

The piece had the greatest success, although it was not listened to and nobody was occupied with the music in itself. It was quite in the Italian style—graceful, touching, and gave no indication of the author of *Alceste* and *Orpheus*. There were not many striking beauties to astonish the audience. After the first act, the German maestro was called for, with Anzoletto, the débutante, and Clorinda, who, thanks to the protection of Consuelo, had sung through the second part with a flat voice, and an inferior tone, but whose beautiful arms propitiated the spectators—Rosalba, whom she had replaced, being very lean.

In the last act, Anzoletto, who secretly watched Corilla, and perceived her increasing agitation, thought it prudent to seek her in her box, in order to avert any explosion. So soon as she perceived him she threw herself upon him like a tigress, bestowed several vigorous cuffs, the least of which was so smart as to draw blood, leaving a mark that red and white could not immediately cover. The angry tenor settled matters by a thrust on the breast, which threw the singer gasping into the arms of her sister Rosalba. "Wretch!—traitor!" she murmured in a choking voice, "your Consuelo and you shall perish by my hand!"

"If you make a step, a movement, a single gesture, I will stab you in the face of Venice," replied Anzoletto, pale and with clenched teeth, while his faithful knife, which he knew how to use with all the dexterity of a man of the lagunes, gleamed before her eyes.

"He would do as he says," murmured the terrified Rosalba; "be silent—let us leave this; we are here in danger of our lives."

Although this tragic-comic scene had taken place after the manner of the Venetians, in a mysterious and rapid *sotto voce*, on seeing the débutante pass quickly behind the scenes to regain his box, his cheek hidden in his hand, they suspected some petty squabble. The hair-dresser, who was called to adjust the curls of the Grecian prince, and to plaster up his wound, related to the whole band of choristers that an amorous cat had sunk her claw into the face of the hero. The aforesaid barber was accustomed to this kind of wounds, and was no new confidant of such adventures. The anecdote made the round of the stage, penetrated no one knew how, into the body of the house, found its way into the orchestra, the boxes, and with some additions, descended to the pit. They were not yet aware of the position of Anzoletto with regard to Corilla; but some had noticed his apparent devotion to Clorinda, and the general report was, that the *seconda donna*, jealous of the *prima donna*, had just blackened the eye and broken three teeth of the handsomest of tenors.

This was sad news for some, but an exquisite bit of scandal for the majority. They wondered if the representation would be put off, or whether the old tenor Stefanini, should have to appear, roll in hand, to finish the part. The curtain rose, and everything was forgotten on seeing Consuelo appear, calm and sublime as at the beginning. Although her part was not extremely tragical, she made it so by the power of her acting and the expression of her voice. She called forth tears, and when the tenor reappeared, the slight scratch only excited a smile; but this absurd incident prevented his success from being so brilliant, and all the glory of the evening was reserved for Consuelo, who was applauded to the last with frenzy.

After the play, they went to sup at the Palace Zustiniani, and Anzoletto forgot Corilla, whom he had shut up in her box, and who was

forced to burst it open in order to leave it. In the tumult which always follows so successful a representation, her retreat was not noticed; but the next day, this broken door coincided so well with the torn face of Anzoletto, that the love affair, hitherto so carefully concealed, was made known.

Hardly was he seated at the sumptuous banquet which the count gave in honor of Consuelo, and at which the Venetian dilettanti handed to the triumphant actress sonnets and mandrivals composed the evening before, when a valet slipped under his plate a little billet from Corilla, which he read aside, and which was to the following effect:—

"If you do not come to me this instant, I shall go to seek you openly, were you even at the end of the world—were you even at the feet of your Consuelo, thrice accursed!"

Anzoletto pretended to be seized with a fit of coughing, and retired to write an answer with a pencil on a piece of ruled paper which he had torn in the antechamber of the count from a music-book:—

"Come if you will. My knife is ready, and with it my scorn and hatred."

The despot was well aware that with such a creature fear was the only restraint; that threats were the only expedient at the moment; but in spite of himself he was gloomy and absent during the repast, and as soon as it was over he hurried off to go to Corilla.

He found the unhappy girl in a truly pitiable condition. Convulsions were followed by torrents of tears. She was seated at the window, her hair dishevelled, her eyes swollen with weeping, and her dress disordered. She sent away her sister and maid, and in spite of herself, a ray of joy overspread her features, at finding herself with him whom she had feared she might never see again. But Anzoletto knew her too well to seek to comfort her. He knew that at the first appearance of pity or penitence he would see her fury revive, and seize upon revenge. He resolved to keep up the appearance of inflexible harshness; and although he was moved with her despair, he overwhelmed her with cruel reproaches, declaring that he was only come to bid her an eternal farewell. He suffered her to throw herself at his feet, to cling to his knees even to the door, and to implore his pardon in the anguish of grief. When he had thus subdued and humbled her, he pretended to be somewhat moved, and promising to return in the morning, he left her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Anzoletto awoke the following morning, he experienced a reverse of the jealousy with which Count Zustiniani had inspired him. A thousand opposing sentiments divided his soul. First, that other jealousy which the genius and success of Consuelo had awakened in his bosom. This sank the deeper in his breast in proportion as he measured the triumph of his betrothed with what in his slighted ambition he was pleased to call his downfall. Again,

