish to destroy her? Your cowardly prudence, your hideous apathy, have tied your tongue and your hands! Give me your box, I say, and let me act."

And as the chaplain hesitated to trust him with medicines, which in the hand of an excited and half crazy man, might become poisons, he wrested it from him violently. Deaf to the observations of his aunt, he selected and himself poured out doses of the most powerful and active medicines. Albert was more learned in many things than they supposed. He had practised upon himself, at a period of his life when he still studied carefully the frequent disorders of his brain, and he knew the effects of the most energetic reagents. Inspired by a prompt judgment, by a courageous and absolute zeal, he administered a potion which the chaplain would never have dared to recommend. He succeeded, with incredible patience and gentleness, in unclosing the teeth of the sufferer, and making her swallow some drops of this efficacious remedy. At the end of an hour, during which he several times repeated the dose, Consuelo breathed freely; her hands had recovered their warmth, and her features their elasticity. She neither heard nor felt anything as yet; but her prostration was a kind of sleep, and a slight color returned to her lips. The physician arrived, and seeing that the case was a serious one, declared that he had been called very late, and that he would not answer for the result. The patient ought to have been bled the day before; now the time was no longer favorable. Without doubt bleeding would bring back the crisis. That was embarrassing.

"It will bring it back," said Albert; "and yet she must be bled."

The German physician, a heavy personage full of self-esteem, and accustomed, in his country practice where he had no competitor, to be listened to as an oracle, scowlingly raised his heavy eyelids towards him who thus presumed to cut short the question.

"I tell you she must be bled," resumed Albert forcibly. "With or without bleeding the crisis will return."

"Excuse me," said doctor Wetzelius; "that is not so certain as you seem to think." And he smiled in a disdainful and ironical manner.

"If the crisis does not return, all is lost," repeated Albert; "and you ought to know it. This stupor leads directly to numbness of the brain, to paralysis and death. Your duty is to seize the malady, to restore its intensity in order to combat it; to wrestle with it in fine! If it be not so, why have you come here? Prayers and burials do not belong to you. Bleed her, or I will."

The doctor knew very well that Albert reasoned justly, and he had from the first the intention of bleeding; but it was not expedient for a man of his importance to determine and execute so speedily. That would have given cause to believe that the case was a simple one and the treatment easy, and our German was accustomed to pretend great perplexities and a prolonged examination, in order to issue from them triumphantly, as by a sudden illumination of his genius, in order to have repeated what had been said of him a thousand times: "The malady was so far advanced, so dangerous, that doctor Wetzelius himself did not know what to determine; no other than he would have seized the moment and divined the remedy. He is very prudent, very learned, very strong. He has not his equal, even in Vienna."

When he saw himself contradicted and put to the wall by Albert's impatience,—“If you are a physician,” said he, “and have authority here, I do not see why I should have been called, and I will return home.”

“If you do not wish to decide at the proper time, you may retire,” said Albert.

Doctor Wetzelius, deeply wounded at having been associated with one of the fraternity who treated him with so little deference, rose and passed into Amelia's room to attend to the nerves of that young person, who urgently called him, and to take leave of the canoness; but the latter retained him.

"Alas! my dear doctor," said she, "you must not abandon us in such a situation. See what a responsibility rests upon us. My nephew has offended you; but you must not take seriously the impatience of a man so little master of himself."

"Is that count Albert?" asked the stupified doctor. "I should not have recognized him. He is so changed!"

"Without doubt; during almost ten years that you have not seen him, many changes have taken place in him."

"I thought him completely reëstablished," said the doctor maliciously; "for I have not been called a single time since his return."

"Ah! my dear doctor! you know very well that Albert would never submit to the decrees of science."

"And yet he is a physician himself, so far as I see?"

"He has some notions of everything; but he carries his hurried precipitation into all. The horrible state in which he has just seen that young girl, has agitated him very much; otherwise you would have found him more polite, more sensible, more grateful for the cares you bestowed upon him in his childhood."

"I fear he has more need of them now than ever," returned the doctor, who, notwithstanding his respect for the family and the chateau, preferred to afflict the canoness by this severe remark, rather than quit his disdainful position and renounce the petty revenge of treating Albert as insane.

The canoness suffered by this cruelty, the more that the doctor's spite might lead him to divulge her nephew's condition, which she took so much pains to conceal. She humbled herself to disarm him, and asked him submissively what he thought of the bleeding recommended by Albert.

"I think it an absurdity at the moment," said the doctor, who wished to keep the initiative, and let the decree fall with full liberty from his revered mouth. "I will wait an hour or two; I will not lose sight of the patient, and if the moment presents itself, even sooner than I think, I will act; but at the present crisis, the state of the pulse does not allow me to determine anything."

"Then you will remain? May you be blessed, excellent doctor!"

"Since my adversary is the young count," said the doctor, smiling with an air of protecting pity, "I am no longer astonished, and will allow him to say what he pleases." He was about to reënter Consuelo's chamber, the door of which the chaplain had closed, in order that Albert might not hear this conversation, when the chaplain himself, pale and terrified, left the patient, and came to find the doctor.

"In the name of Heaven! doctor," cried he, "come and exercise your authority; mine is unacknowledged, and so would be the voice of God himself, I believe, by count Albert. He persists in bleeding the dying person, notwithstanding your prohibition; and he will do it, if we cannot succeed in preventing him, by strength or by stratagem. God knows if he has ever touched a lancet. He will cripple her, if he does not kill her on the spot by an untimely drawing of blood."

"Ah, ha!" said the doctor in a jeering tone, dragging himself heavily towards the door, with the contemptuous and unpleasant sneer of a man whose heart does not inspire him. "We shall see fine doings, if I cannot find some tale to bring him to his senses."

But when he reached the bed, Albert already had the reddened lancet between his teeth; with one hand he held Consuelo's arm, and with the other a basin. The vein was opened and a black blood flowed abundantly. The chaplain wished to murmur, exclaim, take Heaven to witness. The doctor tried to jest and to distract Albert's attention, thinking to take his own time to close the vein, if he opened it in an instant afterwards, when his caprice and his vanity could claim the success. But Albert kept them at a distance solely by the expression of his look; and as soon as he had drawn the desired quantity of blood, he applied the bandages with all the dexterity of an experienced operator; then he gently bent Consuelo's arm under the coverings, and handing a smelling bottle to the canoness to keep near the nostrils of the patient, he called the chaplain and the doctor into Amelia's chamber:

"Gentlemen," said he to them, "you can be of no service to the person under my charge. Either irresolution or prejudice paralyzes your zeal and your knowledge. I declare to you that I take all responsibility upon myself, and that I do not wish to be distracted or opposed in so serious a task. I therefore beseech you, sir chaplain, to recite your prayers, and you, sir doctor, to administer your potions to my cousin. I will no longer permit prognostics and preparations of death about the bed of a person who will soon recover her consciousness. Let this be understood. If herein I offend a learned man, or am wanting towards a friend, I will ask pardon for it as soon as I can think of myself."

After having thus spoken, in a tone the calmness and gentleness of which contrasted with the dryness of his words, Albert returned to Consuelo's chamber, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and said to the canoness, "No one shall enter, or leave this apartment without my permission."



## CHAPTER XLIX.

THE canoness, confounded, could not say a word. There was something so peremptory in Albert's air and manner, that the good aunt was afraid, and instinctively obeyed him with unexampled earnestness and punctuality. The doctor, seeing his authority completely set aside, and not caring, as he afterwards declared, to enter the lists with a madman, had the wisdom to retire. The chaplain betook himself to his prayers, and Albert, assisted by his aunt and the two servant women, passed the whole day by the side of his patient, without relaxing his cares a single instant. After some hours of calmness, the crisis of excitement returned almost as violently as the night before; but it was shorter in duration, and as soon as it had yielded to the effect of powerful reagents, Albert desired the canoness to go to bed, and only to send him another woman to assist him while the two others went to take some rest.

"Will you not take some rest yourself?" asked Wenceslawa trembling.

"No, my dear aunt," replied he; "I do not require it."

"Alas!" returned she, "you will kill yourself, my child! This stranger costs us very dear!" added she as she departed, emboldened by the inattention of the young count.

Still he consented to take some food, in order not to lose the strength of which he felt the need. He ate standing in the corridor, his eye fixed upon the door, and as soon as he had finished, he threw his plate on the floor and reëntered. He had immediately closed the communication between Consuelo's chamber and that of Amelia, and allowed the few persons whom he admitted to enter only by the gallery. Amelia wished to be admitted, and pretended to bestow some care upon her companion; but she was so awkward, and at every

feverish movement of Consuelo she testified so much fear of seeing her again fall into convulsions, that Albert, becoming impatient, requested her not to meddle in anything, but to go to her own chamber and take care of herself. "To my own chamber!" replied Amelia; "and even if propriety did not forbid my sleeping where you are separated from me only by a single door, almost in my very room, do you think I could enjoy a very peaceful repose with those horrible cries and that frightful agony sounding in my ears?"

Albert shrugged his shoulders, and answered her that there were a great many other apartments in the chateau; that she might take the best, until the patient could be transported to a chamber in which her neighborhood would trouble no one.

Amelia, full of spite, followed this advice. The sight of the delicate attentions, which might almost be called maternal, that Albert bestowed upon her rival, was more painful to her than all the rest. "O my aunt!" said she, throwing herself into the arms of the canoness, when the latter had installed her in her own sleeping room, where she had a bed placed for her beside her own, "we did not know Albert. Now he shows us that he knows how to love."

For many days, Consuelo lay between life and death; but Albert combated the disease with a perseverance and a skill which must needs triumph. At last he rescued her from her severe trial; and as soon as she was out of danger, he had her carried to a tower of the chateau, where the sun lay longer, and whence the view was more beautiful and more extended than from all the other windows. This chamber, furnished in the antique style, was more in conformity with the serious tastes of Consuelo, than that they had first appropriated to her, and she had long manifested a desire to inhabit it. There she was freed from the importunities of her companion, and notwithstanding the constant presence of a woman who was relieved every morning and every evening, she was enabled to pass the languishing and sweet days of her convalescence in a kind of tête-a-tête with him who had saved her. They always spoke Spanish together, and the delicate and tender

expression of Albert's passion was more sweet to the ear of Consuelo in that language, which reminded her of her country, her childhood, and her mother. Penetrated by a vivid gratitude, weakened by sufferings which Albert alone had relieved and solaced, she gave herself up to that soft quietude which follows great crises. Her memory was awakened by degrees, but under a veil which was not everywhere equally light. For example, if she remembered with a pure and legitimate pleasure the support and devotedness of Albert in the principal events of their connection, she did not see the wanderings of his reason and the too serious depth of his passion for her, except through a thick cloud. There were even hours when, after the forgetfulness of sleep, or under the influence of soporific potions, she still imagined herself to have dreamt all that could mingle distrust and fear with the image of her generous friend. She was so accustomed to his presence and his cares, that, whenever he absented himself at her request, to take his meals with the family, she felt ill and agitated until his return. She imagined that the sedatives he administered to her, had a contrary effect if he did not prepare and pour them out with his own hand; and when he presented them to her himself, she said to him with that slow and deep smile, so touching upon a beautiful face, still half covered with the shades of death: "I can very well believe now, Albert, that you have a knowledge of enchantments; for it is enough that you order a drop of water to be salutary for me, to cause it immediately to communicate to me the calmness and strength which are in yourself."

Albert was happy for the first time in his life; and as if his soul were powerful for joy, as it had been for sorrow, he was, at this period of enchantment and intoxication, the most fortunate man on earth. That chamber, in which he saw his well beloved at all hours and without unwelcome witnesses, had become for him a place of delights. At night, as soon as he had pretended to retire, and everybody had gone to bed in the house, he traversed it with stealthy steps; and

while the nurse, whose duty it was to watch, slept profoundly, he glided behind the bed of his dear Consuelo, and looked upon her slumbering, pale and bent down like a flower after the storm. He installed himself in a great arm-chair, which he was always careful to leave there when he went away; and he there passed the whole night, sleeping so lightly, that at the least movement of his patient, he was bent towards her to hear the feeble words she uttered; or his ready hand received that which sought for it, when Consuelo, agitated by some dream, testified a remnant of uneasiness. If the nurse awoke, Albert always said that he had just come in, and she persuaded herself that he made one or two visits every night to his patient, when in fact he did not pass half an hour in his own chamber. Consuelo shared this illusion. Although she perceived Albert's presence much more frequently than did her nurse, she was still so feeble that she allowed herself to be easily deceived by him as to the frequency and duration of those visits. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, when she besought him to go to his bed, he would tell her that the day was about to appear, and that he himself had just risen. Thanks to these delicate artifices, Consuelo never suffered from his absence, and she was not anxious on account of the fatigue he must feel.

This fatigue was, however, so light, that Albert did not perceive it. Love gives strength to the weakest; and besides Albert's being endowed with an organization of more than common strength, never did human breast contain a more vast and vivifying love than his. When, at the first rays of the sun, Consuelo had slowly reached her sofa near the window, Albert seated himself behind her, and in the course of the clouds or the purple of the rays endeavored to seize the thoughts with which the aspect of the sky inspired his silent friend. Sometimes he stealthily took a corner of the veil with which she enveloped her head, and which a warm wind wafted over the back of the sofa. Albert bent his forehead as if to rest, and pressed his lips to the veil. One day Consuelo, drawing it from him to bring it over her chest, was

astonished to find it warm and moist, and turning with more vivacity than usually accompanied her movements, since the prostration of her illness, surprised an extraordinary emotion on the countenance of her friend. His cheeks were animated, a consuming fire glowed in his eyes, his chest was raised by violent palpitations,—Albert rapidly mastered his excitement, but he had time to see fear depicted on the features of Consuelo. This observation deeply afflicted him. He would have liked rather to see her armed with disdain and severity, than with any remnant of fear and distrust. He resolved to watch over himself with sufficient care to prevent the remembrance of his insanity from alarming her who had saved him at the risk, and almost at the price of her own reason and her own life.

He succeeded, thanks to a power which one in a calmer state of feeling would not have possessed. Accustomed for a long while to concentrate the impetuosity of his feelings, and to make of his will a usage the more energetic that it was constantly disputed by the mysterious attacks of his disease, he exercised upon himself a power for which he never received sufficient credit. His friends did not know the frequency and strength of the attacks which he conquered each day, until the moment when, subdued by the violence of despair and frenzy, he fled towards his unknown cavern, conqueror even in his defeat, since he preserved sufficient regard for himself to hide from all eyes the spectacle of his fall. Albert was a madman of the most unfortunate and the most respectable class. He was sensible of his insanity, and felt it coming until it had complete possession of him. Even in the midst of his fits, he retained a vague instinct and confused recollection of the real world, in which he did not wish to reappear, until he felt its relations with himself completely reestablished. We all have this remembrance of an actual and positive life, when the dreams of a painful sleep cast us into a life of fictions and delirium. Sometimes we fight against these chimeras and terrors of the night, saying to ourselves that they are the effect of nightmare, and making

efforts to awake; but an opposing power seems to seize us from time to time, and to plunge us back into that horrible lethargy, in which visions more and more gloomy, and sorrows more and more poignant besiege and torture us.

In an alternation analogous to this, passed the powerful and miserable life of that misunderstood man, whom an active, delicate and intelligent tenderness alone, could save from his own distresses. This tenderness had at last been manifested in his existence. Consuelo's was truly the transparent soul which seemed formed to find the difficult access to that sombre one, hitherto closed to all complete sympathy. There was in the solicitude which a romantic enthusiasm had first engendered in that young girl, and in the respectful friendship which gratitude inspired since her illness, something sweet and touching which God doubtless knew to be peculiarly fitted for Albert's restoration. It is highly probable, that if Consuelo, forgetful of the past, had shared the ardor of his passion, transports so new in his life, and so sudden a joy, would have excited him in a most fatal manner. The discreet and chaste friendship which she felt for him, must have a more slow but a more sure effect upon his health. It was a restraint as well as a benefit; and if there was a sort of intoxication in the renewed heart of the young count, there was mingled with it an idea of duty and of sacrifice, which gave to his thoughts other employment, and to his will another object than those which had hitherto consumed him. He therefore experienced at the same time, the happiness of being loved as he had never before been, the sorrow of not being so with the ardor he himself felt, and the fear of losing his happiness if he did not appear contented with it. This triple effect of his love soon filled his soul so completely, as to leave no room for the reveries towards which his inaction and isolation had so long compelled him to turn. He was delivered as by the power of enchantment; for he forgot them, and the image of her whom he loved, kept his enemies at a distance, and seemed placed between them and him, like a celestial buckler.

That repose of spirit and calmness of feeling, which were

so necessary to the reestablishment of the young patient, were therefore hereafter no more than very slightly and very rarely troubled by the secret agitations of her physician. Like the hero of the fable, Consuelo had descended into Tartarus to draw thence her friend, and she had brought out horror and frenzy. In his turn, he applied himself to deliver her from the inauspicious guests who had followed her, and he succeeded by means of delicate attentions and passionate respect. They began a new life together, resting on each other, not daring to look back, and not feeling courage to replunge in thought into the abyss they had passed through. The future was a new abyss, not less mysterious and terrible, which they dared no more to question. But they sweetly enjoyed the present, like a season of grace which was granted them by Heaven.

## CHAPTER L.

THE other inhabitants of the chateau were by no means so tranquil. Amelia was furious, and no longer deigned even to visit the invalid. She affected not to speak to Albert, never to turn her eyes towards him, and never to answer his morning and evening salutation. And the most horrible of all was, that Albert did not seem to pay the least attention to her vexation.

The canoness, seeing the very evident, and, so to speak, declared passion of her nephew for the *adventuress*, had not a moment's peace. She racked her brains to find some means of putting a stop to the danger of this scandal; and for this purpose she had long conferences with the chaplain. But the latter did not very earnestly desire the termination of such a state of things. He had been for a long while useless and unnoticed amidst the cares of the family. His post recovered a kind of importance since these new agitations, and he could at least enjoy the pleasure of spying, revealing, warning, predicting, consulting, in a word, of moving the domestic interests at his will, while he had the air of not interfering, and could hide himself from the indignation of the young count behind the old aunt's petticoats. Between them both they found continually new subjects of alarm, new motives for precaution, but no means of safety. Every day the good Wenceslawa approached her nephew with a decisive explanation on the tip of her tongue, and every day, a mocking smile or a freezing look made the words miscarry. Every instant she watched the opportunity of slipping secretly into Consuelo's chamber, in order to address to her a skilful and firm reprimand; every instant Albert, as if warned by a familiar spirit, came to place himself upon the threshold of the chamber, and by a single frown of his brow, like the Olympian Jupiter, he disarmed the



anger, and froze the courage of the divinities hostile to his dear Ilion. Still the canoness had several times engaged the invalid in conversation; and as the moments when she could see her tête-a-tête were very rare, she had profited by those occasions to address to her some quite absurd reflections, which she thought very significant. But Consuelo was so far removed from the ambition attributed to her, that she understood nothing of it. Her astonishment, her air of candor and of confidence, immediately disarmed the good canoness, who, in all her life, never could resist an accent of frankness or a cordial caress. She went, quite confused, to confess her defeat to the chaplain, and the rest of the day was passed in making arrangements for the morrow.

Still, Albert, divining this management very clearly, and seeing that Consuelo began to be astonished and uneasy, undertook to put a stop to it. One day he watched Wenceslawa as she passed; and while she thought to elude him by surprising Consuelo alone, very early in the morning, he suddenly showed himself at the moment when she was putting her hand to the key in order to enter the invalid's chamber.

"My good aunt," said he, seizing that hand and carrying it to his lips, "I must whisper to you something in which you are very much interested. It is that the life and health of the person who reposes within, are more precious to me than my own life and my own happiness. I know very well that your confessor has made it a point of conscience with you to thwart my devotedness for her, and to destroy the effect of my cares. Without that your noble heart would never have conceived the idea of compromising, by bitter words and unjust reproaches, the reestablishment of an invalid hardly out of danger. But since the fanaticism or bitterness of a priest can perform such prodigies as to transform the most sincere piety and the purest charity into blind cruelty, I shall oppose with all my power the crime of which my poor aunt consents to be made the instrument. I shall watch over my patient night and day, and will no longer leave her for a moment; and if, notwithstanding my zeal, you succeed in carrying her away from me,

I swear by all that is most fearful to human belief, that I will leave the house of my fathers never to return. I think that when you have communicated my determination to the chaplain, he will cease tormenting you, and combating the generous instincts of your maternal heart."

The astonished canonesse could answer this discourse only by bursting into tears. Albert had drawn her to the extremity of the gallery, in order that this explanation might not be heard by Consuelo. She complained bitterly of the tone of revolt and menace which her nephew assumed towards her, and wished to profit by the opportunity to demonstrate to him the madness of his attachment for a person of so low an extraction as Nina.

"My dear aunt," replied Albert, smiling, "you forget that if we are descended from the royal blood of the Podiebrads, our ancestors, the monarchs, were such only by the grace of revolted peasants and warlike adventurers. A Podiebrad should therefore never think of his glorious origin, except as an additional motive to attach him to the weak and the poor, since it is there that his power and strength have planted their roots so recently that he cannot have forgotten it."

When Wenceslawa informed the chaplain of this stormy conference, he was of opinion that it was best not to press the point with the young count, and drive him to rebellion by tormenting his protégée. "It is to count Christian himself that you must address your representations," said he. "Your excessive tenderness has too much emboldened the son; let the wisdom of your remonstrances at last awaken the anxieties of the father, in order that he may take decisive measures respecting *this dangerous person*."

"Do you believe," returned the canonesse, "that I have not already bethought me of this means? But alas! my brother grew fifteen years older during the fifteen days of Albert's last disappearance. His mind has so decayed, that it is no longer possible to make him understand a hint. He seems to oppose a kind of blind and mute resistance to the idea of any new trouble; he is as pleased as a child at recovering his son,

and at hearing him reason like an apparently sensible man. He thinks him radically cured, and does not perceive that poor Albert is the victim of a new kind of madness more fatal than the other. My brother's security in this respect is so deep, and he enjoys it so sincerely, that I have not yet been able to find courage to destroy it, by completely opening his eyes to what is passing. It seems to me that this opening, coming from you, would be listened to with more resignation, and if accompanied by your religious exhortations, would be more efficacious and less painful."

"Such an opening is too delicate," replied the chaplain, "to be undertaken by a poor priest like me. In the mouth of a sister it will be much better placed, and your ladyship will know how to soften its bitterness by expressions of tenderness which I could not permit myself to use familiarly to the august head of the family."

These two grave personages lost several days in shifting from one to the other the duty of belling the cat; and during these irresolutions, in which the slowness and apathy of their habits certainly played their part, love made rapid progress in Albert's heart. Consuelo's health was visibly reëstablished, and nothing came to trouble the sweetness of an intimacy which the watchfulness of a most severe Argus could not have rendered more chaste or more reserved, than it was from the sole fact of a true modesty and a profound love.

Still the baroness Amelia, no longer able to endure the humiliation of her position, earnestly requested her father to carry her back to Prague. Baron Frederick, who much preferred life in the forest to that in a city, promised her all she wished, and put off from each day to the next the notification and preparations of departure. The young girl saw that it was necessary to hurry matters, and conceived an unexpected expedient. She arranged with her maid, an acute and decided young Frenchwoman, and one morning when her father was going to the hunt, she asked him to accompany her in the carriage to the chateau of a lady of their acquaintance, to whom she had for a long while owed a visit. The

baron was rather disinclined to quit his gun and his game bag, to change his dress and the employment of his day. But he flattered himself that this act of condescension would make Amelia less exacting; that the distraction of the jaunt would carry off her ill humor, and help her to pass some days more at Giants' castle without fretting. When the honest man had a week before him, he thought he had assured the independence of his whole life; his foresight extended no further. He therefore resigned himself to send Saphyr and Pantheré back to the kennel; and Attila, the falcon, returned to his perch with a mutinous and dissatisfied air, which drew a heavy sigh from his master.

At last the baron entered the carriage with his daughter, and when the wheels had made three turns he was fast asleep, according to his custom in such circumstances. Immediately the coachman received orders from Amelia to turn his horses' heads, and direct his course to the nearest post-station. They reached it after two hours of rapid travelling; and when the baron opened his eyes, he saw the post horses tackled to his carriage, all ready to convey him on the road to Prague.

"Why! what is this? where are we? where are we going? Amelia, my dear child, how heedless you are! What means this caprice or this pleasantry?"

To all her father's questions the young baroness only answered by shouts of laughter and childish caresses. At last, when she saw the postilion on horseback, and the wheels rolling slowly over the sand of the main road, she assumed a serious air, and in a very decided tone spoke thus: "Dear papa, do not be anxious about anything. All our packages are very well made. The boxes of the carriage are filled with the articles necessary for our journey. Nothing has been left at Giants' castle except your arms, and your animals, for which you have no use at Prague, and which moreover will be sent to you as soon as you ask for them. A letter will be given to my uncle Christian at breakfast time. It is so written as to make him understand the

necessity of our departure, without affecting him too much, and without making him angry with you or with me. Now I humbly ask your pardon for having deceived you; but it is almost a month since you consented to what I execute at this instant. I therefore do not oppose your will in returning to Prague, at a moment when you did not precisely think of it, but when you are enchanted, I am sure, at being relieved from all the troubles which the resolution and preparations for a removal necessarily bring with them. My position became intolerable, and you did not perceive it. Please to kiss me, and do not look at me with those angry eyes which terrify me."

While thus speaking, Amelia, as well as her attendant, smothered a strong desire to laugh; for the baron had never had an angry look for any one, much less for his dear daughter. He was at the moment rolling his great eyes quite wildly, and they were, it must be confessed, somewhat stupefied with surprise. If he experienced any repugnance at being fooled in such a manner, and a real sorrow at quitting his brother and sister so abruptly, without bidding them farewell, he was so astonished by what had happened to him, that his dissatisfaction was changed into admiration, and he could only say:

"But how did you manage to arrange everything without my having the least suspicion? Pardieu! I was far from believing, when I took off my boots and sent my horse back to the stable, that I was going to Prague, and that I should not dine with my brother this evening! Certainly this is a singular adventure, and nobody will believe me when I relate it. But where have you put my travelling cap, Amelia, and how do you expect me to sleep in the carriage with this laced hat on my head?"

"Your cap! here it is, dear father," said the young wag, handing him his furred cap, which he drew over his ears with childlike satisfaction.

"But my travelling bottle? you have certainly forgotten that, naughty little girl."

"Oh, certainly not," cried she, presenting to him a large flask of crystal, covered with Russian leather and ornamented with silver; "I filled it myself with the best Hungarian wine there is in aunt's cellar. Taste it, it is the kind you like best."

"And my pipe? and my bag of Turkish tobacco?"

"Nothing is wanting," said the maid, "my lord baron will find all in the pockets of the coach; we have forgotten nothing, neglected nothing to render the journey agreeable to him."

"Well and good!" said the baron, filling his pipe; "you have none the less committed a great wickedness, my dear Amelia. You make your father ridiculous, and give everybody an opportunity to laugh at me."

"Dear papa," replied Amelia, "I was very ridiculous in the eyes of the world, when I appeared to persist in marrying an amiable cousin who did not deign to look at me, and who paid assiduous court to my music mistress, before my very eyes. I have endured this humiliation long enough, and I doubt if there are many girls of my rank, my appearance and my age, who would not have taken a more serious spite at it. What I know very well is, that there are some girls, who are less bored than I have been during the last eighteen months, and who, to put an end to it, run away, or get themselves carried off. As for me, I am contented to run away with, and carry off my father. That is more novel and more becoming; what does my dear papa think of it?"

"The devil's in you!" replied the baron, kissing his daughter; and he made the rest of the journey very gaily, drinking, smoking and sleeping by turns, without complaining or being astonished any more.

This occurrence did not produce so much effect on the family as Amelia had flattered herself it would. To begin with count Albert, he might have passed a week without noticing it; and when the canoness announced it to him, he contented himself with saying:—"This is the only spirited thing which the spirited Amelia has done since she entered

the chateau. As to my good uncle, I hope he will return to us before long."

"As for me, I regret my brother," said old Christian, "because at my age we count by weeks and by days. That which does not appear long to you, Albert, may be an eternity for me, and I am not so sure of again seeing my peaceful and easy Frederick. Well! Amelia would have it so," added he, folding and throwing aside with a smile, the singularly cajoling and malicious letter which the young baroness had left for him: "woman's spite never pardons. You were not born for each other, my children, and my sweet dreams have flown!"

While speaking thus, the old count looked at his son with a kind of melancholy cheerfulness, as if to discover some traces of regret in his eyes. But he found none in Albert, who, tenderly pressing his hand, gave him to understand that he thanked him for renouncing a project so contrary to his inclination.

"May God's will be done!" resumed the old man, "and may your heart be free, my son! You are well, you now appear calm and happy among us. I shall die consoled, and the remembrance of your father will be a source of happiness to you after our separation."

"Do not speak of separation, my dear father!" cried the young count, whose eyes suddenly filled with tears. "I have not strength to support the idea."

The canoness, who began to be affected, was spurred on at this instant by a look from the chaplain, who rose and left the saloon with an affected discretion. This was giving her the order and the signal. She thought, not without sorrow and fear, that the moment had come to speak; and closing her eyes, like a person who throws himself from the window to escape a conflagration, she began, hesitating and more pale than usual:

"Certainly Albert tenderly loves his father, and would not wish to cause him a mortal displeasure."

Albert raised his head and looked at his aunt with such

clear penetrating eyes, that she was put out of countenance, and could say no more. The old count appeared not to have heard this strange observation, and in the silence which succeeded, poor Wenceslawa remained trembling under the look of her nephew, like the partridge under the gaze of the dog, which fascinates and enchains her.

But count Christian, awakening from his revery after some seconds, replied to his sister as if she had continued to speak, and as if he could read in her mind the revelations she wished to make to him.

"Dear sister," said he, "if I have any advice to give you, it is not to torment yourself about things of which you can know nothing. You never knew in your life what an inclination of the heart was, and the austerity of a canoness is no rule to be applied to a young man."

"Living God!" murmured the confused canoness, "either my brother does not wish to understand me, or his reason and his piety have abandoned him. Is it possible that he can wish to encourage by his weakness, or to treat lightly—"

"What, my aunt?" asked Albert with a firm tone and a severe countenance. "Speak, since you are condemned to do so. Explain your thought clearly. It is time that this constraint should be brought to an end, and that we should understand each other."

"No, my sister, do not speak," replied count Christian; "you have nothing new to tell me. For a long while I have comprehended you perfectly, without appearing to do so. The moment has not come for an explanation upon this subject. When it is time, I shall know what to do." He immediately affected to speak of something else, and left the canoness dismayed, and Albert uncertain and troubled.

When the chaplain knew in what manner the head of the family had received the indirect communication he had caused to be given him, he was seized with fear. Count Christian, under an air of indolence and irresolution, had never been a weak man. Sometimes they had seen him awaken from a sort of slumber by acts of wisdom and energy. The priest



feared lest he had gone too far, and would be reprimanded. He accordingly applied himself to destroy his own work as soon as possible, and to persuade the canonesse to interfere no longer. A fortnight passed in the most peaceful manner, without anything occurring to make Consuelo imagine she had been a source of trouble in the family. Albert continued his assiduous attentions towards her, and informed her of Amelia's departure as a temporary absence, the motive of which he did not allow her to suspect. She began to leave her chamber; and the first time she walked in the garden, old Christian supported the tottering steps of the convalescent with his feeble and trembling arm.

## CHAPTER LI.

THAT was indeed a beautiful day for Albert, on which he saw his Consuelo, fully restored, supported by his father's arm, extend her hand to him in presence of his family, and say with an ineffable smile: "This is he who has saved me, who has nursed me as if I were his sister."

But that day, which was the apogee of his happiness, changed his relations with Consuelo very suddenly, and more completely than he could have foreseen. Thenceforth associated in the occupations and restored to the customs of the family, she was very rarely alone with him. The old count, who appeared to take a more vivid interest in her than before her illness, surrounded her with his attentions, and with a kind of paternal gallantry by which she felt deeply touched. The canoness no longer said anything, but considered it none the less a duty to watch over all Consuelo's steps, and to make a third in all her conversations with Albert. Finally, as the latter exhibited no further signs of mental alienation, his family gave themselves up to the pleasure of receiving and even inviting their long neglected friends and relatives. They manifested a kind of simple and tender ostentation in showing them how sociable and polite the young count of Rudolstadt had become; and as Consuelo appeared to exact from him, by her looks and her example, that he should fulfil the wishes of his parents, he was obliged to resume the manners of a man of the world and a hospitable chatelain.

This rapid transformation cost him dear. He resigned himself to it, to obey her whom he loved. But he could have wished to be rewarded by longer interviews and a more complete intimacy. He patiently endured days of constraint and ennui to obtain from her in the evening, a word of approbation and of thanks. But when the canoness came, like an

unwelcome spectre, to place herself between them, and to snatch from him this pure delight, he felt his soul become embittered, and his strength abandon him. He passed cruel nights, and often approached the cistern, which had not ceased to be full and limpid since the day he had reascended, bearing Consuelo in his arms. Plunged in a gloomy revery, he almost cursed the oath he had taken not to return to his hermitage. He was terrified at finding himself unhappy, and at not being able to bury the secret of his sorrow in the bosom of the earth. The alteration in his features after these sleepless nights, the temporary, but more and more frequent returns of his gloomy and distracted air, could not fail to strike his parents and his friend. But the latter had found the method of dissipating these clouds, and of recovering her empire every time she was threatened with the loss of it. She began to sing, and immediately the young count, charmed or subdued, was relieved by tears, or animated by a higher enthusiasm. This remedy was infallible, and when he could speak a few words to her in private: "Consuelo," cried he, "you know the secret of my soul. You possess a power denied to common minds, and you possess it more than any other person living in this world. You speak the divine language, you know how to express the most divine sentiments, and to communicate the powerful emotions of your inspired soul. Sing, therefore, whenever you see me failing. The words which you use in your songs have little meaning for me; they are only an abridged theme, an incomplete indication, upon which the musical thought is exercised and developed. I hardly listen to them; that which I hear, that which penetrates to the bottom of my heart, is your voice, your accent, your inspiration. Music says everything which the soul feels and foretells, of most mysterious and most elevated. It is the manifestation of an order of ideas and sentiments superior to what human speech can express. It is the revelation of the infinite; and when you sing, I belong to Humanity, only because Humanity has received what is divine and eternal from the bosom of the Creator. All the consolation and


encouragement which your mouth refuses me in the ordinary course of life, all that which social tyranny forbids your heart to reveal to me, your song conveys to me a hundred-fold. Then you communicate to me your whole being, and my soul possesses you in joy and in sorrow, in faith and in fear, in the transport of enthusiasm and in the languor of revery."

Sometimes Albert said these things in Spanish in the presence of the family, but the evident displeasure which this kind of *aside* gave the canonesse, and the feeling of propriety, prevented the young girl from replying. At last, one day she was alone with him in the garden, and as he was again speaking of the happiness he experienced on hearing her sing;—"Since music is a more complete and persuasive language than words," said she, "why do you never speak it with me, when you know it, perhaps, even better than I do?"

"What do you mean, Consuelo?" cried the young count, struck with surprise. "I am a musician only when listening to you."

"Do not try to deceive me," returned she; "I never heard a divinely human voice drawn from a violin but once in my life, and that was by you, Albert: it was in the grotto of the Schreckenstein. I heard you on that day, before you saw me. I discovered your secret; you must forgive me, and let me again hear that admirable chant, some passages of which I have retained, and which revealed to me unknown beauties in music." Consuelo tried, in an under tone, those passages which she confusedly remembered, and which Albert recognized immediately.

"It is a popular canticle to Hussite words," said he to her. "The verses are by my ancestor Hyncko Podiebrad, son of king George, and one of the poets of the Fatherland. We have quantities of admirable poetry by Streye, by Simon Lomnicky and by many others, which have been put upon the index by the imperial police. Those religious and national chants, set to music by unknown geniuses of Bohemia, are not all preserved in the memory of the Bohemians. The people have retained some, and Zdenko, who is endowed with extra-



ordinary memory and musical sentiment, knows by tradition a large number which I have collected and noted. They are very beautiful, and you will have great pleasure in knowing them. But I can let you hear them only in my hermitage. My violin is there, and all my music. I have some very precious manuscript collections of the old catholic and protestant authors. I wager that you do not know either Josquin, several of whose themes Luther has transmitted to us in his choral pieces, nor Claude the younger, nor Arcadelt, nor George Rhaw, nor Benoît Ducis, nor Jean de Weiss. Will not this curious examination induce you, dear Consuelo, again to come and see my grotto, from which I have been exiled so long, and to visit my church, which you do not yet know?"

This proposition, though it excited the curiosity of the young artist, was listened to with trembling. That horrible grotto recalled remembrances which she could not retrace without shuddering, and the idea of returning there alone with Albert, notwithstanding all the confidence she had acquired in him, caused her a painful emotion, which he very quickly perceived.

"You have a repugnance for that pilgrimage, which you nevertheless did promise me to renew; let us speak no more of it," said he. "Faithful to my oath, I will not make it without you."

"You remind me of mine, Albert," returned she; "and I will keep it as soon as you desire. But, my dear doctor, you must reflect that I have not yet sufficient strength. Could you not, therefore, allow me first to see that curious music and hear that admirable artist, who plays the violin better than I sing?"

"I know not if you are jesting, dear sister; but I do know very well, that you will not hear me elsewhere than in my grotto. It was there I first tried to draw expression, in unison with my heart, from that instrument, of the power of which I was ignorant, after having for many years had a brilliant and frivolous teacher at great expense to my father. It

was there I first understood what music was, and what a sacrilegious mockery a large portion of mankind have substituted for it. As to myself, I confess that it would be impossible for me to draw a sound from my violin, if I were not prostrate in spirit before the Divinity. Even if I saw you cold at my side, attentive only to the form of the pieces which I played, curious to examine the greater or less degree of talent I may possess, I should play so badly, that I doubt if you could listen to me. I have never, since I have been able to use it, touched that instrument, consecrated for me to the praise of the Lord, or to the cry of my ardent prayer, without feeling myself transported into the ideal world, and without obeying the breath of a kind of mysterious inspiration which I cannot recall at my will, and which leaves me without my possessing any means of controlling or fixing it. Ask of me the most simple passage when I am unimpassioned, and notwithstanding the desire I may have to please you, my memory will betray me, and my fingers will become as uncertain as those of a child who is trying his first notes."

"I am not unworthy," replied Consuelo, attentive and impressed, "to comprehend your manner of regarding music. I hope I may be able to unite in your prayer with a soul sufficiently collected and sufficiently fervent, not to chill your inspiration. Ah! why cannot my master Porpora hear what you say respecting the sacred art, my dear Albert? he would embrace your knees. And yet that great artist himself does not carry his severity to the extent that you do, and he thinks that the singer and virtuoso must draw the breath which animates them from the sympathy and admiration of their audience."

"Perhaps the reason is, that Porpora, whatever he may say, confounds in music the religious sentiment with the human thought; it is thus also perhaps that he, as a catholic, understands sacred music; from his point of view I should reason in the same manner. If I were in communion of faith and sympathy with people professing a worship that was also mine, I should find, in the contact of those souls ani-

mated by the same religious sentiment as myself, an inspiration which I have hitherto been obliged to seek in solitude, and which, consequently, I have only imperfectly found. If I ever have the happiness, in a prayer according to my heart, to unite your divine voice, Consuelo, with the accents of my violin, without doubt I shall raise myself higher than I have ever done, and my prayer will be more worthy of the Divinity. But do not forget, dear child, that hitherto my belief has been abominable to all the beings who surround me; those who might not have been shocked at it, would have made it a subject of mockery. This is why I have concealed, as a secret between God, poor Zdenko and myself, the feeble gift which I possess. My father loves music, and would wish that this instrument, sacred to me as the citherns of the mysteries of Eleusis, should serve for his amusement. What would become of me, great God! if I were obliged to accompany Amelia in a cavatina, and what would become of my father, if I should play to him one of those old Hussite airs, which have carried so many Bohemians to the mines, or the gallows; or a more modern canticle of our Lutheran fathers, from whom he blushes to have descended? Alas! Consuelo, I know nothing more modern. There are no doubt many admirable things. What you display to me of Hændel and other great masters by whom you have been nourished, seems to me superior, in many respects, to what I can teach you in return. But to know and to learn this music, I should have been obliged to put myself in relation with a new musical world; and it is with you alone that I can resolve to enter it, to search for the treasures, long unknown or despised, which you will pour upon me from your full hands."

"I do not think I shall undertake that education," replied Consuelo with a smile. "What I heard in the grotto was so beautiful, so grand, so unique in its kind, that I should fear to introduce gravel into a fountain of crystal and diamonds. O Albert! I see very well that you know much more than I do about music. But will you not now say something about that profane music which I am compelled to make my pro-

fession? I am afraid I shall discover, that, in this as in the other, I have hitherto been beneath my mission, by entering upon it with the same ignorance and levity."

"Far from believing this, Consuelo, I look upon the part you have to perform as sacred; and as your profession is the most sublime that a woman can embrace, your soul is the most worthy to fill the priesthood."

"Wait, wait, dear count," returned Consuelo, smiling. "From what I have often told you of the convent in which I learned music, and of the church in which I have sung the praises of the Lord, you conclude that I was destined to the service of the altar, or to the modest teachings of the cloister. But if I tell you, that the Zingarella, faithful to her origin, was dedicated to chance from her childhood, and that all her education was a mixture of religious and profane works, into which her will entered with an equal ardor, not caring if it ended in the nunnery or on the stage—"

"Certain that God has set his seal upon your forehead, and that he dedicated you to holiness from the bosom of your mother, I should trouble myself very little on your account for the chance of human events, and should retain the conviction that you must be holy on the stage as well as in the cloister."

"What! would not the austerity of your thoughts be terrified at the contact of an actress?"

"In the dawn of religions," replied he, "the theatre and the temple are one and the same sanctuary. In the purity of original ideas, the ceremonies of worship are a representation for the people; the arts have their birth at the foot of the altars; the dance itself, that art now consecrated to ideas of impure voluptuousness, is the music of the senses in the festivals of the gods. Music and poetry are the highest expressions of faith, and woman endowed with genius and beauty is priestess, sibyl and initiator. To these severe and grand forms of the past, absurd and culpable distinctions have succeeded; the Roman religion has expelled beauty from its festivals and woman from its solemnities; instead of directing



and ennobling love, it has banished and condemned it. Beauty, woman, and love, could not lose their empire. Men have raised to them other temples which they have called theatres, wherein no other god has come to preside. Is it your fault, Consuelo, if those theatres have become sinks of corruption? Nature, who performs her prodigies, without caring for the reception that her master-pieces may meet with among men, has formed you to shine among all women, and to spread abroad through the earth the treasures of power and of genius. The cloister and the tomb are synonymous. You could not, without committing suicide, bury the gifts of Providence. You were obliged to take your flight in a freer atmosphere. Manifestation is the condition of certain existences; the voice of nature impels them to it irresistibly; and the will of God in this respect is so positive, that he withdraws the faculties with which he has endowed them, as soon as they mistake their use. The artist perishes and is extinguished in obscurity, as the thinker wanders and is exasperated in absolute solitude; as every human spirit deteriorates and is destroyed in isolation and confinement. Go therefore upon the stage, Consuelo, if you will, and encounter its apparent disgrace with the resignation of a pious soul, destined to suffer, to search in vain for its home in this world, but compelled to fly the darkness which is not the element of its life, and out of which the breath of the Holy Spirit imperiously expels it."

Albert spoke thus a long while, with animation, walking rapidly with Consuelo through the shadowy paths of the warren. He had no difficulty in communicating to her the enthusiasm he experienced for the sentiment of art, and in making her forget the repugnance she had at first felt at returning to the grotto. Seeing that he desired it earnestly, she herself began to wish to be alone with him long enough to understand the ideas which this ardent and timid man did not dare to utter except before her. Those ideas were very new to Consuelo, and perhaps they were entirely so, in the mouth of a patrician of that age and country. Still they struck the young artist only as a frank and bold expression of the feelings which

burned within her. Devout and an actress, she every day heard the canoness and chaplain damn without mercy the actors and artists, her fellows. On seeing herself reinstated, as she believed she ought to be, by a serious and earnest man, she felt her chest enlarge, and her heart beat therein more freely, as if he had introduced her into the true region of her life. Her eyes were moistened with tears, and her cheeks glowed with a bright and holy radiance, when she perceived at the extremity of an alley, the canoness who was searching for her. "Ah my priestess!" said Albert to her, pressing against his breast the arm locked in his, "you will come and pray in my church?"

"Yes!" replied she, "I will certainly."

"And when?"

"When you please. Do you think me strong enough to undertake this new exploit?"

"Yes: for we will go to the Schreckenstein in broad daylight, and by a road less dangerous than the cistern. Do you feel courage enough to rise to-morrow before dawn, and to pass the gates as soon as they are opened? I will be in those thickets, which you see here on the side of the hill, there where you perceive the stone cross, and I will serve you as a guide."

"Well, I promise you," replied Consuelo, not without a last beating of the heart.

"It is very fresh this evening for so long a walk," said the canoness, approaching them.

Albert did not answer; he knew not how to feign. Consuelo, who was not agitated by the kind of emotion she experienced, boldly passed her other arm through that of the canoness, and gave her a great kiss on the shoulder. Wenceslawa wished indeed to seem distant to her, but in spite of herself, she yielded to the ascendancy of that true and affectionate soul. She sighed, and on entering the house, went to say a prayer for her conversion.

## CHAPTER LII.

STILL many days passed without its being possible to fulfil Albert's desire. Consuelo was so closely watched by the canonesse, that in vain did she rise with the dawn and pass the drawbridge the first; she always found the aunt or the chaplain wandering under the horn-beam hedge of the esplanade, and thence observing all the open ground which must be passed in order to gain the thickets on the hill. She made up her mind to walk alone within range of their observation and to renounce the project of joining Albert, who, from his shady retreat, saw the enemy's videttes, made a long circuit in the thick wood, and entered the chateau without being noticed.

"You were out walking very early this morning, signora Porporina," said the canonesse at breakfast; "are you not afraid lest the dampness of the dawn may injure you?"

"It was I, aunt," returned the young count, "who advised the signora to breathe the fresh morning air, and I don't doubt these walks will be very beneficial to her."

"I should have thought that a person devoted to vocal music," replied the canonesse with a little affectation, "ought not to expose herself to our misty mornings, but if it is according to your prescription—"

"Do have confidence in Albert's decisions," said count Christian; "he has certainly proved himself a good physician, as well as a good son and a good friend."

The dissimulation to which Consuelo was obliged to submit with blushes, was very painful to her. She gently complained to Albert, when she could speak with him in private, and besought him to renounce his project, at least until his aunt's vigilance should be relaxed. He obeyed, but requested her to continue her morning walks in the environs of the park, so

that he could join her whenever a favorable opportunity presented itself.

Consuelo would gladly have been excused. Although she liked walking, and felt the necessity of exercising herself in that manner a little every day, outside of that enclosure of walls and trenches, within which her thought was as if stifled by the feeling of captivity, she suffered at deceiving people whom she respected, and whose hospitality she was receiving. A little love removes many scruples; but friendship reflects, and Consuelo reflected much. They were then in the last fine days of summer, for many months had already passed since Consuelo arrived at Giant's castle. What a summer for Consuelo! The palest autumn of Italy had more light and heat. But that lukewarm air, that sky often veiled by thin, white and fleecy clouds, had also their charm and their kind of beauty. She found an attraction in her solitary walks, which perhaps also increased the little inclination she had to revisit the grotto. Notwithstanding her resolution, she felt that Albert would have taken a heavy load from her breast, by giving back her promise; and when she was no longer under the empire of his suppliant look, and his enthusiastic words, she secretly blessed the good aunt, for preventing her from fulfilling that engagement by the obstacles she every day interposed.

One morning, from the banks of the torrent where she was wandering, she saw Albert leaning on the balustrade of his garden, far above her. Notwithstanding the distance which separated them, she felt herself almost continually under the anxious and impassioned eye of that man, beneath whose dominion she had allowed herself in some degree to be brought.

"My situation is very strange," said she to herself; "while this persevering friend observes me, to see if I am faithful to the devotion I have sworn to him, I am doubtless watched from some other point of the chateau, to prevent my having with him any relations which their customs and ideas of propriety forbid. I do not know what is passing in the minds of any of them. The baroness Amelia does not return. The canoness seems to mistrust me, and to grow cold towards me.

Count Christian redoubles his friendship, and pretends to fear Porpora's return, which will probably be the signal for my departure. Albert appears to have forgotten that I forbade him to hope for my love. As if he expected everything from me, he asks nothing for the future, and does not abjure the passion which seems to render him happy, spite of my inability to share it. Still here I am, like a declared lover, waiting every morning at his rendezvous, exposing myself to the blame, perhaps to the contempt of a family who can comprehend neither my devotedness nor my position towards him, since I do not understand them myself, nor foresee their result. What a strange destiny is mine; must I be always condemned to devote myself, without being loved by those whom I love, or without loving those whom I esteem?"

In the midst of these reflections, a profound melancholy seized upon her soul. She experienced the necessity of belonging to herself, that sovereign and legitimate necessity, the true condition of progress and development in every superior genius. The solicitude which she had vowed to count Albert, weighed upon her like a chain. The bitter recollection she had preserved of Anzoleto and of Venice, fastened itself upon her, in the inaction and the solitude of a life too monotonous and too regular for her powerful organization.

She stopped near the rock, which Albert had often pointed out to her, as being that, where, by a strange fatality, he had seen her for the first time, a child, strapped to her mother's shoulders like the pack of a pedlar, and running over hill and valley, singing like the grasshopper of the fable, without care for the morrow, without fear of threatening old age and inexorable misery. "O my poor mother!" thought the young Zingarella; "here I am, brought back, by an incomprehensible destiny, to the places which you traversed, to retain of them only a vague remembrance, and the token of a touching hospitality. You were young and handsome, and doubtless you found many a resting place, where love would have received you, where society could have forgiven and transformed you, where, in fine, your hard and wandering life might have

been fixed and abjured in the bosom of comfort and repose. But you felt, and you always said, that comfort was constraint, and repose ennui, fatal to the soul of an artist. You were right, I feel it sensibly; for here I am in this chateau, where as in all others, you did not wish to pass more than a night; here I am, sheltered from want and fatigue, well treated, well cared for, with a rich nobleman at my feet—and yet constraint stifles me, and ennui consumes me.”

Consuelo, overpowered by an extraordinary emotion, had seated herself upon the rock. She looked upon the sandy path, as if she thought to find there the print of her mother's naked feet. The sheep, in passing, had left upon the thorns some locks of their fleece; this wool, of a reddish brown, recalled to Consuelo, precisely the natural color of the coarse cloth, of which her mother's cloak was made; that cloak which had so long protected her from the cold and the sun, from the dust and the rain. She had seen it fall from their shoulders, piece by piece. “And we also,” said she to herself, “were poor wandering sheep, and we left the shreds of our covering upon the brambles of the roads; but we carried always with us, the proud love and the full enjoyment of our dear liberty.”

While dreaming thus, Consuelo looked along that path of yellow sand, which wound gracefully upon the hill, and which, enlarging at the bottom of the valley, ran towards the north, tracing a great sinuous line among the green firs, and the black heath. “What is there more beautiful than a road?” thought she; “it is the symbol and the image of an active and varied life. What smiling ideas are attached in my mind to the capricious windings of this. I have no recollection of the places through which it passes, and which, nevertheless, I have already traversed. But they must be beautiful, compared with that black fortress, which sleeps there eternally, on its immovable rocks! How much more pleasant to the eye are those gentle streaks of pale gold-colored gravel, and those bright shining furzes, the shadows of which cross it, than the straight alleys and stiff hedges of a proud and cold park? I am seized with lassitude, on simply looking at the great dry

lines of a garden. Why should my feet seek to reach that, which my eyes and my thought can at once embrace? while the free road, which flies and half hides itself in the woods, invites and calls me to follow its windings, to penetrate its mysteries. And then that road is the passage of Humanity, the route of the universe. It does not belong to a master, who can close or open it at his will. It is not the powerful and the rich alone, who have the right to tread its flowery borders, and inhale its wild perfumes. Every bird can build her nest in its branches, every vagabond can rest his head upon its stones. No wall, no palisade, closes the horizon before him. The sky does not end before him; and so far as the sight can reach, the road is a land of liberty. On the right, on the left, the fields, the woods belong to masters: the road belongs to him who owns nothing else; therefore how does he love it! The coarsest beggar has an invincible love for it. Though hospitals, rich as palaces, may be built for him, they will always be prisons; his poetry, his dream, his passion, will always be the public road! O my mother! my mother! you knew it well; you have often told me! Why can I not reanimate your ashes, which sleep so far from me beneath the sea-weed of the lagunes! Why can you not again take me on your strong shoulders, and carry me away, down there, down there, where the swallows fly towards the blue hills, where the remembrance of the past, and the regret of lost happiness cannot follow the artist with light feet, who travels more quickly than they, and places every day a new horizon, a new world, between him, and the enemies of his liberty! Poor mother! why can you not again cherish and oppress me, overwhelm me by turns with kisses and with blows, like the wind, which sometimes caresses and sometimes beats down the young wheat of the plain, to raise and depress it again, at its will! Yours was a better tempered soul than mine, and you would have withdrawn me, by good will or by force, from the bonds in which I allow myself to be taken at every step."

In the midst of her absorbing and sorrowful revery, Consuelo

was struck by the sound of a voice, which made her shudder, as if a red-hot iron had been placed upon her heart. It was the voice of a man, which came from the ravine very far below her, and was humming in the Venetian dialect, the song of the *Echo*, one of the most original compositions of Chiozzeto.\* The person who sang, did not give his full voice, and his breath seemed interrupted by walking. He threw out a phrase by chance, as if he wished to divert himself from the ennui of the road, and interrupted it to speak to another person; then he resumed his song, repeating the same modulation several times, as if for exercise, and again began to talk, continually approaching the place where Consuelo, motionless and palpitating, felt herself ready to faint. She could not hear the conversation of the traveller with his companion, he was still too far from her. She could not see him, a jutting rock hindered her from looking into that part of the ravine in which he was. But could she be deceived for an instant in that voice, that accent, which she knew so well, and the fragments of that song, which she herself had taught, and heard repeated so many times by her ungrateful pupil.

At length, the two invisible travellers having come nearer to her, she heard one of them, whose voice was unknown, say to the other in bad Italian, and with the accent of the country, "Eh! eh! signor, do not go up there, the horses cannot follow you, and you will lose sight of me; follow me along the torrent. See, the road is before us, and that is only a path for foot passengers."

The voice, which Consuelo knew so well, appeared to remove and redescend, and soon she heard it ask what fine chateau that was on the other bank.

"It is *Riesenburg*, as if you should say, *il castello dei giganti*," replied the guide; for he was one by profession, and Consuelo began to see him at the bottom of the hill, on foot, leading by their bridles two horses covered with sweat. The bad state of the road, recently washed by the torrent, had compelled the cavaliers to dismount. The traveller followed at

\* Jean Croce, of Chioggia, in the sixteenth century.



some distance, and Consuelo could at last perceive him, by leaning forward over the rock which protected her. His back was towards her, and he had on a travelling dress, which changed his appearance, and even his walk. If she had not heard his voice, she would have thought it was not he. But he stopped to look at the chateau, and taking off his broad hat, he wiped his face with his handkerchief. Although she only saw him by looking down upon his head, she recognized those abundant gold-colored and curling locks, and the movement he was accustomed to make with his hand, to raise them from his forehead and neck, when hot.

"That chateau has a very respectable appearance," said he; "if I had time, I should like to go and ask a breakfast from the giants who live there."

"O! you need not try," replied the guide, shaking his head. "The Rudolstadts receive only beggars or relations."

"Not more hospitable than that? May the devil fly away with them!"

"But listen! it is because they have something to conceal."

"A treasure, or a crime?"

"O! neither; only their son is crazy."

"May the devil fly away with him, also, in that case! He would be doing them a service."

The guide began to laugh. Anzoletto resumed his singing. "Now," said the guide stopping, "we have got past the bad road; if you wish to mount your horse again, we will have a gallop to Tusta. The road is magnificent as far as there; nothing but sand. There you will find the main road to Prague, and good post horses."

"Then," said Anzoletto, adjusting his stirrups, "I can say, —the devil fly away with you too! for your sorry jades, your mountainous roads, and yourself, begin to weary me horribly."

While speaking thus, he lightly mounted his horse, buried both his spurs in its sides, and without troubling himself about his guide, who followed him with difficulty, he departed, like a flash, in a northerly direction, raising clouds of dust upon that road which Consuelo had just contemplated so long, and

where she so little expected to see pass, like a fatal vision, the enemy of her life, the eternal regret of her heart.

She followed him with her eyes in a state of stupor, impossible to express. Frozen by disgust and fear, while he had been within reach of her voice, she had remained concealed and trembling. But when she saw him recede, when she thought she was about to lose him from her sight, and that perhaps forever, she felt only the most horrible despair. She rushed upon the rock, to see him a little longer; and the indestructible love she felt for him, being awakened with frenzy, she wished to cry out after him, and recall him. But her voice died upon her lips; it seemed to her that the hand of death was clasping her throat, and tearing her chest; her eyes became veiled; a dull sound, like that of the sea, roared in her ears; and as she was falling exhausted to the bottom of the rock, she found herself in the arms of Albert, who had approached, without her perceiving him, and who carried her, swooning, into a more shaded and hidden part of the mountain.

## CHAPTER LIII.

THE fear of betraying by her emotion a secret which she had until then so well concealed in the depths of her soul, restored to Consuelo the power of restraining herself, and of letting Albert believe that the situation in which he had surprised her, was by no means extraordinary. At the moment when the young count received her in his arms, pale and ready to faint, Anzoleto and his guide had just disappeared in the distance among the firs, and Albert could attribute to himself, the danger she had run of falling over the precipice. The idea of that danger, which he had doubtless caused by terrifying her with his approach, so troubled him that he did not notice the incoherence of her answers, in the first instance. Consuelo, in whom he sometimes inspired a certain superstitious terror, at first feared lest he should divine a part of the mystery, by the power of his presentiments. But Albert, since love had made him live the life of other men, seemed to have lost those faculties, in some sort supernatural, which he had before possessed. She was soon able to master her agitation, and the proposition which he made, to conduct her to his hermitage, did not at that moment cause her the displeasure she would have felt some hours before. It seemed to her that the austere soul, and the gloomy habitation of this man so seriously devoted to her fate, opened themselves before her, like a refuge in which she could find the calmness and strength necessary to struggle against the recollections of her passion. "It is Providence, who sends this friend to me in the midst of my trials," thought she, "and that dark sanctuary, whither he wishes to draw me, is there, like an emblem of the tomb, in which I ought to bury myself, rather than follow the trace of that evil genius whom I have just seen pass. O! yes, my God! rather than

attach myself to his footsteps, wilt thou order the earth to open under me, and never again restore me to the world of the living !”

“ Dear Consuelo,” said Albert to her, “ I came to tell you that my aunt, being obliged this morning to receive and examine the accounts of her farmers, is not thinking of us, and that we have, at last, the liberty of accomplishing our pilgrimage. Nevertheless, if you still feel any repugnance at again seeing a place, which must recall to you so many sufferings and so many terrors—”

“ No, my friend, no,” replied Consuelo ; “ I feel on the contrary, that I have never been better disposed to pray in your church and to join my soul with yours, on the wings of that holy chant which you have promised to let me hear.”

They took together the road to the Schreckenstein ; and as she buried herself in the wood in a direction opposite to that which Anzoleto had taken, Consuelo felt herself solaced, as if each step she took away from him, destroyed, more and more, that fatal charm, the attack of which she had just felt. She walked so quickly and resolutely, though grave and reserved, that Albert might have attributed her child-like earnestness to the sole desire of pleasing him, had he not retained that distrust of himself and his own destiny, which formed the foundation of his character.

He conducted her to the foot of the Schreckenstein, to the entrance of a grotto filled with still water, and obstructed by an abundant vegetation. “ This grotto, in which you can remark some traces of a vaulted construction,” said he to her, “ is called in the country, the Cave of the Monk. Some think that it was the cell of a monastery, at the time when there was a fortified town in place of these ruins ; others relate that it was, afterwards, the retreat of a penitent criminal, who became a hermit, from a feeling of repentance. However this may be, no one dares to penetrate it, and all pretend that the water with which it is filled, is deep and mortally poisonous, in consequence of the veins of copper through which it has forced a passage. But this water is, in

fact, neither deep nor dangerous ; it rests upon a bed of rocks ; and we shall pass it easily, if you will once more, Consuelo, confide in the strength of my arms, and the holiness of my love for you."

While speaking thus, after having ascertained that no one had followed, or could observe them, he took her in his arms, that she might not wet her feet, and entering the water, about half leg deep, he opened a passage through the shrubs and garlands of ivy, which concealed the bottom of the grotto. After a very short distance, he deposited her upon a dry and fine sand, in a place completely dark, where he immediately lighted the lantern with which he was provided, and after some windings through subterranean galleries, quite similar to those Consuelo had before traversed with him, they found themselves at a door of the cell, opposite to that she had entered the first time.

" This subterranean construction," said Albert to her, " was originally destined to serve as a refuge in time of war, either to the principal inhabitants of the town which covered the hill, or to the lords of Giant's castle, of which this town was a fief, and who could reach it secretly, by the passage you are acquainted with. If a hermit occupied the cave of the monk afterwards, as they say, it is probable that he knew of this retreat ; for the gallery, through which we have just passed, seemed to me quite recently cleared, whilst I found those that led to the chateau, encumbered, in many places, with earth and rubbish, which cost me much labor to clear away. Besides, the vestiges which I found here, the fragments of a mat, the pitcher, the crucifix, the lamp, and finally the bones of a man, lying upon the back, the hands still crossed upon the breast, in the attitude of a last prayer at the hour of the last sleep, proved to me that a solitary had there piously and peaceably terminated his mysterious existence. Our peasants believe that the soul of the hermit still inhabits the bosom of the mountain. They say that they have frequently seen it wander about or flutter upon the summit, in the clear moonlight ; that they have heard it pray, sigh and groan, and that

a strange and incomprehensible music has sometimes come, like an almost imperceptible breath, to expire about them on the wings of night. I myself, Consuelo, when the exaltation of despair peopled nature about me with phantoms and prodigies, have thought I saw the gloomy penitent prostrate beneath the *Hussite*. I imagined I heard his plaintive voice, and his heart-rending sighs ascend from the depths of the abyss. But since I discovered and inhabited this cell, I do not remember ever to have found here any other recluse than myself, to have met any other spectre than my own figure, nor to have heard other groans than those which escaped from my own breast."

Consuelo, since her first interview with Albert in this grotto, had not again heard him utter any insane discourse. She had therefore never dared to remind him of the strange words he had said to her on that night, nor of the hallucinations, in the midst of which she had surprised him. She was astonished to see, at this instant, that he had absolutely lost the memory of them; and not daring to recall them to him, contented herself with asking him, if the tranquillity of such a solitude had completely delivered him from the agitation of which he spoke.

"I cannot tell you precisely," replied he; "and unless you require it, I do not wish to compel my memory to the task. I verily believe that I must have formerly been a prey to actual insanity. The efforts I made to conceal it, betrayed it the more from exasperation. When, thanks to Zdenko, who possessed, by tradition, the secret of these subterranean constructions, I at last found a means of withdrawing myself from the solicitude of my parents, and of concealing my fits of despair, my existence changed. I recovered a sort of control over myself; and certain of being able to hide from unwelcome witnesses, whenever I was too strongly attacked by my disease, I succeeded in playing before my family the part of a tranquil man, resigned to all things."

Consuelo saw very well that poor Albert deceived himself on some points; but she felt that this was not the moment to

disabuse him ; and congratulating herself on his speaking of his past life with so much sang froid and freedom, she began to examine the cell with more attention than she had been able to do the first time. She now saw that the kind of care and neatness which she had then remarked, no longer prevailed there, and the dampness of the walls, the coldness of the atmosphere, and the mouldiness of the books, proved on the contrary a complete abandonment. " You see that I have kept my word with you," said Albert, who with much difficulty had just succeeded in lighting a fire in the stove ; " I have not put foot here, since you tore me hence by the effect of the almighty influence you possess over me."

Consuelo had upon her lips a question, which she hastened to repress. She was on the point of asking, if the friend Zdenko, the faithful servant, the jealous guardian, had also neglected and abandoned the hermitage. But she remembered the profound sadness she had awakened in Albert, every time she had hazarded asking what had become of him, and why she had never seen him, since her terrible meeting with him in the subterranean passage. Albert had always eluded those questions, either by feigning not to hear them, or by requesting her to be tranquil, and not to fear anything, on the part of the *innocent*. She was at first persuaded, that Zdenko had received and faithfully obeyed the order never to present himself before her eyes. But when she resumed her solitary walks, Albert, to reäsure her completely, had sworn to her, with a mortal paleness on his brow, that she would not meet Zdenko, because he had departed on a long journey. In fact, no one had seen him since that time, and people thought that he had either died in some corner, or had left the country.

Consuelo had never believed, either in that death or that departure. She knew too well the passionate attachment of Zdenko, to look upon an absolute separation between him and Albert as possible. As to his death she could not think of it without a profound terror, which she did not dare confess to herself, when she remembered the terrible oath that, in his exaltation, Albert had made to sacrifice the life of that unhappy

one to the repose of her whom he loved, if it became necessary. But she repelled this frightful suspicion, when she recalled the tenderness and humanity, to which the whole of Albert's life bore witness. Moreover, he had enjoyed a perfect tranquillity for several months, and no apparent demonstration on the part of Zdenko, had again excited the fury which the young count had for an instant manifested. Besides, he had forgotten that melancholy moment, which Consuelo endeavored to forget also. He had preserved, of the events of that night, only the remembrance of those in which he had been in possession of his reason. Consuelo therefore concluded that he had forbidden to Zdenko the entrance and approach to the chateau, and that, from spite or from sorrow, the poor man had condemned himself to a voluntary captivity in the hermitage. She presumed that he perhaps came out only at night, to take the air, or to converse on the Schreckenstein with Albert, who no doubt, must at least watch over his welfare, as Zdenko had so long watched over his. On seeing the state of the cell, Consuelo was compelled to believe, that he was vexed with his master, and no longer took care of his deserted retreat; and as Albert had again affirmed to her on entering the grotto, that she would not find there any subject for fear, she seized the opportunity, when she saw him engaged in laboriously opening the rusted door of what he called his church, to go on her side, and try to open that which led to Zdenko's cell, where she would, doubtless, find recent traces of his presence. The door yielded as soon as she turned the key; but the darkness, which reigned in that cave, prevented her from seeing anything. She waited until Albert had passed into the mysterious oratory which he wished to show to her, and which he went to prepare for her reception; then she took a torch, and returned with precaution towards Zdenko's chamber, not without trembling a little at the idea of finding him there in person. But she did not find even a relic of his existence. The bed of leaves and of sheep-skins had been carried away. The rude seat, the tools, the felt sandals, all had disappeared; and from the moisture which



made the walls glisten when the light of the torch fell upon them, one would have said that vault had never sheltered the slumber of a living being.

A sentiment of sadness and of fear seized upon her at this discovery. A gloomy mystery enveloped the destiny of the unfortunate, and Consuelo said to herself with terror, that she was probably the cause of a deplorable event. There were two men in Albert; one wise, the other crazy; one kind-hearted, charitable and tender, the other strange, wild, perhaps violent and pitiless in his decisions. That kind of strange identity which he had dreamed between himself and the sanguinary fanatic, Jean Ziska, that love for the traditions of Hussite Bohemia, that mute and patient, but absolute and profound passion, which he nourished for Consuelo, every thing that, at the moment, recurred to the mind of the young girl, seemed fitted to confirm the most painful suspicions. Motionless and frozen with horror, she hardly dared to look at the bare and cold soil of the grotto, as if she feared to find there marks of blood.

She was still plunged in these gloomy reflections, when she heard Albert tune his violin; and soon the admirable tones of the instrument chanted the ancient psalm she had wished to hear a second time. The music was so original, and Albert expressed it with so pure and broad a feeling, that she forgot all her anguish, and softly approached the spot where he was, drawn and as if charmed by a magnetic power.

## CHAPTER LIV.

THE door of the *church* had remained open ; Consuelo stopped upon the threshold to examine both the inspired virtuoso and the strange sanctuary. This pretended church was no other than an immense grotto cut in the rock, or, to speak more properly, irregularly broken by the hand of nature, and in a great measure worn by the subterranean working of the waters. Some scattered torches, fixed on gigantic blocks, illumined the greenish sides of the rock with fanciful reflections, and flickered before dark recesses, in which floated the vague forms of long stalactites, like spectres who by turns sought and fled the light. The enormous deposits which the water had formerly made upon the sides of the cavern, presented a thousand capricious aspects. Sometimes they rolled like monstrous serpents which interlaced and devoured each other, sometimes they rose from the floor and descended from the roof in formidable needles, the meeting of which made them resemble colossal teeth, bristling at the yawning mouths which were formed by the black depths of the rock. Elsewhere they might have been called misshapen statues, giant images of the barbarian gods of antiquity. A vegetation appropriate to the grotto, great lichens rough as dragon's scales, festoons of scolopendrias with large and heavy leaves, groups of young cypresses recently planted in the midst of the enclosure, on artificial mounds which resembled graves, all gave a sombre, grand and terrible character to the place, which vividly struck the young artist. To the first feeling of affright soon succeeded admiration. She approached, and saw Albert standing beside the fountain which rose in the centre of the cavern. The water, though abundant in its spring, was contained in so deep a basin, that no boiling was perceptible on its surface.

It was smooth and motionless, like a block of dark sapphire, and the beautiful aquatic plants, with which Albert and Zdenko had surrounded its margin, were not agitated by the least movement. The spring was warm at its source, and the tepid exhalations which spread through the cavern preserved a soft atmosphere that favored vegetation. It left its basin by many ramifications, some of which were lost under the rocks with a dull noise, while others spread themselves silently in limpid streams through the interior of the grotto, to disappear in the obscure depths which indefinitely extended its limits.

When count Albert, who till then had only been trying the chords of his violin, saw Consuelo advancing towards him, he went to meet her, and helped her to cross the meanderings of the stream, over the deepest places of which he had thrown trunks of trees. In other parts scattered stones, above the level of the water, offered an easy passage for practised feet. He stretched out his hand to aid her, and sometimes raised her in his arms. But this time, Consuelo felt fear, not of the torrent which flowed silent and dark beneath her feet, but of her mysterious guide, towards whom she was drawn by an incomprehensible sympathy, while an indefinable repugnance at the same time repelled her from him. Arrived at the margin of the fountain, she saw upon a large stone jutting some feet into it, an object little calculated to re-assure her. It was a kind of quadrangular monument, formed of bones and human skulls, artistically arranged, as they are seen in catacombs.

“Do not be agitated,” said Albert, who felt her start. “These noble remains are those of the martyrs of my religion, and they form an altar before which I like to meditate and pray.”

“What then is your religion, Albert?” said Consuelo with melancholy simplicity. “Are those the bones of Hussites or of Catholics? Were not both the victims of an impious fury, the martyrs of an equally earnest faith? Is it true that you have chosen the Hussite belief in preference to that of your

parents, and that the reforms posterior to that of Jean Huss do not appear to you austere or energetic enough? Speak, Albert, what am I to believe, of all they tell me about you?"

"If they have told you, that I prefer the reformation of the Hussites to that of the Lutherans, and the great Procope to the vindictive Calvin, as much as I prefer the exploits of the Taborites to those of Wallenstein's soldiers, they have told you the truth, Consuelo. But what can you care for my belief, you who by intuition have a presentiment of the truth, and know the Divinity far better than I do? God forbid that I should have drawn you to this place, to fill your pure soul and trouble your peaceful conscience with the meditations and torments of my reveries! Remain as you are, Consuelo! You were born pious and holy; moreover, you were born poor and obscure, and nothing has tended to alter in you the integrity of reason and the light of equity. We can pray together without discussing; you who know all, without having learnt anything, and I who know little, after having studied much. In whatever temple you raise your voice, the notion of the true God will be in your heart, and the sentiment of the true faith will fill your soul. It is therefore, not to instruct you, but that revelation may pass from you to me, that I desired the union of our voices and our spirits before this altar, built with the bones of my fathers."

"I was not deceived then, in thinking that these noble remains, as you call them, are those of the Hussites, precipitated by the sanguinary fury of the civil wars into the cistern of the Schreckenstein, at the epoch of your ancestor Jean Ziska, who took, they say, a horrible vengeance. I have been told also, that after having burned the village, he caused the well to be filled up. It seems to me that I see, in the obscurity of the vault, a circle of cut stones, which informs me we are precisely under the spot where I have several times seated myself after being fatigued with seeking for you in vain. Say, count Albert, is that, in fact, the spot which they tell me you have baptized the stone of expiation?"

"Yes, it is here," replied Albert, "that punishments and

violent atrocities have consecrated the asylum of my prayer and of my sorrow. You see enormous blocks suspended above our heads, and others scattered upon the banks of the fountain. The strong hands of the Taborites cast them there, by order of him who was called the *redoubtable blind man*; but they only operated to throw the waters back towards those subterranean beds, in which they tended to clear themselves a passage. The construction of the well was destroyed, and I have hidden its ruins under the cypresses I planted; a whole mountain would have been required to fill up this cavern. The blocks, which were heaped up in the mouth of the cistern, were stopped there by a winding staircase, similar to that you had the courage to descend, in the well of my garden at Giant's castle. Since then the natural pressing of the earth has closed and restrained them more and more. If a piece ever falls, it is only in a severe frost of the winter nights. You therefore have nothing to fear now from the falling of these stones."

"It is not that of which I am thinking, Albert," returned Consuelo, again directing her looks towards the ghastly altar on which he had deposited his Stradivarius. "I ask myself why you render an exclusive worship to the remains of these victims, as if the crimes of the one party had been more pardonable than those of the others." Consuelo spoke this in a severe tone, and looking upon Albert with mistrust. The remembrance of Zdenko returned to her mind, and all her questions were connected in her thought with a sort of interrogatory of a high criminal court, which she would have made him undergo, if she had dared.

The sorrowful emotion which suddenly seized upon the count, seemed to her like the acknowledgment of a remorse. He passed his hands over his brow, then pressed them against his chest, as if he felt it bursting. His face changed in a frightful manner, and Consuelo feared that he had too well understood her meaning.

"You do not know the pain you have caused me!" cried he at last, supporting himself upon the pile of bones, and

bending his head towards those dried skulls, which seemed to look at him from the bottom of their hollow orbits. "No, you cannot know, Consuelo! and your cold reflections awaken in me the memory of the fatal days I have passed through. You do not know that you speak to a man, who has lived through ages of sorrow, and who, after having been in the hand of God the blind instrument of inflexible justice, has received his recompense, and undergone his punishment. I have so suffered, so wept, so expiated my savage destiny, so atoned for the horrors into which fatality had drawn me, that I at last flattered myself I could forget them. To forget, that was the necessity which consumed my burning bosom! it was my prayer and my vow at all moments! it was the sign of my alliance with men and of my reconciliation with God, which I have implored for years, prostrate upon these bones! And when I saw you for the first time, Consuelo, I began to hope. And when you had pity upon me, I began to think I was saved. Here, see this crown of flowers, withered and ready to fall into dust, with which I surrounded the skull that tops the altar. You do not recognize it; but I have bathed it with bitter and delicious tears: it was you who gathered them, it was you who sent them to me by the companion of my misery, the faithful guardian of my sepulchre. Well! I covered them with kisses and with tears; I anxiously asked myself if you could ever feel a true and deep affection for a criminal like me, for a fanatic without pity, for a tyrant without mercy."

"But what are those crimes which you have committed?" said Consuelo forcibly, divided between a thousand different feelings, and emboldened by Albert's deep dejection. "If you have a confession to make, make it here, make it now, before me, that I may know if I can absolve you and love you."

"Absolve me! yes, you can; for he whom you know, Albert of Rudolstadt, has led a life as pure as that of a little child. But he whom you do not know, Jean Ziska of the chalice, was driven by the anger of Heaven into a career of iniquities!"

Consuelo saw what an imprudence she had committed in rekindling the fire which slept under the cinders, and in recalling the sorrowing Albert, by her questions, to the wanderings of his monomania. It was no longer time to combat them by reasoning; she endeavored to calm him by the same means which his insanity indicated.

"Enough, Albert," said she. "If all your actual existence has been consecrated to prayer and repentance, you have nothing more to expiate, and God pardons Ziska."

"God does not reveal himself directly to the humble creatures who serve him," replied the count, shaking his head. "He depresses or encourages them, while he employs some for the salvation, or for the punishment of others. We are the interpreters of his will, when we seek to console or reprimand our fellow-men in a spirit of charity. You have no right, young maiden, to pronounce upon me the words of absolution. The priest himself has not this high mission, which ecclesiastical pride attributes to him. But you can communicate divine grace to me by loving me. Your love can reconcile me with Heaven, and grant me the forgetfulness of days which are called the history of past ages.— You might make me the most sublime promises, on the part of the Almighty, and I could not believe you; I should see in it only a noble and generous fanaticism. Place your hand upon your heart, ask it if the thought of me inhabits it, if my love fills it, and if it answer *yes*, that *yes* will be the sacramental formula of my absolution, the bond of my restoration, the charm which will bring down upon me repose, happiness, *forgetfulness*. It is thus only, that you can be the priestess of my worship, and that my soul can be unbound in heaven, as the catholic thinks his is by the mouth of his confessor. Say that you love me!" cried he, turning towards her passionately, as if to clasp her in his arms. But she recoiled, terrified at the oath he demanded; and he fell back upon the bones, uttering a deep sigh, and crying: "I knew well that she could not love me, that I should never be pardoned, that

I never should *forget* those cursed days in which I did not know her."

"Albert, dear Albert," said Consuelo, deeply moved by the sorrow which affected him, "listen to me with a little courage. You reproach me with wishing to deceive you by the idea of a miracle, and yet you ask me for one still greater. God, who sees all, and who appreciates our merits, can pardon all. But can a feeble and finite creature, like me, especially, comprehend and accept, by the sole effort of her thought and her devotedness, so strange a love as yours? It seems to me that it is for you to inspire that exclusive affection which you ask, and that it does not depend upon me to give it to you, especially when I know you so little. Since we are now speaking that mystic language of devotion, a little of which was taught me in my childhood, I will tell you that you must be in a state of grace to be freed from your faults. Well! the kind of absolution which you ask of my love, do you merit it? You claim the most pure, the most tender, the most gentle affection; and it seems to me that your soul is neither disposed to gentleness nor tenderness. You nourish in it the darkest thoughts, and, as it were, eternal resentments."

"What do you mean to say, Consuelo? I do not understand you."

"I mean to say that you are still the victim of fatal dreams, of ideas of murder, of sanguinary visions. You weep over crimes which you think you committed ages ago, and of which you still cherish the remembrance, for you call them glorious and sublime; you attribute them to the will of Heaven, to the just anger of God. In fine, you are terrified and proud at the same time, at playing in your imagination, the part of a kind of exterminating angel. Supposing that you may have really been in the past, a man of vengeance and destruction, one would say that you had retained an instinct, a temptation and almost a taste for that horrible destiny, since you are always looking beyond your present life, and weeping over yourself as over a criminal condemned still to be one."



“No, thanks to the Almighty Father of souls, who receives and retempers them in the love of his bosom, to restore them to the activity of life!” cried Rudolstadt, raising his arms towards heaven; “no, I have preserved no instinct of violence or ferocity. It is certainly enough to know that I have been condemned, sword and torch in hand, to traverse those barbarous times, which we, in our fanatical and hardy language, call *the times of zeal and of fury*. But you are not acquainted with history, sublime maiden; you do not comprehend the past; and the destinies of nations, in which you have doubtless always had a mission of peace, a character of consoling angel, are like enigmas before your eyes. Still you ought to know something of those appalling truths, you ought to have an idea of that which the justice of God sometimes requires of unfortunate men.”

“Speak, then, Albert; explain to me what there can be so important or so sacred in vain disputes upon the ceremonies of the communion, on one side or the other, as to induce nations to destroy each other in the name of the divine Eucharist.”

“You are right in calling it divine,” replied Albert, seating himself near Consuelo on the bank of the fountain. “That image of equality, that ceremony instituted by a divine being among all men, to immortalize the principle of brotherhood, merits no less from your mouth, you who are the equal of the greatest powers, and of the most noble creatures, on whom the human race can pride itself! And yet, there are vain and senseless beings who will look upon you as of a race inferior to theirs, and who will think your blood less precious than that of the kings and princes of the earth. What should you think of me, Consuelo, if, because I am descended from those kings and princes, I should, in my thought, elevate myself above you?”

“I should forgive in you, a prejudice which all your *caste* regards as sacred, and against which I have never thought to rebel, happy in being born free and equal to the little, whom I love more than the great.”

“ You would forgive me, Consuelo ; but you would no longer esteem me ; and you would not be here, alone with me, tranquil at the side of a man who adores you, and certain that he will respect you, as much as if you were proclaimed by right of birth, empress of Germany. O ! let me believe that without this knowledge of my character and principles, you would not have felt for me that celestial pity which led you here the first time. Well ! my beloved sister, recognize then in your heart, to which I address myself, (not wishing to fatigue your mind with philosophical reasonings,) that equality is holy, that it is the will of the Father of mankind, and that the duty of men is to endeavor to establish it among themselves. When the people were strongly attached to the ceremonies of their worship, the communion represented for them all of equality which the social laws permitted them to enjoy. The poor and the weak found therein a consolation and a religious promise which enabled them to support their evil times, and to hope, in future ages, better days for their descendants. The Bohemian nation had always wished to observe the same eucharistic rites which the apostles had taught and practised. That was indeed the old and fraternal communion, the symbol of the kingdom of God, that is, of the life in community, which must be realized upon the face of the earth. One day, the Roman church, who had reduced the people and the kings beneath her despotic and ambitious laws, wished to separate the Christian from the priest, the nation from the sacerdody, the people from the clergy. She put the chalice into the hands of her ministers, in order that they might hide the Divinity in mysterious tabernacles ; and by absurd interpretations, those priests erected the eucharist into an idolatrous worship, in which the citizens had no right to participate, except according to their good pleasure. She seized the keys of consciences in the secrecy of the confession ; and the holy cup, the glorious cup, in which the indigent could change and retemper his soul, was shut up in coffers of cedar and gold, whence it never issued but to approach the lips of the priest. He alone was worthy to drink the blood and the tears of Jesus Christ. The

humble believer must kneel before him and lick his hand, in order to eat the bread of angels! You can understand now, why the people cried out with one voice, *The cup, restore to us the cup!* The cup to the little, the cup to children, to women, to sinners and the insane! the cup to all the poor, to all the weak in body and soul; such was the cry of revolt and of rallying throughout all Bohemia. You know the rest, Consuelo; you know that to this first idea, which contained in a religious symbol all the joy, all the noble wants of a proud and generous people, became attached, in consequence of persecution in the midst of a terrible struggle against the surrounding nations, all the ideas of patriotic liberty and national honor. The conquest of the cup carried with it the most noble conquests, and created a new society. And now, if history, interpreted by ignorant or skeptical judges, tells you that the fury of blood or the thirst of gold alone, enkindled those fatal wars, be assured that it is a lie against God, and against mankind. It is true that individual hatred and ambition sullied the exploits of our fathers; but it was the old spirit of domination and avarice, which still possessed the rich and the noble. They alone compromised, and ten times betrayed the holy cause. The people, barbarous but sincere, fanatical, but inspired, were incarnated in the sects whose poetical names are known to you. The Taborites, the Orebites, the Orphans, the Brothers of the Union, these were the people, martyrs for their belief, refugees upon the mountains, observing in its rigor the law of distribution and of absolute equality, having faith in the eternal life of the inhabitants of this terrestrial world, awaiting the coming and the festival of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Jean Huss, of Jean Ziska, of Procope Rase, and of all those invincible chiefs who had preached and served the cause of liberty. This belief is not a fiction, in my opinion, Consuelo. Our parts upon this earth are not so short as is commonly supposed, and our duties extend beyond the tomb. As to the narrow and puerile attachment for the practices and formulas of the Hussite worship, which the chaplain and perhaps my good and weak parents

are pleased to attribute to me; if it be true that in my days of agitation and fever, I have appeared to confound the symbol with the principle, the figure with the idea, do not despise me too much, Consuelo. In the depth of my thought, I have never wished to revive in myself, those forgotten rites, which can have no meaning at this day. Other figures and other symbols would be fitted for the more enlightened men of this age, if they would consent to open their eyes, and if the yoke of slavery would permit people to search for the religion of liberty. They have harshly and falsely interpreted my sympathies, my tastes, my habits. Tired of seeing the sterility and vanity of the intelligence of the men of this age, I needed to refresh my pitying heart by an intercourse with simple or unhappy spirits. I took pleasure in conversing with those fools, those vagabonds, all those children disinherited from the goods of the earth and the affection of their kind; in finding amidst the innocent wanderings of those who are called insane, fugitive but often striking glimpses of divine wisdom; in the avowals of those who are called culpable and reprobate, the deep though sullied traces of justice and innocence, under the forms of remorse and regret. From seeing me act thus, seat myself at the table of the ignorant man, or at the bedside of the bandit, they have charitably concluded that I was addicted to heretical practices, and even to sorcery. What could I answer to such accusations? And when my spirit, excited by reading and meditating upon the history of my country, was betrayed into words which resembled delirium, and perhaps proceeded from it, they were afraid of me, as of a frantic man, inspired by the devil. The devil! do you know what that is, Consuelo, and shall I explain to you that mysterious allegory, created by the priests of all religions?"

"Yes, my friend," said Consuelo, who reassured and almost persuaded, had forgotten her hand in those of Albert. "Explain to me what Satan is. To tell you the truth, though I have always believed in God, and have never openly revolted against what has been taught me of him, I have never been able to believe in the devil. If he existed, God would chain

him so far from himself and us, that we could never know him."

"If he existed, he could only be a monstrous creation of that God whom the most impious sophists have rather preferred to deny, than not to recognize as the type and ideal of all perfection, of all wisdom, of all love. How could perfection have given birth to evil; wisdom to falsehood; love to hatred and perverseness? It is a fable which must be attributed to the infancy of the human race, when the plagues and torments of the physical world made the timid children of earth think there were two Gods, two creative and sovereign spirits, one the source of all goods, the other of all evils; two principles almost equal, since the reign of Eblis was to endure for numberless ages, and not to cease until after formidable combats in the spheres of the empyrean. But why, after the preaching of Jesus and the pure light of the Gospels, did the priests dare to revive and encourage in the minds of the people this gross belief of their ancient forefathers? The reason is, that, whether from insufficiency or wrong interpretation of the apostolic doctrine, the notion of good and evil had remained obscure and incomplete in the minds of men. They had admitted and consecrated the principle of absolute division in the rights and destinies of the spirit and the flesh, in the attributes of the spiritual and temporal. Christian asceticism exalted the soul and debased the body. Little by little, fanaticism having pushed to excess this reprobation of the material life, and society having retained the ancient regime of castes, notwithstanding the doctrine of Jesus, a small portion of men continued to live and to reign by intelligence, while the greater number vegetated in the darkness of superstition. It happened then in reality, that the enlightened and powerful castes, especially the clergy, were the soul of society, and that the people were only the body. Who then was, in this sense, the true partisan of intelligent beings? God; and of the ignorant? the devil; for God gave the life of the soul and proscribed that of the senses, towards which Satan continually attracted the weak and brutal. A mysterious and singular sect, among

many others, dreamed of restoring the life of the flesh, and of reuniting in one sole divine principle these two principles so arbitrarily divided. They wished to sanction love, equality, the community of all men, the elements of happiness. It was a just and holy idea, no matter what were its abuses and excesses. It sought therefore to raise from its abject condition the pretended principle of evil, and to render it, on the contrary, servant and agent of the good. Satan was absolved and restored by these philosophers to his place in the choir of celestial spirits; and by poetical interpretations they affected to regard Michael and the archangels of his militia as oppressors, and usurpers of glory and of power. This was truly the figure of the pontiffs and princes of the church, of those who had buried in fictions of hell the religion of equality and the principle of happiness for the whole human family. The sombre and sad Lucifer issued therefore from the abyss, in which, like the divine Prometheus, he had roared in chains for so many ages. His liberators did not dare to invoke him openly; but by mysterious and profound formulas, they expressed the idea of his apotheosis, and of his future reign over humanity, long dethroned, debased and calumniated like him. But doubtless I tire you with these explanations. Pardon me for them, dear Consuelo. I have been represented to you as the antichrist and a worshipper of demons; I wished to justify myself, and exhibit myself to you a little less superstitious than those who accuse me."

"You do not in the least fatigue my attention," said Consuelo, with a gentle smile, "and I am well satisfied to learn that I entered into no compact with the enemy of the human race by using, on a certain night, the formula of the Lollards."

"I consider you very learned on that point," returned Albert. And he continued to explain to her the elevated sense of those great truths called heretical, which the sophists of catholicism have buried under accusations and decrees of bad faith. He became animated by degrees in revealing the studies, the contemplations, the austere reveries which had led him to asceticism and superstition in days which he thought more distant

than they really were. By endeavoring to render this confession clear and simple, he arrived at an extraordinary lucidity of mind, and spoke of himself with as much sincerity and judgment as if he referred to another person, and condemned the miseries and the failings of his own reason as if he had been a long time cured of those dangerous attacks. He spoke with so much wisdom, that apart from the notion of time, which seemed inappreciable by him in the details of his present life, (since he even blamed himself for having formerly believed that he had been Jean Ziska, Wratislaw Podiebrad, and many other personages of the past, without remembering that half an hour before he had again fallen into this aberration,) it was impossible for Consuelo not to recognize in him a superior man, enlightened by more extensive information, more generous, and, consequently, more just ideas, than any of those whom she had before met.

Little by little the attention and the interest with which she listened to him, the living intelligence which shone in the large eyes of that young girl, quick in comprehending, patient in following every thought, and powerful in assimilating to herself every element of elevated knowledge, animated Rudolstadt with a more profound conviction, and his eloquence became entrancing. Consuelo, after some questions and some objections, to which he replied happily, no longer thought so much of satisfying her natural curiosity for ideas, as of enjoying the kind of intoxication of admiration which Albert produced in her. She forgot all that had agitated her during the day, Anzoletto, Zdenko, and the bones before her eyes. A species of fascination seized upon her; and the picturesque place in which she was, with its cypresses, its terrible rocks and its dismal altar, seemed to her by the moving light of the torches, a sort of magical Elysium, in which august and solemn apparitions were passing to and fro. She fell, though wide awake, into a kind of stupor of those examining faculties which she had kept in too high a state of tension for her poetical organization. No longer hearing what Albert said, but plunged in a delicious ecstasy, she was affected by the con-

ception of that Satan which he had presented to her as a great misunderstood idea, and which her artistic imagination reconstructed as a beautiful figure, pale and sorrowful, sister to that of the Christ, and gently inclined towards her, a daughter of the people and proscribed child of the universal family. Suddenly she perceived that Albert was no longer speaking to her, that he no longer held her hand, that he was no longer seated by her side, but was erect before her, near the altar of bones, and was playing upon his violin the strange music which had before surprised and charmed her.



## CHAPTER LV.

ALBERT first made his instrument play several of those ancient canticles whose authors are either unknown to us, or were even then forgotten in Bohemia, but of which Zdenko had retained the precious tradition, and of which the count had found the letter by dint of study and meditation. He had so nourished himself with the spirit of those compositions, barbarous at first sight, but profoundly touching and truly beautiful to a serious and enlightened taste, he had so far assimilated them to himself, as to be able to improvise for a long time upon the idea of their motives, to mingle with them his own ideas, resume and develop the primitive sentiment of the composition and abandon himself to his personal inspiration, without the original, austere and striking character of those ancient chants being altered by his ingenious and learned interpretation. Consuelo had promised herself that she would listen to and retain these precious specimens of the ancient popular genius of old Bohemia. But all spirit of examination soon became impossible to her, as much on account of the dreamy disposition in which she was, as from the vagueness diffused through this music foreign to her ear.

There is a music which may be called natural, because it is not the product of science and reflection, but of an inspiration which escapes the rigor of rules and conventions. Such is popular music; that of the peasants especially. What beautiful poetry is born, lives and dies among them, without ever having had the honors of a correct notation, and without having deigned to enclose itself in the absolute version of a determined theme! The unknown artist, who improvises his rustic ballad, while watching his flocks or following his plough, (there are such, even in countries which appear least poetical,) would with difficulty compel himself to retain and

fix his fugitive ideas. He communicates his ballad to other musicians, children of nature like himself, and they carry it from hamlet to hamlet, from cottage to cottage, every one modifying it at the will of his individual genius. It is on this account that those songs and pastoral romances, so piquant in simplicity, or so profound in sentiment, are for the most part lost, and have hardly more than a century's existence in the memory of the peasants. Musicians formed to the rules of art, do not pay attention enough to collect them. The greater part despise them, for want of an intelligence sufficiently pure and a sentiment sufficiently elevated to comprehend them; others are repelled by the difficulties they meet as soon as they wish to find the veritable and primitive version, which perhaps exists no longer even for the author himself, and which certainly has never been recognized as a determined and invariable type by its numerous interpreters. Some have altered it from ignorance; others have developed, adorned or embellished it from the effect of their superiority, they never having learned from the teachings of art to repress their instincts. They do not themselves know that they have transformed the primitive work. Neither do their simple hearers perceive it. The peasant neither examines nor compares. When Heaven has made him a musician, he sings like the birds, like the nightingale especially, of which the improvisation is continual, though the elements of its infinitely varied song may be always the same. Besides, the genius of the people has a fecundity without limit.\* It has no need

\* If you listen attentively to the players on the bagpipe, who perform the part of minstrels in the rural districts of the centre of France, you will see that they know not less than two or three hundred compositions of the same order and the same character, but which are never borrowed from each other; and you will satisfy yourself that in less than three years, this immense repertory is entirely renewed. I lately had the following conversation with one of those wandering minstrels. "You have learned a little music?" "Certainly, I have learned to play upon the bag-pipe with the great drone and with keys."\* "Where did you take lessons?" "In Bourbonnais in the woods." "Who was your master?" "A man of the woods." "Then you know the notes?" "I should think so." "In what key do

\*The *cornemuse* and the *musette*.

of registering its productions ; it produces without repose, like the earth it cultivates ; it creates at all hours like the nature which inspires it.

Consuelo had in her heart all the candor, all the poetry, all the sensibility which are required to understand popular music, and to love it passionately. Therein she was a great artist, and the learned theories she had fathomed had not deprived her genius of that freshness and that suavity which is the treasure of inspiration and the youth of the soul. She had sometimes said to Anzoletto, but concealed it from Porpora,

you play ?" " In what key ? what does that mean ?" " Is it not in *re* that you play ?" " I do not know the *re*." " How do you call your notes then ?" " They are called notes ; they have no particular names." " How can you retain so many different airs ?" " I listen." " Who composes those airs ?" " A great many people, famous musicians in the woods." " Then they make a great many." " They make them all the time ; they never stop." " Do they do anything else ?" " They cut wood." " They are wood-cutters ?" " Almost all wood-cutters. We say that music grows in the woods. We always find it there." " And is it there you go to seek it ?" " Every year. The little musicians do not go. They listen to what comes by the road, and they repeat it as they can. But to get the true *accent*, one must go and hear the wood-cutters of Bourbonnais." " And how does it come to them ?" " As they walk in the woods, as they go home at night, as they repose on Sundays." " And do you compose ?" " A little, but hardly ever, it's not worth much. One must be born in the woods, and I am of the plain. There is no one who equals me in the *accent* ; but as for inventing, we know nothing about it, and do well not to attempt it."

I tried to make him say what he meant by *accent*. He could not succeed, perhaps because he comprehended it too well, and judged me unworthy to comprehend. He was young, serious, black as a pifferaro of Calabria, went from fête to fête, playing all day, and had not slept for three nights, because he was obliged to travel six or eight leagues before sunrise, in order to go from one village to another. He was all the better for it, drank great jugs of wine, enough to stupify an ox, and did not complain, like the trumpeter of Walter Scott, of having *lost his wind*. The more he drank the more grave and proud was he. He played very well, and had truly reason to be vain of his *accent*. Let me observe that his play was a perpetual modification of each theme. It was impossible to write one of those themes, without taking notes of each one of fifty different versions. That was probably his merit and his art. His answers to my questions enabled me to find, I believe, the etymology of the theme of *bourrée* given to the dances of the country. *Bourrée* is the synonyme of fagot, and the wood-cutters of Bourbonnais have given this name to their musical compositions, as master Adam gave that of *pegs* to his pieces of poetry.

that she liked the barcaroles of the fishermen of the Adriatic, better than all the science of *Padre Martini* and *Maestro Durante*. Her mother's boleros and canticles were a source of poetic life for her, of which she never wearied in drawing upon her precious recollections. What an impression then must have been made upon her by the musical genius of Bohemia, the inspiration of that people of shepherds and warriors, fanatical, grave and gentle, in the midst of the most powerful elements of force and activity! There were in it striking characteristics, entirely new to her. Albert expressed that music with a rare intelligence of the national spirit, and of the energetic and pious sentiment which had given birth to it. He united with it, in his improvisations, the profound melancholy and overwhelming sorrow which slavery had impressed upon his own character and that of his people; and that mixture of sadness and bravery, of exaltation and depression, those hymns of gratitude joined to cries of distress, were the most complete and the most profound expression both of poor Bohemia and of poor Albert.

It has been truly said, that the aim of music is emotion. No other art can in so sublime a manner awaken the human sentiment in the breast of men; no other art can depict to the eyes of the soul, all the splendors of nature, the delights of contemplation, the characters of nations, the tumults of their passions, and the languors of their suffering. Regret, hope, terror, concentration, consternation, enthusiasm, faith, doubt, glory, calmness, all these and even more, music communicates to us and again takes from us, at the will of its genius, and according to the whole extent of ours. It even creates the aspect of things, and without falling into the puerilities of sounds, or the narrow imitations of real noises, it exhibits to us, through a vapor that enlarges and aggrandizes them, those exterior objects, among which it transports our imagination. Certain canticles will cause to appear before us the gigantic phantoms of ancient cathedrals, and at the same time enable us to penetrate into the thought of the nations who have built them and are there prostrate singing their religious hymns. He who knows

how to express powerfully and simply the music of different people, and he who knows how to listen to it properly, needs not to make the circuit of the globe to see different nations, to enter their monuments, to read their books, and to traverse their plains, their mountains, their gardens, or their deserts. A Jewish song well rendered makes us enter the synagogue; all Scotland is in a true Scotch air, as all Spain in a true Spanish air. I have often been in Poland, in Germany, at Naples, in Ireland, and in India, and I know those men and those countries better than if I had examined them for years. It required but an instant to transport me there, and to make me live all the life which animates them. It was the essence of that life which I assimilated to myself under the illusions of music.

Little by little Consuelo ceased to listen, and even to hear Albert's violin. All her soul was attentive; and her senses, closed to direct perceptions, awoke in another world, to guide her spirit through unknown regions inhabited by new beings. She saw the spectres of the old heroes of Bohemia move in a chaos at once horrible and magnificent; she heard the funeral knell of the convent bells, while the formidable Taborites descended from the summits of their fortified mountains, lean, half naked, savage and bloody. Then she saw the angels of death assemble in the clouds, the chalice and sword in their hands. Suspended in close ranks over the heads of the prevaricating pontiffs, she saw them pour down upon the accursed earth the cup of divine wrath. She thought she heard the shock of their heavy wings, and saw the blood of the Christ falling in large drops behind them to extinguish the conflagration enkindled by their fury. At one moment it was a fearful and dark night in which she heard the bodies, abandoned on the field of battle, groan and rattle. Then it was a glowing day, the brightness of which she dared not endure, and in which she saw pass, like lightning, the redoubtable blind man in his chariot, with his round casque, his rusty cuirass, and the bloody bandage that covered his eyes. The temples opened themselves at his approach; the monks fled into

the bosom of the earth, carrying and hiding their treasures in the lappets of their gowns. Then the conquerors brought emaciated old men, beggars covered with sores like Lazarus; idiots came laughing like Zdenko; executioners stained with livid blood, little children with pure hands and angelic brows, warlike women with bundles of pikes and resinous torches, all seated themselves around a table; and an angel, radiant and beautiful as those whom Albert Durer has placed in his apocalyptic compositions, came and offered to their greedy lips, the cup of wood, the chalice of pardon, of restoration and of holy equality.

This angel reappeared in all the visions which passed at that instant before the eyes of Consuelo. On looking at him intently, she recognized Satan, the most beautiful of the immortals after God, the saddest next to Jesus, the boldest among the bold. He dragged after him the chains he had broken; and his fawn-colored wings, stripped and hanging, bore the marks of violence and captivity. He smiled mournfully upon the men stained with crimes, and pressed the little children to his breast.

Suddenly it seemed to Consuelo that Albert's violin spoke, and said by the mouth of Satan:—"No, the Christ my brother has not loved you more than I love you. It is time that you should know me, and that, instead of calling me the enemy of the human race, you should recognize in me the friend who has sustained you in the strife. I am not a demon, I am the archangel of legitimate revolt, and the patron of great struggles. Like the Christ, I am the God of the poor, the weak and the oppressed. When he promised you the kingdom of God upon the earth, when he announced his return among you, he meant to say that after having endured persecution, you would be recompensed, by acquiring liberty and happiness with him and with me. It was together that we were to return, and it is together that we do return, so united each to the other that we no longer constitute more than one. It was he, the divine principle, the God of spirit, who descended into the darkness, into which ignorance had

cast me, and where I underwent, in the flames of desire and indignation, the same torments which the scribes and pharisees of all ages have made him endure. I am henceforth forever with your children; for he has broken my chains, he has extinguished my burning pyre, he has reconciled me with God and with you. Hereafter craft and fear shall no longer be the law and the lot of the weak, but boldness and strong-minded will. It is he, Jesus, who is the merciful, the gentle, the tender, and the just: as for me, I am the just also, but I am the strong, the warlike, the severe, and the persevering. O people! do you not recognize him who has spoken in the secret of your hearts, during the whole of your existence, and who, in all your distresses, has comforted you by saying to you: 'Seek for happiness, do not renounce it! Happiness is due to you, demand it and you will have it!' Do you not see upon my brow all your sufferings, and upon my wounded limbs the scars of the chains which you have worn. Drink of the cup that I bring you; you will there find my tears mingled with those of the Christ and with your own; you will find them quite as warm, and they will be quite as salutary to you!"

This hallucination filled the heart of Consuelo. She thought she saw and heard the fallen angel weep and groan before her. She saw him grand, pale, and beautiful, with his long hair disordered upon his brow, scarred by lightning, but always bold and raised towards heaven. She admired him, while still shuddering from the habit of fearing him, and yet she loved him with that fraternal and pious love which is inspired by the sight of powerful misfortune. It seemed to her that in the midst of the communion of the Bohemian brothers, it was to her that he addressed himself; that he gently reproached her for her mistrust and her fear, and that he drew her towards him by a magnetic look which it was impossible to resist. Fascinated, transported out of herself, she rose, and rushed towards him with open arms, her knees bending beneath her. Albert let fall his violin, which gave out a plaintive sound as it fell, and received the young girl in

his arms, with a cry of surprise and transport. It was he whom Consuelo had listened to and looked upon, while dreaming of the rebellious angel; it was his figure, every way similar to the image she had formed, which had attracted and subdued her; it was against his heart that she had pressed her own, saying in smothered voice: "Thine! thine! angel of sorrow; thine and God's forever!"

Hardly had Albert's trembling lips breathed upon hers, when she felt a mortal coldness and piercing pains freeze and burn by turns her breast and brain. Suddenly snatched from her illusion, she experienced so violent a shock in her whole being, that she believed herself about to die; and tearing herself from the count's arms, she fell against the bones of the altar, a part of which crumbled upon her with a terrible noise. Seeing herself covered with these human remains, and looking upon Albert, whom she had pressed in her arms, and made in some sort master of her soul and her liberty in a moment of frenzied exaltation, she experienced such horrible terror and anguish, that she hid her face in her disordered hair, crying out with sobs;—"Away from here! Far from here! In the name of God, air, daylight! O my God! deliver me from this sepulchre, and restore me to the light of the sun!"

Albert, seeing her grow pale and delirious, rushed towards her, and wished to take her in his arms and carry her out of the grotto. But in her fright, she did not comprehend him; and rising strongly, she began to fly recklessly towards the bottom of the cavern, taking no note of the obstacles, of the sinuous arms of the fountain which crossed before her, and which in many places presented great dangers. "In the name of God!" cried Albert, "not that way! stop, stop. There is death under your feet! wait for me!"

But his cries only increased Consuelo's fear. Twice she passed the stream, leaping with the lightness of a doe, and yet without knowing what she did. At last, in a dark place, planted with cypresses, she stumbled upon a raised mound and



fell, her hands forward, upon the fine and freshly stirred earth.

This shock changed the disposition of her nerves. A sort of stupor succeeded her terror. Suffocated, panting, and understanding nothing of what she had experienced, she allowed the count to approach and rejoin her. He had rushed quickly after her, and had retained presence of mind enough to seize hastily, in passing, one of the torches planted on the rocks, in order that he might at least light her steps amidst the windings of the stream, if he did not succeed in overtaking her before she reached a place which he knew to be deep, and towards which she was hurrying. Terrified, overpowered by such sudden and contrary emotions, the poor young man dared neither speak to her nor raise her. She was seated upon the heap of earth which had made her stumble, and dared as little to address him. Confused, with her eyes cast down, she looked mechanically upon the soil where she was. Suddenly she perceived that the eminence had the form and dimensions of a grave, and that she was in fact seated upon a trench recently filled up, covered with dried flowers and branches of cypress hardly withered. She rose precipitately, and in a fresh attack of terror, which she could not conquer, cried out: "O Albert! whom have you buried here?"

"I have here interred that which was most dear to me in the world before knowing you," replied Albert, displaying the most sorrowful emotion. "If it be a sacrilege, as I committed it in a day of delirium and with the intention of fulfilling a sacred duty, God will forgive me. I will tell you by-and-bye what soul inhabited the body which reposes here. Now you are too much agitated, and have need of the fresh air. Come, Consuelo, let us leave this place, where in one instant you have made me the most happy and the most miserable of men."

"O! yes," cried she, "let us go hence! I know not what vapors exhale from the earth; but I feel myself dying, and my reason abandons me."

They went out together, without saying another word. Albert walked in front, stopping and lowering his torch at every stone, that his companion might see and avoid it. When he was about to open the door of the cell, a remembrance far removed in appearance from the frame of mind in which she was, but connected with it by an artistic association, was awakened in Consuelo.

"Albert," said she, "you have forgotten your violin near the fountain. I cannot consent that that admirable instrument, which has awakened in me emotions unknown before, should be abandoned to certain destruction in that damp spot."

Albert made a motion which indicated the little value he should thenceforth attach to anything that was not Consuelo. But she insisted: "It has caused me great pain," said she to him, "and yet—"

"If it has caused you only pain, let it be destroyed," replied he with bitterness; "I do not wish to touch it again in all my life. Ah! I long for its annihilation."

"I should lie if I said that," returned Consuelo, restored to a sentiment of respect for the count's musical genius. "The emotion exceeded my strength, that is all; and the rapture was changed into agony. Go and seek it, my friend; I wish myself to replace it in its case, while waiting until I have courage enough to take it thence in order to restore it to your hands and again listen to it."

Consuelo was affected by the look of thanks which the count addressed to her on receiving this hope. He reëntered the grotto to obey her; and remaining alone some instants, she reproached herself for her foolish terror and her frightful suspicions. Trembling and blushing, she remembered that feverish movement which had thrown her into his arms; but she could not help admiring the modest respect and the chaste timidity of a man who adored her, and who did not dare profit by such a circumstance to utter even a word of his love. The sadness which she saw in his features, and the languor of his faltering steps, sufficiently

testified that he had not conceived any audacious hope either for the present or the future. She felt obliged by such great delicacy of heart, and promised herself that she would soften by the kindest words, the sort of leave they were about to take of each other on quitting the grotto.

But the remembrance of Zdenko, like a vengeful shade, was to follow her even to the end, and accuse Albert in spite of herself. On approaching the door, her eyes fell upon an inscription in Bohemian, of which she easily understood all the words excepting one, since she knew them by heart. A hand, which could only have been Zdenko's, had traced with chalk upon the deep and black door: "*May he who has been wronged — thee.*" The other word was unintelligible to Consuelo, and this circumstance caused her intense anxiety. Albert returned, shut up his violin, without her having either the courage or the thought to help him as she had promised. She again felt all the impatience she had before experienced to leave the grotto. As he was turning the key with difficulty in the rusted lock, she could not help putting her finger upon the mysterious word, and looking at her host with an air of interrogation.

"That signifies," replied Albert, with a kind of calmness, "May the misunderstood angel, the friend of the unhappy, he of whom we spoke just now, Consuelo—"

"Yes, Satan; I know that; and the rest?"

"May Satan, I say, pardon you!"

"Pardon what?" returned she, becoming pale.

"If sorrow need pardon," replied the count with melancholy serenity, "I have a long prayer to make."

They entered the gallery, and did not break their silence until they had reached the cave of the monk. But when the light of outward day fell with its bluish reflections through the foliage upon the count's face, Consuelo saw two streams of silent tears flowing gently down his cheeks. She was affected; and yet, when he approached with a timid air to carry her to the entrance, she preferred wetting her feet in the brackish water, rather than permit him to raise her in his arms. She

alleged as a pretext the state of fatigue and depression in which she saw he was, and had already put her delicate shoe into the basin, when Albert said, extinguishing his torch, "Farewell, then, Consuelo! I see by your aversion to me that I must again enter everlasting night, and like a spectre, evoked by you for an instant, return to my tomb, after having succeeded only in terrifying you."

"No, your life belongs to me!" cried Consuelo, turning and stopping him; "you made an oath to me not to reënter that cavern without me, and you have no right to take it back."

"And why do you wish to impose the burden of life upon the phantom of a man? The solitary is but the shadow of a mortal, and he who is not loved is alone everywhere and among all."

"Albert, Albert! you rend my heart. Come, carry me out. It seems to me that in the full light of day, I shall at last see clearly into my own destiny."

## CHAPTER LVI.

ALBERT obeyed, and when they began to descend from the base of the Schreckenstein towards the lower valleys, Consuelo did in fact feel herself become more calm.

“Forgive me the pain I have caused you,” said she to him, supporting herself gently upon his arm in walking; “it is very clear to me now that I had an attack of insanity a little while ago in the grotto.”

“Why recall it, Consuelo? I should never have spoken of it; I know you would like to efface it from your memory. I also must succeed in forgetting it!”

“My friend, I do not wish to forget it, but to ask your forgiveness. If I should relate to you the strange vision I had while listening to your Bohemian airs, you would see that I was out of my senses when I caused you such surprise and such an affright. You cannot believe that I could have wished to play with your reason and your repose—My God! Heaven is my witness that I would even now give my life for yours.”

“I know that you do not care much for life, Consuelo; and I feel that I should care for it very earnestly if——”

“Finish then!”

“If I were loved as I love!”

“Albert, I love you as much as is permitted me to do. I should love you perhaps as much as you deserve to be loved, if——”

“Finish in your turn!”

“If insurmountable obstacles did not make it a crime.”

“And what are those obstacles? I seek for them in vain around you; I find them only in the depths of your heart, only in your recollections, doubtless!”

“Do not speak of my recollections; they are odious, and I

would rather die at once, than recommence the past. But your rank in the world, your fortune, the opposition and indignation of your parents, where can you expect me to find the courage to accept all these! I possess nothing in the world but my pride and my disinterestedness; what would remain to me if I should sacrifice them?"

"There would remain your love and mine, if you loved me. I know that it is not so, and I will only ask of you a little pity. How could you be humiliated by bestowing upon me the alms of a little happiness? Which of us would then be prostrate before the other? In what would my fortune degrade you? Could we not throw it very quickly to the poor, if it troubled you as much as it does me? Think you that I did not long since take the firm resolution to employ it as accords with my belief and my tastes, that is to say, by getting rid of it, whenever the loss of my father shall add the sorrow of inheritance to the sorrow of separation. What! do you fear being rich? I have made a vow of poverty. Do you fear being made illustrious by my name? It is a false name, and the true one is a proscribed name. I shall not resume it, that would be an injury to my father's memory; but in the obscurity into which I shall plunge, no one will be dazzled by it, and you cannot reproach me with it. In fine, as to the opposition of my parents—O! if there were only that obstacle! tell me that there is but that, and you shall see."

"It is the greatest of all, the only one which all my devotedness, all my gratitude to you cannot remove."

"It is not true, Consuelo! Dare to swear that it is true! That is not the only obstacle."

Consuelo hesitated. She had never lied, and yet she could have wished to repair the evil she had done to her friend, to him who had saved her life, and who had watched over her several months with the solicitude of a tender and intelligent mother. She had flattered herself that she could soften her refusal by calling to her aid obstacles, which she considered to be in fact insurmountable. But Albert's reiterated questions troubled her, and her own heart was a laby-

rinth in which she lost herself; for she could not say **with** certainty if she loved or hated that strange man, towards whom a mysterious and powerful sympathy impelled her, while an invincible fear and something which resembled aversion, made her tremble at the simple idea of a betrothal.

It seemed to her at this instant, as if she hated Anzoleto. Could it be otherwise, when she compared him, with his brutal selfishness, his abject ambition, his baseness, his perfidiousness, with Albert, so generous, so humane, so pure, so grand in all the most sublime and romantic virtues? The sole cloud that could obscure the conclusion of the parallel, was the attempt upon Zdenko's life, which she could not help presuming. But was not that suspicion a disease of her imagination, a nightmare which could be dissipated by an instant's explanation? She resolved to try; and pretending to be absent and not to have heard Albert's last question: "My God!" said she, stopping to look at a peasant who was passing at a distance, "I thought I saw Zdenko."

Albert started, let fall Consuelo's arm which he held under his, and made some steps forward. Then he stopped and turning towards her, said: "What a mistake, Consuelo! that man has not the least look of ——" He could not resolve to pronounce the name of Zdenko; his countenance was agitated.

"Still you thought so yourself for an instant," said Consuelo, who was examining him attentively.

"I am very near-sighted, and I ought to have remembered that such an encounter was impossible."

"Impossible! Then Zdenko must be very far from here?"

"Far enough to prevent you fearing his insanity any more."

"Could you not tell me whence arose his sudden hatred, after the evidences of sympathy he had given me?"

"As I told you, from a dream he had the night before your descent into the subterranean. He saw you, in his dream, follow me to the altar, where you consented to plight to me your faith; and there you began to sing our old Bohemian

songs with a wonderful voice which made the whole church tremble. And while you sang, he saw me become pale and sink into the pavement of the church, until I was entombed and laid out dead in the sepulchre of my ancestors. Then he saw you quickly cast aside your bridal crown, push with your foot a tile which instantly covered me, and dance upon that funereal stone, singing incomprehensible things in an unknown language, with all the signs of the most unbridled and the most cruel joy. Full of fury, he threw himself upon you, but you had already disappeared in smoke, and he awoke bathed in sweat, and transported with anger. He awoke me, for his cries and imprecations made the vault of his cell ring again. I had much difficulty in making him relate his dream, and more still in preventing his seeing in it a real sense of my future destiny. I could not easily convince him, for I was myself under the dominion of an entirely diseased exaltation of mind, and I had never till then attempted to dissuade him when I saw him give faith to his visions and his dreams. Still I had reason to believe, on the day which followed that agitated night, that he did not recollect, or attached no importance to it, for he said no more about it, and when I asked him to go and speak to you of me, he made no open resistance. He did not imagine that you would ever have the thought, or the possibility of coming to seek me where I was, or his delirium was not awakened until he saw you undertake it. At any rate he did not manifest to me his hatred against you, until the moment when we met him on our return through the subterranean galleries. It was then he told me laconically, in Bohemian, that his intention and his resolution were to deliver me from you, (that was his expression,) and to *destroy* you, the first time he found you alone, because you were the bane of my life, and you had my death written in your eyes. Forgive me for repeating to you the words of his insanity, and understand now why I was obliged to remove him from you, and from me. Let us talk no more of him, I beseech you; this subject is very painful to me. I have loved Zdenko as another self. His madness was assimilated to and identified



with mine to such a degree, that we had spontaneously the same thoughts, the same visions, and even the same physical sufferings. He was more simple and therefore more poetical than I; his temper was more equal, and the phantoms which appeared to me under frightful and menacing forms, he saw under gentle and sad ones, through his more tender and more serene organization. The great difference which existed between us was, the irregularity of my attacks and the continuity of his enthusiasm. While I was by turns the victim of delirium, or a cold and terrified spectator of my own misery, he lived constantly in a sort of dream, in which all exterior objects took symbolic forms; and this wandering was always so gentle and so affectionate, that in my lucid moments, (assuredly the most sad to me,) I needed Zdenko's peaceful and ingenious insanity to reanimate me and reconcile me to life."

"O my friend," said Consuelo, "you must hate me and I hate myself, for having deprived you of that friend so precious and so devoted. But has not his exile lasted long enough? By this time, he must certainly be cured of a temporary attack of violence——"

"He is cured of it—*probably!*" said Albert, with a strange smile, full of bitterness.

"Well then," returned Consuelo, who sought to repel the idea of Zdenko's death, "why do you not recall him? I should see him again without fear, I assure you; and between us both, we would make him forget his prejudices against me."

"Do not speak thus, Consuelo," said Albert, dejectedly; "that return is henceforth impossible. I have sacrificed my best friend, him who was my companion, my servant, my support, my far-sighted and laborious mother, my simple, ignorant, and submissive child; him who provided for all my wants, for my innocent and sad pleasures; him who defended me against myself in my fits of despair, and who employed force and craft to prevent me from quitting my cell, whenever he saw me incapable of maintaining my own dignity and my own life in the world of the living, and in the society of other men. I have made this sacrifice without looking behind me, and

without remorse, because it was my duty ; because by encountering the dangers of the subterranean, by restoring me to reason and the consciousness of my duties, you were more precious, more sacred to me than Zdenko himself."

"That was an error, a blasphemy perhaps, Albert! An instant of courage should not be compared with a whole life of devotedness."

"Do not believe that a wild and selfish love counselled me to act as I did. I should have been able to stifle such a love in my bosom, and shut myself up in my cavern with Zdenko, rather than break the heart and the life of the best of men. But the voice of God had spoken clearly. I had resisted the attraction which mastered me ; I had fled from you, I wished to cease seeing you, so long as the dreams and the presentiments which made me hope in you as the angel of my salvation, were not realized. Until the disorder introduced by a lying dream into Zdenko's pious and gentle organization, he partook my aspirations towards you, my fears, my hopes, my religious desires. He unfortunately misunderstood you on the day when you revealed yourself! The celestial light which had always illuminated the mysterious regions of his mind, was suddenly extinguished, and God condemned him by sending him the spirit of dizziness and madness. It was my duty to abandon him also ; for you appeared to me surrounded with a ray of glory ; you descended towards me on the wings of a miracle,—you found, to unseal my eyes, words which your calm intelligence and your artistic education had not permitted you to study and prepare. Pity, charity, inspired you, and under their miraculous influence, you said to me what I needed in order that I might know and conceive human life."

"What then did I say to you so wise and so powerful ? Truly, Albert, I know nothing of it."

"Neither do I ; but God himself was in the sound of your voice and in the serenity of your look. By your side I understood in an instant, what I could not have discovered alone in my whole life. I knew before that my life was an expiation,

a martyrdom ; and I sought the accomplishment of my destiny in darkness, in solitude, in tears, in indignation, in study, in asceticism, in mortifications. You made me perceive another life, another martyrdom, all of patience, of gentleness, of tolerance, of devotedness. I had forgotten the duties which you clearly and simply traced out for me, beginning with those towards my family ; and my family, through excess of kindness, kept me ignorant of my crimes. I have repaired them, thanks to you ; and from that first day I have known, by the calmness which was produced in me, that this was all that God required of me at present. I know that it is not all, and I wait until God shall reveal to me the continuation of my existence. But I have confidence now, because I have found the oracle which I can interrogate. You are that oracle, Consuelo ! Providence has given you power over me, and I will not revolt against its decrees, by seeking to resist it. I ought not, therefore, to have hesitated between the superior power invested with the gift of regenerating me, and the poor passive creature who had hitherto only shared my distresses and borne my storms."

"Do you speak of Zdenko ? But how can you know that God had not destined me to cure him also ? You saw that I had already some power over him, since I succeeded in convincing him by a word, when his hand was raised to kill me."

"O my God ! it is true, I wanted faith, I was afraid. I knew what were the oaths of Zdenko. In spite of me, he had made that of living only for me, and he had kept it during my whole existence, as well in my absence as before, and since my return. When he swore to *destroy* you, I did not even think it possible to prevent the effect of his resolution, and I took the part of offending him, of banishing him, of breaking, of *destroying* him himself."

"Of *destroying* him, my God ! What does that word mean in your mouth, Albert ? Where is Zdenko ?"

"You ask me as God asked Cain : 'What hast thou done with thy brother !'"

"O Heaven, Heaven ! You have not killed him, Albert ?"

Consuelo, in letting this terrible word escape her, clung with energy to Albert's arm, and looked at him in terror mingled with a sorrowing pity. She recoiled, affrighted at the proud and cold expression of his pale countenance, in which sadness sometimes seemed petrified.

"I have not *killed* him," replied he, "and yet I have taken away his life, assuredly. Would you dare to accuse me of it as a crime, you, for whom I would, perhaps, kill my own father in the same manner; you for whom I would brave all remorse, and would break the dearest ties, the most sacred existences? If I have preferred the regret and repentance which now consume me, to the fear of seeing you assassinated by a mad-man, have you so little pity in your heart as to bring this sorrow continually before my eyes, and to reproach me with the greatest sacrifice I could possibly make for you? Ah! even you have sometimes moments of cruelty! Cruelty cannot be extinguished in the bosom of whomsoever belongs to the human race!"

There was so much solemnity in this reproach, the first that Albert had ever dared address to Consuelo, that she was penetrated with fear, and felt, more than ever before, the terror with which he inspired her. A kind of humiliation, puerile perhaps, but inherent in the heart of woman, succeeded the sweet elation she could not but feel on hearing Albert depict his passionate veneration for her. She felt herself humiliated, misunderstood without doubt; for she had endeavored to discover his secret only with the desire of responding to his love, if he justified himself. At the same time she saw that in the mind of her lover, she was culpable; for if he had killed Zdenko, the only person in the world who had no right to condemn him irrevocably, was she, whose life had required the sacrifice of another life, otherwise infinitely more precious to the unhappy Albert. Consuelo could not answer; she wished to speak of something else, but her tears cut short the words. On seeing them flow, Albert, repentant, wished to humble himself in turn; but she prayed him never to recur to a subject so painful to her mind, and promised him with a sort of

bitter consternation, never again to pronounce a name which awakened in her as in him the most frightful emotions. The remainder of their walk was full of constraint and anguish. They attempted another conversation in vain. Consuelo neither knew what she said nor what she heard. Still Albert appeared calm, like Abraham or like Brutus, after the accomplishment of a sacrifice commanded by the unyielding fates. This sad but profound tranquillity with such a load upon his breast, seemed like a remnant of madness; and Consuelo could only justify her friend by remembering that he was crazy. If in a combat of open strength against some bandit, he had killed his adversary to save her, she would have found therein only an additional motive for gratitude; and perhaps of admiration for his vigor and his courage. But that mysterious murder, accomplished without doubt in the darkness of the subterranean; that tomb in the place of prayer; that savage silence after such a crisis; that stoical fanaticism with which he had dared conduct her to the grotto, and give himself up there to the charms of music; all this was horrible, and Consuelo felt that the love of that man could not enter her heart. "When could he have committed this murder?" she asked herself. "I have not seen on his brow, for three months, one line so deep as to indicate a remorse? Could he have had drops of blood upon his hands, any day when I extended mine to him? Horror! he must be of stone or of ice, or must love me even to ferocity. And I, who have so desired to inspire a love without bounds! I, who regretted so bitterly to have been loved feebly! This then is the love that Heaven reserved for me as a compensation!" Then she again began to search for the moment in which Albert could have accomplished his horrible sacrifice. She thought that it must have been during the serious illness which had made her indifferent to external things; but when she recalled the tender and delicate attentions that Albert had lavished upon her, she could not reconcile these two faces of a being so dissimilar to himself and to all other men.

Lost in these gloomy reveries, she received with a trembling

hand and absent air, the flowers which Albert was accustomed to gather for her as they walked; for he knew that she loved them much. She did not even think of leaving him, to reënter the chateau alone, and so conceal the long tête-a-tête they had had together. Whether Albert did not think of it, or had determined to dissemble no longer before his family, he did not remind her of it; and they found themselves at the entrance of the chateau face to face with the canoness. Consuelo (and without doubt Albert also) saw for the first time anger and disdain inflame the features of that woman, the goodness of whose heart usually prevented her from being ugly, spite of her thinness and deformity. "It is quite time that you returned, young lady," said she to the Porporina, in a voice trembling and husky with indignation. "We were very anxious about count Albert. His father, who was unwilling to breakfast without him, desired to have a conversation with him this morning, which you have thought proper to make him forget; and as for yourself, there is a young man in the saloon who calls himself your brother, and who is waiting for you with an impatience far from polite."

After saying these strange words, poor Wenceslawa, affrighted at her own courage, turned her back abruptly and ran to her chamber, where she coughed and wept for more than an hour.

## CHAPTER LVII.

“My aunt is in a singular state of mind,” said Albert to Consuelo, as they ascended the steps of the porch. “I ask your pardon for her, my friend; be sure that this very day she will change her manners and her language.”

“My brother?” said Consuelo, stupefied at the tidings which had been announced to her, and without hearing what the young count said.

“I did not know that you had a brother,” replied Albert, who had been more struck by his aunt’s bitterness than by that incident. “Doubtless you will have much pleasure in seeing him again, dear Consuelo, and I rejoice —”

“Do not rejoice, sir count,” returned Consuelo, whom a sad presentiment suddenly seized; “perhaps a great misfortune is prepared for me and —” she stopped, trembling; for she was on the point of demanding his advice and protection. But she feared to confide too much in him, and daring neither receive nor avoid him who introduced himself by means of a falsehood, she felt her knees bend, and becoming pale, she clung to the balustrade for support at the last step of the entrance.

“Do you fear some bad news from your family?” asked Albert, whose anxiety began to be awakened.

“I have no family,” replied Consuelo, gathering strength to continue her advance. She had almost said she had no brother; a vague fear restrained her. But on crossing the eating room, she heard creaking upon the floor of the saloon, the boots of a traveller who was impatiently walking to and fro. By an involuntary movement, she approached the young count, and pressed his arm, into which she clasped her own, as if to find a refuge in his love from the approach of the sufferings she foresaw.

Albert, struck by this movement, felt mortal apprehensions awakened within him. "Do not enter without me," said he to her in a low voice; "I divine, by my presentiments, which have never deceived me, that this brother is your enemy and mine. I am chilled, I am afraid, as if I were about to be compelled to hate some one."

Consuelo disengaged her arm which Albert had pressed closely to his breast. She trembled at thinking that he might perhaps conceive one of those implacable resolutions, of which Zdenko's supposed death was a deplorable example for her. "Let us leave each other here," said she to him in German, (for their conversation could already be heard from the neighboring room.) "I have nothing to fear for the present; but if the future threatens me, believe, Albert, I will have recourse to you."

Albert yielded with a mortal repugnance. Fearing to want delicacy, he dared not disobey her; but he could not resolve to withdraw from the hall. Consuelo, who understood his hesitation, closed both doors of the saloon as she entered, so that he could neither see nor hear what was about to happen.

Anzoleto (for it was he; she had but too well divined his audacity, and but too well recognized the sound of his steps) was prepared to approach her impudently with a fraternal embrace in the presence of witnesses. When he saw her enter alone, pale, but cold and severe, he lost all his courage, and threw himself stammering at her feet. He had no need to feign joy and tenderness. He experienced both these sentiments, really and violently, on again finding her whom he had never ceased to love, notwithstanding his treachery. He burst into tears; and as she would not let him take her hands, he covered the border of her dress with kisses and with tears. Consuelo had not expected to find him thus. During four months, she had thought of him as he showed himself on the night of their separation, bitter, ironical, despicable and hateful above all men. That very morning she had seen him pass with an insolent bearing and an almost cynical thought-



lessness. And here he was on his knees, humbled, repentant, bathed in tears, as in the stormy days of their passionate reconciliations; handsomer than ever, for his travelling costume, somewhat common but well fitting, became him wonderfully, and the tan of his journey had given a more manly character to his admirable features.

Palpitating like a dove which the vulture has just seized, she was compelled to seat herself and hide her face in her hands, in order to be freed from the fascination of his glance. This movement, which Anzoleto mistook for shame, encouraged him; and the return of evil thoughts soon infected the simple burst of his first transports. Anzoleto, on flying from Venice, and the disgusts he had there experienced in punishment of his faults, had no other thought than that of seeking fortune; but at the same time, he had always cherished the desire and the hope of again finding his dear Consuelo. So wonderful a talent could not, in his opinion, remain long concealed, and he had nowhere neglected to obtain information, by questioning the tavern-keepers, guides, and travellers whom he encountered. At Vienna he had met persons of distinction from his own nation, to whom he had confessed his last act and his flight. They had advised him to go further from Venice, and to wait until count Zustiniani had forgotten or forgiven his escapade; and promising to do what they could in effecting this, had given him letters of recommendation for Prague, Dresden and Berlin. On passing Giants' castle, Anzoleto had not thought of questioning his guide; but after an hour's rapid riding, having slackened his pace to let the horses breathe, he had renewed the conversation by asking him for some details respecting the country and its inhabitants. The guide naturally talked to him of the lords of Rudolstadt, of their style of living, of the eccentricities of count Albert, whose craziness was no longer a secret to any one, especially since the aversion which doctor Wetzelius had very cordially sworn towards him. The guide did not fail to add, in order to complete the scandalous chronicle of the province, that count Albert had crowned all his

extravagances by refusing to marry his noble cousin, the beautiful baroness Amelia of Rudolstadt, and by being bewitched with an adventuress, only moderately handsome, but with whom all the world fell in love when she sang, because she had an extraordinary voice.

These two circumstances were so applicable to Consuelo, that our traveller immediately asked the name of the adventuress, and learning that she was called the Porporina, no longer doubted the truth. He retraced his steps on the instant; and after having rapidly improvised the pretext and the title under which he could introduce himself into so well guarded a chateau, he had drawn still more slanders from his guide. The man's gossip made him regard it as certain that Consuelo was the young count's mistress, while waiting until she became his wife; for the story was, that she had enchanted the whole family, and instead of driving her away as she deserved, they paid more respect and attention to her in the house, than they had ever done to the baroness Amelia.

These details stimulated Anzoletto quite as much, and perhaps even more than his real attachment for Consuelo. He had indeed sighed for the return of that sweet life she had procured for him; he had truly felt that in losing her advice and direction, he had destroyed, or for a long time compromised, the success of his musical career; in fine, he was strongly drawn to her by a love at once selfish, profound and unconquerable. But to all this was added the conceited temptation of disputing Consuelo with a rich and noble lover, of snatching her from a brilliant marriage, and of causing it to be said in the country and in the world, that this girl, so well endowed, had preferred to follow his fortunes, rather than become countess and chatelaine. He therefore amused himself by making the guide repeat that the Porporina reigned as sovereign at Riesenburg, and pleased himself with the puerile hope of making this same man say to all the travellers who should pass after him, that a handsome young stranger had entered the inhospitable manor of the giants on a gallop, that he CAME, SAW AND CONQUERED, and that a few hours or a few

days afterwards, he again left, carrying off the pearl of cantatrices from the very noble, the very powerful lord, the count of Rudolstadt.

At this idea he buried his spurs in his horse's sides, and laughed in such a manner as to make the guide think that the most crazy of the two was not count Albert.

The canoness received him with mistrust, but did not dare dismiss him, in the hope that he would perhaps carry away his pretended sister with him. He learned that Consuelo was out walking, and that vexed him. They served breakfast, and he questioned the domestics. Only one understood a little Italian, and intended no harm in saying that he had seen the signora upon the mountain with the young count. Anzoleto feared to find Consuelo reserved and cold in the first instance. He said to himself that if she was still only the virtuous betrothed of the heir of the house, she would have the haughty bearing of a person proud of her position; but if she had become his mistress, she would be less sure of her standing, and would tremble before an old friend who could ruin her prospects. Innocent, her conquest was difficult, but so much the more glorious; corrupted, it was the contrary; in the one case or the other, there was room for enterprise and hope.

Anzoleto had too much penetration not to perceive the ill humor and the anxiety which the canoness felt at the Porporina's long walk with her nephew. As he did not see count Christian, he had reason to believe that the guide had been misinformed; that the family saw with fear and displeasure the young count's love for the adventuress, and that she would lower her head before her first lover.

After waiting four mortal hours, Anzoleto, who had time to make many reflections, and whose morals were not pure enough to imagine any good in such a circumstance, regarded it as certain that so long a tête-a-tête between Consuelo and his rival testified an intimacy without reserve. He became more bold, more determined to await her without being rebuffed; and after the irresistible emotion which her first appearance caused him, he believed himself secure in daring

everything, as soon as he saw her become agitated, and fall powerless upon a chair. His tongue was therefore very quickly loosed. He accused himself for all the past, humbled himself hypocritically, wept all he chose, recounted his remorse and his sufferings, depicting them in a much more poetical light than disgusting distractions had allowed him to feel them; finally he implored her forgiveness with all the eloquence of a Venetian and a consummate actor.

Moved at first by the sound of his voice, and more and more terrified at her own weakness than at the strength of the temptation, Consuelo, who, during four months, had herself reflected much, recovered enough clearness of mind to recognize in these protestations and in this passionate eloquence, all she had so often heard at Venice in the last periods of their unfortunate connection. She was wounded at perceiving that he repeated the same oaths and the same prayers, as if nothing had occurred since those quarrels, when she was still so far from imagining his odious conduct. Indignant at such audacity, and at such fine discourses where there ought to have been only the silence of shame and the tears of repentance, she cut short his declamation by rising and replying with clearness;

“Enough, Anzoletto; I forgave you long since, and am no longer angry with you. Indignation has given place to pity, and the forgetfulness of my wrongs has come with the forgetfulness of my sufferings. We have nothing more to say to each other. I thank you for the good feeling which induced you to interrupt your journey in order to be reconciled with me. Your pardon was granted in advance, you perceive. Farewell then, and resume your journey.”

“I depart! leave you, lose you again!” cried Anzoletto, really frightened. “No, I would rather you would order me to kill myself immediately. No, I never will resolve to live without you. I cannot, Consuelo. I have tried and know that it is useless. Wherever you are not, there is nothing for me. My detestable ambition, my miserable vanity, to which I in vain wished to sacrifice my love, have become my punish-

ment, and never give me an instant of pleasure. Your image pursues me everywhere ; the remembrance of our love, so pure, so chaste, so delicious, (where can you yourself find one like it ?) is always before my eyes : all the chimeras, with which I strive to surround myself, cause me the deepest disgust. O Consuelo ! recall our beautiful nights at Venice, our boat, our stars, our endless songs, your good lessons, and our long kisses ! and your little bed, where I slept alone, while you said your rosary upon the terrace ! Did I not love you then ? Is the man who always respected you, even during your sleep, shut up tête-a-tête with you, incapable of loving ? If I were a wretch with others, was I not an angel with you ? and God knows what it cost me ! O ! do not forget all that ! You said you loved me so much, and yet you forget it ! And I, who am an ingrate, a monster, a dastard, I have not been able to forget it for a single instant ! and I do not wish to forget it, though you do so without regret and without effort ! But you never loved me, though you were a saint ; and I adore you, though I am a demon."

"It is possible," replied Consuelo, struck by the accent of truth which accompanied these words, "that you may have a sincere regret for that happiness lost and stained by you. It is a punishment which it is your duty to accept, and which I ought not to prevent you from undergoing. Success has corrupted you, Anzoletto. You require a little suffering to purify you. Go and remember me, if the bitter draught is salutary to you. If not, forget me, as I, who have nothing to expiate or repair, forget you."

"Ah ! you have a heart of iron !" cried Anzoletto, surprised and offended at so much calmness. "But do not think that you can drive me away thus. It is possible that my arrival troubles you, that my presence is a clog upon you. I know very well that you wish to sacrifice the remembrance of our love to the ambition of rank and fortune. But it shall not be so. I attach myself to you ; and if I lose you, it shall not be without a struggle. I will recall to you the past, and I will do it before your new friends, if you constrain me to it. I

will repeat to you the oaths which you made at the bedside of your dying mother, and which you renewed to me a hundred times upon her tomb, and in the churches, where we went to kneel close to each other among the crowd, to hear the beautiful music, and whisper together. Prostrate before you, I will humbly recall to you alone, things which you will not refuse to hear; and if you do, woe to us both! I will say before your new lover things which he does not know! For they know nothing of you, not even that you have been an actress. Well, I will inform them, and then we shall see if the noble count Albert will recover his reason to contend for you with an actor, your friend, your equal, your betrothed, your lover. Ah! do not drive me to despair, Consuelo, or else—”

“Threats! At last I discover and recognize you, Anzoleto,” said the young girl, indignant. “Well! I like you better thus, and I thank you for having raised the mask. Yes, thanks to Heaven, I shall have no more regret or pity for you. I see the gall in your heart, the baseness in your character, the hatred in your love. Go on, satisfy your spite. You will do me a service. But unless you are as accustomed to calumny as you are to insult, you can say nothing of me to make me blush.”

Speaking thus, she moved towards the door, opened it, and was going out, when she found herself face to face with count Christian. At the aspect of this venerable old man, who advanced with an affable and majestic air after kissing Consuelo's hand, Anzoleto, who had rushed forward to retain the latter, by good will or by force, recoiled intimidated, and lost the audacity of his manner.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

"DEAR signora," said the old count, "pardon me for not having given a better reception to your brother. I had given orders that I should not be interrupted, because I had unusual occupations for this morning; and they obeyed me too well, in leaving me ignorant of the arrival of a guest who is welcome in this house to me, as to all my family. Be assured, sir," added he, addressing Anzoletto, "that I see here with pleasure so near a relation of our beloved Porporina. I therefore request you to remain here, and pass all the time that may be agreeable to you. I presume that after so long a separation you must have many things to say to each other, and much pleasure at finding yourselves together. I hope you will not fear being indiscreet in enjoying at leisure a happiness which I partake."

Contrary to his custom, count Christian spoke with ease to a stranger. His timidity had long since disappeared beside the gentle Consuelo, and on this day, his countenance seemed illumined by a ray of life more brilliant than usual, like those which the sun sheds upon the horizon at the hour of his setting. Anzoletto was confused before that kind of majesty which rectitude and serenity of soul reflect upon the brow of a respectable old man. He knew how to bend his back very low before the great nobles; but he hated and mocked them internally. He had found only too many reasons to despise them, in the fashionable world in which he had for some time lived. He had never before seen dignity so well borne, and politeness so cordial, as those of the old chatelain of Riesen- burg. He was troubled in thanking him, and almost repented having obtained by an imposition the paternal reception with which he was greeted. He feared above all, lest Consuelo should unmask him, by declaring to the count that he was not

her brother. He felt that, at this moment, he could not repay her with impertinence, and endeavor to avenge himself.

“I am much gratified by the goodness of my lord count,” replied Consuelo, after an instant’s reflection; “but my brother, who feels its whole value, cannot have the happiness to profit by it. Pressing business calls him to Prague, and he has this moment taken leave of me.”

“That is impossible! you have hardly seen each other an instant,” said the count.

“He has lost several hours in waiting for me,” replied she, “and now his moments are counted. He knows very well,” added she, looking at her pretended brother with a significant air, “that he cannot remain here a minute longer.”

This cold pertinacity restored to Anzoletto all the hardihood of his character, and all the ease of his part. “Let happen whatever pleases the devil—God, I mean to say!” said he recovering himself; “but I will not leave my dear sister so precipitately as her reason and prudence require. I know of no business that is worth an instant of happiness; and since my lord the count permits me so generously, I accept with gratitude. I remain! my engagements at Prague must be fulfilled a little later, that is all.”

“That is speaking like a thoughtless young man,” returned Consuelo, offended. “There are some affairs in which honor calls more loudly than interest.”

“It is speaking like a brother,” replied Anzoletto; “and you speak always like a queen, my good little sister.”

“It is speaking like a good young man!” added the old count, extending his hand to Anzoletto. “I know of no business which cannot be put off till the morrow. It is true that I have always been reproached for my indolence; but I have always found that more is lost by precipitancy than by reflection. For example, my dear Porporina, there are many days, I might say many weeks, that I have had a request to make to you, and I have delayed until now. I believe I have done well, and that the moment has come. Can you grant me, to-day, the hour’s conversation I was coming to ask of you,



when I was informed of your brother's arrival? It seems to me that this happy circumstance has occurred quite apropos, and perhaps he would not be out of place in the conference I propose to you."

"I am always, and at every hour, at your lordship's command," answered Consuelo. "As to my brother, he is a young man whom I do not admit without examination into my personal affairs."

"I know that very well," returned Anzoleto impudently; "but as my lord the count authorizes me, I do not require any other permission than his to enter into the confidence."

"You will please allow me to judge of what is proper for you and for me," replied Consuelo haughtily. "Sir count, I am ready to follow you to your apartment, and to listen to you with respect."

"You are very severe with this young man, who has so frank and cheerful an air," said the count smiling; then turning towards Anzoleto: "Do not be impatient, my child," said he to him. "Your turn will come. What I have to say to your sister cannot be concealed from you; and soon, I hope, she will permit me to place you, as you say, in the confidence."

Anzoleto had the impertinence to reply to the expansive gaiety of the old man, by retaining his hand in his own, as if he wished to attach himself to him, and discover the secret from which Consuelo excluded him. He had not the good taste to understand that he ought at least to leave the saloon, in order to spare the count the necessity of doing so. When he found himself alone, he stamped with anger, fearing lest that young girl, become so much mistress of herself, should disconcert all his plans, and cause him to be dismissed in spite of his address. He had a desire to steal through the house, and listen at all the doors. He left the saloon with this design, wandered in the gardens for some moments, then ventured into the galleries, pretending, whenever he met a domestic, to be admiring the beautiful architecture of the chateau. But, at three different times, he saw pass at some distance, a

personage dressed in black, and singularly grave, whose attention he was not very desirous of attracting; it was Albert, who appeared not to remark him, and yet never lost sight of him. Anzoletto, seeing that he was a full head taller than himself, and observing the serious beauty of his features, comprehended that, on all points, he had not so despicable a rival as he had at first thought, in the person of the madman of Riesenburg. He therefore preferred returning to the saloon, and exercising his fine voice in that vast hall, as he passed his fingers absently over the harpsichord.

"My daughter," said count Christian to Consuelo, after having led her to his study, and drawn out for her a large arm chair of red velvet with gold fringes, while he seated himself on an easy chair by her side: "I have a favor to ask of you, and yet I know not by what right I can do so, before you understand my intentions. May I flatter myself that my white hairs, my tender esteem for you, and the friendship of the noble Porpora, your adopted father, will give you sufficient confidence in me to induce you to open your heart without reserve?"

Affected, and yet somewhat terrified at this opening, Consuelo raised the old man's hand to her lips, and replied with frankness: "Yes, sir count, I love and respect you as if I had the honor to have you for my father, and I can answer all your questions without fear and without evasion, in whatever concerns me personally."

"I will ask you nothing else, my dear daughter, and I thank you for this promise. Believe me incapable of abusing it, as I believe you incapable of breaking it."

"I do believe it, sir count. Be pleased to speak."

"Well! my child," said the old man, with an artless and encouraging curiosity, "what is your name?"

"I have no surname," replied Consuelo without hesitating; "my mother bore no other than that of Rosmunda. At my baptism, I was called Mary of Consolation: I have never known my father."

"But you know his name?"

“Not at all, my lord; I have never heard him spoken of.”

“Has master Porpora adopted you? Has he given you his name by a legal act?”

“No, my lord. Among artists, such things are not done, and are not necessary. My generous master has no property, and nothing to bequeath. As to his name, it is unimportant to my position in the world, whether I bear it in consequence of a usage, or of a contract. If I justify it by some talent, it will be well acquired; otherwise, I shall have received an honor of which I was unworthy.”

The count kept silence for some instants; then taking Consuelo's hand:

“The noble frankness with which you reply gives me a still higher opinion of you,” said he to her. “Do not think that I have asked these details of you in order to esteem you more or less, according to your birth and your condition. I wished to know if you had any repugnance to telling the truth; I see that you have none whatever. I am infinitely obliged to you, and consider you more ennobled by your character than we are by our titles.”

Consuelo smiled at the good faith in which the old patrician admired her for making so easy an avowal without blushing. There was in this surprise a remnant of prejudice, the more tenacious as Christian opposed it more nobly. It was evident that he combated this prejudice in himself, and wished to overcome it.

“Now,” resumed he, “I am going to ask a still more delicate question, my dear child, and shall require all your indulgence to excuse my temerity.”

“Fear nothing, my lord,” said she; “I will answer everything with as little embarrassment.”

“Well! my child—you are not married?”

“No, my lord, not that I know of.”

“And—you are not a widow? You have no children?”

“I am not a widow, I have no children,” replied Consuelo, who had a strong inclination to laugh, not knowing to what point the count wished to come.

"In fine," resumed he, "you have not plighted your faith to any one; you are perfectly free?"

"Excuse me, my lord; I had plighted my faith, with the consent, and even by the order, of my dying mother, to a young man whom I had loved from my childhood and whose betrothed I was up to the moment of leaving Venice."

"So then, you are betrothed?" said the count, with a singular mixture of disappointment and satisfaction.

"No, my lord, I am perfectly free," replied Consuelo. "He whom I loved has unworthily betrayed his faith, and I have left him forever."

"So, you loved him?" said the count, after a pause.

"With my whole soul, it is true."

"And—perhaps you love him still?"

"No, my lord, that is impossible."

"You would have no pleasure at seeing him again?"

"The sight of him would be torture to me."

"And you never permitted—he could not have dared—but you will say that I become insulting, and wish to know too much!"

"I comprehend you, my lord; and as I am called upon to confess, and do not wish to surprise you into esteem, I will give you the means of knowing, to an iota, if I merit it or not. He permitted himself many things, but he never dared more than I permitted. Thus we have drank in the same cup, and reposed on the same bench. He slept in my chamber, while I said my rosary. He watched me when I was ill. I did not guard myself with fear. We were always alone, we loved each other, we were to be married, and we respected each other. I had sworn to my mother to be what is called a *sage* girl. I kept my word, if it is being sage to believe in a man who tries to deceive us, and to give all our confidence, affection and esteem to one who merits none of them. It was when he wished to cease being my brother without becoming my husband, that I began to defend myself. It was when he was unfaithful to me that I rejoiced at having defended myself so well. It is in the power of that man without honor to

boast of the contrary; that is not of much consequence to a poor girl like me. Provided I sing well, no more will be required of me. Provided I can without remorse kiss the crucifix on which I swore to my mother to be chaste, I shall not be much troubled about what people think of me. I have no family to blush, no brothers or cousins to fight for me —”

“No brothers? you have one!”

Consuelo felt herself ready to confess the whole truth to the old count, under the seal of secrecy. But she feared to be cowardly in seeking beyond herself for a refuge against one who had threatened her in so cowardly a manner. She thought she ought to have firmness enough to defend and deliver herself from Anzoletto. And besides, the generosity of her heart recoiled before the idea of having the man she had so religiously loved, ignominiously expelled by her host. However polite count Christian might be in dismissing Anzoletto, however culpable the latter, she did not feel the courage to subject him to so great a humiliation. She therefore replied to the question of the old man, that she regarded her brother as a mad-cap, and was not accustomed to treat him otherwise than as a child.

“But he is not evil disposed?” said the count.

“Perhaps he is so,” replied she. “I have the least possible intercourse with him; our characters and our views of life are entirely different. Your lordship may have remarked that I was not very anxious to retain him here.”

“It shall be as you wish, my child; I have full confidence in your judgment. Now that you have confided everything to me with so noble a frankness —”

“Excuse me, my lord,” said Consuelo; “I have not told you everything about myself, because you have not asked me. I am ignorant of your motive for the interest you are this day pleased to take in my existence. I presume that some one has spoken of me here more or less unfavorably, and that you wish to know if my presence does not disgrace your house. Hitherto, as you have questioned me upon very superficial things, I have thought I should be wanting in due modesty,

if I referred to myself without your permission ; but as you now appear to wish to know me thoroughly, I ought to inform you of a circumstance which will perhaps injure me in your estimation. Not only would it be possible, as you have often suggested, (though I have no such desire at present,) that I should embrace the career of the stage ; but it is moreover certain that I made my *début* at Venice the last season, under the name of Consuelo—they gave me the surname of the Zingarella—and all Venice knows my person and my voice.”

“ Wait a moment ! ” cried the count, astonished at this new revelation. “ Can you be that wonder who made so much noise at Venice the past year, and of whom the Italian gazettes made mention with such pompous eulogiums ? The most beautiful voice, the most beautiful talent, which had ever been revealed, within the memory of man — ? ”

“ Upon the Saint Samuel theatre, my lord. Those eulogiums were, without doubt, exaggerated ; but it is an incontestable fact, that I am that same Consuelo, that I sang in several operas, in one word, that I am an actress, or, as is more politely said, a cantatrice. See now if I deserve to retain your good will.”

“ This is very extraordinary ! what a strange destiny ! ” said the count, absorbed in his reflections. “ Have you told all this to — to any one besides me, my child ? ”

“ I have told nearly all to the count your son, my lord, although I have not entered into the details you have just heard.”

“ So Albert knows your birth, your ancient love, your profession ? ”

“ Yes, my lord.”

“ Very well, my dear signora, I cannot thank you too much for the admirable loyalty of your conduct as respects us, and I can promise you that you will have no reason to repent it. Now, Consuelo—(yes, I remember that was the name Albert gave you at the commencement, when he talked Spanish to you,) permit me to recover myself somewhat. I feel much agitated. We have still many things to say to each other,

and you must forgive me a little anxiety at the approach of so grave a decision. Have the goodness to wait here for me an instant."

He went out, and Consuelo, following him with her eyes, saw him through the gilded glass doors enter his oratory, and kneel down with fervor.

Herself greatly agitated, she was lost in conjectures as to the object of a conversation which was announced with so much solemnity. At first she had thought that Anzoletto, while waiting for her, had, out of spite, already done what he had threatened; that he had talked with the chaplain or with Hanz, and that the manner in which he had spoken of her, had excited grave scruples in the minds of her hosts. But count Christian could not dissemble, and hitherto his manner and his discourse announced an increase of affection, rather than a feeling of mistrust. Besides, the frankness of her answers had affected him, as unexpected revelations would have done; the last, especially, had been a stroke of lightning. And now he was praying, he was asking God to enlighten and sustain him, in the accomplishment of a great resolution. "Is he going to ask me to leave the house with my brother? Is he going to offer me money?" she asked herself. "Ah! may God preserve me from that insult! But no! this man is too delicate, too good to think of humiliating me. What did he mean to say at first, and what can he mean to say now? Doubtless my long walk with his son may have given him fears, and he is about to scold me. I have deserved it, perhaps, and I will receive the lecture, since I cannot answer sincerely the questions which may be asked me respecting Albert. This is a trying day; if I pass many such I shall no longer be able to dispute the palm of singing with Anzoletto's jealous mistresses; my chest feels all on fire, and my throat is dry."

Count Christian soon returned to her. He was calm, his pale countenance bore witness of a victory obtained with a noble intention. "My daughter," said he to Consuelo, reseating himself beside her, after having compelled her to retain

the sumptuous arm-chair which she had wished to yield to him, and on which she was enthroned, spite of herself, with a timid air; "it is time that I should respond by my frankness to that which you have testified towards me. Consuelo, my son loves you."

Consuelo became red and pale by turns. She attempted to answer. Christian interrupted her.

"It is not a question which I ask you," said he; "I should have no right to do so, and perhaps you would have none to answer; for I know that you have not in any way encouraged Albert's hopes. He has told me all; and I believe him, for he has never lied, nor I either."

"Nor I either," said Consuelo raising her eyes to heaven with an expression of the most candid pride. "Count Albert must have told you, my lord—"

"That you have repelled every idea of a union with him."

"It was my duty. I knew the customs and the ideas of the world; I knew that I was not made to be count Albert's wife, for the sole reason that I esteem myself inferior to no person under God, and that I would not receive grace or favor from whomsoever before men."

"I know your just pride, Consuelo. I should consider it exaggerated, if Albert had been alone in the world; but in the belief you had that I should not approve of such a union, you ought to have answered as you did."

"Now, my lord," said Consuelo rising, "I understand the rest, and beseech you to spare me the humiliation I feared. I will quit your house, as I would before have quitted it, if I had thought I could do so without endangering the reason and the life of count Albert, over which I have more influence than I could have wished. Since you know what it was not permitted me to reveal to you, you can watch over him, prevent the consequences of this separation, and resume a care which belongs to you rather than to me. If I arrogated it to myself indiscreetly, it is a fault which God will forgive me; for he knows what purity of feeling has guided me in all this."



"I know it," returned the count, "and God has spoken to my conscience, as Albert had spoken to my heart. Remain seated therefore, Consuelo, and do not hasten to condemn my intentions. It was not to order you to quit my house, but to beseech you, with clasped hands, to remain in it all your life, that I asked you to listen to me."

"All my life!" repeated Consuelo, falling back upon her chair, divided between the satisfaction caused her by this reparation to her dignity, and the terror which such an offer excited. "All my life! your lordship is not thinking of what you do me the honor to say."

"I have thought much of it, my daughter," replied the count with a melancholy smile, "and I feel that I ought not to repent it. My son loves you distractedly, you have all power over his soul. It is you who restored him to me, you who went to seek him in some mysterious place which he will not disclose to me, but where he says no one but a mother or a saint would have dared to penetrate. It is you who risked your life to save him from the isolation and delirium which consumed him. Thanks to you, he has ceased to cause us horrible anxiety by his absences. It is you who have restored to him calmness, health, reason in a word. For it must not be dissembled, my poor boy was mad, and it is certain that he is so no longer. We have passed nearly the whole night together, and he has shown me a wisdom superior to mine. I knew that you were to go out with him this morning. I therefore authorized him to ask of you that which you would not hear—You were afraid of me, dear Consuelo; you thought that the old Rudolstadt, encrusted with his prejudices of nobility, would be ashamed to owe his son to you. Well! you were mistaken. The old Rudolstadt has had pride and prejudices without doubt; perhaps he has them still; he will not conceal his faults before you; but he abjures them, and in the transport of a boundless gratitude, he thanks you for having restored to him his last, his only child!" Speaking thus, count Christian took both of Consuelo's hands in his, and covered them with kisses while he watered them with tears.

## CHAPTER LIX.

CONSUELO was deeply affected by an explanation which restored to her her self-respect, and tranquillized her conscience. Until this moment she had often feared that she had imprudently yielded to the dictates of her generosity and her courage: now she received the sanction and the recompense. Her tears of joy mingled with those of the old man, and they both remained for some time too much agitated to continue the conversation.

Still Consuelo did not yet understand the proposition which had been made to her, and the count, thinking that he had sufficiently explained himself, regarded her silence and her tears as signs of assent and gratitude. "I will go," said he at last, "and bring my son to your feet, in order that he may unite his blessings with mine on learning the extent of his happiness."

"Stop, my lord!" said Consuelo, astonished at this precipitancy. "I do not understand what you require of me. You approve the attachment which count Albert has manifested for me, and my devotedness towards him. You grant me your confidence, you know that I will not betray it: but how can I engage to consecrate my whole life to a friendship of so delicate a nature? I see clearly that you depend on time and on my reason, to preserve your son's moral health and to calm the enthusiasm of his attachment for me. But I do not know if I shall long have that power; even if such an intimacy were not dangerous for so excitable a man, I am not free to devote my days to that glorious task. I am not my own mistress!"

"O heavens! what do you say, Consuelo? Did you not then understand me? Or did you deceive me in saying that

you were free, that you had no attachment of the heart, no engagement, no family?"

"But, my lord," said Consuelo stupefied, "I have an object, a vocation, a condition; I belong to the art to which I have consecrated myself since my childhood."

"Great God! what do you say? Do you wish to return to the stage?"

"As to that, I am ignorant, and I spoke the truth in affirming that my inclination did not lead me thither. I have hitherto experienced only horrible sufferings in that stormy career; but I feel nevertheless that I should be rash in agreeing to renounce it. It has been my destiny, and perhaps I cannot withdraw myself from the future which had been traced out for me. Whether I again tread the boards, or give lessons and concerts, I am still, I must be, a cantatrice. What should I be good for otherwise? Where can I attain independence? In what can I occupy my mind, accustomed to labor, and greedy of that kind of emotion?"

"O Consuelo, Consuelo!" cried count Christian sadly; "what you say is true. But I thought you loved my son, and now I see that you do not love him!"

"And if I should love him with the passion which I must feel in order to sacrifice myself for him, what should you say, my lord?" cried Consuelo, growing impatient in her turn. "Do you think it absolutely impossible for a woman to conceive love for count Albert, that you ask me to remain always with him?"

"What! can I have so badly explained myself, or do you think me crazy, dear Consuelo? Have I not asked your heart and your hand for my son? Have I not placed at your feet a legitimate and certainly honorable alliance? If you loved Albert, you would doubtless find in the happiness of sharing his life a sufficient recompense for the loss of your glory and your triumphs! But you do not love him, since you consider it impossible to renounce what you call your destiny!"

This explanation had been tardy, even involuntarily to the

good Christian. It was not without a mixture of terror and of mortal repugnance, that the old lord had sacrificed to the happiness of his son, all the ideas of his life, all the principles of his caste; and when, after a long and painful struggle with Albert and with himself, he had consummated the sacrifice, the absolute ratification of so terrible an act could not, without effort, extend from his heart to his lips.

Consuelo perceived or divined this; for at the moment when count Christian appeared to despair of making her consent to this marriage, there certainly was upon the old man's countenance an expression of involuntary joy, mingled with that of a strange consternation.

In an instant Consuelo understood her position, and a feeling of pride, perhaps a little too personal, inspired a disinclination for the match proposed to her. "You wish that I should become count Albert's wife!" said she, still more amazed at so strange an offer. "You would consent to call me your daughter, to allow me to bear your name, to present me to your relatives, to your friends? Ah! my lord! how much you must love your son, and how much your son ought to love you."

"If you find so great a generosity in that, Consuelo, the reason must be that your heart cannot conceive one equal to it, or that the object does not appear to you worthy."

"My lord," said Consuelo, after having recovered herself with her face hidden in her hands, "it seems to me that I am dreaming. In spite of myself, my pride is awakened at the thought of the humiliations with which my life would be filled, if I dared accept the sacrifice which your paternal love suggests to you."

"And who would dare to humiliate you, Consuelo, when both father and son covered you with the ægis of marriage and family?"

"And the aunt, my lord? the aunt, who is here a true mother, could she consent to it without blushing?"

"She will come and unite her prayers with ours, if you promise to allow yourself to be persuaded. Do not ask more

than the weakness of human nature can grant. A lover, a father, can endure the humiliation and the sorrow of a refusal. My sister would not dare to do so. But, with the assurance of success, we will bring her to your arms, my daughter."

"My lord," said Consuelo trembling, "has count Albert ever told you that I loved him?"

"No!" replied the count, struck with a sudden recollection. "Albert told me that the obstacle would be in your own heart. He repeated it to me a hundred times; but I could not believe it. Your reserve appeared to me to have a sufficient foundation in your rectitude and delicacy. But I thought that in relieving you of your scruples, I should obtain from you the avowal you had refused to him."

"And what did he say of our walk this morning?"

"A single word: 'Try, my father, it is the only means of knowing if it be disinclination or pride which closes her heart against me.'"

"Alas, my lord, what will you think of me, when I tell you that I myself do not know?"

"I shall think it is disinclination, my dear Consuelo. Ah! my son! my poor son! What a horrible destiny is his! Not to be loved by the only woman he has ever been able to love, whom perhaps he ever can love! This last misfortune was wanting to us."

"O my God! you must hate me, my lord! You do not understand how my pride resists when you immolate your own. The pride of a girl like me must appear to you to have much less foundation; and yet believe me, there is in my heart at this moment a combat as violent as that over which you have yourself triumphed."

"I comprehend it. Do not believe, signora, that I have so little respect for modesty, rectitude and disinterestedness, as not to appreciate the pride founded on such treasures. But that which paternal love has been able to overcome, (you see that I speak to you with entire freedom,) I think woman's love could likewise accomplish. Well! suppose that Albert's whole life, yours and mine, should be a combat

against the prejudices of the world; suppose that we should be obliged to suffer long and much, all three of us, and my sister with us, would there not be in our mutual tenderness, in the testimony of our conscience, and in the fruits of our devotedness, somewhat sufficient to render us stronger than all the world together? A great love will make those evils appear light which now seem too heavy for yourself and for us. But that great love, you, agitated and fearful, seek for in the bottom of your heart; and you do not find it there, Consuelo, because it is not there."

"Well! yes, that is the question, that is the whole question," said Consuelo, pressing her hands strongly against her heart, "all the rest is nothing. I also had my prejudices; but your example proves to me that it is my duty to tread them under my feet, to be as great, as heroic as you! Let us speak no more of my dislikes, of my false shame. Let us speak no more even of my career, of my art!" added she with a deep sigh. "I should know how to abjure even that, if—if I love Albert. This is what I must know. Hear me, my lord. I have asked myself the question a hundred times, but never with the confidence which your assent gives me. How could I interrogate my heart seriously, when the question itself was in my eyes a madness and a crime? Now, it seems to me that I can know myself, and decide. I ask of you some days to reflect, and to know if the immense devotedness I feel for him, the respect, the boundless esteem with which his virtues inspire me, the powerful sympathy, the strange dominion which he exercises over me by his words, proceed from love, or from admiration. For I experience all these, my lord, and all these are combated in me by an indefinable terror, by a profound sadness, and I will tell you all, O my noble friend! by the remembrance of a love less enthusiastic, but more sweet and tender, which in no manner resembled this."

"Strange and noble girl!" replied Christian with emotion, "what wisdom and what strange ideas in your words and thoughts! You resemble my poor Albert in many respects,

and the agitated uncertainty of your feelings recalls to me my wife, my noble, my beautiful, my sad Wanda!—O! Consuelo! you awaken in me a recollection at once very tender and very bitter. I was about to say to you: Surmount these irresolutions; triumph over these dislikes; love, from virtue, from greatness of soul, from compassion, from the effort of a noble and pious charity, that poor man who adores you, and who, in making you unhappy perhaps, will owe to you his salvation, and will cause you to deserve celestial recompense! But you have recalled to me his mother, his mother who gave herself to me from duty and from friendship. She could not feel for me, a simple, gentle and timid man, the enthusiasm with which her imagination burned. Still she was faithful and generous to the last; but how she did suffer! Alas! her affection was my joy and my punishment; her constancy, my pride and my remorse. She died in suffering, and my heart was broken forever. And now if I am insignificant, worn out, dead before being buried, do not be too much astonished, Consuelo: I have suffered what no one has known, what I have never spoken of to any one, and what I now confess to you with trembling. Ah! rather than induce you to make such a sacrifice, rather than advise Albert to accept it, may my eyes close in sadness and my son at once sink under his destiny! I know too well the cost of endeavoring to force nature, and to combat the insatiable requirements of the soul! Take time therefore to reflect, my daughter," added the old count, pressing Consuelo against his breast, swollen with sobs, and kissing her noble brow with a father's love. "It will be much better so. If you must refuse, Albert, prepared by anxious uncertainty, will not be struck to the ground, as he would now be by the frightful news."

They separated with this understanding; and Consuelo, stealing through the galleries in fear of meeting Anzoleta, shut herself up in her chamber, overpowered with emotion and fatigue.

At first she endeavored to take a little rest, in order to

attain the necessary calmness. She felt exhausted and, throwing herself on her bed, she soon fell into a state of torpor which was more painful than refreshing. She had wished to go to sleep thinking of Albert, in order to mature her decision in her mind, during those mysterious manifestations of sleep, in which we think we sometimes find the prophetic sense of those things which engross us. But the interrupted dreams which she had for several hours, incessantly recalled Anzoleto, instead of Albert, to her thoughts. It was always Venice, always the Corte Minelli; it was always her first love, calm, smiling, poetical. And every time she awoke, the remembrance of Albert was connected with that of the gloomy grotto; or the sound of his violin, made ten times more powerful by the echoes of solitude, called up the dead, and wailed over the freshly closed grave of Zdenko. At this idea, fear and sorrow closed her heart to the transports of affection. The future which was proposed to her, showed itself only in the midst of cold shadows and bloody visions; while the past, radiant and fruitful, enlarged her chest and made her heart palpitate. It seemed to her that in dreaming of the past, she heard her own voice resound through space, fill all nature, and spread immensely while mounting to the skies, instead of which, that voice became hoarse and hollow, and lost itself like a death-rattle in the abysses of the earth, whenever the strange sounds of the violin of the cavern recurred to her memory.

These vague reveries so fatigued her, that she rose to drive them away; and the first stroke of the bell warning her that dinner would be served in half an hour, she began her toilet, continuing to be occupied with the same ideas. But, strange occurrence! for the first time in her life, she was more attentive to her mirror and more interested in her hair and her dress, than in those serious matters of which she sought the solution. In spite of herself, she made herself beautiful and wished to be so. And it was not to excite the desires and jealousy of the two rival lovers, that she felt this irresistible movement of coquetry; she did think, she could think of only



one. Albert had never said a word to her about her appearance. Perhaps, in the enthusiasm of his passion, he imagined her more beautiful than she really was; but his ideas were so elevated and his love so great, that he would have thought he profaned her, by looking upon her with the intoxicated eyes of a lover, or the scrutinizing satisfaction of an artist. She was always to him enveloped in a cloud which his sight could not pierce, and which moreover his thought surrounded with a dazzling glory. Looked she more or less well, to his eyes she was always the same. He had seen her livid, emaciated, withered, struggling with death, and more like a spectre than a woman. He had then searched in her features, with attention and anxiety, for the more or less terrifying symptoms of her malady; but he had not seen if she had moments of ugliness, if she could be an object of fright and of disgust. And when she had recovered the brightness of youth and the expression of life, he did not perceive whether she had lost or gained in beauty. She was for him, in life as in death, the ideal of all youth, of all sublime expression, of all unique and incomparable beauty. Therefore Consuelo never thought of him when arranging herself before her mirror.

But what a difference on the part of Anzoletto! With what minute care he had examined, judged and detailed her in his imagination, on the day when he asked himself if she was ugly! How he had taken account of the least graces of her person, of the smallest efforts she had made to please! How he knew her hair, her arm, her foot, her walk, the colors which became her complexion, the smallest folds of her dress! And with what ardent vivacity had he praised her! with what voluptuous languor had he contemplated her! The chaste girl had not then comprehended the beatings of her own heart. She wished still not to comprehend them, and yet she felt them almost as violent, at the idea of reappearing before his eyes. She was vexed with herself, blushed with shame and anger, strove to beautify herself for Albert alone; and yet she sought for the style of hair, the ribbon, and even the look which would please Anzoletto. "Alas! alas!" said

she to herself, hurrying from her mirror as soon as her toilet was completed ; “ even at this time I can think only of him, and past happiness exercises a more attractive power upon me than present contempt, and the promises of another love ! When I look at the future, without him it offers only terror and despair. But what would it be with him ? Do I not know that the beautiful days of Venice cannot return, that innocence would no longer dwell with us, that Anzoletto’s soul is forever corrupted, that his caresses would degrade me, that my life would be empoisoned every minute by shame, by jealousy, by fear and by regret ? ”

Interrogating herself severely in this respect, Consuelo was satisfied that she labored under no delusion, and that she had not the most secret affection for Anzoletto. She no longer loved him in the present, she feared and almost hated him in the future, in which his perversity could only increase ; but in the past she cherished him to such a degree that her soul and her life could not be detached from him. He was henceforth before her as a portrait which recalled to her an adored being and days of delights ; like a widow, who hides herself from her new husband to look upon the likeness of the first, she felt that the dead was more living than the other in her heart.

## CHAPTER LX.

CONSUELO had too much judgment and elevation of soul, not to know that of the two loves she inspired, the truest, the most noble and the most precious was without any comparison that of Albert. Thus when she again found herself between them, she at first thought she had triumphed over her enemy. Albert's profound look, which seemed to penetrate to the bottom of her heart, the slow and strong pressure of his loyal hand, gave her to understand that he knew the result of her interview with Christian, and that he awaited her decision with submission and gratitude. In fact, Albert had obtained more than he hoped for, and this irresolution was sweet to him, compared with what he had feared, so far was he removed from the presumptuous fatuity of Anzoletto. The latter, on the contrary, had armed himself with all his resolution. Guessing, pretty nearly, what was passing around him, he was determined to contest the ground step by step, even should he be pushed out of the house by the shoulders. His free and easy manners, his ironical and bold look, excited in Consuelo the deepest disgust; and when he impudently approached to offer her his hand, she turned away her head, and took that which Albert extended to lead her to the table.

As usual the young count seated himself opposite to Consuelo, and old Christian had her on his left, in the place where Amelia had formerly sat, and which she had always occupied since her recovery. But, instead of the chaplain, whose seat was on Consuelo's left, the canoness invited the

pretended brother to seat himself between them; so that Anzoleto's bitter epigrams could reach the young girl's ear in a low voice, and his irreverent sallies could scandalize, as he wished, the old priest, to whom he had already begun to give offence.

Anzoleto's plan was very simple. He wished to render himself odious and insupportable to those of the family whom he felt to be hostile to the projected marriage, in order to give them by his *mauvais ton*, his familiar air, and his misplaced words, the worst possible idea of Consuelo's connexions. "We shall see," said he to himself, "if they will swallow the *brother* I shall serve up to them."

Anzoleto, an unfinished singer and poor tragedian, had the instincts of a good comic actor. He had already seen enough of the world, to know how to imitate the elegant manners and agreeable language of good company; but that character would only have served to reconcile the canoness to the low extraction of the betrothed, and he took the opposite part with the greater facility that it was more natural to him. Having satisfied himself that Wenceslawa, notwithstanding her obstinacy in speaking only German, the language of the court and of all well disposed subjects, did not lose a word of what was said in Italian, he began to chat at random, helped himself freely to the good Hungarian wine, the effects of which he did not fear, accustomed as he had been for a long while to more heady drinks, but the heating influences of which he pretended to feel, in order to give himself the appearance of an inveterate toper. His project succeeded wonderfully. Count Christian, who had at first laughed indulgently at his droll sallies, no longer smiled without effort, and required all his lordly urbanity, all his paternal affection, not to put in his true place the disagreeable future brother-in-law of his noble son. The chaplain, indignant, fidgeted in his chair, and murmured in German some exclamations which resembled exorcisms. His meal was horribly troubled, and never in his life did he digest more sadly. The canoness heard all the impertinences of her guest with a

restrained contempt, and a rather malicious satisfaction. At every new sally, she raised her eyes towards her brother, as if to call him to witness; and the good Christian bent his head, and endeavored to distract the attention of the auditors by some very awkward observation. Then the canoness looked at Albert; but Albert was impassible. He seemed neither to hear nor see his unwelcome and merry neighbor. Poor Consuelo was without doubt the most cruelly oppressed of all these persons. At first she thought that Anzoleto, in a life of debauchery, had contracted these disorderly manners and this cynical turn of mind, which she did not know him to possess; for he had never been thus before her. She was so much disgusted and troubled, as almost to be obliged to leave the table. But when she perceived that it was all a stratagem, she recovered the sang-froid which became her innocence and her dignity. She had not introduced herself into the secrets and the affections of this family, to obtain by intrigue the rank they offered her. That rank had not for an instant flattered her ambition, and she felt herself strong in her conscience against the accusations of the canoness. She knew, she saw clearly, that Albert's love, and his father's confidence, were above so miserable a trial. The contempt with which Anzoleto, mean and wicked in his vengeance, inspired her, made her stronger still. Her eyes met Albert's only once, and they understood each other. Consuelo said: *yes?* and Albert answered: *In spite of all.*

Anzoleto saw and commented upon that look: "It is not yet finished," said he in a low voice to Consuelo.

"You are doing me a great service," replied Consuelo to him, "and I thank you."

They spoke between their teeth that rapid dialect of Venice, which seems composed only of vowels, and in which the ellipsis is so frequent that the Italians of Rome and Florence can hardly catch it at first hearing.

"I perceive that you detest me at this moment," returned Anzoleto, "and think yourself sure of hating me always. But you will not escape me for all that."

"You unmasked yourself too soon," said Consuelo.

"But not too late," replied Anzoleto. "Come, *padre mio benedetto*," said he, addressing the chaplain, and pushing his elbow so as to make him spill upon his band half the wine he was carrying to his lips, "drink more boldly of this good wine which does as much good to body and soul as that of the holy mass. Lord count," said he to old Christian, reaching out his glass, "you are keeping there in reserve, on the side of your heart, a flask of yellow crystal which glitters like the sun. I am certain that if I could swallow a single drop of the nectar it contains, I should be changed into a demigod."

"Take care, my child," said the count at last, placing his thin hand, loaded with rings, on the cut neck of the flask: "old men's wine sometimes shuts the mouths of young people."

"You look as handsome as a sprite in your anger," said Anzoleto to Consuelo, in good and clear Italian, so as to be heard by everybody. "You remind me of the *Diavolessa* of Galluppi, which you played so well at Venice last year. Ah, lord count, do you think to keep my sister a long while here, in your gilded cage, lined with silk? She is a singing bird, I warn you, and the bird that is deprived of its voice, soon loses its plumage. She is very happy here, I can understand; but the good public whom she has struck with transport is calling for her again with loud cries. And as for me, if you were to give me your name, your chateau, all the wine in your cellar, and your respectable chaplain to boot, I would not renounce my foot-lights, my buskin, and my trills."

"Then you are a comedian also?" said the canoness, with a dry and cold contempt.

"Comedian, stroller, at your service, *illustrissima*," replied Anzoleto, without being disconcerted.

"Has he any talent?" asked old Christian of Consuelo, with a tranquillity full of gentleness and benevolence.

"None whatever," replied Consuelo, looking upon her adversary with an air of pity.

“If that be true, you accuse yourself,” said Anzoleto; “for I am your pupil. “I hope still,” continued he in Venetian, “that I shall have enough to disturb your play.”

“You will only harm yourself,” replied Consuelo in the same dialect. “Bad intentions contaminate the heart, and yours will lose, moreover, all that you cannot make me lose in that of others.”

“I am pleased to see that you accept my challenge. To the work then, my beautiful amazon; it will do you no good to lower the visor of your casque, I see uneasiness and fear shining in your eyes.”

“Alas! you can only see there a profound sorrow on your account. I hoped I could have forgotten the contempt I owe you, and you take pains to recall it.”

“Contempt and love often go together.”

“In mean souls.”

“In the proudest souls. That has been and always will be.”

All the dinner passed in the same manner. When they went into the saloon, the canonesse, who appeared determined to divert herself with Anzoleto's impertinence, requested him to sing something. He hardly waited to be asked; and after having vigorously preluded upon the old groaning harpsichord with his sinewy fingers, he thundered out one of those songs with which he had embellished Zustiniani's little suppers. The words were rather free. The canonesse did not understand them, and amused herself at the strength with which he uttered them. Count Christian could not avoid being struck with the fine voice and wonderful facility of the singer. He gave himself up with simplicity to the pleasure of hearing him; and when the first air was concluded, asked for another. Albert, seated by the side of Consuelo, appeared deaf and said not a word. Anzoleto imagined that he was vexed, and at last felt himself surpassed in something. He forgot that his design had been to make his auditors fly by his musical improprieties, and seeing, moreover, that whether from the innocence of his hosts, or from their ignorance of the lan-

guage, it was labor lost, he gave himself up to the necessity of being admired, and sang for the pleasure of singing; and then he wished to let Consuelo see that he had improved. He had in fact gained in the order of power which was assigned to him. His voice had perhaps already lost its original freshness; debauchery had destroyed the flexibility of youth; but he had become more master of his effects, and more skilful in the art of overcoming the difficulties towards which his taste and his instinct continually led him. He sang well, and received many praises from count Christian, from the canoness, and even from the chaplain, who liked *strokes*, and who considered Consuelo's manner too simple, too natural, to be learned.

"You told us he had no talent," said the count to the latter: "you are either too severe or too modest as regards your pupil. He has a great deal, and indeed I recognize in him something of you."

The good Christian wished by this little triumph of Anzoletto's to efface the humiliation which his manner had caused to his pretended sister. He therefore insisted much upon the merit of the singer, and the latter, who loved to shine too well not to be already tired of the low part he had played, returned to the harpsichord, after having remarked that count Albert became more and more pensive. The canoness, who dozed a little at the long piece of music, asked for another Venetian song; and this time Anzoletto chose one which was in better taste. He knew that the popular airs were those which he sang the best. Even Consuelo herself had not the piquant accentuation of the dialect so natural and so well characterized as he, child of the lagunes, and comic singer by distinction.

He counterfeited with so much grace and pleasantness, now the rough and frank manner of the fishermen of Istria, now the spiritual and careless nonchalance of the gondoliers of Venice, that it was impossible not to look at and listen to him with great interest. His beautiful face, flexible and expressive, assumed at one moment the grave and bold aspect,



at another the caressing and jesting cheerfulness of each. The coquettish bad taste of his toilet, which savored of Venice a league off, added still more to the illusion, and improved his personal advantages instead of injuring them on this occasion. Consuelo, at first cold, was soon obliged to take refuge in indifference and preoccupation. Her emotion affected her more and more. She again saw all Venice in Anzoletto, and in that Venice all the Anzoletto of former days, with his gaiety, his innocent love, and his childish pride. Her eyes filled with tears, and the merry strokes which made the others laugh, penetrated her heart with a fresh tenderness.

After the songs, count Christian asked for some chants. "Oh! as to that," said Anzoletto, "I know all that are sung in Venice; but they are for two voices, and if my sister, who knows them also, is unwilling to sing them with me, I shall not be able to gratify your lordships."

They immediately requested Consuelo to sing. She refused a long while, though she felt a strong temptation. At last, yielding to the entreaties of the good Christian, who exerted himself to reconcile her with her brother, by showing that he too was entirely reconciled, she seated herself by Anzoletto's side, and tremblingly began one of those long chants, in two parts, divided into stanzas of three verses, which are heard at Venice during the times of devotion, for whole nights, around the madonnas of the street corners. Their rhythm is rather lively than sad; but in the monotony of their burden, and in the poetry of their words, borrowed from a somewhat pagan piety, there is a soothing melancholy which attracts you by degrees, and ends by taking entire possession of you.

Consuelo sang them in a sweet and veiled voice, in imitation of the Venetian women, and Anzoletto with the somewhat hoarse and guttural accent of the young men of the country. At the same time he improvised upon the harpsichord a low, continuous, and fresh accompaniment, which recalled to his companion the murmuring of the water upon the tiles, and

the breath of the wind among the vine-branches. She thought herself at Venice, in the midst of a beautiful summer's night, alone at the foot of one of those chapels in the open air, which are shaded by arbors of vines, and lighted by a swinging lamp reflected in the gently ruffled waters of the canal. O what a difference between the gloomy and heart-rending emotions she had that morning experienced on hearing Albert's violin on the bank of another water, motionless, black, mute, full of phantoms, and this vision of Venice, with its beautiful sky, its sweet melodies, its waves of azure, flashing with rapid torches or radiant stars! Anzoletto restored to her this magnificent spectacle, in which were consecrated for her the ideal of life and of liberty; while the cavern, the strange and wild airs of ancient Bohemia, the bones illuminated by funereal torches, and reflected in a water perhaps full of the same frightful relics; and in the midst of all that, the pale and ardent face of the ascetic Albert, the thought of an unknown world, the apparition of a symbolic scene, and the sad emotion of an incomprehensible fascination, were too much for Consuelo's peaceful and simple soul. To enter into this region of abstract ideas required an effort of which her vivid imagination was capable, but in which her whole being was broken, tortured by mysterious sufferings and painful forebodings. Her southern organization, even more than her education, recoiled from this austere initiation into a mystic love. Albert was for her the genius of the North, profound, powerful, sometimes sublime, but always sad, like the wind of freezing nights, or the subterranean voice of winter torments. It was the reflecting and investigating mind which interrogates and symbolizes all things, the nights of storm, the course of the meteors, the wild harmonies of the forest, and the obliterated inscriptions of ancient tombs. Anzoletto, on the contrary, was meridional life, matter embraced and impregnated by the broad sun, by the full light, which derives its poetry only from the intensity of its vegetation, and its pride only from the richness of its organic principle. It was the life of feeling, eager for enjoyment, the intellectual carelessness-

ness and want of foresight of artists, a kind of ignorance or of indifference to the distinction of good and evil, easy happiness, contempt, or inability of reflection; in a word the enemy and the opposite of the ideal.

Between these two men, of whom each was bound to a medium antipathetic to that of the other, Consuelo was as little living, as little capable of action and energy, as a soul separated from its body. She loved the beautiful, she thirsted for the ideal; Albert displayed it to her. But Albert, arrested in the development of his genius by a diseased principle, had given too much to the life of intelligence. He knew so little the necessity of the present life, that he had often lost the faculty of perceiving his own existence. He could not imagine that the ideas and the gloomy objects with which he was familiarized; could, under the influence of love and virtue, inspire any other sentiments in his betrothed than the enthusiasm of love, and the emotion of happiness. He had not foreseen, he had not understood, that he drew her into an atmosphere where she would die, like a plant of the tropics in polar twilight. In fine, he did not comprehend the kind of violence that her being must undergo in order to become identified with his.

Anzoleto, on the contrary, wounding the soul, and disgusting the mind of Consuelo at every point, at least bore in his large chest, expanded by the breath of the generous wind of the south, all the vital air which the *Flower of Spain* (as he had formerly called her,) required for her reanimation. She again found in him a whole life of animal, ignorant and delicious contemplation; a whole world of natural, dear, and easy melodies, a whole past of calmness, of carelessness, of physical movement, of innocence without labor, of integrity without effort, of piety without reflection. It was almost the existence of a bird. But is there not a great deal of the bird in the artist, and must not man drink likewise somewhat from that cup of life common to all beings, in order to be complete and bring to good the treasure of his intelligence?

Consuelo sang with a voice still more sweet and more touching, as she abandoned herself by vague instinct to the

distinctions I have just made in her place, perhaps too tediously. May my readers forgive me! Without it, could they understand by what fatal pliancy of sentiment, that young girl, so pure and so sincere, who hated the perfidious Anzoleto with good reason a quarter of an hour before, forgot herself so far as to listen to his voice, to graze his hair, and inhale his breath with a sort of delight? The saloon was too vast ever to be well lighted, as we already know; besides the day was drawing to a close. The music desk of the harpsichord, on which Anzoleto had left a large book open, hid their heads from persons seated at a little distance; and their faces approached each other more and more. Anzoleto, no longer using more than one hand for the accompaniment, had passed his other arm around the pliant waist of his friend, and drew her insensibly towards him. Six months of indignation and suffering were effaced as a dream from the mind of the young girl. She thought herself at Venice; she was praying the madonna to bless her love for the beautiful betrothed whom her mother had given her, and who prayed with her, hand in hand, heart against heart. Albert had gone out when she did not perceive it, and the air was more light, the twilight more sweet about her. Suddenly, at the end of a stanza, she felt the burning lips of her first betrothed upon hers. She restrained a cry, and, bending over the keys, burst into tears.

At this moment count Albert returned, heard her sobs, and saw Anzoleto's insulting joy. The singing, being interrupted by the emotion of the young artist, did not so much astonish the other spectators of this rapid scene. No one had seen the kiss, and all thought that the remembrance of her childhood, and the love of her art had drawn tears from her. Count Christian was somewhat afflicted by this sensibility, which announced so much attachment and regret for things of which he asked the sacrifice. The canonesse and the chaplain were rejoiced, hoping that the sacrifice could not be accomplished. Albert had not yet asked himself if the countess of Rodolstadt could again become an artist, or cease

to be one. He would have accepted all, permitted all, exacted all indeed, that she might be happy, in retreat, in the world, or on the stage, at her option. His want of prejudice and self-love extended even to the absence of foresight in the most simple cases. It did not then come into his mind that Consuelo could think of imposing sacrifices upon herself, for the sake of him who wished for none. But not seeing this first fact, he saw beyond, as he always did; he penetrated to the heart of the tree, and put his hand upon the destroying worm. The real relation of Anzoletto towards Consuelo, the real object that he sought, and the real sentiment that inspired him, were revealed to Albert in an instant. He looked attentively at this man for whom he felt an antipathy, and upon whom he had not hitherto wished to cast his eyes, because he desired not to hate Consuelo's brother. He saw in him a bold, resolute and dangerous lover. The noble Albert did not think of himself; neither suspicion nor jealousy entered his heart. The danger was all for Consuelo; for, by a profound and lucid glance, that man, whose vague look and delicate sight could not endure the sun, nor discern either color or form, read in the bottom of the soul, and penetrated, by the mysterious power of divination, into the most secret thoughts of the wicked and deceitful. I cannot explain the strange gift which he sometimes possessed, in any natural manner. Certain faculties in him, (not yet fathomed and defined by science,) remained incomprehensible to those around him as they are to the historian who relates them to you, and who, in that respect, is not more advanced, after the lapse of a century, than are the great minds of his age. Albert, on seeing naked before him the selfish and vain soul of his rival, did not say to himself: "That man is my enemy;" but he said: "That man is Consuelo's enemy." And without betraying his discovery, he promised himself that he would watch over her and preserve her.

## CHAPTER LXI.

As soon as Consuelo saw a favorable moment, she left the saloon and went into the garden. The sun had set, and the first stars were shining serene and white in a sky still rosy in the west, already black in the east. The young artist sought to inhale calmness in that pure and fresh air of the early autumn evening. Her bosom was oppressed with a voluptuous languor; and yet she experienced remorse on that account, and invoked all the strength of her mind in aid of her will. She might have asked herself, "*Can I not tell if I love or if I hate?*" She trembled as if she felt her courage abandon her at the most dangerous crisis of her life; and for the first time, she did not find in herself that rectitude of the first impulse, that holy confidence in her intentions which had always sustained her in her trials. She had left the saloon to withdraw from the fascination which Anzoleto exercised upon her, and she had experienced at the same time, as it were, a vague desire to be followed by him. The leaves had begun to fall. When the border of her dress made them rustle behind her, she thought she heard steps following hers, and, ready to fly, not daring to turn round, she remained chained to the spot by a magic power.

Some one did follow her in fact, but without daring and without wishing to show himself; it was Albert. A stranger to all those little dissimulations which are called proprieties, and feeling himself, in the greatness of his love, superior to all false shame, he had left the room an instant after Consuelo, resolved to protect her without her knowledge, and to hinder her persecutor from rejoining her. Anzoleto had remarked that simple earnestness, without being much alarmed by it. He had seen Consuelo's agitation too clearly, not to consider his victory as secure; and, thanks to the confidence which

easy successes had developed in him, he was resolved not to hurry matters, no longer to irritate Consuelo, nor disgust the family. "It is no longer necessary to be hasty," said he to himself. "Anger might give her strength. An appearance of sorrow and depression will destroy the rest of her indignation against me. Her spirit is proud, I will attack her senses. She is no doubt less austere than at Venice; she has become civilized here. What do I care if my rival is happy one day longer. To-morrow she is mine; to-night perhaps! We will see! Let me not drive her by fear to some desperate resolution. She has not betrayed me to them. Either from pity or from fear, she does not disown my title of brother; and the old people, in spite of my follies, seem resolved to uphold me for love of her. Let me change my tactics. I have made more headway than I expected. I can afford to halt."

Count Christian, the canoness, and the chaplain, were therefore much surprised at seeing him suddenly assume very good manners, a modest tone, a gentle and prepossessing style. He had the address to complain in a low voice to the chaplain, of a severe head-ache, and to add that, being habitually very temperate, the wine of Hungary, which he had not mistrusted at dinner, had got into his head. An instant after, this avowal was communicated in German to the canoness and the count; the latter of whom accepted this kind of justification with a charitable earnestness. Wenceslawa was at first less indulgent, but the care that the comedian took to please her, the respectable eulogiums, which he knew how to make in their proper place, upon the advantages of noble blood, the admiration he displayed for the order established in the chateau, quickly disarmed that benevolent soul, incapable of resentment. She listened to him at first for want of employment, and ended by talking to him with interest, and by agreeing with her brother that he was an excellent and charming young man. When Consuelo returned from her walk, an hour had elapsed, during which Anzoletto had not lost his time. He had so well recovered the good opinion of the family, that he was sure of being able to remain at the chateau as many days as

he might require for the accomplishment of his purpose. He did not understand what the old count said to Consuelo in German; but he guessed, from the looks turned towards him, and the young girl's air of surprise and embarrassment, that Christian had made a complete eulogium of him, scolding her a little for not testifying more interest in so amiable a brother.

"Come, signora," said the canoness, who, notwithstanding her spite against the Porporina, could not avoid wishing her well, and who, besides, thought she was accomplishing an act of religion; "you were vexed with your brother at dinner, and it must be said that he well deserved it at the time. But he is better than he appeared to us at first. He loves you tenderly, and has repeatedly spoken of you to us with all kinds of affection, even with respect. Do not be more severe than we are. I am certain that if he remembers having drunk too much at dinner, he is very sorry for it, especially on your account. Speak to him then, and do not be cold to one so nearly allied to you in blood. For my part, though my brother, the baron Frederick, who was very teasing in his youth, plagued me quite often, I never could remain angry with him an hour." Consuelo, not daring either to confirm or to destroy the good lady's error, remained, as it were, cast down by this new attack of Anzoleto, the power and ingenuity of which she understood but too well. "You do not comprehend what my sister says?" said Christian to the young man. "I will translate it for you in two words. She reproaches Consuelo for playing the little mother too much towards you; and I am sure that Consuelo is very desirous to make peace. Embrace each other, then, my children. Come, do you, young man, take the first step, and if you have heretofore committed faults towards her, of which you repent, tell her so that she may forgive you."

Anzoleto did not wait to be told a second time; and seizing Consuelo's hand, which she did not dare withdraw, "Yes," said he, "I have committed great faults towards her, and I repent them so bitterly, that all my efforts to drive them out of my mind only serve to break my heart more and more."



She knows it well; and if she had not a soul of iron, proud as power and pitiless as virtue, she would have understood that my remorse had punished me quite enough. My dear sister, do forgive me and restore to me your love; or else I shall depart immediately and carry my despair, my isolation and my sorrow over all the earth. A stranger everywhere, without support, without advice, without affection, I shall no longer be able to believe in God, and my errors will rest upon your head."

This homily deeply affected the count, and drew tears from the good canoness.

"You hear him, Porporina," cried she; "what he says to you is very beautiful, and very true. Sir chaplain, you ought, in the name of religion, to order the signora to be reconciled with her brother."

The chaplain was about to put in his oar. Anzoleto did not wait for the sermon, and seizing Consuelo in his arms, notwithstanding her resistance and her terror, embraced her passionately in the face of the chaplain, and to the great edification of all present. Consuelo, indignant at so impudent a deception, could no longer be a party to it. "Stop!" said she, "my lord count, hear me."—She was about to reveal all, when Albert appeared. Immediately the thought of Zdenko chilled with fear her soul ready to unburden itself. Consuelo's implacable protector might wish to free her, without noise or deliberation, from the enemy against whom she was about to invoke him. She became pale, looked at Anzoleto with an air of sorrowful reproach, and the words died upon her lips.

At seven o'clock precisely, they again seated themselves at the table for supper. If the idea of these frequent repasts should deprive my delicate readers of appetite, I will merely say that the fashion of not eating was not in force at that time and in that country. I believe I have already mentioned it; they ate slowly, copiously and frequently at Riesenbourg. Almost half of the day was passed at table; and I confess that Consuelo, accustomed from her childhood, and with good reason, to live a whole day upon a few spoonsfull of rice

boiled in water, found these Homeric repasts mortally long. For the first time, she did not know if this one lasted an hour, an instant, or an age. She was no more alive than Albert was, when alone at the bottom of his grotto. It seemed to her that she was drunk, so much did shame of herself, love and terror, agitate her whole being. She ate nothing, heard and saw nothing of what passed about her. In a state of consternation, like one who feels himself rolling towards a precipice, and who sees break one by one the weak branches which he wishes to seize in order to arrest his fall, she looked to the bottom of the abyss, and dizziness took possession of her brain. Anzoleto was next her, he touched her dress; with convulsive movements he pressed his elbow against her elbow, his foot against her foot. In his earnestness to help her, he met her hands and retained them in his for a second; but this rapid and burning pressure contained a whole age of feeling. He said to her, in secret, words which stifled her, and darted glances which consumed her. He profited by a passing moment to change like lightning his glass for hers, and to touch with his lips the crystal which her lips had touched. And he knew how to be all fire for her, cold as marble to the eyes of others: he behaved himself wonderfully, conversed properly, was full of attentive cares for the canoness, treated the chaplain with respect, offered him the best pieces of the meats, which he took upon himself to carve with the dexterity and grace of one accustomed to good cheer. He had remarked that the holy man was a gourmand, that his timidity imposed upon him frequent privations in this respect; and the latter was so well pleased at his preferences, that he could have wished to see the new carving squire pass all his days at Giant's castle.

It was remarked that Anzoleto drank nothing but water, and when the chaplain, in return for his good offices, offered him wine, he replied loud enough to be heard; "A thousand thanks! I shall not be caught again. Your fine wine is a traitor with whom I tried to forget myself some time since.

Now, I have no more troubles, and I return to water, my usual drink and loyal friend."

The sitting was prolonged somewhat later than usual. Anzoleto sang again, and this time he sang for Consuelo. He chose the favorite airs of her old masters, which she herself had taught him; and he executed them with all the care, with all the purity of taste and delicacy of intention which she was accustomed to exact of him. This again recalled to her the most dear and the most pure recollections of her love and her art.

At the moment when they were about to separate, he took a favorable opportunity to say to her in a very low voice: "I know where your chamber is; they have given me one in the same gallery. At midnight I shall be on my knees at your door; I shall remain prostrate there until day. Do not refuse to hear me for an instant. I do not wish to recover your love, I do not deserve it. I know that you can no longer love me, that another is happy, and that I must depart. I shall depart with death in my soul, and the rest of my life is devoted to the furies! But do not drive me away without one word of pity, one word of farewell. If you do not consent, I shall depart at break of day, and there will be an end of me forever!"

"Do not say so, Anzoleto. We must quit each other here, we must say an eternal farewell. I forgive you, and wish for you ——"

"A good journey!" returned he ironically; then immediately resuming his hypocritical tone: "You are merciless, Consuelo. You desire that I should be lost, that there should not remain in me, one good feeling, one good remembrance. What do you fear? Have I not, a thousand times, proved to you my respect and the purity of my love? When one loves devotedly, is he not a slave, and do you not know that a single word of yours subdues and enchains me? In the name of Heaven, if you are not the mistress of the man you are to marry, if he is not the master of your apartment and the inevitable companion of your nights ——"

"He is not, he never has been," said Consuelo with the accent of conscious innocence.

She would have done better to repress this movement of a pride, well founded, but too sincere on this occasion. Anzoleto was not a poltroon, but he loved life, and if he had expected to find a determined guardian in Consuelo's chamber, would have remained quietly in his own. The truthful accent which accompanied the young girl's answer emboldened him completely.

"In that case," said he, "I do not compromise your prospects. I will be so prudent, so careful, I will walk so lightly, will speak to you so low, that your reputation will not be blemished. Besides, am I not your brother? when I am going away at dawn of day, what would there be so strange in my coming to bid you farewell?"

"No! no! do not come!" said Consuelo, terrified. "Count Albert's apartment is not far off; perhaps he has divined all — Anzoleto, if you expose yourself —. I will not answer for your life. I speak seriously, and my blood freezes in my veins!"

Anzoleto did in fact feel her hand, which he had taken in his, become colder than marble. "If you argue, if you parley at your door, you expose my life," said he smiling; "but if your door is open, if our kisses are mute, we shall risk nothing. Remember how we passed whole nights together without awakening a single one of the many neighbors of the Corte Minelli. As for myself, if there is no other obstacle than the count's jealousy, and no other danger than death —"

At this instant Consuelo saw count Albert's glance, usually so vague, become clear and piercing, as it fixed itself upon Anzoleto. He could not hear; but it seemed as if he understood with his eyes. She drew back her hand from Anzoleto and said in a smothered voice:

"Ah! if you love me, do not brave that terrible man!"

"Is it for yourself that you fear?" said Anzoleto rapidly.

"No, but for everything that approaches and threatens me."

"And for everything that adores you, without doubt?"

Well, so be it! To die before your eyes, to die at your feet; O! I ask only that. I shall be there at midnight; resist, and you only hasten my ruin."

"You go to-morrow, and you take leave of no one?" said Consuelo, seeing that he saluted the count and the canonesse without speaking of his departure.

"No," replied he; "they would detain me, and in spite of myself, seeing all conspire to prolong my agony, I should yield. You will make my excuses and my adieus. I have given orders to my guide to have the horses ready at four o'clock."

This last assertion was more than true. Albert's singular looks for several hours had not escaped Anzoletto. He was resolved to dare all, but he was prepared for flight in case of accident. His horses were already saddled in the stable, and his guide was ordered not to go to bed.

Returned to her chamber, Consuelo was seized with real terror. She did not wish to receive Anzoletto, and at the same time she feared lest he should be prevented from coming to find her.

This double, false, and unconquerable feeling continually tormented her mind, and placed her heart in opposition to her conscience. Never had she felt herself so unhappy, so exposed, so solitary on the earth. "O my master Porpora! where are you?" she cried. "You alone could save me; you alone understand my difficulties, and the perils to which I am exposed. You alone are rough, severe, distrustful enough, as a friend and a father ought to be, to draw me from this abyss into which I am falling! But have I not friends about me? Have I not a father in count Christian? Would not the canonesse be a mother to me if I had the courage to brave her prejudices, and open my heart to her? And is not Albert my support, my brother, my husband, if I consent to say one word? O! yes, it is he who ought to be my savior, and I fear him, I repel him! I must go and find them all three," added she, rising and walking in agitation about her chamber. "I must engage myself to them; I must

chain myself to their protecting arms; I must seek refuge under the wings of those guardian angels. Repose, dignity, honor, dwell with them; humiliation and despair await me by the side of Anzoletto. O! yes, I must go, and make them a confession respecting this horrible day; I must tell them all that passes within me, in order that they may preserve and defend me from myself. I must bind myself to them by an oath; I must say that terrible *yes* which will place an invincible barrier between me and my tormenter! I will go!"

And instead of going, she fell exhausted upon her chair, and wept bitterly for her lost tranquillity, her broken strength.

"But what!" said she, "shall I go to them with a fresh falsehood? shall I offer them a misguided girl, an adulterous spouse? For I am so in my heart; and the mouth that would swear an unchangeable fidelity to the most sincere of men, is still burning with the kiss of another, and my heart beats with an impure pleasure even at thinking of it! Ah! my love for the unworthy Anzoletto has changed like him. It is no longer that tranquil and holy affection with which I slept happy under the wings that my mother extended over me from high heaven. It is an attraction mean and impetuous as the being that inspires it. There is no longer any greatness or truth in my soul. I lie to myself since this morning, even as I have lied to others. How shall I not lie to them henceforth in all the hours of my life? Present or absent, Anzoletto will be continually before my eyes; even the thought of parting with him to-morrow fills me with sorrow, and on the bosom of another, I shall see only him. What shall I do? What will become of me?"

The hour advanced with a horrible rapidity, with a horrible slowness. "I will see him," said she to herself. "I will tell him that I hate him, that I despise him, that I wish never to see him more. But no, I lie again! for I shall not tell him so; or if indeed I should have the courage, I should retract an instant afterwards. I can no longer be sure even of my chastity; he no longer believes in it; he will not respect me. And as for me, I no longer believe in myself, I no longer

believe in anything. I shall fall even more from fear than from weakness. O! rather die than so descend in my own esteem, and give this triumph to the craft and libertinism of another, over the holy instincts and the noble designs which God has implanted in me!"

She placed herself at her window, and felt tempted to throw herself out in order to escape by death from the infamy with which she thought herself already stained. While struggling against this dark temptation, she thought over the means of salvation which remained to her. Materially speaking, there was no want of them; but all seemed to her to lead to other dangers. She had begun by locking the door through which Anzoleto could enter. But she only knew by halves that cold and selfish man, and having seen the proofs of his physical courage, she did not know that he was entirely void of that moral courage which would lead him to brave death in order to satisfy his passion. She thought he would dare to come there, that he would insist on being heard, that he would make some noise; and she knew that a breath only was needed to bring Albert to the spot. There was in her chamber a closet with a back staircase, as in nearly all the apartments of the chateau; but that staircase led to the lower story, close to the room of the canoness. This was the only refuge she could seek against the imprudent audacity of Anzoleto; and to induce her to open her door, it would be necessary to confess all beforehand, in order not to give room to a scandal, which the good Wenceslawa, in her terror, would probably prolong. There was, besides, the garden; but if Anzoleto, who appeared to have carefully explored the whole chateau, should go there in his turn, it was running to her ruin.

While reflecting upon these things, she saw a light in the stables, as she looked from her closet window which opened upon a back court. She noticed a man who passed to and fro in those stables, without awakening the other servants, and who appeared to be making preparations for departure. By his costume she recognized Anzoleto's guide, who was saddling his horses, according to his instructions. She saw also

that there was a light in the room of the drawbridge-keeper, and thought with reason that he had been informed by the guide of a departure of which the precise hour was not yet fixed. On observing these details, and giving herself up to a thousand conjectures, to a thousand projects, Consuelo conceived a very strange and a very rash design. But as it offered a medium between the two extremes which she feared, and opened to her at the same time a new perspective upon the events of her life, it seemed to her a real inspiration from Heaven. She had no time to spend in examining the means and results. The first appeared to be presented to her by the effect of a providential accident; the others it seemed could be diverted. She began to write what follows, in great haste as may be believed, for the castle clock had just struck eleven.

“Albert, I am compelled to depart. I cherish you with my whole soul, as you know. But there are in my being contradictions, sufferings, and rebellions, which I cannot explain, either to you or to myself. If I saw you at this moment, I should tell you that I confide in you, that I yield to you the care of my future life, that I consent to become your wife. I should tell you perhaps that I desire it. And yet I should deceive you, or I should take a rash oath; for my heart is not sufficiently purified of its old love to belong to you at present without fear, and to deserve yours without remorse. I fly; I go to Vienna, to rejoin or to await Porpora, who must now be there or arrive in a few days, as his letter to your father recently announced. I swear to you that I am going to seek by his side the forgetfulness and hatred of the past, and the hope of a future, in which you are for me the corner stone. Do not follow me; I forbid you in the name of that future which your impatience might compromise, and perhaps destroy. Wait for me, and keep for my sake the oath which you made never to return without me to —. You understand me. Trust in me, I command you; for I go with the holy hope of returning, or soon sending for you. At this moment I am under the influence of a horrible dream. It seems to me, that when I am alone, I shall awaken worthy of you. I do not wish my



brother to follow me. I mean to deceive him, and make him take a road opposite to mine. By all that you hold most dear to the world, do not in any way thwart my project, and believe me sincere. By that I shall see if you really love me, and if I can without blushing sacrifice my poverty to your riches, my obscurity to your rank, my ignorance to the wisdom of your mind. Adieu, but no : *au revoir*, Albert. To prove to you that I do not go irrevocably, I charge you to render your worthy and dear aunt favorable to our union, and to preserve for me the good will of your father, the best, the most respectable of men ! Tell him the truth of all this. I will write to you from Vienna."

The hope of convincing and calming a man so enamored as Albert, was rash, no doubt, but not unreasonable. As she wrote, Consuelo felt the energy of her will and the uprightness of her character return to her. All that she wrote, she felt. All that she announced to him, she intended to do. She believed in the powerful penetration and almost second sight of Albert ; she could not have hoped to deceive him ; she was sure that he would believe her, and that from his character, he would obey her implicitly. At that moment, she judged matters, and Albert himself, from as high a point of view as he did.

After folding her letter without sealing it, she threw her travelling cloak upon her shoulders, enveloped her head in a very thick black veil, put on strong shoes, gathered together the little money she possessed, made a small package of linen, and descending upon tiptoe with incredible precautions, traversed the lower stories, reached count Christian's apartment, glided to his oratory, which she knew he regularly entered at six o'clock every morning. She deposited her letter on the cushion where he placed his book before kneeling on the floor. Then, descending to the court without awakening any one, she went straight to the stables.

The guide, who did not feel too bold on finding himself alone in the dead of night in a chateau where all slept like stones, was at first afraid of that black woman who

approached him like a phantom. He withdrew to the very extremity of the stable, not daring either to cry out or question her: this was what Consuelo wished. As soon as she found herself beyond the reach of sight and voice, (she knew moreover that neither Albert's nor Anzoletto's windows looked upon this court,) she said to the guide: "I am the sister of the young man whom you accompanied here this morning. He carries me off. I arranged it with him an instant since. Put a lady's saddle immediately upon his horse: there are several here. Follow me to Tusta without saying a single word, without taking a single step which can inform the people of the chateau that I am going away. You shall be paid double. You seem astonished? Come, despatch! As soon as we reach the city, you must return here to seek my brother." The guide shook his head. "You shall be paid triple." The guide made a sign of assent. "And you will conduct him at full speed to Tusta, where I shall be waiting for you." The guide again shook his head. "You shall be paid four times as much for the last heat as for the first." The guide obeyed. In an instant the horse which Consuelo was to mount was ready with the lady's saddle. "That is not all," said Consuelo, vaulting upon it even before it was entirely bridled; "give me your hat, and throw your cloak over mine. It is only for a moment." "I understand," said the other; "it is to deceive the porter: that is easy enough! O! it is not the first time I have carried off a young lady! Your lover will pay well, I suppose, though you are his sister?" added he in a jeering tone. "You shall be well paid by me in the first place. Be silent. Are you ready?" "I am mounted." "Go on first and have the bridge lowered."

They passed it at a walk, made a circuit so as not to go under the walls of the chateau, and in a quarter of an hour reached the sandy main road. Consuelo had never been on the back of a horse in her life. Happily, this one, although strong, was good-tempered. His master animated him by clacking his tongue, and he took a firm and continued gallop, which in two hours' riding through woods and heaths carried

our amazon to her destination. Consuelo drew her bridle and leaped to the ground at the entrance of the city. "I do not wish to be seen here," said she to the guide, putting into his hand the price agreed upon for herself and Anzoletto. "I shall pass through the city on foot, and will take from some of my acquaintances a carriage which will convey me on the road to Prague. I shall travel quickly, in order to get as far as possible before day from this country where my face is known; at daylight, I shall stop and await my brother."

"But in what place?"

"I cannot say. But tell him that it will be at some post-house. He must not make any inquiries within ten leagues of this. Then he must ask everywhere for madam Wolf; it is the first name I think of; still you must not forget it. There is only one road to Prague?"

"Only one as far as—"

"Very well. Stop in the suburb to bait your horses. Be careful not to let the lady's saddle be seen; throw your cloak over it; answer no questions, and be off. Stop! one word more: tell my brother not to hesitate; not to delay, but to escape without being seen. He is in danger of death at the chateau."

"May God be with you, pretty girl!" replied the guide, who had had time enough to roll in his fingers the silver he had received. "Though it should kill my horses, I am satisfied to have done you a service. I am sorry, notwithstanding," said he to himself, when she had disappeared in the darkness, "not to have seen even the tip of her nose; I should like to know if she is handsome enough to run away with. She frightened me at first with her black veil and her resolute step; and then they had told me so many stories in the kitchen that I did n't know where I was. How superstitious and simple those people are, with their ghosts and their black man of the oak of Schreckenstein! Bah! I've passed there more than a hundred times, and I have never seen him! To be sure I was always careful to hold my head down, and to

look on the side of the ravine when I passed at the foot of the mountain.”

While making these simple reflections, the guide, after having administered some oats to his horses, and a large pint of hydromel to himself in a neighboring drinking shop, in order to wake himself up, resumed the road to Riesenburg, quite leisurely, as Consuelo had hoped and expected, even while she recommended him to hasten. The brave youth, in proportion as he increased his distance from her, lost himself in conjectures upon the romantic adventure in which he had been engaged. Little by little the vapors of the night, and perhaps also those of the fermented drink, made this adventure appear to him still more marvellous. “It would be pleasant,” thought he, “if that black woman were a man, and that man the ghost of the chateau, the black phantom of the Schreckenstein! They say that he plays all sorts of tricks upon night-travellers, and old Hanz swore to me that he had seen him more than ten times in the stable, when he was going to feed old baron Frederick’s horse before daylight. Devil! that would not be so pleasant! the meeting and keeping company with such beings is always followed by some misfortune. If my poor grey has carried Satan to-night, he will die of a certainty. It seems to me that he is already breathing flames through his nostrils; I hope he won’t take the bit between his teeth and run away. Par-dieu! I am curious to reach the chateau, in order to see if in place of the silver which the devil gave me, I don’t find dry leaves in my pocket. And if they should tell me that the signora Porporina was sleeping quietly in her bed, instead of travelling on the road to Prague, which would be taken in, the devil or I? The fact is, that she galloped like the wind, and disappeared on leaving me, as if she had sank into the ground.”

## CHAPTER LXII.

ANZOLETO had not failed to rise at midnight, to take his stiletto, perfume himself, and extinguish his light. But at the moment when he thought he could open his door without noise, (he had already remarked that the lock was well oiled and worked easily,) he was much astonished at not being able to produce the slightest movement in the latch. He bruised his fingers, and wore himself out with fatigue, at the risk of awakening some one by shaking the door too violently. All was useless. His apartment had no other means of exit; the window looked upon the gardens at an elevation of fifty feet, perfectly bare and incapable of being scaled; the very thought of it made him dizzy. "This is not the work of chance," said Anzoleto to himself, after having again tried in vain to move the door. "Whether it be Consuelo's doings, (and that would be a good sign; her fear would prove her weakness,) or count Albert's, they shall both pay me for it at the same time."

He tried to go to sleep again. Vexation prevented him, and perhaps also a certain uneasiness allied to fear. If Albert had been the author of this precaution, he alone, in the house, had not been the dupe of his fraternal relation with Consuelo. The latter had appeared really frightened when she warned him to beware of *that terrible man*. It did no good for Anzoleto to say, that being crazy, the young count would not have much connection in his ideas, or that being of an illustrious birth, he would not be willing, according to the prejudices of the day, to commit himself in an affair of honor with an actor; these suppositions did not re-assure him. Albert had appeared to him a very quiet mad-man, and one who was quite master of himself; and as to his prejudices, they could not be very deeply rooted, if they permitted him

to wish to marry an actress. Anzoletto therefore began seriously to fear having any difference with him before the accomplishment of his object, and getting into trouble without profit. This result appeared to him rather shameful than fatal. He had learned how to handle a sword, and flattered himself that he was a match for any man of quality whatsoever. Nevertheless he did not feel easy, and could not sleep.

Towards five o'clock in the morning, he thought he heard steps in the corridor, and shortly afterwards, his door was opened without noise and without difficulty. It was not quite daylight, and on seeing a man enter his chamber with so little ceremony, Anzoletto thought the decisive moment had arrived. He leaped towards his stiletto, bounding like a bull. But by the glimmer of the dawn, he immediately recognized his guide, who made signs to him to speak low, and to make no noise. "What do you mean by your grimaces, and what do you want of me, stupid?" said Anzoletto, quite vexed. "How did you get in?"

"Eh! How should I, but by the door, my good sir?"

"The door was locked."

"But you had left the key outside."

"Impossible! there it is on my table."

"That is strange! then there's another."

"And who can have played me the trick of locking me in thus? There was but one key yesterday; was it you when you came for my valise?"

"I swear that it was not I, and that I have not seen the key."

"Then it must be the devil! But what do you want of me, with your busy and mysterious air? I did not send for you."

"You do not give me time to speak! Besides, you see me, and you must know very well what I want of you. The signora reached Tusta without accident, and according to her orders, I am here with my horses to conduct you thither."

Some minutes were required for Anzoletto to comprehend the gist of the matter; but he accommodated himself to the

truth quickly enough to prevent his guide, whose superstitious fears were moreover dissipated with the shades of night, from again falling into his perplexities respecting a trick of the devil. The knave had begun by examining and ringing Consuelo's money on the pavement of the stable, and felt himself well satisfied with his part of the bargain with hell. Anzoleto understood at half a word, and thought that the fugitive had been so closely watched on her side as not to be able to inform him of her resolution; that threatened, urged to extremity perhaps, by her jealous lover, she had seized a propitious moment to baffle his projects, escape and free herself by flight. "Whichever way that may be," said he to himself, "there's no reason for doubt or hesitation. The notice which she has sent to me by this man who has conducted her on the road to Prague, is clear and precise. Victory! that is, if I can get out of this house without being obliged to cross swords!"

He armed himself to the teeth; and while he was hurrying to get ready, sent his guide as a scout, to see if the road was clear. Upon his answer that all seemed to be still buried in sleep, except the bridge-keeper, who had just opened for him, Anzoleto descended without noise, remounted his horse, and only met in the court one stable boy, whom he called in order to give him some money, that his departure might not bear the appearance of a flight. "By Saint Wenceslas!" said that servant to the guide, "how strange it is, your horses on coming out of the stable are covered with sweat, as if they had been running all night."

"It must have been that your black devil came and dressed them," replied the other.

"That must be the reason," returned the stabler, "why I heard such a horrible noise on this side all night! I did not dare to come and see what was the matter; but I heard the port-cullis creak and the drawbridge lowered, just as I see it now: so that I thought you were going away, and I did not expect to see you this morning."

At the drawbridge, there was another observation from the

keeper. "Your lordship is double then?" asked the man, rubbing his eyes. "I saw you depart about midnight, and now I see you again."

"You must have been dreaming, my honest fellow," said Anzoleto, making him a present also. "I should not have gone without asking you to drink my health."

"Your lordship does me too much honor," said the porter, who spoke a little broken Italian. "No matter," said he to the guide in his own tongue, "I have seen two to-night."

"And take care not to see four to-morrow night," replied the guide, galloping over the bridge after Anzoleto. "The black devil always plays such tricks with sleepers like you."

Anzoleto, well informed and instructed by his guide, reached Tusta, or Tauss; for they are, I believe, the same city. He passed through it, after having discharged his man and taken post-horses, abstained from making any inquiries for ten leagues, and at the appointed place stopped to breakfast, (for he was pretty well worn out,) and to ask for a madam Wolf, who was to be there with a carriage. No one could give him any news of her, and with good reason.

There was a madam Wolf in the village, but she had been established there fifty years, and kept a mercer's shop. Anzoleto, bruised and exhausted, thought that Consuelo had not judged best to stop in this place. He inquired for a carriage to hire; there was none. He was obliged to mount on horseback again, and to ride post once more. He considered it impossible not to meet every instant the welcome carriage, into which he could throw himself, and be recompensed for his anxieties and his fatigues. But he met very few travellers, and in no carriage did he see Consuelo. At last, overcome by excess of fatigue, and finding no vehicle to be let anywhere, he resolved to stop, mortally vexed, and to wait in a little town on the road side, until Consuelo should join him; for he thought he must have passed her. He had plenty of time, the rest of the day and the following night, to curse the women, the inns, all jealous lovers and the roads. The next day, he found a public passenger coach, and continued to



hurry towards Prague, without being more successful. Let us leave him travelling towards the North, the victim of a genuine rage and of a mortal impatience mingled with hope, to return ourselves an instant to the chateau, that we may see the effect of Consuelo's departure upon the inhabitants of that dwelling.

It may well be thought that count Albert did not sleep, any more than the other two personages engaged in this hurried adventure. After having provided a double key to Anzoletto's chamber, he had locked him in from the outside, and was no longer anxious about his attempts, knowing well that unless Consuelo herself interfered, no one would go to deliver him. Respecting the first possibility, the idea of which made him shudder, Albert had the extreme delicacy not to wish to make any imprudent discovery. "If she loves him so much as that," thought he, "I need struggle no more; let my destiny be accomplished! I shall know it soon enough, for she is sincere; and to-morrow she will openly refuse the offers I have made her to-day. If she is merely persecuted and threatened by this dangerous man, she is now sheltered from his pursuits for one night at least. Now whatever passing noise I hear around me, I will not stir, and I will not make myself odious; I will not inflict upon that unfortunate the punishment of shame, by presenting myself before her without being called. No! I will not play the part of a cowardly spy, of a suspicious and jealous lover, since hitherto her refusals, her irresolutions, have given me no right over her. I know only one thing, satisfactory to my honor, frightful to my love, I shall not be deceived. Soul of her whom I love, who residest at the same time in the bosom of the most perfect of women and in the inmost of the eternal God, if through the mysteries and the shadows of human thought, thou canst read my heart at this hour, thy internal convictions must tell thee that I love thee too much not to believe in thy word!"

The courageous Albert religiously kept the engagement he had made with himself; and although he thought he heard

Consuelo's steps in the lower story at the moment of her flight, and some other more inexplicable noises on the side of the port-cullis, he suffered, prayed, and restrained with clasped hands the heart which was bounding in his bosom.

When the day appeared, he heard steps walking and doors opening in the direction of Anzoletto. "The villain," said he to himself, "leaves her without shame and without precaution! He seems to wish to publish his victory! Ah! the evil which he does me would be nothing, if another soul, more dear and more precious than mine, were not sullied by his love."

At the hour when count Christian was accustomed to rise, Albert went to him, with the intention, not of informing him of what was passing, but of persuading him to enter into a fresh explanation with Consuelo. He was sure that she would not lie. He thought that she must desire such an explanation, and prepared to comfort her in her trouble, to console her even for her shame, and to pretend a resignation which would qualify the bitterness of their farewell. Albert did not ask what would become of himself afterwards. He felt that neither his reason nor his life could support such a shock, and he did not shrink from experiencing a sorrow beyond his strength.

He found his father at the moment of entering the oratory. The letter placed upon the cushion struck their eyes at the same time. They seized and read it together. The old man was cast down by it, thinking that his son could not endure the shock; but Albert, who was prepared for a much greater misfortune, was calm, resigned, and firm in his confidence.

"She is pure," said he; "she wishes to love me. She feels that my love is true, and my faith immovable. God will protect her from danger. Let us accept this promise, my father, and remain tranquil. Fear not for me; I shall be stronger than my sorrow, and will subdue any anxiety that may seize upon me."

"My son," said the old man, much moved, "we are here before the image of the God of your fathers. You have

accepted another belief, and I have never reproached you for it bitterly, as you well know, though my heart has suffered much. I am about to prostrate myself before the likeness of that God, upon which I promised you, the night before this, to do all that depended on me in order that your love might be heard, and sanctified by a respectable union. I have kept my promise, and I renew it to you. I am again about to pray that the Almighty may fulfil your wishes, and my own will not oppose them. Will you not unite with me in this solemn hour, which will perhaps decide in heaven the destiny of your love upon the earth? O my noble son! in whom the Eternal has preserved all virtues, notwithstanding the trials he has permitted your first faith to undergo! whom I have seen in your childhood, kneeling at my side on the tomb of your mother, and praying like a young angel to that Sovereign Master whom you did not then doubt! will you this day refuse to raise your voice towards him, that mine may not be useless?"

"My father," replied Albert, pressing the old man in his arms, "if our faith differs in its form and its dogmas, our souls are always in agreement upon an eternal and divine principle. You serve a God of wisdom and of goodness, an ideal of perfection, of science and of justice, whom I have never ceased to adore.—O divine crucified One!" said he, kneeling beside his father before the image of Jesus, "whom men adore as the Word, and whom I revere as the most noble and the most pure manifestation of universal love amongst us! Hear my prayer, O thou whose thought dwells eternally in God and in us! Bless all true instincts and right intentions! Pity the wickedness which triumphs, and support the innocence which struggles! Let my happiness become whatever God may will! But, O human God! may thy influence direct and animate the hearts which have no other strength and no other consolation than thy passage and thy example upon the earth!"

## CHAPTER LXIII.

ANZOLETO pursued his course to Prague in sheer loss ; for immediately after having given to her guide the deceitful instructions she judged necessary for the success of her enterprise, Consuelo had taken a road to the left, which she was acquainted with, from having twice accompanied the baroness Amelia in the carriage to a chateau near the little city of Tauss. This chateau was the most distant termination of the few drives Consuelo had had the opportunity of taking during her residence at Riesenburg. Therefore the aspect of that country, and the direction of the roads which traversed it, had naturally presented themselves to her memory when she conceived and hurriedly executed the bold project of her flight. She remembered that while she walked with her on the terrace of the chateau, the lady who inhabited it had said, as she made her admire the vast extent of landscape which could be seen in the distance : " That beautiful road bordered with trees, which you see below there, and which is lost in the horizon, unites with the great southern road, and it is by that we go to Vienna." Consuelo, with this indication and this precise recollection, was therefore certain not to go astray, and to regain at a short distance the road by which she had come into Bohemia. She reached the chateau of Beila, skirted the boundary of the park, found the road bordered with trees without difficulty, notwithstanding the darkness ; and before day had succeeded in placing between herself and the point she wished to leave behind, a distance of about three leagues as the bird flies. Young, strong, and accustomed from her childhood to long foot journeys, supported moreover by a daring will, she saw the day break without experiencing much fatigue. The sky was serene, the roads dry and covered with a sand which was quite pleasant to the feet. The

galloping of the horse, to which she was not accustomed, had somewhat bruised her ; but we know that walking, in such a case, is better than rest, and that for energetic temperaments, one fatigue relieves another.

Still, in proportion as the stars became pale and the dawn brightened into daylight, she began to be terrified at her loneliness. She had felt very secure in the darkness. Always on the look-out, she had thought it certain that in case of pursuit, she could conceal herself without being seen ; but in broad day, compelled to cross large open spaces, she no longer dared to follow the beaten road, more especially as she soon saw groups of persons show themselves in the distance, and spread like black spots upon the white line which marked the road among the still darkened fields. At so little distance from Riesenburg, she might be recognized by the first passer ; and she resolved to venture into a bye-path which it seemed to her must shorten her walk, by cutting at right angles a circuit which the road made round a hill. She walked thus for almost an hour without meeting any one, and entered a woody place, where she could hope to conceal herself easily from all eyes. "If I can thus gain," thought she, "an advance of eight or ten leagues without being discovered, I can travel quickly on the main road ; and at the first favorable opportunity I will hire a carriage and horses."

This thought made her put her hand into her pocket and take out her purse, in order to calculate how much money remained, after her generous payment to the guide who had brought her out from Riesenburg, with which to undertake this long and difficult journey. She had not yet allowed herself time to reflect upon it, and if she had made all the reflections that prudence suggested, would she have resolved upon this venturesome flight ? But what were her surprise and consternation, when she found her purse much lighter than she had supposed ! In her haste she had not brought away at most more than half the little sum she possessed ; or perhaps in the darkness, she had given the guide gold instead of silver ; or perhaps again, on opening her purse to pay him,

she had let a part of her fortune fall into the dust of the road. At any rate, after having counted and recounted, she could not deceive herself as to the fact that she must travel all the distance to Vienna on foot.

This discovery discouraged her somewhat, not on account of the fatigue, which she did not fear, but on account of the dangers to a young girl, inseparable from so long a pedestrian journey. The fear she had till then surmounted, by persuading herself that she would soon be sheltered in a carriage from the adventures of the main road, was more menacing than she had anticipated in the effervescence of her ideas, and as if overpowered, for the first time in her life, by the dread of her misery and her weakness, she began to walk precipitately, seeking for the darkest thickets as a refuge in case of attack.

To increase her anxiety, she soon perceived that she was no longer following a beaten track, and that she was walking at random in the midst of a wood more and more deep and desert. If this gloomy solitude reassured her in certain respects, the uncertainty as to her direction caused her to apprehend returning upon her steps, and unwittingly reapproaching Giant's castle. Anzoletto was possibly still there: a suspicion, an accident, an idea of vengeance against Albert, might have detained him. Besides, was not Albert himself to be feared in this first moment of trouble and despair? Consuelo well knew that he would submit to her decision; but if she should show herself near the chateau, and the young count should be told that she was still there, near enough to be reached and brought back, would he not come to overpower her by his supplications and his tears? Ought she to expose that noble young man, and his family, and her own pride, to the scandal and ridicule of an enterprise which had failed as soon as it was undertaken? The return of Anzoletto, after a few days, might, moreover, cast her again into the inextricable embarrassment and the dangers of a situation from which she had just freed herself by a bold and ingenious stroke.

She must therefore suffer everything and expose herself to everything, rather than return to Riesenburg.

Resolved to seek attentively for the direction of Vienna, and to follow it at all hazards, she stopped in a covered and mysterious spot, where a little spring bubbled among rocks shaded by old trees. The ground about it seemed somewhat trampled by the small feet of animals. Were these the flocks of the neighborhood, or the wild beasts of the forest, which came sometimes to drink at this hidden fountain? Consuelo approached it, and kneeling upon the wet stones, beguiled her hunger, which began to make itself felt, by drinking of the cold and limpid water. Then, remaining bent upon her knees, she meditated a little upon her situation. "I must be very foolish and very vain," said she to herself, "if I cannot realize what I have conceived. What! shall it be said that my mother's child had become so effeminate in the delicacies of life, that she could no longer brave the sun, hunger, fatigue and danger? I had such fine dreams of indigence and liberty in the bosom of that comfort which oppressed me, and from which I always hoped to escape! and now I am terrified at the first step. Is not this the condition to which I was born, 'to tramp, to want, and to dare?' What has changed in me since the time when I trudged before day with my poor mother, often fasting, and when we drank of the little springs at the road-side to give ourselves strength? Truly I am a fine Zingara, good for nothing but to sing upon the stage, sleep upon down, and travel in a coach! What dangers did I fear with my mother? Did she not tell me when we met wicked looking people: 'Fear nothing; nothing threatens those who possess nothing, and the wretched do not make war on each other.' She was still young and handsome in those days! did I ever see her insulted by the passers-by? The most wicked men respect defenceless beings. And how do so many poor beggar girls do, who travel the roads, and have only the protection of God? Shall I be like those young ladies, who cannot take a step out of doors without thinking that all the universe, intoxicated by their charms, are going to

pursue them? Must it be said that because one is alone, with one's feet upon the common earth, one must be degraded and renounce honor when one has not the means of surrounding one's self with protectors? Besides, my mother was strong as a man; she would have defended herself like a lioness. Cannot I be courageous and strong, I who have good plebeian blood only in my veins? Cannot one kill one's self when threatened with the loss of more than life? And besides, I am still in a quiet country, where the people are gentle and charitable; and when I reach unknown districts, I shall be very unfortunate, if I do not find, in the hour of danger, one of those upright and generous beings, whom God places everywhere to serve as Providence to the weak and the oppressed. Let me pluck up my courage. For to-day I have only to struggle with hunger. I will not enter a cabin to buy bread, until the close of the day, when it is dark, and I shall be far, very far away. I know what hunger is, and I know how to resist it, notwithstanding the eternal feasts to which they wished to accustom me at Riesenburg. One day is soon past. When it becomes hot, and my feet are tired, I will remember the philosophical axiom which I heard so often in my childhood: 'Whoso sleeps, dines.' I will hide myself in some hole in a rock, and will let thee see, O my poor mother, who watchest over me, and travellest invisible by my side at this moment, that I can still take my siesta without a sofa and cushions!"

While thus devising with herself, the poor child forgot a little of her heart's sufferings. The confidence of a great victory gained over herself, made Anzoletto appear less redoubtable already. It even seemed to her, that from the moment when she had baffled his seductions, she felt her soul freed from that fatal attachment; and in the difficulties of her romantic project, she found a sort of melancholy gaiety, which made her repeat every instant in a low voice:—"My body suffers, but my soul is saved. The bird that cannot defend himself has wings to fly away, and when he is in the plains of air, he laughs at snares and stratagems."



The recollection of Albert, the idea of his terror and his sorrow presented itself differently to Consuelo's mind; but she combatted with all her strength the emotion which seized her at this thought. She had formed the resolution to repel his image, until she should be secured from too sudden a repentance and an imprudent tenderness. "Dear Albert! sublime friend!" said she, "I cannot help sighing deeply when I depict to myself your sufferings! But it is only at Vienna that I will stop to share and pity them. It is at Vienna that I will allow my heart to tell me how much it venerates and regrets you!"

"Come, let us go on!" said Consuelo to herself, trying to rise. But she tried in vain two or three times to abandon that fountain so wild and so pretty, the sweet murmurings of which seemed to invite her to prolong her repose. Sleep, which she wished to put off until mid-day, weighed down her eye-lids; and hunger, which she was no longer accustomed to endure so well as she flattered herself, overcame her with an irresistible weakness. She strove in vain to deceive herself in this respect. She had eaten hardly anything the day before; too much agitation and anxiety had prevented her from thinking of it. A veil spread over her eyes; a cold and painful sweat weakened her whole body. She yielded to fatigue without being conscious of it; and even while forming a last resolution to rise and resume her journey, her limbs sank upon the grass, her head fell upon her little bundle, and she slept profoundly. The sun, red and hot, as it sometimes is in the short summers of Bohemia, mounted gaily into the heavens; the fountain bubbled among the stones, as if it wished to lull with its monotonous song the slumbers of the traveller, and the birds flew about, singing also their warbling burdens above her head.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

THE forgetful girl had reposed thus almost three hours, when another noise than that of the fountain and of the chattering birds, awoke her from her lethargy. She half opened her eyes, without having strength to rise, without as yet comprehending where she was, and saw, at two paces' distance from her, a young man bent over the rocks, engaged in drinking from the spring, as she herself had done, without any more ceremony or preparation than that of placing his mouth into the current. Consuelo's first feeling was fright; but the second glance cast upon this guest of her retreat restored her confidence. For whether he had already examined her features at his leisure while she was asleep, or felt no great interest in the encounter, he did not seem to bestow much attention upon her. Besides, he was less a man than a child: he appeared to be fifteen or sixteen years old at most, was very small, thin, extremely sallow and tanned, and his features, which were neither handsome nor ugly, indicated nothing at this moment but a quiet carelessness.

By an instinctive movement, Consuelo drew her veil over her face, and did not change her position, thinking that if the traveller paid no more regard to her than he now seemed disposed to do, it was better to pretend sleep, than to give occasion for embarrassing questions. Through her veil, she lost not one of the unknown's movements, as she waited for him to resume his wallet and stick, which were lying on the grass, and continue his journey.

But she soon saw that he also was determined to rest, and even to breakfast; for he opened his little pilgrim's bag, and took out a great loaf of hard bread, which he began to cut, and to eat with his beautiful teeth, casting a timid look upon the sleeper from time to time, and taking pains not to make

any noise when he opened and shut his spring-knife, as if he feared to wake her with a start. The mark of deference restored full confidence to Consuelo, and the sight of the bread which her companion ate with such relish, awakened in her the gnawings of hunger. After being well assured, by the torn dress of the boy and his dusty shoes, that he was a poor traveller, a stranger to the country, she judged that Providence had sent her an unhoped-for relief, by which she ought to profit. The piece of bread was enormous, and the child could give her a small portion, without doing much injustice to his own appetite. She therefore rose, pretended to rub her eyes as if she woke at that very moment, and looked at the youth with an assured air, in order to impose upon him, in case he should lose the respect he had hitherto testified.

This precaution was unnecessary ; as soon as he saw the sleeper erect, the youth was a little troubled, cast down his eyes, raised them several times with exertion, and at last, emboldened by Consuelo's physiognomy, which remained irresistibly good and sympathetic, notwithstanding her efforts to appear reserved, he addressed her with a voice so sweet and so harmonious in tone, that the young musician was suddenly impressed in his favor. "Well! young lady," said he with a smile, "so you have waked up at last? You were sleeping there so soundly, that but for the fear of being impolite, I should have done the same myself."

"If you are as obliging as polite," replied Consuelo, assuming a maternal air, "you will do me a little favor."

"Whatever you wish," returned the young traveller, to whom the sound of Consuelo's voice appeared equally agreeable and penetrating.

"You will sell me a morsel of your breakfast," said she, "if you can do so without robbing yourself."

"Sell it to you!" cried the child, quite surprised and blushing; oh! if I had a breakfast, I would not sell it to you! I am not an inn-keeper; but I should like to offer and give it to you."

"You shall give it to me then, on condition that I give you in exchange wherewithal to buy a better one."

"Not so, not so," returned he. "Are you joking? Are you too proud to accept a little morsel of bread from me? Alas! you see I have only that to offer."

"Well, I accept it," said Consuelo, extending her hand; "your good heart would make me blush if I were proud."

"Take it, take it! my beautiful young lady," cried the young man, quite joyful. "Take the loaf and knife, and cut for yourself. But no ceremony, at least. I am not a great eater, and I had enough for the whole day."

"But have you the means of buying another for your day?"

"Can't we find bread everywhere? But come, eat, if you wish to give me pleasure!"

Consuelo did not wait to be asked again; and feeling that it would be wrong not to respond to the brotherly frankness of her Amphitryon by eating with him, she reseated herself not far from him, and began to devour that bread, in comparison with which the most succulent dishes she had tasted at the tables of the rich, appeared to her insipid and coarse.

"What a good appetite you have!" said the boy; "it gives one pleasure to see you. Well! it was lucky for me that I met you; it makes me quite contented. Believe me, it is better you should eat the whole; we shall certainly find some house on the road to-day, though this country seems a desert."

"Then you are not acquainted with it?" said Consuelo, with an air of indifference.

"This is the first time I have passed through it, though I know the whole road from Vienna to Pilsen, which I have just travelled, and by which I am returning there again."

"There! where? to Vienna?"

"Yes, to Vienna; are you going there too?"

Consuelo, undecided if she should accept this travelling companion or avoid him, pretended to be absent, in order not to reply immediately.

“Bah! what am I saying?” resumed the young man. “A beautiful lady like you would not be going thus all alone to Vienna. And yet you are travelling; for you have a bundle like myself,—you are on foot as I am!”

Consuelo, determined to elude his questions until she saw how far she could trust him, took the part of answering one interrogation by another. “Do you belong to Pilsen?” asked she.

“No,” replied the child, who had no motive for distrust; “I am from Rohran in Hungary; my father is a wheelwright there.”

“And why are you travelling so far from home? Do you not follow your father’s trade?”

“Yes and no. My father is a wheel-wright, and I am not; but he is at the same time a musician, and I aspire to be one.”

“Musician? Bravo! that’s a fine trade!”

“Perhaps it is yours also?”

“Still you are not going to study music at Pilsen, which they say is a gloomy fortress.”

“Oh no! I was charged with a commission for that city, and I am returning to Vienna to try and earn my bread, while I continue my musical studies.”

“What branch have you embraced? vocal or instrumental music?”

“Both the one and the other hitherto. I have quite a good voice; and I have here a poor little violin, on which I can make myself understood. But my ambition is great, and I wish to go beyond that.”

“To compose, perhaps!”

“That is it. I can think of nothing but that cursed composition. I am going to show you that I have a good travelling companion in my bag; it is a great book which I cut in pieces, so that I could carry some parts with me while scouring the country; and when I am tired of walking, I seat myself in a corner and study a little; that rests me.”

“Of course.—I bet it is Fuchs’ *Gradus ad Parnassum*.”

“Exactly. Ah! I see that you understand, and I am sure that you too are a musician, yourself. A little while ago, when you were sleeping, I looked at you and said to myself, ‘There is a face which is not German; it is a southern face, perhaps Italian: and what is more, it is the face of an artist!’ So you gave me great pleasure in asking for my bread; and I see now that you have a foreign accent, though you speak German as well as can be.”

“You may be mistaken. You have not a German face any more than I have; you have the complexion of an Italian, and yet—”

“Oh! you are very polite, young lady. I have the complexion of an African, and my comrades of St. Stephen’s choir used to call me the Moor. But to return to what I was saying; when I found you sleeping there alone in the middle of the wood, I was somewhat astonished. And then I had a thousand ideas about you; perhaps, thought I, my good star has led me here to meet a good friend who can help me. At last,—shall I tell you all?”

“Speak without fear.”

“Seeing you too well dressed, and of too white a complexion for a poor stroller, seeing still that you had a bundle, I imagined that you must be some person attached to another foreign person—and artist. Oh! a great artist she is, whom I seek to find, and whose protection would be my salvation and my joy. Come, mademoiselle, confess the truth! You belong to some neighboring chateau, and you are going or returning from some business in the neighborhood? and you certainly know,—oh! yes, you must know Giant’s castle.”

“Riesenburg? are you going to Riesenburg?”

“I am trying to go there, at least; for I have so lost myself in this cursed wood, notwithstanding the directions given me at Klatau, that I don’t know if I shall ever get out of it. Fortunately, you know where Riesenburg is, and can tell me if I am very far from it.”

“But what are you going to do at Riesenburg?”

“I wish to go and see the Porporina.”

‘Indeed!’ And Consuelo, fearing to betray herself before a traveller who might speak of her at Giant’s castle, again assumed her reserved manner, and asked with an indifferent air, “And who may this Porporina be, if you please?”

“Don’t you know? Alas, I see well that you must be an entire stranger in this country. But since you are a musician, and know the name of Fuchs, you must also be very well acquainted with that of Porpora?”

“And you, do you know Porpora?”

“Not yet, and it is because I wish to know him, that I endeavor to obtain the protection of his famous and beloved pupil, the Porporina.”

“Tell me how the thought came into your mind. Perhaps I should like to go with you, and find this castle and this Porporina.”

“I will tell you my whole history. I am, as I have already said, the son of an honest wheelwright, and the native of a little town on the borders of Hungary and Austria. My father is the sacristan and organist of his village; my mother, who was formerly cook to the lord of our place, has a fine voice; and my father, to rest himself after his work, used to accompany her in the evening on his harp. The taste for music came to me quite naturally, and I recollect that my greatest pleasure, when quite small, was to take my part in our family concerts, upon a little stick of wood which I rubbed with a piece of shingle, fancying that I had a violin and bow in my hand, and that I drew from it magnificent sounds. Oh, yes! it still seems to me that my dear sticks were not mute, and that a divine voice, which others could not hear, breathed around me, and intoxicated me with the most celestial melodies.

“Our cousin Franck, a school-master at Haimburg, came to see us one day when I was playing on my imaginary violin, and was amused at the kind of ecstasy in which I was plunged. He pretended it was the presage of a prodigious talent, and took me with him to Haimburg, where, for three years, he gave me a very rough musical education, I assure you! What beautiful pieces for the organ, with strokes and flourishes, he

executed with his baton for marking time upon my fingers and my ears! Still I was not rebuffed. I learned to read and write; I had a real violin, of which I also learnt the elementary practice, as well as the first principles of singing and of the Latin language. I made as rapid progress as was possible with a master of so little patience as my cousin Franck.

“I was about eight years old, when chance, or rather Providence, in which I have always believed like a good Christian, brought to my cousin’s house, Mr. Reuter, the chapel-master of the cathedral at Vienna. I was presented to him as a prodigy, and on my easily reading a small piece at first sight, he conceived a friendship for me, carried me to Vienna, and got me into St. Stephen’s as one of the choir.

“We had only two hours of work a day there; and the rest of the time, abandoned to ourselves, we could wander about at liberty. But my passion for music stifled in me the dissipated tastes and the idleness of childhood. When playing upon the square with my comrades, as soon as I heard the sound of the organ, I left all to enter the church, and delight myself with listening to the chants and the harmony. I forgot myself in the evening in the street under windows whence issued the interrupted sounds of a concert, or even those of an agreeable voice; I was curious, I was greedy to know and understand all which struck my ear. Above all, I wished to compose. At thirteen, without knowing any of the rules, I even dared to write a mass, the scale of which I showed to our master Reuter. He laughed at me, and advised me to learn before creating. It was very easy for him to say so. I had not the means of paying a master, and my parents were too poor to send me the money necessary for my support and education too. At last, I one day received six florins from them, with which I bought this book, and that of Matheson. I began to study them with ardor, and took a great pleasure in it. My voice improved, and was considered the finest in the choir. In the midst of the doubts and uncertainties of ignorance which I strove to dissipate, I felt that my brain was developing itself, and that ideas were springing up in me; but I ap-



proached with terror the age at which it would be necessary for me, conformably to the rules of the chapel, to leave the foundation, and seeing myself without resources, without protection, and without masters, I asked if those eight years of labor at the cathedral would not be my last studies, and if I should not be obliged to return to my parents, and learn the wheelwright's trade. To increase my vexation, I saw that master Reuter, instead of taking an interest in me, treated me with severity, and only thought of hastening the fatal moment of my departure. I am ignorant of the causes of that antipathy, which I in no way deserved. Some of my comrades had the folly to say that he was jealous of me, because he discovered in my attempts at composition a kind of revelation of musical genius, and that he was accustomed to hate and discourage all young persons in whom he perceived talent superior to his own. I am far from accepting so vain an interpretation of my disgrace; but I do believe that I made a mistake in showing him my essays. He took me for an ambitious boy without brains, and considered me presumptuous and impertinent."

"And yet," said Consuelo, interrupting the narrator, "old teachers do not like pupils who seem to comprehend faster than they teach. But tell me your name, my child."

"My name is Joseph."

"Joseph what?"

"Joseph Haydn."

"I wish to remember this name, in order to know some day, if you become anything, what to think of your master's aversion, and of the interest with which your history inspires me. Continue it, I beseech you."

Young Haydn resumed in these terms, while Consuelo, struck with the resemblance between their destinies as poor children and artists, examined attentively the physiognomy of the young chorister. That diminutive and bilious face acquired a singular animation in the freedom of his recital. His blue eyes glistened with a wit which was at the same time roguish and benevolent, and nothing in his manner or his speech announced an ordinary mind.

## CHAPTER LXV.

“WHATEVER may have been the cause of Master Reuter’s antipathy, he testified it towards me very severely, and for a very trifling fault. I had a new pair of scissors, and, like a true school-boy, tried them upon everything that fell under my hand. One of my comrades having his back towards me, and his long cue, of which he was very vain, constantly coming and sweeping away the characters I traced with chalk upon my slate, I had a rapid, a fatal idea!—it was the work of an instant!—crack! my scissors were open, and the cue upon the floor! The master followed all my movements with a vulture’s eye. Before my poor comrade had perceived the unfortunate loss he had met with, I was already reprimanded, disgraced and expelled without further process.

“I left the foundation in the month of November, last year, at seven o’clock in the evening, and found myself in the square, without money, or any other clothing than the poor dress I had on. I was in despair for a moment. Seeing myself dismissed with so much anger and scandal, I imagined I had committed an enormous fault. I began to weep with all my heart for the clump of hair and bit of ribbon which had fallen under my fatal scissors. My comrade, whose head I had so dishonored, passed me, also in tears. Never had so many tears been shed, or so much regret and remorse experienced for a cue à la Prussienne. I had a great mind to go and throw myself into his arms, at his feet! But I did not dare, and hid my shame in the darkness. Perhaps the poor boy was crying more for my disgrace than for his cue.

“I passed the night on the pavement; and as I was sighing, the next morning, over the necessity and improbability of breakfast, I was accosted by Keller, hair-dresser to the foundation of Saint Stephen’s. He had just been dressing master

Reuter's hair, and the latter, still furious against me, had talked to him of nothing else but the terrible adventure of the cropped cue. So the facetious Keller, on seeing my pitiful face, burst into a shout of laughter, and overwhelmed me with his sarcasms. 'Oh ho!' cried he, from as far off as he saw me, 'this then is the scourge of hair-dressers, the general and particular enemy of all those like myself, whose profession it is to preserve the beauty of the head! Eh! my little executioner of cues, my little ravager of locks! come a little this way, that I may cut off your fine black hair, in order to replace all the cues that may fall under your blows!' I was despairing, furious. I hid my face in my hands, and believing myself the object of public odium, I was about to fly, when the good Keller stopping me: 'Where are you going now, little unfortunate?' said he in a gentle voice. 'What is to become of you without bread, without friends, without clothes, and with such a crime on your conscience? Come, I will have pity on you, for the sake of your fine voice, which I have so often taken pleasure in hearing at the cathedral; come to my house. I have only one chamber in the fifth story, for myself, my wife and my children. Even that is more than we want, for the attic above it, which I hire, is not occupied. We will accommodate you, and you shall eat with us, until you can find something to do; on condition, however, that you respect the hair of my customers, and that you do not try your shears on my wigs.'

"I followed my generous Keller, my savior and father! Besides lodging and board, he had the goodness, poor artisan as he himself was, to advance me some money, in order that I might continue my studies. I hired an old worm-eaten harpsichord; and shut up in my garret, with my Fuchs and my Mattheson, I gave myself without restraint to my ardor for composition. From that moment I can consider myself as protected by Providence. The first six sonatas of Emanuel Bach were my delight during the whole of that winter, and I believe I understood them well. At the same time Heaven, rewarding my zeal and my perseverance, permitted me to find

a little occupation, by means of which I could live and recompense my dear host. I played on the organ every Sunday at the count of Haugwitz's chapel, after having performed my part in the morning as first violin at the church of the Fathers of Mercy. Besides, I have found two protectors; one is an abbé who makes a great many Italian verses, very fine as they tell me, and who is very high in the favor of her majesty the empress queen. He is called signor de Metastasio; and as he lives in the same house with Keller and me, I give lessons to a young person who is said to be his niece. My other protector is his lordship the Venetian ambassador."

"Il signor Corner?" asked Consuelo quickly.

"Ah! you know him?" returned Haydn; "it was the abbé de Metastasio who introduced me into that house. My trifling talents gave satisfaction there, and his excellency has promised that I shall take lessons of master Porpora, who is now at the baths of Manensdorf with madam Wilhelmina, the wife or mistress of his excellency. This promise filled me with joy; to become the pupil of so great a professor, of the first master of vocal music in the universe! To learn composition, the pure and correct principles of Italian art! I looked upon myself as made; I blessed my stars; I thought I was already master. But alas! notwithstanding his excellency's good intentions, his promise has not been so easy to realize as I had flattered myself; and if I do not find a more powerful recommendation to Porpora, I truly fear I shall never even approach his person. They say that this illustrious master is very odd; and as he shows himself attentive, generous and devoted towards some of his pupils, so he is capricious and cruel towards others. It seems that master Reuter is nothing compared with Porpora, and I tremble at the very idea of seeing him. Still, though he began by flatly refusing the ambassador's propositions respecting me, and has signified that he wishes for no more pupils, as I know that signor Corner will insist, I still hope, and am determined to submit patiently to the most cruel mortifications, provided he will teach me something while he scolds."

“ You have there formed a salutary resolution,” said Consuelo. “ The rough manners and terrible aspect of that great master have not been exaggerated to you. But you have reason to hope ; for if you have patience, a blind submission, and the true love of music which I divine in you, if you do not lose your senses in the midst of the first hurricanes, and succeed in displaying to him intelligence and rapidity of judgment, I promise you that after three or four lessons, he will be the gentlest and most conscientious of masters. Perhaps even, if your heart responds, as I believe it does, to your mind, Porpora will become for you a firm friend, an equitable and beneficent father.”

“ Oh ! you fill me with joy. I see that you know him and must also know his famous pupil, the new countess of Rudolstadt—the Porporina—”

“ But where have you heard speak of this Porporina, and what do you expect from her ?”

“ I expect from her a letter for Porpora, and her active protection with him, when she comes to Venice ; for she will doubtless go there after her marriage with the rich lord of Riesenburg.”

“ How did you hear of that marriage ?”

“ By the greatest chance in the world : I must tell you that, last month, my friend Keller heard that a relation of his at Pilsen had just died, and left him a little property. Keller had neither time nor means to undertake the journey, and did not dare determine upon it, for fear lest the inheritance should not pay the expense of his trip and the loss of his time. I had just received some money for my labor. I offered to go and to take his interests in hand. I have been at Pilsen, and, during the week I passed there, have had the satisfaction of seeing Keller’s inheritance realized. It is little, no doubt, but that little is not to be despised by him ; and I carry with me the titles of a small property which he can sell or improve as he shall judge best. Returning from Pilsen, I found myself last evening in a place called Klatau, where I passed the night. It had been a market day, and the inn was full of

people. I was seated near a table where a gross man was eating, whom they called doctor Wetzelius, and who is the greatest gourmand and the greatest babbler I have ever met with. 'Do you know the news?' said he to his neighbors: 'count Albert of Rudolstadt, he who is mad, arch-mad, almost a maniac, is going to marry his cousin's music mistress, an adventuress, a beggar, who has been, they say, an actress in Italy, and who was seduced by the old musician Porpora, who got tired of her, and sent her to be brought to bed at Riesen-burg. They kept the matter quite secret; and at first, as they did not understand the illness and the convulsions of the young miss, whom they thought virtuous, they sent for me as for a putrid and malignant fever. But hardly had I touched the patient's pulse, when count Albert, who doubtless knew what to expect from such virtue, threw himself upon me like a madman, drove me away, and would not allow me to reënter the apartment. Everything passed very secretly. I believe the old canoness acted as midwife; the poor lady never found herself in such a strait before. The child has disappeared. But what is most wonderful is, that the young count, who, as you all know, cannot measure time and takes months for years, has imagined himself the father of that child, and has talked so energetically to his family, that, rather than see him fall again into his fits of fury, they have consented to this fine marriage.'"

"Oh! that is horrible; that is infamous!" cried Consuelo, beside herself. "It is a tissue of abominable calumnies and revolting absurdities."

"Do not believe that I gave credence to it for an instant," returned Joseph Haydn; "the face of that old doctor was as stupid as it was wicked, and before they had given him the lie, I was already sure that he was retailing only follies and falsities. But hardly had he ended his story, when five or six young men who were about him, took the part of the young person; and it was thus that I learnt the truth. Each praised the beauty, the grace, the modesty, the sense, and the incomparable talent of the Porporina. All approved count

Albert's passion for her, envied his happiness, and admired the old count for having consented to the union. Doctor Wetzelius was treated as an insane dotard; and as they spoke of the great esteem which master Porpora felt for a pupil to whom he had been willing to give his name, the idea came into my head of going to Riesenburg, throwing myself at the feet of the future or perhaps present countess, (for they said the marriage was already celebrated, but kept secret for fear of offending the court,) and relating my history to her, in order to obtain from her the favor of becoming the pupil of her illustrious master."

Consuelo remained some instants pensive; the last words of Joseph respecting the court had struck her. But quickly recovering herself: "My child," said she to him, "do not go to Riesenburg; you will not find the Porporina there. She is not married to the count of Rudolstadt, and nothing is less certain than that marriage. It has been talked of, it is true, and I believe the betrothed were worthy of each other; but the Porporina, though she felt for count Albert a strong friendship, a profound esteem, and a respect without bounds, thought she ought not to decide lightly upon so serious a matter. She weighed, on the one side, the injury she might inflict on that illustrious family, by making it lose the good graces and perhaps the protection of the empress, as well as the esteem of the other nobles, and the consideration of the whole country; and on the other, the injury she would inflict on herself, by renouncing the practice of that divine art, which she had studied with passion and embraced with courage. She said to herself that the sacrifice was great on both sides, and that, before throwing herself headlong into it, she ought to consult Porpora, and give the young count time to know if his passion would resist the influence of absence; therefore she left for Vienna on a sudden, on foot, without guide and almost without money, but with the hope of restoring repose and reason to him who loves her, and carrying away, of all the riches that were offered to her, only the testimony of her conscience and the pride of her profession as an artist."

"Oh! she is a true artist, indeed. She has a strong head and a noble soul, if she has acted thus!" cried Joseph, fixing his brilliant eyes on Consuelo; "and if I am not deceived, it is to her that I speak; it is before her that I prostrate myself."

"It is she who extends her hand to you, and who offers you her friendship, her advice and support with Porpora; for we shall travel together, it appears to me; and if God protects us, as he has protected us both hitherto, as he protects all those who trust only in him, we shall soon be at Vienna, and will take lessons of the same master."

"God be praised!" cried Haydn, weeping with joy, and raising his arms enthusiastically towards heaven; "I divined truly, on seeing you asleep, that there was something supernatural in you, and that my life, my destiny were in your hands."



## CHAPTER LXVI.

WHEN the young people had made a fuller acquaintance, by going over on both sides the details of their situation in a musical conversation, they thought of the precautions and arrangements necessary for their journey to Vienna. The first thing they did was to take out their purses and count their money. Consuelo was still the richer of the two; but their united funds would only furnish sufficient to travel agreeably on foot, without suffering from hunger or sleeping in the open air. They could imagine nothing different, and Consuelo had already made up her mind to it. Still, notwithstanding the philosophical gaiety she testified in this respect, Joseph was anxious and thoughtful.

“What is the matter with you?” said she to him; “perhaps you are afraid of the embarrassment of my company, and yet I will bet I can walk better than you.”

“You must do everything better than I,” replied he; “that does not trouble me. But I am sad and frightened when I think that you are young and handsome, and that all will look upon you with desire, while I am so small and so weak that though well resolved to be killed for your sake, I may not have strength enough to defend you.”

“What are you thinking of, my poor child? If I were handsome enough to attract the glances of passers by, I think that a woman who respects herself can always impose by her countenance.”

“Whether you are ugly or handsome, young or old, bold or modest, you are not in safety on these roads covered with soldiers and rascals of every kind. Since the peace, the country is inundated with military men, and especially with volunteer adventurers, who seeing themselves discharged, and no longer knowing where to seek their fortunes, undertake to

pillage travellers, to extort from the country people, and to treat the provinces as conquered countries. Our poverty will shelter us from their talent in this respect; but your being a woman is sufficient to excite their brutality. I think seriously of changing our road; and instead of going by Piseck and Budweiss, which are fortified places, offering a continual pretext for the passage of discharged troops and others who are no better, we shall do well to descend the course of the Moldaw, following the mountain cuts which are almost desert, whither the cupidity and thievish disposition of those gentry will find nothing to attract them. We will keep close to the river till we are near Reichenau, and will soon enter Austria by Freistadt. Once upon the soil of the empire, we shall be protected by a police more powerful than that of Bohemia."

"You know the road then?"

"I do not even know if there be one. But I have a little map in my pocket, and had intended, on leaving Pilsen, to try and return by the mountains for a change, and to see the country."

"Well, so be it! Your idea seems a good one," said Consuelo, looking at the map which Joseph had opened; "there are always paths for foot travellers, and huts which will receive honest folks short of money. I see, in fact, that there is a chain of mountains which leads us to the source of the Moldaw, and continues along the river."

"It is the great Bøhmer-Wald, the highest elevations of which are there, and form the frontier between Bavaria and Bohemia, we shall easily reach it by keeping along these heights; they will show that to the right and left are the valleys which descend towards the two provinces. Since, thank God! I have nothing more to do with that undiscoverable Giant's castle, I am sure of guiding you aright, and of not making you travel a greater distance than is necessary."

"Forward then," said Consuelo; "I feel completely rested. Sleep and your good bread have restored my strength, and I can travel at least two leagues more to-day. Besides, I am in

a hurry to leave this vicinity, where I am continually afraid of meeting some acquaintance."

"Wait a moment," said Joseph, "I have a singular idea running through my brain."

"What is it?"

"If you have no repugnance to dressing like a man, your incognito would be secured, and you would escape all the evil suppositions which might be excited at our stopping places on seeing a young girl travelling alone with a young man."

"The idea is not a bad one, but you forget that we are not rich enough to make purchases. Besides, where should I find a dress to fit me?"

"Listen; I should not have thought of it, if I did not know that I had the means necessary to put it in execution. We are absolutely of the same size, which is more honor to you than to me; and I have in my bag a complete suit entirely new, which will disguise you perfectly. This is the history of the suit; it was sent to me by the good woman my mother, who thinking to make me a very useful present, and wishing that I should be properly equipped to present myself at the embassy, and to give lessons to young ladies, had made for me at her village one of the most elegant costumes that are in fashion there. Certainly the costume is picturesque and the stuffs well chosen, as you shall see! But imagine the effect I should have produced at the embassy, and the merry laugh of signor de Metastasio's niece, if I had shown myself with this rustic frock and these comical broad pantaloons. I thanked my poor mother for her good intentions, and flattered myself that I could sell the costume to some countryman who was in want, or to some travelling actor. That is why I brought it with me; but by good luck, I found no opportunity to dispose of it. The people of this country say that the fashion of the dress is ancient, and ask if it is Polish or Turkish."

"Well, the opportunity is found," cried Consuelo, laughing; "your idea is excellent, and the travelling actress will avail herself of your Turkish dress, which very much resembles a

skirt. I buy it of you on credit at any rate, or rather on condition that you will be cashier of our *tickler*, as the king of Prussia calls his treasure, and that you will advance the expense of my journey to Vienna."

"We will see," said Joseph, putting the purse in his pocket, and promising himself that he would receive no pay. "Now it remains to be seen if the dress fits you. I will go into the wood, while you hide yourself among these rocks. They will furnish you with many safe and spacious dressing rooms."

"Go and appear upon the stage," replied Consuelo, pointing to the forest: "I will enter the wing." And retiring within the rocks, while her respectful companion conscientiously withdrew, she immediately proceeded to her transformation. The fountain served as a mirror when she left her retreat, and it was not without a certain pleasure that she saw in it the prettiest little peasant that the Slave race had ever produced. Her waist, delicate and supple as an osier, played freely in a broad girdle of red woollen; and her foot, slender as a doe's, issued modestly a little above the ankle, from the broad folds of the pantaloon. Her black hair, which she had always insisted on not powdering, had been cut during her illness, and curled naturally about her face. She passed her fingers through her locks to give them all the rustic negligence which belonged to a young shepherd; and wearing her costume with the ease of the stage, knowing even,—thanks to her mimic talents,—how to give to her face at once an expression of wild simplicity, she found herself so well disguised that she felt courageous and safe in an instant. As happens to actors when they put on their costume, she felt her part, and even identified herself with the personage she was to play, so far as to experience, as it were, the want of care, the pleasure of an innocent vagabondism, the gaiety, activity and lightness of body of a truant school-boy.

She had to whistle three times before Haydn, who had withdrawn further than necessary into the wood, either to testify his respect, or to escape the temptation of turning his

eyes towards the openings in the rocks, returned to her. He uttered a cry of surprise and admiration on seeing her ; and even though he had expected to find her well disguised, could hardly believe his eyes at the first moment. This transformation became Consuelo prodigiously, and at the same time gave an entirely different turn to the young man's imagination.

The kind of pleasure which the beauty of a woman produces in an adolescent is always mingled with fear ; and the dress that makes of her, even in the eyes of the least chaste, a being so veiled and so mysterious, has much to do with this impression of trouble and anguish. Joseph had a pure soul, and whatever some of his biographers may have said, was a chaste and modest young man. He had been dazzled on seeing Consuelo asleep on the bank of the fountain, motionless like a beautiful statue animated by the rays of the sun, in which she was bathed. On talking and listening to her, his heart had been agitated with unknown emotions, which he had attributed only to the enthusiasm and the joy of so happy a meeting. But in the quarter of an hour which he had passed far from her in the wood, during that mysterious toilet, he had experienced violent palpitations. His first emotion had returned ; and he approached resolved to make great efforts still to conceal the mortal trouble which he bore in his soul, under an air of carelessness and cheerfulness.

The change of costume which succeeded so well as to seem a real change of sex, suddenly changed also the disposition of the young man's mind. He apparently no longer felt anything more than the fraternal transport of a strong friendship improvised between himself and his agreeable travelling companion. The same desire to travel and see the country, the same security as to the dangers of the road, the same sympathetic gaiety which animated Consuelo at this instant, seized likewise upon him, and they began their march through wood and meadow as light as two birds of passage.

Still, after a few steps, he forgot that she was a boy, on seeing her carry on her shoulder, at the end of a stick, her

little bundle of clothes, increased by the woman's dress she had just put off. A discussion arose between them on this subject. Consuelo pretended that what with his bag, his violin, and his roll of the *gradus ad Parnassum*, Joseph was loaded enough. Joseph, on his part, swore that he would put all Consuelo's bundle into his bag, and that she should carry nothing. She was obliged to yield; but, to keep up the consistency of her character, and the appearance of equality between them, he consented to let her carry the violin hung over her shoulder by a ribbon.

"Do you know," said Consuelo, to induce this concession, "that I must have the appearance of your servant, or at least of your guide? For I am a peasant,—there can be no doubt of that; and you, you are a citizen."

"What a citizen!" replied Haydn, laughing. "I don't look much unlike Keller's barber boy!" While saying this, the good youth felt a little mortified at not being able to show himself to Consuelo in a rather more beauish accoutrement than his present clothes, faded by the sun, and somewhat dilapidated by his journey.

"No, you have the appearance," said Consuelo, to relieve him of this little vexation, "of a ruined son of some family, returning to the paternal mansion, accompanied by his gardener's boy, the companion of his mad pranks."

"I really think we shall do better to play the parts appropriate to our situation," returned Joseph. "We can only pass for what we are, (you at least for the moment,) poor wandering artists; and, as it is the custom of that profession to dress one's self as one can, with whatever one finds, and according to the money one has; as troubadours of our class are often seen dragging through the fields the cast-off coat of a marquis or of a soldier, we may well have, I the old threadbare dress of a little professor, and you the costume of a Hungarian villager, unusual in this country. We shall even do well to say, if we are questioned, that we have recently made an expedition in that direction. I can speak *ex professo* of the celebrated village of Rohran, with which nobody is

acquainted, and of the celebrated city of Haimburg, of which nobody thinks. As for you, as your pretty little accent will always betray you, you will do well not to deny that you are an Italian, and a singer by profession."

"Apropos, we must have some travelling names: that's the custom. Yours is already made for me, according to my Italian manners; I must call you Beppo: it is the abbreviation of Joseph."

"Call me what you please; I have the advantage of being as much unknown with one name as with another. For yourself, it is different. You must absolutely have a name; which do you prefer?"

"The first Venetian abbreviation I can think of, Nello, Maso, Renzo, Zoto—oh! no, not that," cried she, after having, from habit, allowed the childish contraction of Anzoletto's name to escape her.

"Why not that?" said Joseph, who remarked the earnestness of her exclamation.

"It would bring me bad luck. They say there are some such names."

"Well then, how shall we baptize you?"

"Bertoni. That will be an Italian name, and a sort of diminutive of the name of Albert."

"Il signor Bertoni! that does very well," said Joseph, forcing a smile; but Consuelo's remembrance of her noble betrothed struck a poignard to his heart. He looked at her walking strong and freely before him: "Really," said he to himself, as a sort of consolation, "I forgot that it was a boy."

## CHAPTER LXVII.

THEY soon reached the edge of the wood, and directed their steps towards the south-east. Consuelo walked with her head bare, and Joseph, though seeing the sun inflame her white and pure skin, did not dare to express his uneasiness. The hat which he himself wore was not new, and he could not offer it to her ; so seeing that his anxiety was useless, he did not wish to express it ; but he clapped his own hat under his arm with a hasty movement which was remarked by his companion.

“That is a singular idea,” said she to him. “One would imagine that you considered the sky cloudy and the plain shady ? That makes me think that I have nothing on my head ; but as I have not always had every comfort, I well know how to procure for myself a little freshness.” While speaking thus, she tore from a thicket the leafy branch of a wild vine, and winding it upon itself, soon produced a verdant head-dress.

“Now she has the air of a muse,” thought Joseph, “and the boy has again disappeared !”

They passed through a village, where seeing one of those shops in which everything is sold, he entered precipitately, without her perceiving his design, and soon came out with a little broad-brimmed straw hat fastened up at the sides, such as is worn by the peasants of the valleys of the Danube.

“If you begin by purchasing luxuries,” said she, trying on this new covering, “think that we may want bread towards the end of our journey.”

“You want bread !” said Joseph earnestly ; “I would rather hold out my hand to travellers, cut capers on the public squares for a copper sous ! or do anything else ! Oh ! no, you



shall want nothing while you are with me." And seeing that Consuelo was a little astonished at his enthusiasm, he added, endeavoring to depreciate his good feelings:—"Reflect, *signor Bertoni*, that my future lot depends on you; that my fortune is in your hands, and that it is for my interest to deliver you safe and sound to master Porpora."

The idea that her companion might fall suddenly in love with her never entered Consuelo's mind. Chaste and simple women have rarely such a foresight, while coquettes, on the contrary, have it at every encounter, perhaps in consequence of their inclination to produce the cause. Besides, a very young woman seldom looks upon a man of her own age otherwise than as a child. Consuelo was two years older than Haydn, and the latter was so small and puny that he would hardly be considered fifteen. She well knew that he was more; but she could not imagine that his senses had already been awakened by love. Still she noticed an extraordinary emotion, when, having stopped to take breath in another place, whence she admired one of those beautiful situations that present themselves at every step in those elevated regions, she caught Joseph's eyes fixed upon her in a sort of ecstasy.

"What is the matter with you, friend Beppo?" said she artlessly. "You seem anxious, and I cannot get rid of the notion that my company embarrasses you."

"Do not say so!" cried he sadly; "that would be wanting esteem for me, and refusing me your confidence and your friendship, which I would repay with my life."

"In that case, do not be sad, unless you have some other subject of trouble which you have not confided to me."

Joseph fell into a gloomy silence, and they walked some distance without his finding strength to break it. The more this silence was prolonged, the more embarrassed the young man felt; he feared lest his thoughts should be divined. But he found nothing appropriate to renew the conversation. At last making a great effort over himself:—"Do you know," said he, "what I am thinking of very seriously?"

"No, I cannot guess," replied Consuelo, who, during all this time, had been buried in her own thoughts, and had observed nothing peculiar in his silence.

"I thought, as we came along, that if it would not weary you, you ought to teach me Italian. I began it with books this winter; but having nobody to guide me in the pronunciation, I dare not articulate a word before you. Still I understand what I read, and if, during our journey, you would be so good as to make me overcome my bashfulness, and to correct me at every syllable, it seems to me that my ear is musical enough to prevent your pains being lost."

"Oh! with all my heart," replied Consuelo. "I think no one should suffer a single one of the precious moments of life to pass without instruction; and as one learns in teaching, it can only be very advantageous for us both to practise the pronunciation of that language which is musical *par excellence*. You think me an Italian, but I am not, though I have very little accent in that language. But I do not pronounce it perfectly well except when I sing; and when I wish to seize the harmony of Italian sounds, I will sing the words that present difficulties to you. I am persuaded that people pronounce badly only because they understand badly. If your ear perceives the shades of sounds exactly, it will afterwards be only an effort of memory to repeat them well."

"Then it will be at the same time a lesson in Italian and a lesson in singing!" cried Joseph. "And one that will last fifty leagues," thought he, with rapture. "Ah! upon my faith, long live art! the least dangerous, the least ungrateful of attachments!"

The lesson commenced immediately, and Consuelo, who at first could hardly help laughing at every word that Joseph uttered in Italian, was soon astonished at the facility and justness with which he corrected himself. Still the young musician, who ardently desired to hear the voice of the cantatrice, and who did not see an opportunity present itself soon enough, produced one by a little deception. He pretended to be embarrassed in giving to the Italian its proper clearness and

neatness, and he sang a passage of Leo's in which the word *felicità* was repeated several times. Immediately Consuelo, without stopping, and without being more out of breath than if seated at her piano, sang the passage over several times. At that accent, so generous and so penetrating that no other in the world could at that period be compared with it, Joseph felt a thrill pass through his whole body, and he rubbed his hands one against the other with a convulsive movement and a passionate exclamation.

"Now it is your turn,—try," said Consuelo, without noticing his transports.

Haydn tried the passage and sang it so well, that his young professor clapped her hands.

"Very well, indeed," said she to him in a tone of frankness and goodness. "You learn quickly and have a magnificent voice."

"You may say what you please about that," replied Joseph; "but I feel I can never tell you anything of yourself."

"And why not?" said Consuelo. But, on turning towards him, she saw that his eyes were filled with tears, and that he still clasped his hands, making the joints crack like a playful child or an enthusiastic man.

"Let us sing no more," said she. "There are some travellers on horseback coming towards us."

"Ah! my God, yes! Keep silence!" cried Joseph beside himself. "Don't let them hear you! for they would dismount and salute you on their knees."

"I do not fear such amateurs; those are butcher's boys on horseback with calves behind them."

"Ah! pull down your hat, turn away your head!" said Joseph, coming close to her with a feeling of excited jealousy. "Don't let them see you! don't let them hear you! Let no one see or hear you but me!"

The rest of the day passed in an alternation of serious studies and youthful talk. In the midst of his agitations, Joseph experienced an intoxicating joy, and did not know if he was the most trembling among the adorers of beauty, or

the most radiant among the friends of art. By turns a dazzling idol and a delightful comrade, Consuelo filled his whole life, and transported his whole being. Towards evening he perceived that she dragged herself along with difficulty, and that fatigue had overpowered her cheerfulness. In fact, notwithstanding the frequent halts they made under the trees by the road-side, she had for several hours felt herself overcome by lassitude; but she wished it to be so; and even had it not been evident that she must leave that country as soon as possible, she would still have sought in motion and the forgetfulness of a somewhat forced gaiety, a distraction from the anguish of her heart. The first shades of evening, as they spread melancholy over the face of the country, reëxcited in her the sorrowful feelings she had combatted with so much strength. She depicted to herself the gloomy evening which was commencing at Giant's castle, and the perhaps terrible night that Albert was about to pass. Depressed by this idea, she stopped involuntarily on the summit of a bare hill, at the foot of a large wooden cross, which marked the spot of some traditional miracle or crime.

"Alas! you are more fatigued than you will acknowledge," said Joseph to her; "but our stint is near its end, for I see the lights of a hamlet gleaming at the bottom of this valley. Perhaps you think I am not strong enough to carry you, and yet, if you were willing——"

"My child," said she smiling, "you are very proud of your sex. I beg you not to despise mine so much, and to believe that I have more strength than remains to you to carry yourself. I am out of breath with climbing this steep path, that is all; and if I rest, it is because I wish to sing."

"God be praised!" cried Joseph: "sing here then, at the foot of the cross. I will kneel—And yet, if it should fatigue you more!"

"It will not be long," said Consuelo; "but I have a fancy to sing here the verse of a canticle which my mother used to make me sing with her every night and morning in the

country, whenever we encountered a chapel or a cross planted like this at the junction of four roads."

Consuelo's idea was still more romantic than she was willing to confess. In thinking of Albert, she had remembered the almost supernatural faculty he had of seeing and hearing at a distance. She strongly imagined that at this very hour he thought of her, saw her perhaps; and, thinking to afford an alleviation to his sorrow in speaking to him through night and space by a sympathetic song, she ascended the stones which supported the lower end of the cross. Then, turning towards that side of the horizon where Riesenburg must be, she gave her voice all its power in singing the stave of the Spanish canticle:

*O Consuelo de mi alma, &c.*

"My God! my God!" said Haydn, speaking to himself as soon as she had finished, "I had never heard singing; I never knew what singing was. Can there be other human voices like this? Shall I ever again hear anything similar to what is revealed to me this day? O music! holy music! O genius of the art! thou consumest, thou terrifiest me!"

Consuelo descended from the stone, where, like a madonna, her beautiful profile had been traced in the transparent azure of the night. In her turn, inspired after the manner of Albert, she imagined that she saw him, through the woods, mountains and valleys, seated upon the stone of the Schreckenstein, calm, resigned, and filled with a holy hope. "He has heard me," thought she, "he has recognized my voice and the chant which he loves. He has understood me, and now he will return to the chateau, embrace his father, and perhaps sleep peacefully."

"All is right," said she to Joseph, without noticing his delirium of admiration. Then retracing her steps, she bestowed a kiss upon the rough wood of the cross. Perhaps at that instant, by a strange coincidence, Albert experienced as it were an electric emotion which opened the springs of his gloomy will, and caused the delight of a divine calm to

pass into the most mysterious recesses of his soul. Perhaps that was the precise moment when he fell into a deep and beneficent sleep, in which his father, anxious and early rising, found him plunged the next day at early dawn. The hamlet, the lights of which they had perceived in the darkness, was only an extensive farm-house where they were received with hospitality. A family of honest laborers was eating in the open air before the door, around a table of unhewn wood, at which places were made for them without opposition as well as without heartiness. No questions were asked them; they were hardly looked at. Those good people, tired with a long and hot day's work, took their meal in silence, and gave themselves up to the stupid enjoyment of their simple and copious food. Consuelo found the supper delicious. Joseph forgot to eat, engaged as he was in looking at Consuelo's pale and noble features in the midst of those broad sunburnt peasants' faces, gentle and stupid as those of their oxen, which grazed around them, and made hardly more noise with their jaws as they slowly chewed their cud.

Each of the guests retired silently with a sign of the cross as soon as he felt satisfied, and went to give himself up to sleep, leaving the more robust to prolong the meal as they thought proper. The women, who had waited upon them, took their seats as soon as they had all risen, and began to sup with their children. More animated and more curious, they retained and questioned the young travellers. Joseph gave them the account he had prepared to satisfy them, and did not in reality depart from the truth, in saying that he and his comrade were poor wandering musicians. "What a pity it is not Sunday," replied one of the youngest, "you could have given us a dance." They carefully examined Consuelo, who appeared to them a very pretty boy, and who, to fill her part, affected to look at them with bold and sprightly eyes. She had sighed a moment at thinking of the sweetness of their patriarchal manners, from which her own active and wandering profession so far removed her. But on observing these poor women stand erect behind their husbands, serve them

with respect, and afterwards eat cheerfully what they had left, some nursing a little one, others slaves already, by instinct, of their young boys, whom they helped before thinking of their daughters or themselves, she no longer saw in these good cultivators anything more than victims of hunger and necessity; the men chained to the soil, slaves of the plough and of the herds; the women chained to the master, that is to the man, cloistered in the house, servants to perpetuity, and condemned to a labor without repose, in the midst of the sufferings and inconveniences of maternity. On one side the owner of the soil pressing or extorting from the laborer even to the deprivation of the necessaries of life, which were the results of his arid toils; on the other, avarice and fear communicated from the landlord to the tenant, and condemning the latter to govern his own family and his own life despotically and parsimoniously. Then this apparent serenity seemed to Consuelo only the brutalizing effect of misfortune or the stupefaction of fatigue; and she said to herself that it was better to be an artist or a gipsy, than a lord or a peasant, since to the ownership of land as to that of an ear of wheat was annexed either an unjust tyranny or the sad slavery of avarice. "*Viva la libertà!*" said she to Joseph in Italian, while the women were washing and arranging the dishes with a great noise, and one who was old and crippled turned her spinning wheel with the regularity of a machine.

Joseph was surprised to find that some of these peasant-women spoke German quite well. He learnt from them that the head of the family, whom he had seen dressed like a peasant, was of noble birth, and had enjoyed some fortune and education in his youth; but entirely ruined in the war of Succession, he had no other means of bringing up his numerous family than by attaching himself as farmer to a neighboring abbey. This abbey extorted from him horribly, and he had just paid the mitre-due; that is, the tax levied by the imperial fisc upon religious communities at each change of abbot. This tax was always paid in reality by the vassals and tenants of the ecclesiastical property, besides their ground-

rent and other charges. The servants of the farm were serfs, and did not consider themselves more unfortunate than the master who employed them. The farmer of the fisc was a Jew, and referred from the abbey which he tormented to the cultivators whom he tormented still more, he had that very morning claimed and carried away a sum of money which constituted the savings of several years. Between the catholic priests and the Israelitish extortioners the poor agriculturist knew not which to hate and fear the most.

"You see, Joseph," said Consuelo to her companion; "was I not right when I told you that we are the only rich in this world, we, who pay no tax upon our voices, and work only when we please?"

Bed-time having arrived, Consuelo felt so fatigued that she fell asleep on a bench at the house-door. Joseph profited by the opportunity to ask the farmer's wife for beds.

"Beds, my child?" replied she smiling; "if we can give you one it will be a great deal, and you must be satisfied with it for both."

This answer brought the blood into poor Joseph's face. He looked at Consuelo, and seeing that she had heard nothing of the dialogue, he overcame his emotion.

"My comrade is very much fatigued," said he, "and if you can give him a little bed, we will pay whatever you wish. A corner of the barn or the stable will answer for me."

"Well! if the child is ill, out of humanity we will give him a bed in the common chamber. Our three daughters sleep together. But tell your comrade to keep quiet, at least, and behave decently; or my husband and my son-in-law, who sleep in the same room, will bring him to his senses."

"I will answer for my comrade's gentleness and propriety; it remains to be seen if he will not prefer to sleep in the straw rather than in a chamber where there are so many people."

The good Joseph was obliged to rouse the signor Bertoni, in order to propose this arrangement. Consuelo was not so much startled at it as he expected. She reflected that since the young daughters of the house slept in the same room with



the father and son-in-law, she would be safer there than anywhere else; and having wished good night to Joseph, she glided behind the four brown woollen curtains which enclosed the designated bed, and there, hardly taking time to undress herself, she fell into a deep sleep.

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## CHAPTER LXVIII.

STILL, after the first hours of this overpowering sleep, she was awakened by the continual noise around her. On one side the old grandmother, whose bed almost touched hers, coughed and hawked in the shrillest and most distressing manner; on the other, a young woman nursed her child, and sang to hush it to sleep again; the snores of the men resembled roars; another child, the fourth in a bed, cried as he quarrelled with his brothers; the women rose to pacify them, and made still more noise with their scoldings and their threats. This perpetual movement, these cries of children, the dirt, the bad smell and the heat of an atmosphere loaded with thick miasmas, became so disagreeable to Consuelo, that she could no longer endure them. She dressed herself without noise, and profiting by a moment when everybody was asleep, she left the house, and sought for a corner where she could sleep till day.

She flattered herself she could sleep better in the open air. Having passed the previous night in walking, she had not been sensible of the cold; but besides her being in a state of exhaustion very different from the excitement of her departure, the climate of this elevated region already showed itself more harsh than that of the vicinity of Riesenburg. She felt herself seized with shivering, and a horrible disquiet made her fear that she could not endure a succession of days of travel and nights without rest, the commencement of which announced itself so disagreeably. In vain did she reproach herself with having become a *princess* in her effeminate life at the chateau; she would have given the rest of her days at this moment for an hour of good sleep. Still, not daring to reënter the house, for fear of awakening her hosts and exciting their suspicions, she searched for the door of the barn;

and finding that of the stable half open, she entered on tiptoe. A profound silence prevailed there. Judging this place empty, she stretched herself upon a crib filled with hay, the warmth and pleasant smell of which seemed delicious to her.

She began to fall asleep, when she felt upon her forehead a warm and moist breath, which withdrew with a violent snort and a kind of smothered imprecation. Her first fright having passed away, she perceived by the light of the dawn which began to break, a long face and two formidable horns above her head; it was a fine cow, which having passed her neck through the rack, had smelt of her with astonishment, and afterwards drew back from fear. Consuelo gathered herself up in a corner so as not to disturb her, and slept very quietly. Her ear was soon accustomed to all the noises of the stable, the rattling of chains in their rings, the lowing of heifers, and the rubbing of horns against the bars of the mangers. She did not even wake until the milkmaids came in to drive out their cattle and milk them in the open air. The stable was empty; the dark corner into which Consuelo had retired prevented her being discovered, and the sun had risen when she again opened her eyes. Buried in the hay, she enjoyed the comfort of her situation for some instants more, and was rejoiced to feel herself rested and refreshed, ready to resume her journey without effort and without anxiety. When she jumped down from the crib to seek for Joseph, the first object she saw was Joseph himself seated in front of her on the opposite crib.

“You have caused me a great deal of anxiety, dear signor Bertoni,” said he to her. “When the young girls told me you were not in the chamber, and that they did not know what had become of you, I sought for you everywhere, and it was only from despair of finding you that I returned to the place in which I had passed the night, and where, to my great surprise, I discovered you. I went out in the darkness, and did not think of your being there opposite to me, covered with that hay and under the very noses of those animals which might have wounded you. Indeed, signora, you are very

rash, and do not reflect upon the dangers of every kind to which you expose yourself."

"What dangers, my dear Beppo?" said Consuelo, smiling and extending her hand to him. "These good cows are not very ferocious animals, and I caused more fear to them than they could have done injury to me."

"But signora," replied Joseph, lowering his voice; "you came in the middle of the night to find a refuge in the first place that presented itself. Other men might have been in the stable besides me; some vagabond less respectful than your faithful and devoted Beppo; some clownish serf. If instead of the crib in which you slept, you had chosen the other, and in place of me, awakened with a start some soldier or some rustic!"

Consuelo blushed at the thought of having slept so near to Joseph, and all alone with him in the darkness; but this only increased her confidence and her friendship for the young man.

"Joseph," said she to him, "you see that Heaven does not abandon me in my imprudences, since it conducted me to the place where you were. It was Heaven that made me encounter you yesterday morning on the bank of the fountain, where you gave me your bread, your confidence, and your friendship; it was Heaven again that placed my thoughtless sleep this night under your brotherly protection."

She related to him, laughing, the bad night she had passed in the common chamber with the noisy family of the farm, and how happy and quiet she had felt among the cows.

"It is true, then," said Joseph, "that the animals have a more agreeable habitation and more elegant manners than the man who tends them!"

"That is what I was thinking of as I fell asleep in this crib. Those animals caused me neither fear nor disgust, and I reproached myself for having contracted habits so aristocratic that the company of my fellow-creatures, and the contact of their indigence, had become insufferable to me. How is that Joseph? One who was born in misery, ought not, when

again reduced to it, to experience that disdainful repugnance to which I yielded. And when the heart is not vitiated in the atmosphere of riches, why does it remain delicate in its tastes, as I was last night when I fled from the noisome heat and the stunning confusion of that poor human nest."

"The reason is, that neatness, prudence, and a well ordered house are doubtless legitimate and imperious necessities for all chosen organizations," replied Joseph. "Whoever is born an artist has a feeling for the beautiful and the good, an antipathy for the gross and the ugly. And misery is ugly! I too am a peasant, and my parents gave me life under a thatch; but they were artists: our house, though poor and small, was neat and well arranged. It is true that our poverty was allied to comfort, while excessive privation often takes away even the wish for anything better."

"Poor people!" said Consuelo. "If I were rich, I would immediately have a house built for them; and if I were queen, I would remove these taxes, these monks and Jews which devour them."

"If you were rich, you would not think of them; and if you were born queen, you would not wish to do so. So goes the world!"

"Then the world goes very badly!"

"Alas, yes! and without music which transports one into an ideal world, it would be better to kill one's self, when one has the feeling of what happens in this."

"Killing one's self is very convenient, but it does no good to anybody else! Joseph, we must become rich and still be humane."

"And as that does not seem at all possible, it is at least necessary that all poor people should be artists."

"That is not a bad idea of yours, Joseph. If all unfortunates had the sentiment and love of art to poetize suffering and embellish misery, there would be no more un-neatness, nor discouragement, nor forgetfulness of self, and then the rich would not allow themselves to despise the wretched and

trample them under foot as they now do. Artists are always somewhat respected."

"Ah! you make me think of it for the first time," replied Haydn. "Art may then have a serious object, very useful to mankind?—"

"Have you hitherto thought that it was only an amusement?"

"No, but a disease, a passion, a storm which howls within the heart, a fever which burns within us and which we communicate to others. If you know what it is, tell me."

"I will tell you when I understand it well myself; but it is something grand, be sure of that, Joseph. Come, let us be moving, and do not forget the violin, your sole property, friend Beppo, and the source of your future riches."

They began by making their little provision for breakfast, which they intended to take upon the grass in some romantic spot. But when Joseph drew out his purse and wished to pay, the farmer's wife smiled and refused without affectation, though with firmness. Notwithstanding Consuelo's solicitations, she would not accept anything, and even watched her young guests so narrowly that they could not slip the smallest present to the children.

"Remember," said she at last, with a little haughtiness, to Joseph, who insisted, "that my husband is of noble birth, and do not think that misfortune has so degraded him as to make him sell hospitality."

"That reluctance seems to me rather excessive," said Joseph to his companion, when they were again on the road. "There is more of pride than charity in the feeling which actuates them."

"I am willing to see only charity," replied Consuelo; "and my heart is full of shame and repentance at the thought that I was not able to endure the inconveniences of that house which did not consider itself soiled and overburdened by the presence of the vagabond whom I represent. Ah! cursed nicety! foolish delicacy of the spoiled children of this world!"

you are a disease, since you are health for some only to the detriment of others!"

"For such a great artist as you are, I consider you too sensible to the affairs of this lower sphere," said Joseph. "It seems to me that an artist ought to have more indifference and forgetfulness of all things which do not relate to his profession. They said at the inn of Klatau, where I heard them speaking of you and Giant's castle, that count Albert of Rudolstadt was a great philosopher with all his singularity. You felt, signora, that one could not be an artist and philosopher at the same time; that is why you took to flight. Do not then be any more affected by the misfortunes of mankind, and let us resume our yesterday's lesson."

"I am very willing, Beppo; but know beforehand that count Albert is a greater artist than either of us, philosopher as he is."

"Indeed! Then he wants nothing in order to be loved?" returned Joseph with a sigh.

"Nothing in my eyes but to be poor and of humble birth," replied Consuelo; and gently led on by the interest that Joseph manifested, stimulated by other simple questions which he tremblingly addressed to her, she gave herself up to the pleasure of conversing a long time about her betrothed. Every answer led to an explanation, and from details to details, she related to him minutely all the peculiarities of the affection with which Albert had inspired her. Perhaps this absolute confidence in a young man whom she had known only since yesterday, would have been inconvenient in any other situation. It is true that this strange situation alone could have produced it. However that might be, Consuelo yielded to an irresistible necessity of recalling to herself and confiding to a friendly heart the virtues of her betrothed; and while conversing thus, she felt with the same satisfaction that one experiences on trying one's strength after a serious illness, that she loved Albert more than she had flattered herself when she promised to strive to love him alone. She indulged her imagination without anxiety; and all that was beautiful,

great and worthy of respect in his character, appeared to her under a more brilliant light, when she no longer felt the fear of taking an absolute resolution too precipitately. Her pride no longer suffered at the idea that she could be accused of ambition; for she fled, she renounced in some sort the material advantages attached to this union; she could therefore, without constraint and without shame, give herself up to the prevailing affection of her soul. Anzoleto's name did not come to her lips a single time, and she even perceived with pleasure that she had not thought of mentioning him in the account of her residence in Bohemia.

This frankness, misplaced and rash as it might have been, produced the best results. It gave Joseph to understand how seriously attached Consuelo's soul was; and the vague hopes he might have involuntarily conceived, vanished like dreams, the remembrance even of which he strove to dissipate. After one or two hours of silence which followed this earnest conversation, he firmly resolved to see in her no more a beautiful siren, nor a dangerous and problematic comrade, but a great artist and a noble woman, whose advice and friendship would diffuse a happy influence over his whole life.

As much to respond to her confidence, as to create a double barrier to his own desires, he opened his soul and related to her how he himself was also engaged, and as it were betrothed. His romance of the heart was less poetical than that of Consuelo; but to whomsoever knows the termination of that romance in Haydn's life, it was not less pure or less noble. He had testified some friendship for the daughter of his generous host the hair-dresser Keller, and the latter, seeing their innocent familiarity, said to him; "Joseph, I have confidence in you. You appear to love my daughter, and I see that you are not displeasing to her. If you are as faithful as you are industrious and grateful, you shall be my son-in-law, when you have secured a livelihood." In a moment of exalted gratitude, Joseph had promised, sworn!—And though his betrothed did not inspire him with the least passion, he considered himself bound for life.



He related this with a melancholy which he could not conquer, on thinking of the difference between his real position and the intoxicating dreams he was obliged to renounce. Consuelo looked upon this sadness as the indication of a deep and invincible love for Keller's daughter. He did not dare undeceive her; and her esteem, her complete confidence in Beppo's purity and loyalty increased in proportion. Their journey was not therefore troubled by any of those crises or explosions which might have been anticipated on seeing two amiable young persons, intelligent and filled with sympathy for each other, depart together on a tête-a-tête for fifteen days, and under circumstances which guaranteed the most perfect impunity. Although Joseph did not love Keller's daughter, he consented to let his fidelity of conscience pass for fidelity of heart; and though he still sometimes felt the storm threatening in his bosom, he knew so well how to master it, that his chaste companion, sleeping upon the heath in the midst of the woods, guarded by him as by a faithful dog, traversing at his side the profoundest solitudes, far from every human eye, often passing the night with him in the same barn or the same grotto, did not once have an idea of his conflicts and the merits of his victory. In his old age, when Haydn read the first chapters of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Confessions, he smiled, and his eyes filled with tears as he recalled his journey over the Boehmer-wald, with Consuelo, trembling love and pious innocence as his travelling companions.

Once, however, the virtue of the young musician experienced a severe trial. When the weather was fine, the roads easy and the moon bright, they adopted the true and only good method of travelling on foot, without running the risk of bad resting places. They established themselves in some quiet and sheltered place, and there passed the day with talk, music, dinner and sleep. As soon as the evening became cold, they finished their supper, packed up, and resumed their journey until day. They thus escaped the fatigue of a walk in the sun, the danger of being curiously examined, the dirt and expense of an inn. But when the rain, which became more

frequent in that elevated part of the Boehmer-wald where the Moldaw takes its rise, compelled them to seek a shelter, they retired where they could, sometimes into the cabin of a serf, sometimes into the outbuildings of a chateau. They carefully avoided the inns, in which they could more easily have found a lodging, from fear of unlucky meetings, coarse jokes and noisy scenes.

One evening then, compelled by the storm, they entered the hut of a goat-herd, who, for all demonstration of hospitality, said to them, yawning and pointing in the direction of his fold :

“ There is some straw.”

Consuelo glided into a very dark corner, as she was accustomed to do, and Joseph was going to place himself at some distance in another corner, when he stumbled over the legs of a man asleep, who apostrophized him roughly. Other oaths replied to the imprecations of the sleeper, and Joseph, terrified at such company, reapproached Consuelo, and seized her arm, in order to be sure that no one should come between them. At first they thought of going out, but the rain poured in torrents upon the boarded roof of the hut, and every one had fallen asleep again.

“ Let us stay,” said Joseph, in a low voice, “ until it has stopped raining. You can sleep without fear ; I will not close my eyes ; I will remain by your side. No one can imagine that there is a woman here. As soon as the weather becomes tolerable, I will wake you, and we will slip out.” Consuelo did not feel very much reassured ; but there was more danger in going out immediately than in remaining. The goat-herd and his guests would remark this fear of lodging with them ; they would have some suspicion, either respecting their sex or the money they might be supposed to have ; and if these men were capable of bad intentions, they would follow them into the fields to attack them. Consuelo, having made all these reflections, kept herself quiet ; but she entwined her arm within that of Joseph, from a very natural feeling of terror and of well founded confidence in his care.

As soon as the rain ceased, as they had neither of them slept, they prepared to depart, when they heard their unknown companions move, rise, and talk with low voices in an incomprehensible jargon, after having raised some heavy bundles with which they loaded their shoulders. As they departed they exchanged with the goat-herd some words in German which made Joseph think they were smugglers, and that the host was in their confidence. It was barely midnight, the moon had risen, and by the light of a ray which fell obliquely upon the half opened door, Consuelo saw the glittering of their arms, as they concealed them beneath their cloaks. At the same time she satisfied herself that there was no one in the hut, and the goat-herd himself left her alone there with Haydn; for he followed the smugglers to guide them in the paths of the mountain, and show them a passage to the frontier, known, he said, to himself alone.

"If you deceive us, at the least suspicion I will blow out your brains," said one of those men with a grave and determined face. These were the last words that Consuelo heard. Their measured steps creaked upon the gravel for some instants. The noise of a neighboring stream, swollen by the rain, at last covered that of their march, which was lost in the distance.

"We were wrong to fear them," said Joseph, still without quitting Consuelo's arm, which he all the while pressed against his breast. "These people avoid observation even more than we."

"It is on that very account, that I think we incurred some danger," replied Consuelo. "When you stumbled over them in the dark, you did well not to answer their oaths: they thought you one of themselves. Otherwise they might have taken us for spies and done us some injury. Thank God! there is nothing to fear now, and we are at last alone."

"Repose yourself then," said Joseph, feeling with regret Consuelo's arm detach itself from his. "I will still watch, and at day-light we will depart."

Consuelo had been more fatigued by fear than by walking. She was so accustomed to rest under the guardianship of her friend, that she yielded herself to sleep. But Joseph, who also, after many agitations, had acquired the habit of sleeping by her side, could not this time obtain any repose. That hand of Consuelo which he had held trembling in his own for two hours; those emotions of terror and of jealousy which had excited all the intensity of his love, and even those last words which Consuelo had uttered as she went to sleep: "We are at last alone!" awakened in him a burning fever. Instead of retiring to the bottom of the hut to testify his respect, as he was accustomed to do, seeing that she did not think of withdrawing from him, he remained seated at her side; and the palpitations of his heart became so violent, that Consuelo might have heard them had she not been asleep. Everything agitated him, the melancholy noise of the stream, the moaning of the wind in the firs, and the rays of the moon which glanced through an opening in the roof, and feebly illumined Consuelo's pale features, surrounded by her black tresses as with a frame; finally, that something, I know not what, of terrible and savage which passes from external nature into the heart of man, when life is wild about him. He began to grow calm, and to fall asleep, when he thought he felt hands upon his breast. He bounded upon his feet, and seized in his arms a little kid which had come to kneel and warm itself upon his bosom. He caressed it, and without knowing why, covered it with tears and kisses. At last the day appeared; and on seeing more distinctly Consuelo's noble brow, and grave and pure features, he was ashamed of his torments. He went out to bathe his face and his hair in the freezing water of the stream. He seemed to wish to purify himself from the culpable thoughts that had inflamed his brain.

Consuelo soon came to join him there, and to make the same ablution, in order to dissipate the heaviness of sleep, and to familiarize herself courageously with the morning

atmosphere, as she gaily did every day. She was astonished to find Haydn so pale and sad.

"Oh! this time, friend Beppo," said she, "you do not bear fatigues and emotions as well as I do; you are as pale as these little flowers which seem to weep on the surface of the water."

"And you are as fresh as those beautiful wild roses which seem to laugh on its banks," replied Joseph. "I believe I can endure fatigue, notwithstanding my pallid face; but emotion, it is true, signora, that I cannot endure."

He was sad all the morning; and when they stopped to eat bread and hazel nuts in a beautiful meadow on a rapid declivity, under an arbor of wild vine, she tormented him with such ingenious questions, in order to make him confess the cause of his gloominess, that he could not help making an answer which testified a great discontent with himself and his own destiny.

"Well! since you will know," said he, "I think that I am very unhappy; for I am every day approaching a little nearer to Vienna, where my destiny is engaged while my heart is not. I do not love my betrothed; I feel that I shall never love her; and yet I have promised, and shall keep my word."

"Can it be possible?" said Consuelo, struck with surprise. "In that case, my poor Beppo, our destinies, which I thought agreed in many points, are entirely opposed; for you are hastening to a betrothed whom you do not love, and I am flying one whom I love. Strange fortune! which gives to some that which they fear, to snatch from others that which they desire."

She affectionately pressed his hand as she said this, and Joseph saw clearly that this answer was not dictated by any suspicion of his temerity, or the desire of giving him a lesson. But the lesson was only the more efficacious. She pitied him for his misfortune, and sympathized with him, while she showed by a deep and sincere utterance of her heart that she loved another without distraction and without diminution.

This was Joseph's last folly towards her. He took his

violin, and scraping it with force, forgot that stormy night. When they resumed their route, he had completely abjured an impossible love, and the events which followed made him feel only the strength of his devotedness and of his friendship. When Consuelo saw a cloud pass over his brow, which she strove to dissipate by affectionate words, "Do not be anxious about me," he replied. "If I am condemned not to have love for my wife, at least I shall have friendship for her; and that friendship can console for the want of love, I feel much more sensibly than you can imagine!"

## CHAPTER LXIX.

HAYDN never had reason to regret this journey, and the sufferings he then underwent ; for he received the best Italian lessons, and even the best notions of music he had yet had in his life. During the long halts they made on *fine days*, under the sequestered shades of the Boehmer-wald, our young artists revealed to each other all they possessed of intelligence and genius. Although Joseph Haydn had a fine voice, and could use it to the best advantage as a chorister ; although he played agreeably on the violin, and on several other instruments, he soon understood, on hearing Consuelo sing, that she was infinitely superior to him as a virtuoso, and could make him a skilful singer without the aid of Porpora. But Haydn's ambition and powers were not limited to this branch of the art ; and Consuelo, seeing him so little advanced in practice, while in theory he expressed such elevated and healthy ideas, said to him one day with a smile :

“ I know not if I am doing well in making you apply yourself to the study of vocal music ; for if you should become attached to the profession of a singer, you might perhaps sacrifice higher powers which are in you. Let me see some of your compositions ! Notwithstanding my long and severe studies in counterpoint with so great a master as Porpora, what I have learned only enables me to understand well the creations of genius, and I should not have time, even if I had the boldness, to produce works of much importance ; but if you have the creative genius, you should follow that path, and look upon vocal music and the study of instruments, as your material means only.”

Since Haydn had met Consuelo, it is very true that he had only thought of becoming a singer. To follow her or live by her side, to encounter her everywhere in her wandering life,

such had been his ardent dream for several days. He therefore made some objections about showing her his last manuscript, though he had it with him, and had finished writing it on his journey to Pilsen. He equally feared to appear indifferent to her in this branch of art, and to exhibit a talent which would lead her to combat his inclination to sing. He yielded at last, and half willingly, half by force, allowed the mysterious manuscript to be taken from him. It was a little sonata for the piano, which he intended for his young pupils. Consuelo began by reading it with her eyes, and Joseph was astonished to see her seize the idea as perfectly by a simple perusal as if she had heard it executed. Then she made him try several passages on his violin, and she herself sang those which were possible for the voice. I know not if Consuelo divined, from this sketch, the future author of "*The Creation*," and so many other eminent productions; but it is certain that she foresaw a good master, and she said to him, as she returned the manuscript, "Courage, Beppo! you are a distinguished artist, and may be a great composer, if you apply yourself. You have ideas, that is certain. With ideas and science much may be done. Therefore acquire science, and let us conquer Porpora's bad temper; for he is the master whom you require. But think no more of the stage; your place is elsewhere, and the pen is your baton of command. You must not obey but prescribe. When one can be the soul of a work, how can one think of taking place among the machines? Come, maestro in bud, study no longer the trill and the cadence with your throat. Know where they are to be placed, and not how to make them. That belongs to your very humble servant and subordinate, who engages of you the first woman's part you shall be pleased to write for a mezzo-soprano."

"O Consuelo *de mi alma!*" cried Joseph, transported with joy and hope; "write for you, be understood and expressed by you! What glory, what ambitions you awaken in me! But no, it is a dream, a madness. Teach me to sing. I would rather be able to execute the ideas of another, accord-



ing to your heart and your intelligence, than to place upon your divine lips accents unworthy of you."

"Come, come," said Consuelo, "a truce to compliments. Try to improvise, first upon the violin, then with your voice. It is thus that the soul comes to the lips, and to the fingers' ends. I can tell if you have the divine spirit, or are only a clever scholar, stuffed with reminiscences."

Haydn obeyed her. She remarked with pleasure that he was not learned, that there was freshness, youth and simplicity in his first ideas. She encouraged him more and more, and thereafter was willing to teach him singing only to show him, as she said, how to make use of it. They amused themselves afterwards by singing some little Italian duets, which she taught him, and which he learnt by heart.

"If we should happen to want money before the end of our journey," said she, "we may be obliged to sing in the streets. Besides, the police may wish to put our talents to the proof, if they take us for wandering pickpockets, as there are so many who dishonor the profession; unfortunates! Let us therefore be prepared for every event. My voice, used entirely in contralto, might pass for that of a young boy before the change. You must also learn some little songs in which you can accompany me on the violin. You will see that it is not a bad study. Those popular oddities are full of nerve and original sentiment; and as to my old Spanish chants, they are pure genius, uncut diamonds. Maestro, profit by them; ideas engender ideas."

These studies were delicious to Haydn. It was from them, perhaps, that he conceived the idea of those infantile and charming compositions which he afterwards made for the marionettes of the little princes Esterhazy. Consuelo introduced so much gaiety, grace, animation and spirit into those lessons, that the good young man, restored to the pertness and thoughtless happiness of youth, forgot his thoughts of love, his privations, his anxieties, and earnestly wished that this travelling education might never end. We do not pretend to give an itinerary of Consuelo's journey with Haydn. Little

familiarized as we are with the paths of the Boehmer-wald, we should perhaps give incorrect indications if we followed their route with the confused recollections that have been transmitted to us. It is enough to say that the first half of that journey was more agreeable than painful, up to the time of an adventure which we cannot help recording.

They had followed from its source, the northern bank of the Moldaw, because it seemed to them the least frequented and the most picturesque. They therefore descended for a whole day, the narrow defile which is prolonged as it slopes in the same direction as the Danube; but when they were on the height of Schenau, seeing the chain of mountains slope towards the plain, they regretted not having followed the other bank of the river, and consequently the other range of the chain, which became more distant as it rose towards Bavaria. Those wooded mountains presented more natural shelters and poetical situations than the valleys of Bohemia. During the stoppages they made by day in the forest, they amused themselves by catching small birds with bird-lime and nooses; and when, after their siesta, they found their snares filled with this little game, they cooked them in the open air with dead wood, and made a repast which they considered sumptuous. They granted life only to the nightingales, on pretext that those musical birds belonged to the fraternity. Our poor children searched therefore for a ford, and found none; the river was rapid, enclosed by high banks, deep and swollen by the recent rains. At last they found a landing-place where lay a little boat, guarded by a boy. They hesitated a little about drawing near, as they saw several persons approach it before them and bargain for a passage. Those men separated after saying farewell to each other. Three prepared to follow the northern bank of the Moldaw, while the other two entered the boat. This circumstance determined Consuelo.

“We shall meet them on the right, we shall meet them on the left,” said she to Joseph; “we may as well cross, since such was our intention.”

Haydn still hesitated, and pretended that those people had

wicked looks, loud voices, and brutal manners; when one of them who seemed to wish to give the lie to that unfavorable opinion, stopped the boatman, and addressing Consuelo:

"Eh! my child! come then," cried he in German, and manifesting a cheerful benevolence; "the boat is not full, and you can cross with us if you wish."

"We are much obliged, sir," replied Haydn, "and will profit by your permission."

"Come, my children," resumed he who had already spoken, and whom his companion called Mr. Mayer; "come, jump!"

Hardly was Joseph seated in the boat, before he remarked that the two strangers looked at Consuelo and himself alternately with much attention and curiosity. Still Mr. Mayer's face announced only gentleness and gaiety, his voice was agreeable, his manners polite, and Consuelo gathered confidence from his grizzled hair, and his paternal aspect.

"You are a musician, my boy?" said he soon to the latter.

"At your service, my good gentleman," replied Joseph.

"You also?" said Mr. Mayer to Joseph; and pointing to Consuelo, "That is your brother, doubtless?" added he.

"No, sir, it is my friend," said Joseph; "we are not of the same country, and he only understands a little German."

"Of what country is he then?" continued Mr. Mayer, still looking at Consuelo.

"Of Italy, sir," replied Haydn again.

"Venetian, Genoese, Roman, Neapolitan, or Calabrian?" said Mr. Mayer, articulating each of these denominations in the dialect which belonged to it, with an admirable facility.

"Oh! sir, I see that you can talk with all kinds of Italians," at last replied Consuelo, who feared to draw attention by a more prolonged silence; "I am from Venice."

"Ah! that is a beautiful country!" resumed Mr. Mayer, immediately using the dialect which was familiar to Consuelo. "Is it a long time since you left it?"

"Only six months."

"And are you travelling over the country, playing on your violin?"

"No; he accompanies," replied Consuelo, pointing to Joseph; "I sing."

"And do you play on no instrument? neither hautboy, nor flute, nor tambourine?"

"No, there is no need of it."

"But if you are a good musician, you would learn easily, would you not?"

"Oh! certainly, if it were necessary."

"But you do not care to?"

"No, I had rather sing."

"And you are right; still you will be obliged to come to it, or to change your profession, at least for a certain time."

"Why so, sir?"

"Because your voice will soon change, if it has not begun to already. How old are you? fourteen, fifteen, at most."

"Somewhere thereabouts."

"Well! before a year, you will croak like a little frog, and it is by no means certain that you will again become a night-ingale. This passing from childhood to youth, is a very doubtful matter with boys. Sometimes the voice is lost when the beard comes. In your place, I would learn to play on the fife; you would then be always sure of earning your living."

"I will see, when I require it."

"And you, my brave fellow?" said Mr. Mayer, addressing Joseph in German, "can you play on anything besides the violin?"

"Excuse me, sir," replied Joseph, who recovered confidence in his turn on seeing that the good Mayer caused no embarrassment to Consuelo; "I play a little on several instruments."

"Which, for example?"

"The piano, the harp, the flute; a little of all, when I find a chance to learn."

"With such talents, you are very wrong to stroll about the roads as you do; it is a hard business. I see that your com-

panion, who is still younger and more delicate than you, can bear it no longer, for he limps."

"Have you remarked that?" said Joseph, who had only too well noticed it himself, though his companion had not been willing to confess the swollen and painful condition of her feet.

"I saw that he could hardly drag himself to the boat," replied Mayer.

"Ah! sir, what can one do?" said Haydn, concealing his trouble under an air of philosophical indifference; "we were not born to have every comfort, and when we must suffer, we suffer!"

"But when you could live more happily and respectably by establishing yourselves! I don't like to see intelligent and gentle children as you appear to be, following the life of vagabonds. Believe a good man, who has children of his own, and who, in all probability, will never see you again, my little friends. You will kill and corrupt yourselves by running after adventures. Remember that I tell you so."

"Thanks for your good advice, sir," replied Consuelo with an affectionate smile; "perhaps we will profit by it."

"God hears you, my little gondolier!" said Mr. Mayer to Consuelo, who had taken an oar and mechanically, from a habit entirely popular and Venetian, had begun to row.

The boat reached the bank, after having made a considerable bend, in consequence of the current, which was rather strong. Mr. Mayer addressed a friendly farewell to the young artists as he wished them a pleasant journey, and his silent companion prevented them from paying their part to the boatman. After the proper thanks, Consuelo and Joseph entered a path which led towards the mountains, while the two strangers followed the level bank of the river in the same direction.

"That Mr. Mayer seems an honest man," said Consuelo, turning for the last time upon an eminence as she lost sight of him. "I am certain he is a good father of a family."

“He is curious and talkative,” said Joseph, “and I am very glad to see you freed from his questions.”

“He likes to talk, as do all persons who have travelled much. He is a cosmopolite, to judge by his facility in pronouncing various dialects. What country can he belong to?”

“He has a Saxon accent, though he speaks the low Austrian well. I think he is from the north of Germany. A Prussian perhaps!”

“So much the worse; I don’t like the Prussians, and their king Frederick still less than all his nation, from what I heard of him at Giant’s castle.”

“Then you will be in favor at Vienna. That fighter and philosopher king has no partisans either at the court or in the city.”

Conversing thus, they gained the thick wood, and followed paths which were sometimes lost among the firs, and sometimes skirted an amphitheatre of steep mountains. Consuelo found these Hyrcinio-Carpathian mountains more pleasant than sublime; having crossed the Alps many times, she did not experience the same transports as Joseph, who had never before seen such majestic summits. The impressions of the latter therefore led him to enthusiasm, while his companion felt more disposed to revery. Moreover, Consuelo was much fatigued that day, and made great efforts to conceal it, in order not to afflict Joseph, who was only too much afflicted already. They slept for some hours, and after their meal and music, resumed their road at sunset. But soon Consuelo, though she had for a long time bathed her feet in the crystal water of the spring, after the manner of the heroines of romance, felt her heels bruised upon the flints, and was compelled to confess that she could not perform her nightly task. Unfortunately the country was entirely desert on that side. Not a cabin, not a convent, not a hamlet on the slope of the Moldaw. The night was too cold for them to remain in the open air. Through an opening between two hills, they saw some lights at the bottom of the opposite valley. That valley, into which

they descended, was Bavaria; but the village they saw was more distant than they imagined. It seemed to the disconsolate Joseph, that it withdrew as they approached it. To complete their misfortune, the clouds gathered on every side, and soon a fine cold rain began to fall. In a few moments it so obscured the atmosphere, that the lights disappeared, and our travellers, who, not without trouble and danger, had reached the foot of the mountain, no longer knew to which side to direct their steps. Still they were upon quite a smooth road, and they continued to drag themselves along continually descending, when they heard the noise of a carriage advancing towards them. Joseph did not hesitate to approach it, and to ask for some information respecting the country, and the possibility of finding a shelter.

“Who goes there?” replied a strong voice, and at the same time he heard the click of a pistol. “Be off, or I will blow out your brains.”

“We are not very formidable,” replied Joseph, without being disconcerted. “Look! we are only two children, and we ask for nothing but information.”

“Eh!” cried another voice, which Consuelo immediately recognized as honest Mr. Mayer’s, “but those are my little acquaintances of this morning; I recognize the accent of the oldest. Are you there too, gondolier?” added he in Venetian, calling Consuelo.

“Here I am,” replied she in the same dialect. “We have lost our way, and we ask you, my good sir, where we can find a palace or a stable to sleep in. Do tell us if you know.”

“Eh! my poor children!” returned Mr. Mayer, “you are two long leagues from any kind of habitation. You will not find even a dog-kennel on this whole mountain. But I will have pity on you; get into my carriage; I can give you two seats without inconveniencing myself. Come, no ceremony; jump up!”

“Sir, you are a thousand times too good,” said Consuelo,

affected by the hospitality of this honest man ; “ but you are going towards the north, and we towards Austria.”

“ No, I am going west. In an hour at the outside, I will put you down at Biberek. You shall pass the night there, and to-morrow you can reach Austria. It will even shorten your road. Come, be quick, unless you take pleasure in getting wet and stopping us.”

“ Well ! courage and confidence ! ” said Consuelo in a low voice to Joseph, as they entered the carriage. They remarked that there were three persons, two in front, one of whom drove ; the third, who was Mr. Mayer, occupied the back seat. Consuelo took one corner, Joseph the middle. The carriage was spacious and solid, with six places. The large and strong horse, driven by a vigorous hand, resumed his trot, and made the bells of his collar jingle, as he shook his head impatiently.



## CHAPTER LXX.

“Just as I was telling you!” cried Mr. Mayer, resuming his discourse where he had dropped it in the morning. “You cannot find a more rough and unpleasant profession than yours. When the sun shines, everything seems beautiful; but the sun does not shine always; and your destiny is variable as the atmosphere.”

“What destiny is not variable and uncertain?” said Consuelo. “When the sky is inclement, Providence places benevolent hearts in our way to relieve us; we are certainly not tempted to accuse it at this moment.”

“You have a quick wit, my little friend,” replied Mayer; “you are from that beautiful country where everybody has it. But, believe me, neither your wit nor your fine voice will prevent your dying with hunger in these gloomy Austrian provinces. If I were in your place, I would go and seek my fortune in some rich and civilized country, under the protection of a great prince.”

“Which?” said Consuelo, surprised at this insinuation.

“Ah! by my faith, I don’t know; there are many such.”

“But is not the queen of Hungary a great princess?” said Haydn; “is not one well protected in her dominions?”

“Eh! without doubt,” replied Mayer; “but you do not know that her majesty Maria-Theresa detests music, vagabonds especially, and that you will be driven from Vienna, if you appear in the streets as troubadours, such as you now are.”

At this moment, Consuelo again saw, at a little distance, in a dark valley, below the road, the lights she had before perceived, and communicated her observation to Joseph, who at once mentioned to Mr. Mayer their desire to alight in order to gain this shelter which was so much nearer than the town of Biberek.

"That!" replied Mr. Mayer; "do you take that for lights? They are lights indeed; but they enlighten no other shelter than dangerous morasses, where many travellers have been lost and swallowed up. Did you never see any will-o'-the-wisps?"

"Many upon the lagunes of Venice," said Consuelo, "and upon the little lakes of Bohemia."

"Well, my children, those lights which you see there are nothing else."

Mr. Mayer talked a long while with our young people on the necessity of establishing themselves, and of the few resources which they would find at Vienna, without deciding however upon the place to which he wished they should go. At first Joseph was struck by his obstinacy, and feared he might have discovered the sex of his companion; but the good faith with which he talked to her as to a boy (going so far as to tell her that she would do much better to embrace a military life as soon as she was old enough, than to tramp through the country,) reassured him on this point, and he persuaded himself that the good Mayer was one of those weak heads, with fixed ideas, who repeat for a whole day the first notion that comes into their brains on waking. Consuelo, on her side, took him for a school-master, or a protestant minister, who thought of nothing but education, good morals and proselytism.

In an hour, they reached Biberek, the night having become so dark that they could absolutely see nothing. The chaise stopped in the courtyard of an inn, and Mr. Mayer was immediately accosted by two men who took him aside to speak with him. When they entered the kitchen where Consuelo and Joseph were busily drying and warming themselves at the fire, Joseph recognized in those two personages the same who had separated from Mr. Mayer at the passage of the Moldaw when the latter crossed it, leaving them on the left bank. One of the two had but one eye, and the other, though he still retained both eyes, had quite as disagreeable a face. He who had passed the river with Mr. Mayer, and whom our young travellers had found in the carriage, rejoined them; the

fourth did not appear. They talked together a language which was unintelligible to Consuelo herself, who understood so many tongues. Mr. Mayer appeared to exercise a kind of authority over them, and at least to influence their decisions; for, after quite a lively discussion in a low voice, respecting the last words he addressed to them, they retired, excepting he, whom Consuelo, in designating him to Joseph, called the silent man: it was that one who had not left Mr. Mayer.

Haydn was getting ready his companion's and his own frugal supper upon a corner of the kitchen table, when Mr. Mayer, returning, invited them to share his repast, and insisted with so much good nature, that they did not dare refuse. He led them to the dining hall, where they found a veritable feast, at least it was one for two poor children, who had been deprived of every luxury of this kind during a rather toilsome journey of five days. Still Consuelo took part in it with a feeling of restraint; the good cheer which Mr. Mayer made, the earnestness with which the domestics appeared to wait upon him, and the quantity of wine imbibed by him as well as by his mute companion, compelled her to lower a little the high opinion she had formed respecting the presbyterian virtues of their amphitryon. She was above all shocked at the desire he displayed to make Joseph and herself drink beyond their thirst, and the very vulgar hilarity with which he prevented them from putting water into their wine. She saw with still more anxiety, that either from distraction, or from a real need of repairing his strength, Joseph did not refrain, and began to show himself more communicative and more animated than she could have wished. At last she was a little vexed at finding her companion insensible to the pushes she gave him with her elbow to stop his frequent libations; and taking away his glass at the moment when Mr. Mayer was about to fill it anew:

"No sir," said she, "no; allow us not to imitate you; it is not right."

"You are queer musicians!" cried Mayer, laughing with his air of frankness and carelessness; "musicians who do

not drink! you are the first I have ever met with of that character."

"And you, sir, are you a musician?" said Joseph. "I bet you are! May the devil take me if you be not the master of a chapel in some Saxon principality!"

"Perhaps," replied Mayer, smiling; "and that is why I feel a sympathy for you, my children."

"If the gentleman is a master," returned Consuelo, "there is too much distance between his talent and that of poor street singers like ourselves, to interest him very vividly."

"There are some poor street singers who have more talent than people think," said Mayer; "and there are very great masters, even masters of chapels of the greatest sovereigns on earth, who began by singing in the streets. What if I should tell you that this morning, between nine and ten o'clock, I heard from a corner of the mountain on the left bank of the Moldaw, two charming voices singing a pretty Italian duet, accompanied by agreeable and even learned ritornellos on the violin! Well! that did happen to me as I was breakfasting on a little hill with my friends. And afterwards, when I saw the musicians who had given me so much pleasure descend from the mountain, I was much surprised to find in them two poor children, one dressed as a little peasant, the other—very genteel, very simple,—but apparently not very rich. Therefore be not ashamed nor surprised at the friendship I testify for you, my little friends, and show me that of drinking to the muses, our mutual and divine patrons."

"Sir, maestro!" cried Joseph, quite joyful and entirely gained over; "I will drink to you. Oh! you are a true musician, I am certain, since you have felt enthusiasm for the talent of—of the signor Bertoni, my comrade."

"No, you shall drink no more," said Consuelo, impatiently snatching away his glass; "nor I either," added she, turning down her own. "We have only our voices to live upon, sir professor, and wine spoils the voice; you ought rather to encourage us to remain sober, than endeavor to intoxicate us."

"Well! you speak reasonably," said Mayer, placing in the middle of the table the decanter he had put behind him. "Yes, take care of your voices; that is well said. You have more wisdom than belongs to your age, friend Bertoni, and I am satisfied with the trial I have made of your good morals. You will do well, I see by your prudence as much as by your talent. You will do well, and I wish to have the honor and merit of contributing to your success."

Then the pretended professor, placing himself at his ease, and talking with an air of extreme goodness and honesty, offered to carry them with him to Dresden, where he would obtain for them instruction of the celebrated Hasse and the special protection of the queen of Poland, the electoral princess of Saxony.

That princess, wife of Augustus III., king of Poland, was in fact a pupil of Porpora. A rivalry between that master and the *Sassone*\* for the favor of the dilettante sovereign, had been the first cause of their deep enmity. Even had Consuelo been inclined to try her fortune in the North of Germany, she would not have chosen for her début that court where she would find herself in opposition to the school and coterie which had triumphed over her master. She had heard the latter, in his hours of bitterness and resentment, say too much about it to be in the slightest degree tempted, under any circumstances, to follow the advice of professor Mayer.

As to Joseph, his situation was very different. His brain heated by the supper, he imagined he had met with a powerful protector and the promoter of his future fortune. He had no thought of abandoning Consuelo in order to accompany this new friend; but somewhat intoxicated as he was, he gave himself up to the hope of again finding him some day. He trusted to his benevolence and thanked him heartily. In this joyful excitement, he took his violin and played very falsely. Mr. Mayer only applauded him the more, either because he did not wish to annoy him by remarking upon his false notes,

\* Surname given by the Italians to Jean Adolphe Hasse, who was a Saxon.

or, as Consuelo thought, because he was himself only an inferior musician. The error in which he really was respecting the latter's sex, although he had heard her sing, satisfied her that he could not be a professor with a very well practised ear, since he allowed himself to be deceived as might be a village serpent, or a professor of the trumpet. Still Mr. Mayer continually insisted on their going with him to Dresden. Even while refusing, Joseph listened to his offers with such a dazzled air, and made such promises to go there as soon as practicable, that Consuelo thought herself obliged to undeceive Mr. Mayer respecting the possibility of this arrangement.

"It must not be thought of at present," said she in a very firm tone; "Joseph, you know very well that it cannot be, and that you yourself have other projects." Mayer renewed his seductive offers, and was astonished to find her immovable as well as Joseph, who recovered his reason when the signor Bertoni began to speak. At this moment, the silent traveller, who had made only a short appearance at supper, came to call Mr. Mayer, who went out with him. Consuelo profited by the opportunity to scold Joseph for his readiness in listening to the fine words of the first comer, and to the inspirations of the good wine.

"Did I then say anything too much?" said Joseph, frightened.

"No," returned she; "but it is in itself an imprudence to keep company so long with strangers. From the fact of looking at me, they might perceive or at least doubt that I was not a boy. Though I did rub my hands with my pencil to darken them, and kept them as much as possible under the table, their weakness would certainly have been remarked, if fortunately one of those gentlemen had not been entirely occupied with his wine, and the other with his own chat. Now the most prudent way would be to remove, and to go and sleep in another inn; for I am not at all easy about these new acquaintances who seem to wish to dog our steps."

"What!" said Joseph, "shall we go away shamelessly and

ungratefully, without saluting and thanking that honest man, that illustrious professor, perhaps? Who knows if it be not the great Hasse himself, with whom we have just supped?"

"I tell you no; and if you had had your senses, you would have remarked a number of miserable common places which he said about music. A master does not speak thus. He is some musician of the lowest benches in the orchestra, jovial, a great talker and a good deal of a toper. I don't know why, but I think I see from his face, that he has never blown except in brass; and from his side look, one would say that he always has an eye upon the leader of the orchestra."

"*Corno, or clarino secondo,*" cried Joseph, bursting into a laugh; "he is none the less an agreeable companion."

"And you are hardly so," replied Consuelo, a little angry; "come, get sober, and say farewell; but let us go."

"The rain falls in torrents; hear how it beats against the windows!"

"I hope you are not going to sleep on this table?" said Consuelo, shaking him and trying to rouse him.

Mr. Mayer returned at this moment.

"Here is another change!" cried he, gaily. "I thought I could sleep here and go on to-morrow to Chamb; but my friends wish me to retrace my steps, and pretend that I am necessary to them in an affair of importance at Passaw. I must acquiesce! Faith, my children, if I have any advice to give you, since I must renounce the pleasure of carrying you to Dresden, it is to profit by the opportunity. I have still two places for you in my chaise, as those gentlemen have their own. To-morrow morning we shall be at Passaw, which is only six leagues from here. There I will wish you a good journey. You will be near the Austrian frontier, and can even descend the Danube in a boat to Vienna with little expense and fatigue."

Joseph considered the proposition admirable to rest Consuelo's poor feet. The opportunity seemed a good one, in fact, and the navigation of the Danube was a resource of which they had not thought. Consuelo therefore accepted, seeing

moreover that Joseph understood nothing of the necessary precautions for their night's resting place. In the darkness, entrenched at the back of the carriage, she had nothing to fear from the observations of their fellow-travellers, and Mr. Mayer said they would reach Passaw before day. Joseph was enchanted at her determination. Still Consuelo experienced I know not what repugnance, and the appearance of Mr. Mayer's friends displeased her more and more. She asked him if they likewise were musicians.

"All more or less," replied he laconically.

They found the carriages ready, the drivers upon their seats, and the servants of the inn, well satisfied with Mr. Mayer's liberality, pressing about him to wait upon him till the last moment. In an interval of silence, in the midst of all this agitation, Consuelo heard a groan which seemed to proceed from the middle of the court. She turned towards Joseph, who had remarked nothing; and the groan being repeated a second time, she felt a shudder run through her veins. Still nobody seemed to notice it, and she might attribute the complaint to some dog weary of his chain. But, notwithstanding all her attempts at distraction, she received from it a very gloomy impression. This stifled cry in the midst of the darkness, the wind and the rain, proceeding from a group of persons all either animated or indifferent, without her being able to determine whether it was a human voice or an imaginary noise, struck her with terror and sadness. She immediately thought of Albert; and, as if she had believed she could participate in those mysterious revelations with which he seemed endowed, she was affrighted at some danger suspended over the head of her betrothed, or her own.

Still the carriage was already in motion. A fresh horse, even stronger than the first, drew it along with great rapidity. The other carriage, equally swift, was sometimes in front, sometimes behind. Joseph chatted anew with Mr. Mayer, and Consuelo tried to sleep, pretending to doze in order to give reason for her silence.

Fatigue at last overpowered sadness and anxiety, and she



fell into a profound slumber. When she awoke, Joseph slept also, and Mr. Mayer was at last silent. The rain had ceased, the sky was clear, and day began to break. The country had an aspect entirely unknown to Consuelo. Only from time to time she saw appear upon the horizon the summits of a chain of mountains which resembled the Boehmer-wald. As the torpor of sleep was dissipated, Consuelo remarked with surprise the position of those mountains, which ought to have been on the left, and were on the right. The stars had disappeared, and the sun, which she expected to see rise in front of her, did not yet show himself. She thought the chain she saw must be another than that of the Boehmer-wald. Mr. Mayer was still snoring, and she did not dare address the driver of the carriage, the only person awake at the moment.

The horse began to walk on the ascent of a very steep hill, and the noise of the wheels was deadened by the soft sand of the ruts. Then Consuelo very distinctly heard the same dull and sad sob which had reached her ears in the tavern court at Biberek. The voice seemed to proceed from behind her. She turned mechanically, and saw only the leather back against which she rested. She imagined herself the victim of an hallucination; and her thoughts recurring always to Albert, she persuaded herself that at this very moment he was in the agony of death, and that, thanks to the incomprehensible power of the love felt by that strange man, she received the terrible and heart-rending sound of his last sigh. This fancy so seized upon her brain, that she felt herself fainting; and fearing to suffocate entirely, she asked the driver, who stopped about half-way up the hill to breathe his horse, for permission to ascend the rest on foot. He consented, and also alighting, walked whistling by his horse's side.

This man was too well dressed to be a coachman by profession. In a movement which he made, Consuelo thought she saw pistols at his girdle. This precaution was by no means unnatural in a country so deserted as that in which they were: and besides, the shape of the carriage, which

Consuelo examined as she walked beside the wheel, showed that it carried merchandise. It was so deep that there must have been behind the back seat a double box, like those in which treasure and despatches are carried. Yet it did not appear much loaded, and one horse drew it easily. An observation which struck Consuelo much more forcibly was the sight of her shadow extended before her; and turning round she saw the sun entirely above the horizon at the point opposite to that in which she ought to have seen him if the carriage were going in the direction of Passaw.

"Which way are we going, then?" asked she of the driver, hurrying up to him: "we are turning our backs upon Austria."

"Yes, for half an hour," replied he, quietly; "we are going back, because the bridge by which we were to have crossed the river is broken, and we have to make a turn of half a mile to find another."

Consuelo, somewhat tranquillized, again got into the carriage, exchanged a few indifferent words with Mr. Mayer, who was awake but soon fell asleep again; (Joseph had not stirred a moment from his slumber;) and they reached the top of the hill. Consuelo saw displayed before her a long, steep and winding road, and the river of which the driver had spoken showed itself at the bottom of a valley; but as far as the eye could reach, no bridge was to be seen, and they still journeyed towards the north. Consuelo, anxious and surprised, could not sleep again.

A fresh rising soon presented itself, and the horse seemed much fatigued. The travellers all alighted except Consuelo, who still suffered from her feet. Then the groaning again struck her ears, but so clearly, and at so many different periods, that she could no longer attribute it to an illusion of her senses: the noise came without any doubt from the double back of the carriage. She examined it with care, and found in the corner which Mr. Mayer had always occupied, a little leathern window like a shutter, which communicated with that double back. She tried to open it, but could not succeed.

It had a lock, the key of which was probably in the pocket of the pretended professor. Consuelo, ardent and courageous in such adventures, took from her pocket a knife with a strong and sharp blade, with which she had provided herself on her departure, perhaps from an inspiration of modesty and with a vague apprehension of dangers from which suicide can always deliver an energetic woman. She profited by a moment when all the travellers were in front on the road, even the driver, who had no more to fear from his horse's impetuosity; and enlarging with a prompt and firm hand the narrow opening left by the shutter at its junction with the back, she succeeded in pushing it aside so that she could place her eye to it, and look into the interior of that mysterious case. What were her surprise and her terror when she discovered, in that narrow and dark box, which received air and light only from a small opening in the top, a man of athletic make, gagged, covered with blood, his hands and feet tightly bound and lashed together, his body bent upon itself in a state of horrible constraint and suffering! What could be distinguished of his face was of a livid paleness, and he appeared to be in the convulsions of death.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

FROZEN with horror, Consuelo leaped to the ground ; and rejoining Joseph, she pressed his arm in secret, in order that he might withdraw with her from the group.

“ We are lost, if we do not take to flight on the instant,” said she to him, in a low voice ; “ these people are robbers and murderers. I have just had proof of it. Let us hasten and escape across the country ; for they have reasons for deceiving us as they do.”

Joseph thought that a bad dream had troubled the imagination of his companion. He hardly understood what she said. He himself felt weighed down by an unaccustomed languor ; and the pains which he experienced in his stomach made him think that the wine he drank the night before had been adulterated by the inn-keeper, and mixed with vile heady drugs. It was certain that he had not so decidedly infringed upon his habitual sobriety as to account for his feeling sleepy and heavy as he did.

“ Dear signora,” replied he, “ you have the night-mare, and I believe I have it too, on listening to you. Even if these honest folks were bandits, as you are pleased to imagine, what rich capture could they hope for by seizing upon us ?”

“ I know not, but I am afraid ; and if you had seen as I have, in that very carriage in which we have been travelling a man who has been assassinated——.”

Joseph could not help laughing ; for Consuelo’s statement had all the appearance of a vision.

“ Eh ! can’t you at least see that they are leading us astray ?” said she, impetuously ; “ that they are carrying us to the north, while Passaw and the Danube are behind us ? Look where the sun is, and see in what a desert we are travelling, instead of approaching a great city !”

The justice of these observations at last struck Joseph, and dissipated the almost lethargic security into which he was plunged.

"Well," said he, "let us advance; and if they appear to desire to retain us against our will, we shall soon learn their intentions."

"And if we cannot escape from them at once in cold blood, Joseph,—do you understand? we must be very crafty, and seize some other opportunity."

Then she took him by the arm, pretending to limp even more than the pain of her feet compelled her to do, and still gained ground. But they had not made ten steps in this way before they were recalled by Mr. Mayer, at first in a friendly tone, soon in one more severe, and lastly, as they took no notice, by the energetic oaths of the others. Joseph turned his head, and saw a pistol levelled at them by the driver, who was pursuing them.

"They are going to kill us," said he to Consuelo, slackening his pace.

"Are we out of range?" said she, with coolness, still dragging him forward, and beginning to run.

"I don't know," said Joseph, trying to stop her. "Believe me the time has not come; they will fire on you."

"Stop, or you are dead," cried the driver, who ran faster than they, and kept them within range of his pistol.

"This is the moment to pay them off with assurance," said Consuelo, stopping; "Joseph, say and do like me."

"Ah! faith," said she in a loud voice, turning round and laughing with the readiness of a good actress, "if my feet were not too sore to run any further, I would let you see that that joke does not answer." And looking at Joseph, who was pale as death, she pretended to burst into shouts of laughter, as she pointed out his terrified face to the other travellers who had come up with them.

"He believed it!" cried she, with a perfectly well acted gaiety. "He believed it, my poor comrade! Ah! Beppo, I did not think you were such a coward. Eh! sir professor,

look at Beppo, who really imagined that the gentleman meant to send a bullet after him."

Consuelo affected to talk Venetian, and thus by her gaiety kept at a distance the man with the pistol, who did not understand it. Mr. Mayer affected to laugh also. Then turning to the driver :

"What is this foolish joke?" said he, not without a wink of the eye, which Consuelo observed very well. "Why frighten these poor children?"

"I wished to see if they had any courage," replied the other, replacing his pistols in his belt.

"Alas!" said Consuelo, maliciously, "the gentleman will have a bad opinion of you now, friend Joseph! As to me, I was not afraid, do me justice, Mr. Pistol."

"You are a brave boy," said Mr. Mayer; "you would make a pretty drummer, and would beat the charge at the head of a regiment without blinking in the midst of the shot."

"Ah! as to that I don't know," replied she; "perhaps I should have been afraid, if I had thought he really meant to kill us. But we Venetians know all sorts of plays, and are not to be taken in in that way."

"No matter, the mystification is in bad taste," replied Mr. Mayer. And addressing his speech to the driver, he appeared to scold him a little; but Consuelo was not their dupe, and she saw by the intonations of their dialogue, that they carried on an explanation, of which the result was that they thought themselves deceived respecting her intention to fly.

Consuelo had reëntered the carriage with the others: "Allow," said she to Mr. Mayer, laughing, "that your driver with his pistols is a very strange fellow! I shall call him now *signor Pistola*. Well, you must allow besides, Mr. professor, that that joke has nothing new in it!"

"It is a piece of German gentility," said Mr. Mayer; "there is better wit than that at Venice, is there not?"

"Oh! do you know what Italians would have done in your place, to play us a good trick? They would have driven the

carriage into the first thicket on the road and would have all hidden themselves. Then when we turned round, not seeing anything and thinking that the devil had carried everybody away, who would have been well caught? I especially, who can hardly drag myself along; and Joseph also, who is as cowardly as a doe of the Boehmer-wald, and who would have believed himself abandoned in this desert."

Mr. Mayer laughed at her childish facetiousness which he translated as she proceeded to the *signor Pistola*, not less amused than he at the simplicity of the *gondolier*.

"Oh! you are entirely too sharp," replied Mayer; "nobody will try to lay a trap for you again!" And Consuelo, who at last saw the deep irony of his false good nature piercing through his jovial and paternal air, continued on her side to play the part of a fool who considers himself witty, a well known accessory of every melodrama.

It is certain that their adventure was becoming quite serious: and even while playing her part with skill, Consuelo felt that she was in a fever. Happily, it is in a fever that one acts, and in stupor that one sinks.

Thenceforth she showed herself as gay as she had been reserved until then; and Joseph who had recovered all his faculties, seconded her well. Even while appearing not to doubt that they were approaching Passaw, they pretended to open their ears to the proposition to go to Dresden, to which Mr. Mayer did not fail to recur. By this means, they gained all his confidence, and he went to work to find some expedient for confessing frankly that he was carrying them there without their permission. The expedient was soon found. Mr. Mayer was by no means a novice in such matters. There was a lively dialogue in the strange tongue between those three individuals, Mr. Mayer, the *signor Pistola* and the silent man. And then all at once they talked German and as if they continued the same subject:

"I tell you it is so," cried Mr. Mayer, "we have taken the wrong road; a proof of which is that their carriage does not

come up. It is more than two hours since we left it behind, and though I looked back from the hill, I could see nothing."

"I cannot see it anywhere," said the driver, putting his head out of the carriage and again drawing it in with a disappointed air.

Consuelo herself had remarked from the first hill the disappearance of the carriage with which they had left Biberek.

"I was sure we were lost," observed Joseph, "but did not wish to say so."

"Eh! why the devil did n't you say so?" returned the silent man, affecting a great displeasure at this discovery.

"Because it was so amusing!" said Joseph, inspired by Consuelo's innocent machiavelism; "it is queer to get lost in a carriage! I thought that happened only to foot travellers."

"Well! it amuses me too," said Consuelo. "Now I wish we were on the road to Dresden!"

"If I knew where we were," returned Mr. Mayer, "I would rejoice with you, my children; for I must confess to you that I did not like going to Passaw for the good pleasure of those gentlemen my friends, and I should be pleased if we had gone astray far enough for an excuse to limit our complaisance towards them."

"Faith, Mr. professor," said Joseph, "let that be as you prefer, that's your business. If we do not incommode you, and you still wish us to go to Dresden, we are ready to follow you, even to the end of the world. What say you, Bertoni?"

"I say the same," replied Consuelo. "We'll take our chance!"

"You are good children!" replied Mayer, hiding his joy under a preoccupied air; "still I should much like to know where we are."

"Wherever we are, we must stop," said the driver; "the horse is done up. He has eaten nothing since last evening, and he has travelled all night. Neither of us would be at all the worse for some refreshment. Here is a small wood. We have some provisions left; halt!"

They entered the wood; the horse was unharnessed;



Joseph and Consuelo earnestly offered their services; they were accepted without mistrust. The chaise was let down upon its shafts; and in this movement, the position of the invisible prisoner doubtless becoming more painful, Consuelo again heard him groan; Mayer heard it also, and looked fixedly at Consuelo to see if she noticed anything. But notwithstanding the pity that rent her breast, she knew how to appear deaf and impassible. Mayer went round the carriage; Consuelo, who had withdrawn a little, saw him open on the outside a little door behind, cast a glance into the interior of the double box, again close it, and replace the key in his pocket.

"*Is the merchandise damaged?*" cried the silent man to Mr. Mayer.

"All is well," replied he with a brutal indifference, and began to get ready for their breakfast.

"Now," said Consuelo, rapidly, to Joseph, as she passed, "do as I do, and follow all my motions." She assisted in spreading the provisions on the grass, and in uncorking the bottles. Joseph imitated her, affecting great gaiety; Mr. Mayer with pleasure saw these voluntary servants devote themselves to his comfort. He loved his ease, and began to eat and drink as well as his companions, with manners more gluttonous and more gross than he had shown the night before. Every instant he reached out his glass to his two new pages, who every instant, rose, reseated themselves and were off again, to run now on this side now on that, watching for the moment of running once for all, but waiting until the wine and the digestion should render those dangerous guardians less clear-sighted. At last Mr. Mayer lying down upon the grass and unbuttoning his vest, exposed to the sun his great chest ornamented with pistols; the driver went to see if the horse ate well, and the silent man undertook to search for some place in the miry stream by the side of which they had stopped, at which the animal could drink. This was the moment for flight. Consuelo pretended to search likewise. Joseph entered the thicket with her; and as soon as

they were hidden by the closeness of the foliage, they took their course like two hares through the wood. They had nothing to fear from bullets in that thick undergrowth; and when they heard themselves called, they judged that they had got far enough ahead to continue without danger. "Still it is better to answer," said Consuelo, stopping; "that will avert suspicion and give us time for a fresh run." Joseph answered therefore: "This way! this way! here is water!"

"A spring! a spring!" cried Consuelo. And immediately running at right angles, in order to deceive the enemy, they lightly hurried away. Consuelo thought no more of her suffering and swollen feet; Joseph had overcome the narcotic which Mr. Mayer had administered to him the night before. Fear gave them wings.

They ran thus for about ten minutes, in a direction opposite to that they had at first taken, not allowing themselves time to listen to the voices which called to them from two different directions, when they found themselves at the edge of the wood, and saw before them a rapid well grassed slope, which descended to a travelled road and a meadow studded with clumps of trees.

"Let us not leave the wood," said Joseph; "they will come here, and from this elevation will see us which ever way we go."

Consuelo hesitated an instant, explored the country with a rapid glance, and said to him:

"The wood is too small to hide us long. Before us there is a road and the hope of meeting some one."

"Eh!" cried Joseph, "it is the same road we were following just now. See, it turns round the hill and rises on the right towards the place we have come from. If one of the three mounts the horse, he will catch us before we reach the lowland."

"That is what we must see," said Consuelo. "We can run fast down hill. I see something on the road down there, which is ascending this way. Our only chance is to reach it before being overtaken. Come."

There was no time to be lost in deliberations. Joseph trusted to Consuelo's inspiration : they ran down the hill in an instant, and had gained the first clump, when they heard the voices of their enemies at the edge of the wood. This time, they took care not to answer, and still ran on, under cover of the trees and bushes, until they encountered a narrow stream, which had been hidden from them by those same trees. A long plank served as a bridge ; they crossed it and threw the plank into the water.

They followed the other bank, still protected by a dense vegetation ; and not hearing themselves called, they supposed that their enemies had lost their track, or that no longer deceived respecting their intentions, they meant to entrap them by surprise. Soon the vegetation of the bank was interrupted and they stopped, fearing to be seen. Joseph stretched out his head carefully among the last bushes, and saw one of the brigands on the look-out at the spot where they had left the wood, and the other (probably the signor Pistola, whose superiority in running they had already proved) at the foot of the hill not far from the river. While Joseph was reconnoitring the position of the enemy, Consuelo had directed her attention towards the road ; and she suddenly turned towards Joseph :

“ There is a carriage coming,” said she to him ; “ we are saved. We must reach it before our pursuer thinks of crossing the water.”

They ran in the direction of the road in a straight line, notwithstanding the bareness of the ground ; the carriage approached them at a gallop.

“ Oh ! my God !” said Joseph, “ what if it should be the other carriage, that of their accomplices ?”

“ No,” replied Consuelo, “ it is a berlin with six horses, two postilions and two outriding couriers ; we are saved, I tell you ; a little more courage !”

It was quite time for them to reach the road : Pistola had again discovered the tracks of their feet upon the sand by the side of the stream. He had the strength and speed of a wild

boar. He soon saw in what place the tracks disappeared, and what pious hands had withdrawn the plank. He guessed the trick, passed the water by swimming, found the marks of steps on the bank, and still following them, had just issued from the thicket, when he saw the two fugitives cross the meadow—but he saw the carriage likewise; he understood their design, and no longer able to oppose it, reëntered the bushes and kept himself on the watch.

The berlin did not stop at the cry of the two young people, who were at first taken for beggars. The travellers threw out some pieces of money; and their out-riders, seeing that our fugitives, instead of picking them up, continued to run crying at the coach door, galloped upon them to free their masters from this importunity. Consuelo, out of breath and losing her strength, as almost always happens at the moment of success, could not utter a sound, but clasping her hands with a supplicating air, followed the riders, while Joseph, clinging to the coach door, at the risk of losing his hold and being crushed, cried with a gasping voice: "Help! help! we are pursued by robbers! by assassins!" One of the two travellers who occupied the berlin, succeeded at last in understanding these interrupted words, and made a sign to one of the couriers to stop the postilions. Consuelo, loosing at the same time the bridle of the other courier, to which she was hanging, notwithstanding the rearing of the horse and the rider's threatening her with his whip, came to join Joseph; and her face animated by running, struck the travellers, who entered into conversation with them.

"What does all this mean?" said one of the two; "is it a new style of asking charity? We have given you something already; what more do you want? Can you not answer?"

Consuelo was almost ready to expire. Joseph, out of breath, could only articulate:

"Save us, save us!" and he pointed to the wood and the hill without being able to say any more.

"They look like two foxes pressed in the chase," said the other traveller; "let us wait till their voices come to them,"

And the two noblemen, magnificently equipped, looked upon them smiling, with an air of sang-froid strangely contrasted with the agitation of the poor fugitives. At last, Joseph succeeded in uttering the words, robbers and assassins; immediately the travellers opened the carriage and stepping upon the foot-board, looked upon every side, astonished to see nothing that could occasion such an alarm. The brigands had hidden themselves, and the country was deserted and silent. At last, Consuelo, coming to herself, spoke thus to them, stopping at every sentence to take breath :

“ We are two poor wandering musicians; we have been carried off by some men whom we do not know, and who, under pretext of doing us a service, made us enter their carriage and travel all night. At day-break, we found out that they were betraying us, and carrying us to the north, instead of following the road to Vienna. We wished to fly; they threatened us, pistol in hand. At last, they stopped in that wood, we escaped and ran towards your carriage. If you abandon us here, we are lost; they are only two steps from the road, one in the bushes, the others in the wood.”

“ How many are there then ? ” asked one of the couriers.

“ My friend,” said one of the travellers in French, he to whom Consuelo had addressed herself because he was nearest to her on the foot-board, “ learn that this does not concern you. How many are there, indeed ! that’s a fine question ! Your duty is to fight if I command you, and I shall give you no order to count the enemy.”

“ Truly, do you wish to amuse yourself with sabring ? ” returned the other nobleman in French; “ remember, baron, that takes time.”

“ It will not take long and will warm us. Will you be of the party, count ? ”

“ So be it, if it amuse you.” And the count, with a majestic indolence, took his sword in one hand, and in the other two pistols, the butts of which were ornamented with precious stones.

"Oh! you do well, gentlemen," cried Consuelo, the impetuosity of whose heart made her forget her humble part for an instant, and she pressed the count's arm with both her hands.

The count, surprised at so much familiarity on the part of a little scamp of that class, looked upon his sleeve with an air of scoffing disgust, shook it, and raised his eyes with a contemptuous slowness upon Consuelo, who could not help smiling, on remembering with what ardor count Zustiniani and so many other illustrious Venetians had requested, in former times, the favor of kissing one of those hands, the insolence of which now appeared so shocking. Whether there was in her, at that instant, a ray of calm and gentle pride which contradicted the appearances of her misery, or the facility with which she spoke the language then fashionable in Germany, gave reason to think she was a young nobleman disguised, or whether finally the charm of her sex made itself instinctively felt, the count suddenly changed his expression, and instead of a smile of disdain, addressed to her one of benevolence. The count was still young and handsome; one might have been dazzled by the advantages of his person, if the baron had not surpassed him in youth, in regularity of features and in nobleness of form. They were the two handsomest men of their age, as was said of them, and probably of many others.

Consuelo, seeing the expressive looks of the young baron also fixed upon her with an appearance of uncertainty, surprise and interest, turned their attention from her person by saying:—

"Go, gentlemen, or rather come; we will act as guides. Those bandits have in their carriage an unfortunate man hidden in a part of the box, shut up as in a dungeon. He is there with his hands and feet tied, dying, covered with blood, and a gag in his mouth. Hasten to deliver him; that task belongs to noble hearts like yours!"

"Par Dieu, this is a fine boy!" cried the baron, "and I see, dear count, that we have not lost our time in listening to

him. Perhaps it is some brave gentleman whom we shall rescue from the hands of the bandits."

"You say that they are there?" said the count, pointing to the wood.

"Yes," said Joseph; "but they are separated, and if your lordships will please listen to my humble advice, you will divide the attack. You will ascend in your carriage, as quickly as possible, and after having turned the hill, you will find in the wood above, and just at its entrance on the opposite border, the carriage in which the prisoner is, while I conduct these gentlemen cavaliers directly across. There are only three bandits; they are well armed; but seeing themselves attacked on both sides at once, they will make no resistance."

"The advice is good," said the baron. "Count, remain in the carriage and keep your servant with you. I will take his horse. One of these children will be your guide to show you where to stop. My chasseur shall carry this one. Let us hurry; for if these brigands are on the look-out, as is probable, they will get off."

"The carriage cannot escape you," observed Consuelo; "their horse is tired out."

The baron leaped upon the horse of the count's servant, and that servant took his place behind the carriage.

"Pass," said the count to Consuelo, making her enter first, but without himself noticing this movement of deference. Still he seated himself on the back seat and she on the front. Leaning over the door while the postilions urged their horses to a gallop, he followed with his eye his companion, who crossed the stream on horseback, accompanied by his courier, who had taken Joseph up behind him in order to pass the water. Consuelo was not without anxiety for her poor comrade, exposed to the first fire; but with esteem and approbation she saw him run to that perilous post. She saw him reascend the hill, followed by the two cavaliers who spurred their horses vigorously, and then disappear in the woods. Two reports of fire-arms were heard, then a third. The ber-

lin turned the hill. Consuelo, unable to learn anything, raised her soul to God; and the count, agitated by an analogous solicitude for his noble companion, cried to the postilions with an oath:

“Force your horses, rascals! whip, whip and spur!”



## CHAPTER LXXII.

THE *signor Pistola*, to whom we can give no other name than that which Consuelo had bestowed upon him, for we have not felt sufficient interest in his person to make any researches in this respect, had from the place where he was hidden seen the berlin stop at the cries of the fugitives. The other anonymous whom we also call, as did Consuelo, the *silent man*, had made the same observation and reflection from the top of the hill; he had run to rejoin Mayer, and both took measures to save themselves. Before the baron had crossed the stream, Pistola had gained some distance and was already covered by the wood. He let them pass, and fired two pistol shots at them from behind, one of which pierced the baron's hat, the other slightly wounded the servant's horse. The baron wheeled round, perceived him, and rushing upon him, stretched him on the ground by a bullet from his pistol. Then he left him to roll swearing among the thorns, and followed Joseph, who reached Mr. Mayer's carriage almost at the same time as did the count's. The latter had already leaped to the ground. Mayer and the silent man had disappeared with the horse, without losing time in hiding the chaise. The first care of the conquerors, was to force the lock of the box in which the prisoner was confined. Consuelo with transport helped to cut the bonds and gag of the unfortunate, who no sooner saw himself free, than he fell prostrate on the earth before his liberators, and thanked God. But as soon as he had looked at the baron he thought he had fallen from Charybdis into Scylla. "Ah! sir baron de Trenck," cried he, "do not kill me, do not give me up! Mercy, mercy for a poor deserter, who is the father of a family! I am no more of a Prussian than you are, sir

baron; I am an Austrian subject like yourself, and beseech you not to have me arrested. Oh! have mercy on me!"

"Have mercy on him, sir baron de Trenck!" cried Consuelo, without knowing to whom, or of what, she spoke.

"I will have mercy on you," replied the baron; "but on condition that you bind yourself by the most fearful oaths, never to say from whom you received your life and liberty." And as he spoke, the baron, drawing a handkerchief from his pocket, carefully wrapped up his face, so that only one eye could be seen.

"Are you wounded?" said the count.

"No," replied he, pulling his hat down over his face; "but if we meet these pretended brigands, I prefer not to be recognized. I already do not stand too well in the books of my gracious sovereign; this only was wanting."

"I understand the matter," returned the count, "but you need have no anxiety; I take it all on myself."

"That may save this deserter from the cat and the gallows, but not me from disgrace. No matter! one knows not what may happen; we must oblige our fellow-creatures at every risk. Here unfortunate! can you stand? Not too well, by what I see. You are wounded?"

"I received many blows, it is true, but I no longer feel them."

"In fine, can you clear out?"

"Oh! yes, sir aid-de-camp."

"Don't call me by that name, you rascal; be silent, and now be off! And let us, dear count, do the same. I am in a hurry to get out of this wood. I have brought down one of the recruiters; if the king knew it, my business would be done! though, after all, I don't care!" added he, shrugging his shoulders.

"Alas!" said Consuelo, while Joseph passed his gourd to the deserter, "if he is abandoned here, he will soon be retaken. His feet are swollen by the cords, and he can hardly use his hands; see how pale and faint he is!"

"We will not abandon him," said the count, who had his

eyes fixed on Consuelo. "Franz, dismount," said he to his domestic; and addressing the deserter:—"Mount that animal; I give it to you, and this also," added he, tossing him his purse. "Have you strength enough to reach Austria?"

"Yes, yes, my lord!"

"Do you wish to go to Vienna?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Do you wish to serve again?"

"Yes, my lord, provided it be not in Prussia."

"Go to her majesty, the empress-queen; she receives everybody one day in the week. Tell her that count Hoditz makes her a present of a very fine grenadier, perfectly drilled à la Prussienne."

"I hasten, my lord."

"And be careful never to mention the baron's name, or I will have you taken by my people and sent back into Prussia."

"I would rather die at once. Oh! if those wretches had only left me the use of my hands, I would have killed myself when they recaptured me."

"Decamp!"

"Yes, my lord."

He finished swallowing the contents of the gourd, returned it to Joseph, embraced him, without knowing that he was his debtor for a more important service, prostrated himself before the count and baron, and upon a gesture of impatience from the latter, which cut short his words, he made a great sign of the cross, kissed the earth, and mounted the horse with the assistance of the servants, for he could not move his feet; but hardly was he in the saddle, than, recovering courage and strength, he spurred on both sides, and began to gallop at full speed on the road to the south.

"That is enough to complete my ruin," said the baron to the count, "if it should ever be discovered that I allowed you to do it. It's all the same," added he with a burst of laughter; "the idea of making Maria-Theresa a present of one of Frederick's grenadiers is the most charming thing in the world. That fellow, who has sent bullets at the hulans of

the empress, is going to send them at the cadets of the king of Prussia! What faithful subjects, what well chosen troops!"

"The sovereigns are none the worse served for that. Well now, what are we going to do with these children?"

"We can say, like the grenadier," replied Consuelo, "that if you abandon us here, we are lost."

"I do not think," replied the count, who introduced a sort of chivalric ostentation into all his words, "that we have thus far given you any reason to doubt our feelings of humanity. We will carry you with us until you are far enough from this spot not to fear anything. My servant, whom I have brought down to his feet, shall ride on the box of the carriage," said he, addressing the baron; and he added in a lower voice, "Do you not prefer the company of these children to that of a valet whom we should be obliged to admit into the carriage, and before whom we must restrain ourselves much more?"

"Eh! doubtless," said the baron; "artists, however poor, are misplaced nowhere. Who knows if that one who has just found his violin among those bushes and is bringing it with so much joy, be not a Tartini in bud? Come, troubadour!" said he to Joseph, who had in fact just recovered his bag, his instrument and his manuscripts upon the field of battle, "come with us, and at our first resting place, you shall sing to us of this glorious conflict in which we have found no one to speak to."

"You can laugh at me at your leisure," said the count, when they were installed in the back seats of the carriage, and the young people in front of them, (the berlin already rolling rapidly towards Austria,) "you who have brought down one of those gallows-birds."

"I am quite afraid I did not kill him on the spot, and that I shall find him some day at the door of Frederick's study: I therefore surrender this exploit to you with all my heart."

"As for me, who did not even see the enemy," returned the count, "I envy you your exploit sincerely; I took some interest in the adventure, and would have had a pleasure in chastising those villains as they deserve. To come and seize

deserters and raise recruits on the very territory of Bavaria, now the faithful ally of Maria-Theresa! it shows an insolence for which no name can be found."

"It would be a good pretext for war, if all were not tired of fighting, and if this were not the season for peace. You will therefore oblige me, sir count, by not mentioning this adventure, not only on account of my sovereign, who would be much dissatisfied at the part I have played in it, but still more on account of the mission with which I am entrusted to your empress. I should find her but ill disposed to receive me, if I made my appearance at the very moment of such an impertinence on the part of my government."

"Fear nothing from me," replied the count; "you know that I am not a zealous subject, from the very fact that I am not an ambitious courtier."

"And what ambition could you still have, dear count? Love and fortune have crowned your wishes, while I— Ah! how dissimilar are our destinies at this moment, notwithstanding the analogy they present at first sight!" As he spoke thus, the baron drew from his bosom a portrait set in diamonds, and began to contemplate it with eyes full of emotion, uttering deep sighs, which gave Consuelo some inclination to laugh. She thought that a passion which betrayed so little delicacy was not in very good taste, and she inwardly derided this style of great lord.

"Dear baron," said the count, lowering his voice, (Consuelo pretended and even did her best not to hear,) "I beseech you not to grant to any one the confidence with which you have honored me, and especially not to show that portrait to any other than me. Return it to its case, and remember that this child understands French as well as you and I."

"Apropos!" cried the baron, reclosing the portrait, upon which Consuelo had been careful not to cast a glance, "what the devil could our kidnappers have wanted with these two little boys? Say, what did they propose to induce you to follow them?"

"In fact," said the count, "I did not think of that, and now

can find no explanation for their fancy; what could they, who only seek to enrol men in the prime of life and of an enormous stature, do with two little children?"

Joseph related that the pretended Mayer had called himself a musician, and had continually talked of Dresden and an engagement in the elector's chapel.

"Ah! now I understand!" returned the baron, "and this Mayer, I bet that I know him! He must be a man called N—, ex-chief of military music, now a recruiter for the bands of the Prussian regiments. Our natives have such hard heads, that they would not succeed in playing truly and in time, if his majesty, who has a more correct ear than the late king his father, did not draw from Hungary and from Bohemia, his clarionets, his fifes and his trumpets. The good professor of *clatter* thought he should make a fine present to his master, by bringing to him, besides a deserter recovered from your territory, two little musicians of an intelligent appearance; and the pretext of promising them Dresden and the delights of the court, was not a bad one to commence with. But you would not even have seen Dresden, my children, and, whether you would or no, you would have been incorporated in the music of some regiment of infantry, only for the rest of your days."

"I know what to think now of the fate which was reserved for us," replied Consuelo; "I have heard of the abominations of that military regime, of the bad faith and the cruelty with which recruits are carried off. I see, from the manner in which that poor grenadier was treated by those wretches, that nothing had been exaggerated to me. Oh! the great Frederick!"

"Know, young man," said the baron, with an emphasis which was a little ironical, "that his majesty is ignorant of the means and knows only the results."

"By which he profits, without caring for the rest," replied Consuelo, moved by an irresistible indignation. "Oh! I know, sir baron, kings never do wrong and are innocent of all the evil that is done to please them."

"The little scamp is a wag!" cried the count, laughing; "but you must be prudent, my pretty little drummer, and not forget that you are speaking before the superior officer of the regiment into which you would perhaps have entered."

"Knowing how to be silent myself, sir count, I never entertain a doubt of another's discretion."

"Do you hear him, baron? he promises you the silence you had not thought of asking from him. Is not he a charming boy?"

"And I trust to him with all my heart," returned the baron. "Count, you ought to enlist him yourself and make a present of him to her highness."

"It is done, if he consents," said the count laughing. "Will you accept this engagement, much more easy than the Prussian service? Ah! my child! you will not be obliged to lug a kettle drum, nor to beat the recall before day-light, nor to receive the cat and eat bread of stolen bricks, but to carry the train and fan of an admirable, beautiful and gracious lady, to dwell in a fairy palace, to preside at games and laughter, and to take your part in concerts which are certainly equal to those of the great Frederick. Are you tempted? Do you not take me for a Mayer?"

"And who then is this so gracious and so magnificent highness?" asked Consuelo, smiling.

"It is the dowager margravine of Bareith, princess of Culmbach, my illustrious spouse," replied count Hoditz; "she is now the chatelaine of Roswald in Moravia."

Consuelo had heard the canoness Wenceslawa of Rudolstadt repeat a hundred times the genealogy, alliances, and anecdotic history of all the great and little principalities and aristocracies of Germany and the neighboring countries; many of those biographies had struck her, and among others that of the count Hoditz-Roswald, a very rich Moravian lord, discarded and abandoned by his father, who was irritated by his misconduct, an adventurer well known in all the European courts; finally, chief squire and lover of the dowager margravine of Bareith, whom he had secretly married, ran away with and

conducted to Vienna, thence into Moravia, where having inherited from his father, he had recently placed her at the head of a brilliant fortune. The canoness had often recurred to this history, which she considered very scandalous, because the margravine was a sovereign princess, and the count a simple gentleman; and it gave her an opportunity to inveigh against mis-alliances and love-marriages. On her side, Consuelo, who strove to comprehend and to know the prejudices of the noble caste, improved these revelations and did not forget them. The first time that count Hoditz had named himself before her, she had been struck by a vague reminiscence, and now she had present in her mind all the circumstances of the life and romantic marriage of this celebrated adventurer. As to the baron de Trenck, who was then only at the commencement of his memorable disgrace, and who by no means anticipated his horrible lot, she had never heard him mentioned. She therefore listened to the count as he displayed with some vanity the picture of his new opulence. Laughed at and despised in the proud little courts of Germany, Hoditz had for a long time blushed at being looked upon as a poor devil enriched by his wife. Inheritor of immense riches, he thenceforth considered himself reëstablished by exhibiting the ostentation of a king in his Moravian county, and produced with complaisance his new titles to the consideration or the envy of those little sovereigns much less rich than himself. Full of politeness and delicate attentions towards his margravine, he nevertheless did not pique himself upon a scrupulous fidelity towards a woman much older than he was; and whether that princess had the good principles and the good taste of the age to shut her eyes, or thought that a husband rendered illustrious by herself would never open his to the decline of her beauty, she did not trouble herself about his fancies.

After some leagues, they found a relay expressly prepared beforehand for the noble travellers. Consuelo and Joseph wished to alight and take leave of them; but they opposed it, alleging the possibility of new enterprises on the part of the recruiters distributed over the country.



“ You do not know,” said Trenck to them, (and he did not exaggerate,) “ how crafty that race is, and how much to be feared. In whatever part of civilized Europe you place your foot, if you are poor and without protection, if you have any strength or any talent, you are exposed to the deceptions or the violence of those people. They know all the passages of the frontiers, all the bye-paths of the mountains, all the cross-roads, all the equivocal resting places, all the villains from whom they can expect aid and assistance in case of need. They speak all languages, all dialects, for they have visited all nations and followed all trades. They excel in managing a horse, in running, swimming and leaping precipices, like real bandits. They are almost all brave, accustomed to fatigue, ready and impudent liars, revengeful, crafty and cruel. They are the offscourings of the human race, of whom the military organization of the late king of Prussia, *Gros-Guil-laume*, has made the most useful providers of his power, and the most important supporters of his discipline. They would retake a deserter in the depths of Siberia, and go to seek him in the midst of the bullets of an enemy’s army, solely for the pleasure of carrying him back into Prussia and having him hung as an example. They have seized a priest at the altar while saying his mass, because he was six feet three ; they have stolen a physician from the electoral princess ; they have thrown the old margrave of Bareith into a fury ten times, by carrying off his army of twenty or thirty men, without his daring to demand an explanation openly ; they made soldier for life of a French gentleman who was going to visit his wife and children in the vicinity of Strasburg ; they have taken Russians from the czarina Elizabeth, hulans from the marshall of Saxony, pandours from Maria-Theresa, magnates of Hungary, Polish noblemen, Italian singers, and women of all nations, modern Sabines, married to soldiers by force ; besides their pay and their travelling expenses which are largely reimbursed, they have a premium of so much per head, what do I say, of so much per inch and line of stature — ”

“ Yes ! ” said Consuelo, “ they furnish human flesh at so

**much the ounce! Ah! your great king is an ogre!—But doubt not, sir baron, continue; you have performed a noble action in restoring liberty to our poor deserter. I would rather undergo the punishments that were in store for him, than say a word which could injure you.”**

Trenck, whose fiery character was not consistent with prudence, and who was already irritated by the rigor and incomprehensible injustice of Frederick towards him, took a bitter pleasure in developing, before count Hoditz, the atrocities of that military regime of which he had been a witness and accomplice, at a period of prosperity and when his reflections had not always been so just and so severe. Now, secretly persecuted, though he apparently owed it to the confidence of the king that he was about to enter upon an important diplomatic mission at the court of Maria-Theresa, he began to detest his master, and to let his sentiments appear with too much freedom. He related to the count the sufferings, the slavery and despair of that numerous Prussian soldiery, precious in war, but so dangerous in peace, that in order to restrain them, a system of unexampled terror and barbarity had been adopted. He mentioned the epidemic of suicide which had spread through the army, and the crimes committed by soldiers, otherwise honest and devout, with the sole object of being condemned to death in order to escape the horror of the life to which they had been compelled. “Would you believe,” said he, “that the *suspected* ranks are those which are sought for with the greatest ardor? You must know that those suspected ranks are composed of foreign recruits, of men who have been kidnapped, or of young Prussians, who, at the commencement of a military career which is to finish only with life, are generally the victims of the most horrible depression. They are divided by ranks, and compelled to march, whether in peace or war, before another rank of men more submissive or more determined, each of whom has the order to fire upon the one in front of him, if the latter testifies the least intention of flight or resistance. If the rank charged with this execution neglects it, the rank placed next, which is again chosen

among the more insensible and the more brutal, (for there are such among the old hardened soldiers, and the volunteers, who are almost all villains,) this third rank, I say, is ordered to fire upon the first two; and so in succession, if the third rank fails in the execution. Thus every rank of the army has in battle, the enemy in the front and the enemy in the rear, nowhere fellows, companions, or brothers-in-arms. Everywhere violence, death, and fear!

“‘It is thus,’ says the great Frederick, ‘that invincible soldiers are formed.’ Well! a place in those first ranks is envied and sought for by the young Prussian soldier; and as soon as he is placed there, without conceiving the least hope of safety, he disbands and casts away his arms, in order to draw upon himself the bullets of his comrades. This movement of despair saves many, who, risking all for all, and braving the most insurmountable dangers, succeed in escaping, and often pass over to the enemy. The king is not deceived respecting the horror with which his yoke of iron inspires the army, and you perhaps know his saying to the duke of Brunswick, his nephew, who was present at one of his great reviews, and did not cease admiring the beautiful condition and superb manœuvres of his troops. ‘The collection and appearance of so many fine men surprise you?’ said Frederick to him; ‘but there is something still more surprising which astonishes me!’ ‘What is it?’ ‘That you and I are in safety among them!’ replied the king.”

“Baron, dear baron,” returned count Hoditz, “this is the reverse of the medal. Nothing is done miraculously among men. How could Frederick be the greatest captain of his age, if he were gentle as a dove? Come, let us speak no more of him. You will oblige me to take his part against you, his aid-de-camp and his favorite.”

“From the manner in which he treats his favorites on a day of caprice, one may judge,” replied Trenck, “of his style of action with his slaves! You are right! let us speak no more of him! For on thinking of him, I have a diabolical desire to return to the wood, and strangle with my own hands

his zealous purveyors of human flesh, to whom I granted mercy from a foolish and cowardly prudence."

The baron's generous excitement pleased Consuelo; she listened with interest to his animated descriptions of military life in Prussia; and not knowing that this courageous indignation was mingled with a little personal spite, she saw in it the indication of a great character. There was, nevertheless, real grandeur in the soul of Trenck. That beautiful and proud young man was not born to grovel. There was a great difference in this respect between him and his accidental travelling friend, the rich and superb Hoditz. The latter, having been the terror and despair of his preceptors in his childhood, was at last abandoned to himself; and though he had passed the age of noisy follies, he retained in his manners and his conversation a something puerile, which contrasted with his herculean stature, and his handsome face, a little faded by forty years full of fatigue and debauchery. He had acquired the superficial information which he displayed from time to time only from novels, the fashionable philosophy, and attendance on the theatre. He prided himself on being an artist, and wanted depth and discernment in that as in all things. Nevertheless, his noble appearance, his exquisite affability, his fine and cheerful ideas, soon operated upon the imagination of young Haydn, who preferred him to the baron, perhaps also on account of the more decided attention which Consuelo bestowed upon the latter.

The baron, on the contrary, had studied much; and if the illusions of courts and the effervescence of youth had often misled his perceptions of the reality and worth of human greatness, he had preserved in the depths of his soul, that independence of sentiment and that equity of principle, which are produced by serious reading and by noble instincts developed by education. His proud character might have been rendered torpid by the flatteries and caresses of power, but he had never bent so low, but that at the least appearance of injustice he raised himself fiery and burning.

Frederick's handsome page had touched his lips to the em-

poisoned cup, but love, an absolute, rash, exalted love, had come to reanimate his boldness and his perseverance. Stricken in the most sensitive part of his heart, he had raised his head, and braved to his face the tyrant who wished to bring him to his knees.

At the period of our recital, he appeared to be twenty at most. Masses of brown locks, which he would not sacrifice to the puerile discipline of Frederick, overshadowed his broad forehead. His figure was superb, his eyes sparkling, his moustache black as ebony, his hand white as alabaster, though strong as that of an athlete, and his voice fresh and manly as his face, his ideas, and the hopes of his love.

Consuelo thought of that mysterious love, which he had every moment upon his lips, and which she no longer considered ridiculous in proportion as she observed, in his transports and in his reserve, that mixture of natural impetuosity and of too well founded mistrust, which kept him in a state of continual warfare with himself and his destiny. She experienced, in spite of herself, a lively curiosity to know the lady of the thoughts of so handsome a young man, and found herself making sincere and romantic wishes for the triumph of the two lovers. She did not find the day long, as she had expected, placed opposite to two strangers of a rank so different from her own. She had acquired at Venice the notion, and at Riesenburg the habit, of politeness, of gentle manners and of chosen expressions, which are the pleasant side of what was exclusively called in those days, good company. While keeping herself on the reserve, and not speaking unless addressed, she felt entirely at her ease, and internally made her reflections upon all she heard. Neither the baron nor the count appeared to perceive her disguise. The first paid no attention either to her or to Joseph. If he addressed some words to them, he continued his remarks turning towards the count: and soon, still speaking with enthusiasm, he no longer thought even of the latter, and seemed to converse with his own thoughts, like a spirit which is nourished with its own fire.

As to the count, he was by turns grave as a monarch, and

frisky as a French marchioness. He drew his tablets from his pocket, and took notes with the serious air of a thinker or a diplomatist; then he read them over in a humming voice, and Consuelo saw that they were little verses in a gallant and pleasant French. Sometimes he recited them to the baron, who declared them admirable without having listened to them. Sometimes he consulted Consuelo with a good-natured air, and asked her with a false modesty, "What do you think of that, my little friend? You understand French, do you not?"

Consuelo, impatient at this pretended condescension, which appeared to seek to dazzle her, could not resist the temptation of mentioning two or three faults which were found in a quatrain *to beauty*. Her mother had taught her to pronounce and enunciate well the languages which she herself sang easily and with a certain elegance. Consuelo, studious and seeking in all things harmony, measure, and the neatness which her musical organization suggested to her, had found in books the key and rules of these various languages. She had especially examined prosody with care, exercising herself in translating lyric poetry, and in adjusting foreign words to national airs, in order to become mistress of the rhythm and accent. She had also succeeded in understanding the rules of versification in many languages, and it was not difficult for her to detect the errors of the Moravian poet.

Astonished at her learning, but not able to resolve upon doubting his own, Hoditz consulted the baron, who confidently gave judgment in favor of the little musician. From this moment, the count occupied himself exclusively with her, but without appearing to doubt her real age or her sex. He asked only where *he* had been educated, to know so well the laws of Parnassus.

"At the charity school of the singing foundations of Venice," replied she laconically.

"It would appear that the studies of that country are more severe than those of Germany; and your comrade, where did he study?"

"At the cathedral of Vienna," replied Joseph.

"My children," resumed the count, "both of you have much intelligence and quickness. At our first resting-place, I wish to examine you upon music, and if you correspond to the promise given by your faces and manners, I engage you for my orchestra or my theatre, at Roswald. I wish at any rate to present you to the princess my spouse; what do you say? ha! It would be a fortune for children like you."

Consuelo had been seized with a strong desire to laugh at hearing the count propose to examine Haydn and herself in music. She could only incline herself respectfully, while she made great efforts to preserve a serious face. Joseph, feeling more powerfully the advantageous consequences of a new protection for himself, thanked and did not refuse. The count resumed his tablets, and read to Consuelo half of a little Italian opera, singularly detestable and full of barbarisms, which he promised to set to music himself, and to have represented on his wife's fête day, by his actors, upon his stage, in his chateau, or rather, at his residence; for, considering himself a prince in the right of his margravine, he did not speak otherwise.

Consuelo pushed Joseph's elbow from time to time, to make him remark the count's blunders, and overcome by ennui, said to herself, that to be seduced by such madrigals, the famous beauty of the hereditary margravit of Bareith with the appanage of Culmbach, must be a very stupid person, notwithstanding her titles, her gallantries, and her years.

While reading and declaiming, the count kept crunching little comfits to moisten his throat, and incessantly offered them to the young travellers, who, having eaten nothing since the day before and dying of hunger, accepted, for want of a better, this aliment, fitted rather to deceive than to satisfy it, saying to themselves that the count's sugar-plums and rhymes were very insipid nourishment.

At last, towards evening, they saw appear in the horizon the fortifications and spires of that city of Passaw, where in the morning Consuelo had thought they never should arrive.

This sight, after so many dangers and terrors, was almost as sweet to her as in former times would have been that of Venice; and when they crossed the Danube, she could not restrain herself from grasping Joseph's hand.

"Is he your brother?" demanded the count, who had not yet thought of asking the question.

"Yes, my lord," replied Consuelo at random, in order to free herself from his curiosity."

"Yet you do not resemble each other," said the count.

"There are so many children who do not resemble their fathers," said Joseph, gaily.

"You have not been educated together?"

"No, my lord. In our wandering condition, we are educated where we can be, and as we can be."

"Yet, I know not why," said the count to Consuelo, lowering his voice, "I imagine you must have been *well born*. Everything in your person and in your language announces a natural distinction."

"I do not at all know how I was born, my lord," replied she, laughing. "I must have been born a musician from father to son, for I love nothing in the world but music."

"Why are you dressed like a Moravian peasant?"

"Because my clothes being worn out by travel, I bought those which you see at a fair in that country."

"Then you have been in Moravia, at Roswald perhaps?"

"In its neighborhood, yes, my lord," replied Consuelo, maliciously; "I saw from a distance, and without daring to approach, your superb domain, your statues, your cascades, your gardens, your mountains, what do I say? wonders,—a fairy palace!"

"You have seen all these?" cried the count, astonished not to have known it sooner, and not perceiving that Consuelo, having heard him describe the delights of his residence for two hours, could easily make the description after him with a safe conscience. "Oh! that must give you a desire to revisit it?" said he.

"I am burning with that desire, now that I have the hap-



piness of knowing you," said Consuelo, who felt the necessity of revenging herself for the reading of his opera, by laughing at him.

She leaped lightly from the bark in which they had crossed the river, crying with a strong German accent :

" O Passaw, I salute thee ! "

The berlin carried them to the dwelling of a rich lord, a friend of the count, absent for the moment, but whose house was destined as a stopping place for them. They were expected ; the servants were preparing supper, which was promptly served. The count, who took an extreme pleasure in the conversation of his little musician, as he called Consuelo, could have wished to carry them to his table ; but the fear of displeasing the baron prevented him. Consuelo and Joseph were contented to eat in the kitchen, and made no difficulty at seating themselves with the servants. Haydn had never been treated any more honorably by the great lords who had admitted him to their feasts ; and though the sentiment of art had elevated his heart sufficiently to enable him to comprehend the indignity attending this style of proceeding, he remembered without false shame that his mother had been cook to count Harrach, the lord of his native village. Later in life, and when he had reached the development of his genius, it was Haydn's lot not to be any better appreciated by his protectors as a man, although he was so by all Europe as an artist. He passed twenty-five years in the service of prince Esterhazy ; and when we say in the service, we do not mean that it was as musician only. Paër saw him with a napkin on his arm, and a sword by his side, behind his master's chair, exercising the functions of *maitre d'hotel*, that is, of head servant, according to the custom of the time and of the country.

Consuelo had not eaten with domestics since her youthful travels with her mother, the Zingara. She was much amused at the grand airs of these lacqueys of a great house, who considered themselves humiliated by the company of two little mountebanks, and who, placing them by themselves at the end

of the table, served them with the poorest morsels. A good appetite and their natural abstemiousness made them find these excellent; and their cheerful air having disarmed those haughty souls, they were requested to enliven the desert of the gentlemen lacqueys by music. Joseph revenged himself for their disdain by playing on the violin very obligingly; and Consuelo herself, hardly feeling any more the agitation and the sufferings of the morning, began to sing, when word was brought them that the count and the baron claimed the music for their own amusement. There were no means of refusing. After the assistance those lords had given them, Consuelo would have regarded all evasion as ingratitude; and besides, to excuse themselves on account of fatigue or hoarseness would have been but a poor pretext, since their voices, ascending from the kitchen to the saloon, had already reached the ears of the masters.

She followed Joseph, who as well as herself was in the humor to take in good part all the consequences of their pilgrimage; and when they had entered a beautiful saloon, in which the two lords were finishing their last bottle of Hungarian wine by the light of twenty wax candles, they remained standing near the door after the manner of musicians of low rank, and began to sing the little Italian duets which they had studied together on the mountains.

“Attention!” said Consuelo maliciously, to Joseph, before beginning. “Remember that his lordship the count is going to examine us upon music. Let us try to do our best!”

The count was much flattered by this remark; the baron had placed the portrait of his mysterious Dulcinea upon his down-turned plate, and did not seem disposed to listen.

Consuelo was careful not to display the whole extent of her voice and her powers. Her pretended sex did not accord with such velvety accents, and the age which she appeared to have under her disguise would not allow it to be believed that she could have attained such great perfection. She therefore sang with a boy's voice, somewhat harsh as if prematurely injured by the abuse of her profession in the open air. It

was an amusement for her at the same time, to counterfeit the simple mistakes, and the rashnesses of crippled ornament which she had heard made so many times by the children in the streets of Venice. But though she played this musical parody wonderfully, there was so much natural taste in her fancies, the duet was sung with so much nerve and harmony, and that popular chant was so fresh and original, that the baron, an excellent musician and admirably organized for the arts, replaced his portrait in his bosom, raised his head, moved about in his chair, and finished by clapping his hands with vivacity, crying out that it was the truest and best understood music he had ever heard. As to count Hoditz, who was full of Fuchs, of Rameau, and his classic authors, he liked less the style of composition and the method of delivery. He looked upon the baron as a barbarian of the north, and upon his two protegés as quite intelligent scholars, whom he would be obliged to draw by his lessons from the darkness of ignorance. His mania was to form his artists himself, and shaking his head, he said to them in a dogmatic tone: "There is something good here; but there is a great deal to be found fault with. Well! well! we will correct all that!"

He imagined that Joseph and Consuelo already belonged to him, and made part of his choir. He afterwards requested Haydn to play on his violin, and as the latter had no reason to conceal his talent, he played admirably an air of his own composition, which was remarkably well written for that instrument. This time the count was very well satisfied. "As to you," said he, "your place is found; you shall be my first violin; you are just what I want. But you must practise upon the violoncello. I love the violoncello above all other instruments. I will teach you how to use it."

"Is my lord the baron also satisfied with my comrade?" said Consuelo to Trenck, who had again become pensive.

"So much so," replied he, "that if I make any stay in Vienna, I will have no other master but him."

"I will teach you the violoncello," returned the count, "and I ask of you the preference."

"I like the violin and that professor better," replied the baron, who in his preoccupation displayed an incomparable frankness. He took the violin, and played from memory, with much purity and expression, some passages of the air which Joseph had just given; then returning it: "I wished to let you see," said he to him, "that I am only fitted to become your scholar, but that I can learn with attention and docility." Consuelo requested him to play something else, and he did so without affectation. He displayed talent, taste, and intelligence. Hoditz bestowed extravagant eulogiums on the composition of the last piece.

"It is not very good," replied Trenck, "for it is mine; yet I love it, for it pleased *my princess*."

The count made a terrible grimace to warn him to weigh his words. Trenck did not even take notice of it, and, lost in his thoughts, made the bow run over the strings for some moments; then throwing the violin on the table, he rose and walked to and fro with great strides, passing his hand across his brow. At last he returned towards the count, and said to him:

"I wish you a good evening, my dear count. I am compelled to depart before day-break, as the carriage I have sent for will take me hence about three o'clock in the morning. Since you will remain all the forenoon, it is probable I shall not see you again before we meet at Vienna. I shall be happy to find you there, and to thank you once more for the agreeable portion of my journey passed in your company. It is from my heart that I am devoted to you for life."

They grasped each other's hands several times, and at the moment of quitting the apartment, the baron, approaching Joseph, gave him several pieces of gold, saying: "This is on account of the lessons I shall receive of you at Vienna; you will find me at the Prussian embassy." He nodded his head to Consuelo, and said: "As for you, if I ever find you trumpeter or drummer in my regiment, we will desert together; do you understand?" And he went out, after having again saluted the count.

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

As soon as count Hoditz found himself alone with his musicians, he felt more at his ease and became entirely communicative. His favorite mania was to assume the chapel-master, and to play the part of *impresario*. He therefore wished to commence Consuelo's education immediately. "Come here," said he to her, "and take a seat. We are alone, and you will not listen with attention a league off. Seat yourself likewise," said he to Joseph, "and try to profit by the lesson. You do not know how to make the smallest trill," said he, addressing himself anew to the great cantatrice. "Listen carefully,—this is the manner in which it should be done." And he sang a common phrase into which he introduced several of those ornaments in a very vulgar style. Consuelo amused herself by repeating the phrase, and making the trill inversely.

"No! that is not it," cried the count with the voice of a stentor, and striking the table. "You have not listened."

He began again, and Consuelo marred the ornament even more oddly and provokingly than the first time, preserving her seriousness, and affecting a great effort of attention and will. Joseph was bursting, and pretended to cough in order to conceal a convulsive laugh.

"La, la, la, trala, tra la!" sang the count, mimicking his awkward scholar, and bounding in his chair with all the symptoms of a terrible indignation which he did not feel the least in the world, but which he considered necessary to the power and magisterial dignity of his character.

Consuelo mocked him for a good quarter of an hour, and when she was satisfied, sang the trill with all the neatness of which she was capable.

“Bravo! bravissimo!” cried the count, throwing himself back in his chair. “At last that is perfect! I knew that I could make you do it! Give me the first peasant you meet, and I am sure of forming him, and teaching him in a day what others would not teach him in a year! Sing that phrase once more, and mark all the notes without seeming to touch them.—That is even better, nothing could be better! we will make something of you yet!” And the count wiped his forehead, though there was not a drop of sweat on it.

“Now,” resumed he, “the cadence with *fall and turn of the throat!*” He gave her an example with that facility which the poorest choristers acquire by rote from listening to the best singers, admiring in their manner only the plays of the throat, and believing themselves as skilful as they because they succeed in imitating them. Consuelo again diverted herself by putting the count into one of those great cold-blooded passions which he loved to display when galloping on his hobby, and ended by making him hear a cadence so perfect and so prolonged, that he was forced to cry out:

“Enough! enough! That is it; you have it now. I was very sure I could give you the key. Let us pass to the roulade. You learn with an admirable facility, and I wish I could always have pupils like you.”

Consuelo, who began to feel overpowered by sleep and fatigue, abridged considerably the lesson of the roulade. She made with docility all those which the opulent pedagogue prescribed to her, however faulty in taste they might be; and even allowed her beautiful voice to resound naturally, no longer fearing to betray herself, since the count was resolved to attribute to himself even the sudden splendor and the celestial purity which her organ acquired from one moment to another.

“How much clearer it becomes in proportion as I show him how to open his mouth, and bring out his voice!” said he to Joseph, turning towards him with an air of triumph. “Clearness in teaching, perseverance, example; these are the three requisites with which to form singers and declaimers in

a short time. We will take another lesson to-morrow; for you must have ten lessons, at the end of which you will know how to sing. We have the *coulé*, the *flatté*, the *port de voix tenu*, and the *port de voix achevé*, the *chute*, the *inflexion tendre*, the *martellement gai*, the *cadence feinte*, &c. &c. Now go and repose yourselves; I have had chambers prepared for you in this palace. I shall stop here on some business until noon. You will breakfast and will follow me to Vienna. Consider yourselves from this moment as in my service. To begin, do you, Joseph, go and tell my body servant to come and light me to my apartment. Do you," said he to Consuelo, "remain and go over again that last roulade I showed you; I am not perfectly satisfied with it."

Hardly had Joseph gone out when the count, taking both of Consuelo's hands with very expressive looks, tried to draw her towards him. Interrupted in her roulade, Consuelo looked at him also with much astonishment; but she quickly drew away her hands and recoiled to the other end of the table, on seeing his inflamed eyes and his libertine smile. "Come, come! do you wish to play the prude?" said the count, resuming his indolent and superb air. "Well! my darling, we have a little lover, eh? he is very ugly, poor fellow, and I hope that you will renounce him from to-day. Your fortune is made, if you do not hesitate; for I do not like delays. You are a charming girl, full of intelligence and sweetness; you please me much, and from the first glance I cast upon you, I saw that you were not made to tramp about with that little scamp. Nevertheless, I will take charge of him also; I will send him to Roswald and establish him there. As for you, you will remain at Vienna. I will lodge you properly, and if you are prudent and modest, even bring you forward in the world. When you have learnt music, you shall be the prima donna of my theatre, and you shall see your little chance friend, when I carry you to my residence. Is it understood?"

"Yes, my lord count," replied Consuelo with much gravity and making a low bow, "it is perfectly understood."

Joseph returned at that moment with the valet de chambre, who carried two candles, and the count went out, giving a little tap on the cheek to Joseph, and addressing a smile of intelligence to Consuelo.

"He is perfectly ridiculous," said Joseph to his companion as soon as he was alone with her.

"More so than you think," replied she thoughtfully.

"No matter, he is the best man in the world, and will be very useful to me at Vienna."

"Yes, at Vienna, as much as you please, Beppo; but at Passaw, not in the least, I assure you. Where are our bundles, Joseph?"

"In the kitchen. I will go and get them and carry them to our chambers, which are charming from what they tell me. At last you will get some rest!"

"Good Joseph," said Consuelo, shrugging her shoulders: "Go," resumed she, "get your bundle quickly, and give up your pretty chamber in which you expected to sleep so well. We leave this house on the instant; do you understand me? Be quick, for they will certainly lock the doors."

Haydn thought she was dreaming. "What!" cried he, "is it possible? Are these great lords kidnapers too?"

"I fear Hoditz even more than Mayer," replied Consuelo impatiently. "Come, run! do not hesitate, or I leave you and go alone."

There was so much resolution and energy in Consuelo's tone and features, that Haydn, surprised and distracted, obeyed her hurriedly. He returned in three minutes with the bag which contained their music and clothes; and three minutes afterwards, without having been remarked by any one, they had left the palace and reached the suburb at the extremity of the city.

They entered a small inn, and hired two chambers which they paid for in advance, in order to leave as early as they wished without being detained.

"Will you not at least tell me the occasion of this fresh



alarm?" asked Haydn of Consuelo, as he bid her good-night on the threshold of her chamber.

"Sleep in peace," replied she, "and know in two words that we have not much to fear now. His lordship the count divined with his eagle eye that I am not of his sex, and did me the honor of a declaration which has singularly flattered my self-love. Good night, friend Beppo, we will be off before day-light, and I will knock at your door to rouse you."

On the next day the rising sun saluted our young travellers as they were floating on the Danube, and descending its rapid stream with a satisfaction as pure and hearts as light as the waves of that beautiful river. They had paid for their passage in the bark of an old boatman who was carrying merchandise to Lintz. He was an honest man, with whom they were well satisfied, and who did not interfere with their conversation. He did not understand a word of Italian, and, his boat being sufficiently loaded, he took no other passengers, which at last gave them that security and repose of body and mind which they needed in order to enjoy completely the beautiful spectacle presented to their eyes at every moment of their voyage. The weather was magnificent. There was a very clean little cabin to the boat, into which Consuelo could retire to rest her eyes from the glare of the water; but she had become so accustomed during the preceding days to the open air and broad sun, that she preferred to pass almost the whole time lying upon the bales, delightfully occupied in watching the rocks and trees of the bank, which seemed to glide away behind her. She could make music at her leisure with Haydn, and the comic recollection of the music-mad Hoditz, whom Joseph called *master-mad*, mingled much gaiety with their warblings. Joseph mimicked him exactly, and felt a malicious joy at the idea of his disappointment. Their laughs and their songs cheered and charmed the old mariner, who was passionately fond of music, as is every German proletary. He also sang to them some airs in which they found an aquatic complexion, and which Consuelo learnt of him with the words. They completely gained his heart

by feasting him as well as they could at their first landing place, where they laid in their own provisions for the day; and that day was the most peaceful and the most agreeable they had yet passed since the commencement of their journey.

"Excellent baron de Trenck!" said Joseph, changing for silver one of those brilliant pieces of gold which that nobleman had given him: "it is to him that I owe the power of at last relieving the divine Porporina from fatigue, from famine, from danger, from all the ills that misery brings in its train. Yet I did not like him at first, that noble and benevolent baron!"

"Yes," said Consuelo, "you preferred the count. I am glad now that the latter confined himself to promises, and did not soil our hands with his benefits."

"After all, we owe him nothing," resumed Joseph. "Who first had the thought and the resolution to fight the recruiters? it was the baron; the count did not care, and only went through complaisance and for fashion's sake. Who ran all the risk and received a ball through his hat, very near the skull? again the baron! Who wounded and perhaps killed that infamous Pistola? the baron! Who saved the deserter at his own expense perhaps, by exposing himself to the anger of a terrible master? Finally, who respected you, and did not pretend to recognize your sex? Who comprehended the beauty of your Italian airs and the good taste of your style?"

"And the genius of Master Joseph Haydn?" added Consuelo smiling; "the baron, always the baron!"

"Doubtless," returned Haydn, to give back the roguish insinuation; "and it is perhaps very fortunate for a certain noble and dear absent one of whom I have heard speak, that the declaration of love to the divine Porporina proceeded from the ridiculous count instead of the brave and seductive baron."

"Beppo!" replied Consuelo, with a melancholy smile, "the absent never suffer wrong except in ungrateful and mean hearts. That is why the baron, who is generous and sincere and who loves a mysterious beauty, could not think of paying court to me. I ask you yourself, would you so

easily sacrifice the love of your betrothed and the fidelity of your heart to the first chance caprice?"

Beppo sighed profoundly. "You cannot be the *first chance caprice* for any one," said he, "and the baron would have been very excusable had he forgotten all his loves, past and present, at the sight of you."

"You grow gallant—complimentary, Beppo! I see that you have profited by the society of his lordship the count; but may you never wed a margravine, nor learn how love is treated when one has married for money."

They reached Lintz in the evening, and slept at last without terror and without care for the morrow. As soon as Joseph woke he hastened to buy shoes, linen, many little niceties of male dress for himself and especially for Consuelo, who could make herself look like a smart and *handsome* young man, as she jestingly said, in order to walk about the city and vicinity. The old boatman had told them, that if he could find a freight for Moelk, he would take them *aboard* the following day, and would carry them twenty leagues more on the Danube. They therefore spent that day at Lintz, amused themselves by climbing the hill, examining the fortification below and that above, whence they could contemplate the majestic meanderings of the river through the fertile plains of Austria. Thence they also saw a spectacle which made them quite merry: this was count Hoditz' berlin, which entered the city triumphantly. They recognized the carriage and the livery, and being too far off to be perceived by him, amused themselves with making low salutations down to the ground. At last, towards evening, returning to the river's bank, they there found their boat laden with merchandise for Moelk, and joyfully made a new bargain with their old pilot. They embarked before dawn and saw the serene stars shining above their heads, while the reflection of those stars glistened in long lines of silver upon the moving surface of the stream. This day passed not less agreeably than the preceding. Joseph had but one trouble, which was to think that he approached Vienna, and that this

journey, of which he forgot all the sufferings and the dangers, to recall only its delightful moments, would soon be brought to its close.

At Moelk, they were obliged to leave their honest pilot, and this not without regret. They could not find in the craft which were offered for a continuation of their voyage the same conditions of isolation and security. Consuelo felt herself rested, refreshed, strengthened against all accidents. She proposed to Joseph to resume their journey on foot until some new opportunity. They had still twenty leagues to travel, and this manner of journeying was not very expeditious. The truth is, that Consuelo, even while persuading herself that she was impatient to resume the dress of her sex and the proprieties of her position, was, at the bottom of her heart, it must be confessed, as little desirous as Joseph to see the end of their expedition. She was too much of an artist in every fibre of her organization, not to love the liberty, the hazards, the deeds of courage and address, the constant and varied aspect of that nature which the pedestrian alone enjoys completely, in fine, all the romantic activity of wandering and isolated life.

I call it isolated, friend reader, in order to express a secret and mysterious impression which is easier for you to comprehend, than for me to define. It is, I believe, a state of mind which has no name in our language, but which you must necessarily recall, if you have ever travelled on foot to any distance, alone, or with another self, or indeed, like Consuelo, with an easy companion, who was cheerful, obliging and sympathizing. In those moments, if you were free from all immediate solicitude, from all disturbing thoughts, you have, I doubt not, experienced a kind of strange delight, a little selfish perhaps, as you said to yourself, "At this instant, nobody is troubled about me, and nobody troubles me. No one knows where I am. Those who domineer over my life would search for me in vain; they cannot discover me in this situation unknown to all, new even to myself, in which I have taken refuge. Those whom my life impresses and agitates,

rest from me, as I from my action upon them. I belong to myself entirely, both as master and as slave;" for there is not one of us, O reader! who is not at once, with regard to a certain group of individuals, by turns and simultaneously, somewhat of a slave, somewhat of a master, whether he will or no; without confessing it and without pretending it.

*No one knows where I am!* Certainly that is a thought of isolation which has its charm, an inexpressible charm, savage in appearance, legitimate and gentle at bottom. We are made to live a life of reciprocity. The highway of duty is long, rough, and has no horizon but death, which is perhaps hardly the rest of a single night. Let us march on then, and without sparing our feet! But if, under rare and beneficent circumstances, in which rest may be inoffensive and isolation without remorse, a green by-path presents itself to our steps, let us profit by some hours of solitude and contemplation. Those hours free from care are very necessary for the active and courageous man to recover his strength; and I tell you, that the more you are devoured by zeal for the house of God, (which is no other than humanity,) the better fitted are you to appreciate some moments of isolation in order to reënter into possession of yourself. The selfish man is alone always and everywhere. His soul is never fatigued by loving, by suffering and persevering; it is inert and cold, and has no more need of sleep and of silence than has a corpse. He who loves is rarely alone, and when he is, he is happy. His soul can enjoy a suspension of activity, which is as a deep sleep to a vigorous body. That sleep is a good witness of past fatigues, and the precursor of new labors for which he is preparing. I hardly believe in the real grief of those who do not seek distraction, nor in the absolute devotedness of those who have no need of rest. Either their grief is a deadness which reveals that they are broken, extinguished, and would no longer have the strength to love that which they have lost; or their devotedness without cessation and without failure of activity, conceals some shameful desire, some selfish and culpable compensation which I distrust.

These observations, though a little too long, are not out of place in a recital of the life of Consuelo, an active and devoted soul, if there ever was one, who still might sometimes have been accused of selfishness and frivolity by those who did not know how to comprehend her.

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

On the first day of their new journey, as our young travellers were crossing a small river, upon a wooden bridge, they saw a poor beggar-woman, who held a little girl in her arms, seated upon the parapet extending her hand to the passers by. The child was pale and suffering, the woman wan and shaking with fever. Consuelo was seized with a deep feeling of sympathy and pity for those unfortunates, who recalled to her her mother and her own childhood. "See how we were sometimes," said she to Joseph, who understood her at a word, and stopped with her to look at and question the beggar woman.

"Alas!" said the latter to them, "I was very happy only a few days ago. I am a peasant from the neighborhood of Harmanitz in Bohemia. I was married, five years since, to a handsome and tall cousin of mine, who was the most industrious of workmen and the best of husbands. About a year after our marriage, my poor Karl, who had gone to cut wood on the mountain, disappeared suddenly, without any one knowing what had become of him. I sank into poverty and sorrow. I thought that my husband had fallen from some precipice, or that the wolves had devoured him. Although I had an opportunity of being married again, the uncertainty of his fate and the friendship I felt for him prevented my thinking of it. Oh! I was well rewarded, my children! Last year, somebody knocked at my door in the evening; I opened it and fell on my knees at the sight of my husband before me. But in what a condition, good God! He looked like a phantom. He was all dried up, yellow, his eyes haggard, his hair stiffened with ice, his feet all bloody, his poor feet which had travelled I know not how many hundreds of miles over the most horrible roads and in the most severe

winter! But he was so happy at again finding his wife and his poor little daughter, that he soon recovered his courage, his health, his strength and his good looks. He told me that he had been kidnapped by brigands, who had carried him far, very far away, even to the sea, and had sold him to the king of Prussia for a soldier. He had lived for three years in the most gloomy of all countries, suffering great hardships and receiving blows from morning to night. At last he had succeeded in escaping, deserting, my good children! In fighting desperately against those who pursued him, he had killed one and put out the eye of another with a stone; finally, he had travelled day and night, hiding in the swamps, in the woods, like a wild beast; he had crossed Saxony and Bohemia, and he was saved, he was restored to me. Ah! how happy we were the whole winter, spite of our poverty and the rigor of the season! We had but one anxiety, that was of again seeing in our neighborhood those birds of prey, who had caused all our sufferings. We formed the project of going to Vienna, presenting ourselves to the empress, and relating our misfortunes to her, in order to obtain her protection, military service for my husband, and some subsistence for myself and child; but I fell ill in consequence of the shock I experienced at again seeing my poor Karl, and we were obliged to pass the whole winter and all the summer in our mountains, always waiting for the moment when I could undertake the journey, always on our guard and sleeping with one eye open. At last, that happy moment arrived, I felt myself strong enough to walk, and our little girl, who was also suffering, was to make the journey in her father's arms. But our evil destiny awaited us on leaving the mountains. We were walking tranquilly and leisurely by the side of a much frequented road, without paying attention to a carriage which, for a quarter of an hour, slowly ascended in the same direction with ourselves. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and three men got out. 'Is that he?' cried one. 'Yes,' replied another, who was blind of an eye, 'that is he! quick! quick!' My husband turned at these words and said to me, 'Ah! those are



Prussians! that is the man whose eye I put out! I recognize him!' 'Run! run!' said I to him, 'save yourself!' He began to fly, when one of those abominable men rushed upon me, threw me down, and presented one pistol at my head and another at my child's. But for that diabolical idea, my husband would have been saved; for he ran better than those bandits and had the start of them. But at the shriek that escaped me on seeing my child under the muzzle of the pistol, Karl turned, uttered great cries to prevent the shot and retraced his steps. When the villain who had his foot on my body saw Karl within reach: 'Yield,' cried he, 'or I kill them. Make one step more to fly and it is done!'

"'I yield, I yield; here I am!'" replied my poor man, running towards them with more speed than he had fled, notwithstanding the prayers and signs I made that he should let us die. When those tigers had him in their grasp, they overwhelmed him with blows and covered him with blood. I wished to defend him; they maltreated me also. On seeing him bound before my eyes, I sobbed, I filled the air with my groans. They told me they would kill my little one if I did not keep still, and they had already torn her from my arms, when Karl said to me; 'Silence wife, I command you; think of our child!' I obeyed, but the effort I was compelled to make at seeing my husband beaten, bound and gagged, while those monsters said to me; 'Yes, cry away! you will never see him again, we carry him to be hanged,' was so violent, that I fell as if dead upon the road. When I opened my eyes it was night; my poor child, lying upon me, was convulsed with sobs, enough to break one's heart. There was nothing on the road but my husband's blood and the mark of the wheels which had carried him away. I remained there an hour or two more, trying to console and warm Maria, who was benumbed and half dead with fear. At last, when my senses returned to me, I thought that the best I could do was not to run after the kidnappers whom I could not overtake, but to go and make my declaration to the officers of Wiesenbach, the nearest city. This was what I did, and

afterwards I resolved to continue my journey to Vienna, and to throw myself at the feet of the empress, in order that she might at least prevent the king of Prussia from having the sentence of death executed upon my husband. Her majesty might claim him as her subject, in case the recruiters could not be overtaken. I therefore employed some alms which had been given me in the territory of the bishop of Passaw, where I related my disaster, to reach the Danube in a wagon, and thence I descended in a boat to the city of Moelk. People to whom I tell my story are not willing to believe me, and suspecting me of being an impostor, give me so little, that I must continue my journey on foot; happy if I can arrive in five or six days without dying of fatigue! for illness and despair have exhausted me. Now, my dear children, if you have the means of giving me some little assistance, do so immediately, for I cannot rest any longer; I must march, march, like the wandering Jew, until I have obtained justice."

"Oh! my good woman, my poor woman!" cried Consuelo, clasping the poor body in her arms, and weeping with joy and compassion; "courage, courage! Hope and be tranquillized! Your husband is delivered. He is galloping towards Vienna on a good horse, with a well lined purse in his pocket."

"What do you say?" cried the deserter's wife, her eyes becoming red as blood, and her lips trembling with a convulsive movement. "You are certain, you have seen him? O my God! great God! God of goodness!"

"Alas! what are you doing?" said Joseph to Consuelo. "If you should be giving her a false joy; if the deserter whom we helped to save should be another than her husband?"

"It is himself, Joseph! I tell you it is he: remember the man with the one eye; remember Pistola's style of proceeding. Remember that the deserter said he was the father of a family and an Austrian subject. Besides, it is easy enough to be convinced. What sort of a man is your husband?"

"Red haired, with grey eyes, a large face, six feet and an

inch tall; his nose a little flattened, his forehead low; a superb man."

"That is he," said Consuelo smiling; "and his dress?"

"A poor green frock, brown breeches and grey stockings."

"That is he again: and the recruiters, did you notice them?"

"Oh! if I did notice them, Holy Virgin! Their horrible faces will never be effaced from my recollection." The poor woman then gave, with much exactness, a description of Pistola, the one-eyed, and the silent man. "There was," said she, "a fourth, who remained by the horse and took no part. He had a great unmeaning face, which seemed to me more cruel than the others; for, while I was crying, and they were beating my husband and tying him with cords like an assassin, that brute sang and made the noise of a trumpet with his mouth, as if he were sounding a charge: broum, broum, broum, broum. Ah! such a heart of iron!"

"Well! that is Mayer," said Consuelo to Joseph. "Do you doubt still? Has he not that trick of singing and playing the trumpet with his mouth every moment?"

"It is true," said Joseph. "Then it was Karl whom we saw delivered? Thanks to God!"

"Oh! yes, thanks to the good God before all!" said the poor woman, throwing herself upon her knees. "Maria," said she to her little girl, "kiss the earth with me to thank the guardian angels and the holy virgin. Your father is found, and we shall soon see him again."

"Tell me, dear woman," observed Consuelo, "has Karl also the custom of kissing the ground when he is well satisfied?"

"Yes, my child, he never fails. When he returned after having deserted, he would not pass the door of our house before kissing the threshold."

"Is it a custom of your country?"

"No; it is a manner of his own, which he taught us, and which has always brought us luck."

"Then it certainly was he whom we saw," returned Con-

suelo ; " for we saw him kiss the earth to thank those who had delivered him. You remarked it, Beppo ? "

" Perfectly ! It was he ; there is no more doubt possible. "

" Come, let me press you to my heart, " cried the wife of Karl, " O you two angels of paradise, who bring me such news. But tell me all about it. "

Joseph related all that had happened ; and when the poor woman had breathed forth all her transports of joy and of gratitude towards Heaven and towards Joseph and Consuelo, whom she rightly considered as the first deliverers of her husband, she asked them what she must do to find him again.

" I think, " said Consuelo, " that it will be best for you to continue your journey. You will find him at Vienna, if you do not meet him on the road. His first care will be to make his declaration to his sovereign, and to request in the bureaus of the administration that you shall be informed in whatever place you may be. He will not have failed to make the same declaration in every important town through which he passed, and to obtain information of the route you had taken. If you reach Vienna before him, do not fail to communicate to the administration the place where you lodge, that notice may be given to Karl as soon as he presents himself. "

" But what bureaus ? what administration ? I know nothing of those customs. And such a great city ! I shall lose myself. I, a poor peasant ! "

" Hold ! " said Joseph, " we have never had an opportunity of knowing any more than you, but ask the first person you meet to show you the Prussian embassy. Ask for his lordship the baron — "

" Be careful of what you were going to say, Beppo ! " said Consuelo in a low voice to Joseph, to remind him that he must not compromise the baron in this adventure.

" Well, count Hoditz ? " returned Joseph.

" Yes, the count ! he will do from vanity what the other would do from charity. Ask for the dwelling of the margravine, princess of Bareith, and present to her husband the billet I am going to give you. "

Consuelo tore a blank leaf from Joseph's memorandum book and traced these words with a pencil ;

"Consuelo Porporina, prima donna of the Saint Samuel theatre at Venice, ex-signor Bertoni, wandering singer at Passaw, recommends to the noble heart of count Hoditz-Roswald the wife of Karl the deserter, whom his lordship rescued from the hands of the recruiters and covered with his benefits. Porporina promises to thank his lordship the count for his protection, in presence of madame the margravine, if his lordship the count will allow her the honor of singing in the private apartments of her highness." Consuelo wrote the address with care, and looked at Joseph ; he understood her, and drew out his purse. Without any further consultation and by a spontaneous movement, they gave the poor woman the two gold pieces which remained of Trenck's present, in order that she might ride the rest of her journey, and conducted her to the neighboring village, where they helped her to make a bargain with an honest vetturino. After they had made her eat something and bought her some clothes, an expense which came from the rest of their little fortune, they sent away the poor creature whom they had just restored to life. Then Consuelo asked laughingly how much remained at the bottom of their purse. Joseph took his violin, shook it at his ear, and replied, "Nothing but sound."

Consuelo tried her voice in the open country with a brilliant roulade and cried : "There remains a good deal of sound !" Then she joyously stretched out her hand to her companion, and clasped his heartily, saying : "You are a brave lad, Beppo !"

"And you also !" replied Joseph, wiping away a tear, and bursting into a shout of laughter.

## CHAPTER LXXV.

It is not very disquieting to find yourself without money when you are near the end of your journey ; but even though they had still been very far from their destination, our young artists would not have felt less gay than they were when they found themselves entirely penniless. One must also have been without resources in an unknown country (Joseph was almost as much of a stranger at this distance from Vienna as Consuelo) to know what a marvellous security, what an inventive and enterprising genius is revealed as by magic in the artist who has just spent his last copper. Until then, it is a kind of agony, a constant fear of want, a black apprehension of sufferings, embarrassments and humiliations, which disappear as soon as you have heard the ring of your last piece of money. Then, for poetic souls, a new world begins, a holy confidence in the charity of others, and many charming illusions ; but also an aptitude for labor and a feeling of complacency which soon enable them to triumph over the first obstacles. Consuelo, who experienced a sentiment of romantic pleasure in this return to the indigence of her earlier days, and who felt happy at having done good by depriving herself, immediately found an expedient to ensure their supper and night's lodging. " This is Sunday," said she to Joseph ; " you shall play some dancing tunes in passing through the first village we come to. We shall find people who want to dance before we have gone through two streets, and we will be the minstrels. Do you know how to make an oaten pipe ? I can soon learn to use it, and if I can draw some sounds from it, it will be enough for an accompaniment."

" Do I know how to make a pipe ?" replied Joseph ; " you shall see !"

They soon found a fine reed growing at the river's side,

hollowed and pierced it carefully, and it sounded wonderfully well. A perfect accord was obtained, the rehearsal followed, and our young people went on very tranquilly until they reached a small hamlet three miles off, into which they made their entrance by the sound of their instruments and crying before each door: "Who wishes to dance? Who wishes to dance? Here is the music, the ball is going to begin!"

They reached a little square planted with beautiful trees; they were escorted by a troop of children, who followed them marching, shouting, and clapping their hands. Soon some joyous couples came to raise the first dust by opening the dance; and before the soil was well trodden, the whole population assembled and made a circle around a rustic ball, improvised without hesitation and without conditions. After the first waltzes, Joseph put his violin under his arm, and Consuelo, mounting upon her chair, made a speech to the company to prove to them that fasting artists had weak fingers and short breath. Five minutes after, they had as much as they wanted of bread and cheese, beer and cakes. As to the salary, it was soon agreed upon: a collection was to be made, and each was to give what he chose.

After having eaten they mounted upon a hogshead, which was rolled triumphantly into the middle of the square, and the dance began again; but after two hours, they were interrupted by a piece of news which made everybody anxious, and passed from mouth to mouth until it reached the minstrels; the shoe-maker of the place, while hurriedly finishing a pair of shoes for an impatient customer, had just stuck his awl into his thumb.

"It is a serious matter, a great misfortune," said an old man who was leaning against the hogshead which served them as a pedestal. "Gottlieb, the shoe-maker, is the organist of our village; and to-morrow is the fête-day of our patron saint. Oh! what a grand fête, what a beautiful fête! There is nothing like it for ten leagues round. Our mass especially is a wonder, and people come from a great distance to hear it. Gottlieb is a true chapel-master; he plays the organ, he makes the children sing, he sings himself; there is nothing he does

not do, especially on that day. He is the soul of everything; without him, all is lost. And what will the canon say, the canon of Saint Stephen's! who comes himself to officiate at the great mass, and who is always so well pleased with our music? For he is music-mad, the good canon, and it is a great honor for us to see him at our altar, he who hardly ever leaves his benefice, and does not put himself out for a trifle."

"Well!" said Consuelo, "there is a means of arranging all this: either my comrade or myself will take charge of the organ, of the direction, of the mass in a word; and if the canon is not satisfied you shall give us nothing for our pains."

"Oh ho!" said the old man, "you talk very much at your ease, young man; our mass cannot be played with a violin and a flute. Oh no! it is a serious matter, and you do not understand our scores."

"We will understand them this very evening," said Joseph, affecting an air of disdainful superiority, which imposed upon the audience grouped around him.

"Come," said Consuelo, "conduct us to the church; let some one blow the organ, and if you are not satisfied with our style of playing, you will be free to refuse our aid."

"But the score, Gottlieb's master-piece of arrangement?"

"We will go and see Gottlieb, and if he does not declare himself satisfied with us, we renounce our pretensions. Besides, a wound in his finger will not prevent Gottlieb from directing the choirs and singing his part."

The elders of the village, who were assembled around them, took counsel together, and determined to make the trial. The ball was abandoned; the canon's mass was quite a different amusement, quite another affair from dancing!

Haydn and Consuelo, after playing the organ alternately and singing together and separately, were judged to be quite passable musicians, for want of better. Some mechanics even dared to hint that their playing was preferable to Gottlieb's, and that the fragments of Scarlatti, of Pergolese and of Bach, which they had made them hear, were at least as fine as the music of Holzbäuer, which Gottlieb always stuck to. The



curate, who had run to listen to them, went so far as to say that the canon would much prefer these songs to those with which they usually regaled him. The sacristan, who was by no means pleased with that opinion, shook his head sorrowfully; and not to make his parishioners discontented, the curate consented that the two virtuosos sent by Heaven, should come to an understanding, if possible, with Gottlieb, to accompany the mass.

They all went in a crowd to the shoe-maker's house; he was obliged to show his swollen hand to everybody, in order to be excused from performing his functions as organist. The impossibility was too real for his liking. Gottlieb was endowed with a degree of musical intelligence, and played the organ passably; but, spoiled by the praises of his fellow-citizens and the somewhat ironical approbation of the canon, he introduced an abominable self-love into his direction and execution. He was vexed when they proposed to fill his place by two wandering artists; he would rather that the fête should fail and the patronal mass be deprived of music, than divide the triumph. Still, he was obliged to yield; he pretended a long while to be looking for the score, and only consented to find it when they threatened to give the two young artists the choice and care of all the music. Then Consuelo and Joseph must show their knowledge by reading at sight those passages which were considered most difficult in that one of Holzbäuer's twenty-six masses which was to be executed on the morrow. This music, without genius and without originality, was at least well written and easily understood, especially for Consuelo, who had surmounted so many more important trials. The audience were astonished, and Gottlieb, who became more and more vexed and morose, declared that he had a fever and was going to bed, enchanted that everybody was satisfied.

Immediately the voices and the instruments assembled in the church, and our two little improvised chapel-masters directed the rehearsal. Everything went on well. The brewer, the weaver, the school-master and the baker of the village, played the four violins. The children constituted the

choirs, with their parents, all good peasants or mechanics, phlegmatic, attentive and willing. Joseph had already heard Holzbäuer's music at Vienna, where it was in favor at that period. He had no trouble in accustoming himself to it, and Consuelo, taking her part alternately in all the burdens of the song, led the choirs so well that they surpassed themselves. There were two solos which were to be given by Gottlieb's son and niece, his favorite pupils and the first singers of the parish; but these two leaders did not appear, under pretence that they were sure of their parts.

Joseph and Consuelo went to sup at the presbytery, where apartments had been prepared for them. The good curate was in the joy of his heart, and they saw that he was much interested in the beauty of his mass, for the sake of pleasing the canon.

On the morrow, everybody was moving in the village before day. The bells rang in fine style; the roads were covered with the faithful coming from all parts of the surrounding country to be present at the solemnity. The coach of the canon approached with a majestic slowness. The church was dressed in its most beautiful ornaments. Consuelo was much amused at the importance every one ascribed to himself. There was almost as much self-love and rivalry in play there, as in the green-room of a theatre. Only matters were conducted with more simplicity, and there was more occasion for laughter than for indignation.

Half an hour before the mass, the terrified sacristan came to reveal to them a great plot conceived by the jealous and perfidious Gottlieb. Having learnt that the rehearsal had been excellent, and that all the musical public of the parish were charmed with the new-comers, he gave out that he was very sick, and forbade his niece and his son, the two principal leaders, to leave his bed-side; so that they would have neither the presence of Gottlieb, which everybody considered indispensable to carry matters along, nor the solos, which were the finest part of the mass. The singers were discouraged, and

it was with great trouble that he, the important and busy sacristan, had assembled them in the church to take counsel.

Consuelo and Joseph ran to find them, made them repeat the dangerous passages, sustained the failing parts, and restored confidence and courage to all. As to replacing the solos, they soon came to an understanding between themselves to take charge of them. Consuelo sought and found in her memory a religious song of Porpora's which was adapted to the tune and words of the required solo. She wrote it upon her knee, and repeated it hurriedly with Haydn, who also prepared himself to accompany her. She likewise found for him a fragment of Sebastian Bach which he knew, and which they arranged between them, tolerably well for the occasion.

The mass was rung, while they still rehearsed and listened to each other, spite of the uproar of the great bell. When the canon, clothed in his vestments, appeared at the altar, the choirs had already set out, and were galloping through the fugued style of the German composer with a steadiness of good promise. Consuelo took pleasure in seeing and hearing those good German proletaries with their serious faces, their true voices, their methodical accord and their strength always sustained, because always restrained within certain limits. "These," said she to Joseph, in an interval, "are the proper executers of this music; if they had the fire which is wanting in the master, everything would go wrong; but they have it not, and the thoughts that were forged mechanically are rendered by pieces of mechanism. Why is not the illustrious maestro Hoditz-Roswald here to fashion these machines? He would take a great deal of pains, would be of no use, and would have the highest satisfaction in the world."

The solo for a man's voice was expected with anxiety by many. Joseph acquitted himself wonderfully; but when Consuelo's came, her Italian style astonished them at first, scandalized them a little, and at last excited their enthusiasm. The cantatrice took pains to sing her best, and the expression of her grand and sublime song transported Joseph to the skies.

"I cannot believe," said he to her, "that you have ever been able to sing better than you have just done, for this poor village mass."

"At least I have never sung with more enthusiasm and pleasure," replied she. "This audience is more sympathetic to me than that of a theatre. Now let me look over the gallery to see if the canon is satisfied. Yes, he has quite a sanctified air, that respectable canon; and from the manner in which every one seeks in his expression for the recompense of their efforts, I see that the good God is the only one here of whom nobody thinks."

"Excepting yourself, Consuelo! Faith and divine love alone can inspire accents like yours."

When the two virtuosos left the church after the mass, but little was wanting to induce the populace to carry them in triumph to the presbytery, where a good breakfast awaited them. The curate presented them to the canon, who covered them with praises, and wished again to hear Porpora's solo after his meal. But Consuelo, who was rightly astonished that no one had recognized her woman's voice, and who feared the eye of the canon, excused herself, on the pretext that the rehearsals and her active coöperation in all the parts of the choir had much fatigued her. The excuse was not admitted, and they were obliged to appear at the canon's breakfast.

The canon was a man of about fifty, with a fine and good face, very well made in his person, though somewhat loaded with flesh. His manners were distinguished, even noble; he told everybody in confidence that he had royal blood in his veins, being one of the four hundred illegitimate children of Augustus II., elector of Saxony and king of Poland. He showed himself gracious and affable as a man of the world and an ecclesiastical personage ought to be. Joseph noticed by his side a layman, whom he appeared to treat both with distinction and familiarity. It seemed to Joseph that he had seen the latter at Venice, but he could not fit, as is said, his name to his face.

"Well, my dear children," said the canon, "so you refuse me a second hearing of the theme of Porpora? Still here is one of my friends even more of a musician and a hundred times better judge than I am, who has been much struck by your manner of delivering that piece. Since you are fatigued," added he, addressing Joseph, "I will not trouble you any more; but you must be so obliging as to tell us what is your name, and where you studied music."

Joseph saw that they attributed to him the solo which Consuelo had sung, and an expressive look of the latter made him understand that he must confirm the canon in his mistake.

"I call myself Joseph," replied he briefly, "and I studied at the foundation of St. Stephen's."

"And I likewise," replied the unknown personage, "I studied at the foundation, under Reuter the father. You doubtless under Reuter the son."

"Yes, sir."

"But you have had other lessons since? You have studied in Italy?"

"No, sir."

"It was you who played the organ?"

"Sometimes I, sometimes my comrade."

"And which of you sang?"

"Both of us."

"Very well! But the theme of Porpora, that was not you?" said the unknown, casting a side glance at Consuelo.

"Bah! It was not that child!" said the canon, also looking at Consuelo; "he is too young to know how to sing so well."

"So it was not I, it was he," replied she quickly, pointing to Joseph. She was in a hurry to free herself from these questions, and looked at the door impatiently.

"Why do you tell a falsehood, my child?" said the curate naively. "I both heard and saw you sing yesterday, and I recognized your comrade's voice in the solo of Bach."

"No matter, you must be deceived, sir curate," resumed

the unknown with a meaning smile, "or else this young man is excessively modest. However it may be, we give praises to both the one and the other." Then, taking the curate aside, "You have a discriminating ear," said he to him, "but you have not a clear-seeing eye; that does honor to the purity of your thoughts. Still, I must undeceive you: that little Hungarian peasant is a very skilful Italian cantatrice."

"A woman in disguise!" cried the astonished curate. He looked attentively at Consuelo, who was engaged in answering the canon's benevolent questions; and either from pleasure or indignation, the good curate blushed from his band to his cap.

"It is as I say," replied the unknown. "I search in vain for whom she may be, I do not know her; and as to her disguise and the precarious condition in which she is, I can only attribute them to some folly—a love affair, sir curate; that does not concern us."

"Some love affair! as you say very truly," returned the curate quite excited; "a running away, a criminal intrigue with that little young man! But all that is very wrong! And I fell into the snare! I lodged them in my presbytery! Fortunately I gave them separate chambers, and I hope there was no scandal under my roof. Ah! what an adventure! and how the wits of my parish (for there are such, sir, I know several) would laugh at my expense if they knew that!"

"If your parishioners did not recognize the woman's voice, it is probable that they did not recognize her features or her walk. See what pretty hands, what silky hair, what little feet, spite of the coarse shoes!"

"I wish to see nothing of all that!" cried the curate beside himself; "it is an abomination to be dressed like a man. There is a verse in the Holy Scriptures which condemns to death every man or woman guilty of quitting the dress of their sex. *To death!* do you understand, sir? That sufficiently indicates the enormity of the sin. For all that she has dared to enter the church, and impudently sing the praises of

the Lord, while her body and soul are stained with such a crime!"

"And she sang them divinely! She brought tears to my eyes; I have never heard anything equal to it. Strange mystery! Who can this woman be? All those I can think of are much older than she."

"She is a child, quite a young girl!" returned the curate, who could not help looking at Consuelo with an interest which was combatted in his heart by the austerity of his principles. "O! the little serpent! see with what a gentle and modest air she answers the canon! Ah! I am a lost man, if any one has discovered the cheat. I shall be obliged to leave the country!"

"How, neither you nor any of your parishioners recognized the woman's voice? You are certainly very simple auditors."

"As you please. We thought there was something very extraordinary in the voice; but Gottlieb said it was an Italian voice, that he had heard others like it, that it was a voice of the Sistine chapel. I do not know what he meant by that; I understand no music out of my ritual, and I was a hundred leagues from imagining—what shall I do, sir, what shall I do?"

"If no one has any suspicions, I advise you not to say anything. Discharge these children as soon as you can; I will undertake, if you wish, to rid you of them."

"Oh! yes, you will do me a favor! Here, here, I will give you the money—how much must I give them?"

"I have nothing to do with that; we pay artists largely—But your parish is not rich, and the church is not obliged to do like the theatre."

"I will do things liberally, I will give them six florins! I will go at once—but what will the canon say? He seems to suspect nothing. There he is talking with *her* quite paternally—the holy man!"

"Frankly, do you think he would be much scandalized?"

"Why should he not be? Besides, what I fear, is not

so much his reprimands as his raillery. You know how he loves a joke; he has so much wit! Oh! how he will laugh at my simplicity!"

"But if he shares your error, as he now seems to—he will have no right to ridicule you. Come, appear to suspect nothing: let us approach, and do you seize a favorable moment to discharge your musicians."

They left the recess of the window in which they had held this conversation, and the curate drawing near to Joseph, who appeared to interest the canon much less than the signor Bertoni, slipped the six florins into his hand. As soon as he had received this modest sum, Joseph made a sign to Consuelo to disengage herself from the canon and to follow him out; but the canon, recalling Joseph, and persisting in accordance with his affirmative answers, in believing that it was he who had the woman's voice: "Tell me then," said he, "why you chose that piece of Porpora's, instead of singing the solo of Mr. Holzbäuer?"

"We did not have it, we did not know it," replied Joseph. "I sang the only thing of my studies which was complete in my memory."

The curate hastened to mention Gottlieb's petty malice, and this artist's jealousy made the canon laugh a good deal.

"Well!" said the unknown, "your good shoemaker did us a great favor. Instead of a bad solo, we had a chef d'œuvre of a great master. You gave proof of your taste," added he, addressing Consuelo.

"I do not think," answered Joseph, "that Holzbäuer's solo could have been bad; what we sang of his was not without merit."

"Merit is not genius!" replied the unknown with a sigh: and persisting in speaking with Consuelo, he added:

"What do you think of it, my little friend? Do you think they are the same thing?"

"No, sir, I do not think so," replied she laconically and



coldly ; for the look of that man embarrassed and troubled her more and more.

"But still you had some pleasure in singing that mass of Holzbauer?" returned the canon; "it is beautiful, is it not?"

"I had neither pleasure nor displeasure," answered Consuelo, her impatience giving her an irresistible impulse to frankness.

"That is to say, it is neither good nor bad," cried the unknown, laughing. "Well, my child, you have answered very well, and I am entirely of your opinion."

The canon burst into a laugh; the curate seemed much embarrassed, and Consuelo, following Joseph, disappeared, without troubling herself about this musical difference.

"Well, sir canon," said the unknown, maliciously, as soon as the musicians had gone out, "what do you think of those children?"

"Charming! admirable! I ask your pardon for saying so, after the basket the little one has just given you."

"Me? I consider that child adorable! What talent in so tender an age! it is wonderful! How powerful and precocious those Italian natures are!"

"I can say nothing of the talent of that one!" returned the canon, with a very natural manner. "I did not distinguish it much; it is his companion who is wonderful; and he is of our own nation, if it please your *Italianomania*."

"Oh ho!" said the unknown, winking at the curate, to draw his attention, "then it was decidedly the oldest who sang that piece of Porpora's?"

"I presume so," replied the curate, quite troubled at the falsehood into which he was drawn.

"I am sure of it," said the canon; "he told me so himself."

"And the other solo," returned the unknown, "it must have been some one of your parish who sang that?"

"Probably," replied the curate, making an effort to sustain the imposition.

Both looked at the canon, to see if he was their dupe, or

was laughing at them. He appeared not to think of it. His tranquillity reassured the curate. They talked of something else. But after a quarter of an hour the canon returned to the subject of music, and wished to see Joseph and Consuelo again, in order, as he said, to carry them to his country house and hear them at his leisure. The curate, frightened, stammered some unintelligible objections. The canon, laughing, asked him if he had put his little musicians into the pot to complete the breakfast, which seemed to him sufficiently splendid without that. The curate was on tenterhooks; the unknown came to his relief. "I will go seek them," said he to the canon; and he went out, making a sign to the curate to trust to some expedient on his part. But there was no need for him to imagine one. He learned from the servant-woman that the young artists had already gone across the country, after having generously given her one of the six florins they had received.

"How! gone?" cried the canon, with much vexation. "Somebody must run after them; I wish to see them again; I wish to hear them; I must, absolutely!"

They pretended to obey him; but were careful not to run in the direction they had taken. Besides, they had flown away like birds, hurrying to escape from the curiosity that threatened them.

The canon experienced much regret, and even a little vexation.

"God be thanked! he suspects nothing," said the curate to the unknown.

"Curate," replied the latter, "remember the story of the bishop, who, inadvertently eating meat on a Friday, was reminded by his grand-vicar. 'How unlucky!' cried the bishop; 'could he not have been silent until after dinner?' Perhaps we ought to have left the canon to be deceived at his ease."

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