the mortification of being supplanted in reality, as he was already thought to be, with her, now so triumphant and powerful, and of whom the preceding evening he was so pleased to believe himself the only lover. These two feelings possessed him by turns, and he knew not to which to give himself up, in order to extinguish the other. He had to choose between two things, either to remove Consuelo from the count and from Venice, and along with her to seek his fortune elsewhere, or to abandon her to his rival, and take his chance alone in some distant country with no drawback to his success. In this poignant uncertainty, in place of endeavoring to recover his calmness with his true friend, he returned to Corilla and plunged Jack into the storm. She added fuel to the flame, by showing him, even in stronger colors than he had imagined the preceding night, all the disadvantages of his position. "No person," said she, "is a prophet in his own country. This is a bad place for one who has been seen running about in rags, and where every one may say—(and God knows the nobles are sufficiently given to boast of the protection, even when it is only imaginary, which they accord to artists)—'I was his protector; I saw his hidden talent; it was I who recommended and gave him a preference.' You have lived too much in public here, my poor Anzoleto. Your charming features struck those who knew not what was in you. You astonished people who have seen you in their gondolas singing the stanzas of Tasso, or doing their errands to gain the means of support. The plain Consuelo, leading a retired life, appears here as a strange wonder. Besides she is a Spaniard, and uses not the Venetian accent; and her agreeable, though somewhat singular pronunciation, would please them, even were it detestable. It is something of which their ears are not tired. Your good looks have contributed mainly to the slight success you obtained in the first act; but now people are accustomed to you."

"Do not forget to mention that the handsome scratch you gave me beneath the eye, and for which I ought never to pardon you, will go far to lessen the last-mentioned trifling advantage."

"On the contrary, it is a decided advantage in the eyes of women, but frivolous in those of men. You will reign in the saloons with one party, without the other you would fall at the theatre. But how can you expect to occupy their attention, when it is a woman who disputes it with you—a woman who not only enthral the serious dilettanti, but who intoxicates by her grace and the magic of her sex, all who are not connoisseurs in music. To struggle with me, how much talent did Stefanini, Savario—all indeed who have appeared with me on the stage, require!"

"In that case, dear Corilla, I should run as much risk in appearing with you as with Consuelo. If I were inclined to follow you to France, you have given me fair warning."

These words which escaped from Anzoleto were as a ray of light to Corilla. She saw that she had hit the mark more nearly than she had supposed, for the thought of leaving Venice had already dawned in the mind of her lover. The instant she conceived the idea of bearing him away with her, she spared no pains to make him relish the project. She humbled herself as much as she could, and even had the modesty to place herself below her rival. She admitted that she was not a great singer, nor yet sufficiently beautiful to attract the public; and as all this was even truer than she cared to think, and as Anzoleto was very well aware of it, having never been deceived as to

the immense superiority of Consuelo, she had little trouble in persuading him. Their partnership and flight were almost determined upon at this interview, and Anzoleto thought seriously of it, although he always kept a loop-hole for escape if necessary.

Corilla, seeing his uncertainty, urged him to continue to appear, in hopes of better success; but quite sure that these unlucky trials would disgust him altogether with Venice and with Consuelo.

On leaving his fair adviser, he went to seek his only real friend, Consuelo. He felt an unconquerable desire to see her again. It was the first time he had begun and ended a day without receiving her chaste kiss upon his brow; but as, after what had passed with Corilla, he would have blushed for his own instability, he persuaded himself that he only went to receive assurance of her unfaithfulness, and to undeceive himself as to his love for her. "Doubtless," said he, "the count has taken advantage of my absence to urge his suit, and who can tell how far he has been successful?" This idea caused a cold perspiration to stand upon his forehead; and the thought of Consuelo's perfidy so affected him that he hastened his steps, thinking to find her bathed in tears. Then an inward voice, which drowned every other, told him that he wronged a being so pure and noble, and he slackened his pace, reflecting on his own odious conduct, his selfish ambition, and the deceit and treachery with which he had stored his life and conscience, and which must inevitably bear their bitter fruit.

He found Consuelo in her black dress, seated beside her table, pure, serene, and tranquil, as he had ever beheld her. She came forward to meet him with the same affection as ever, and questioned him with anxiety, but without distrust or reproach, as to the employment of his time during his absence.

"I have been suffering," said he, with the very deep despondency which his inward humiliation had occasioned. "I hurt my head against a decoration, and although I told you it was nothing, it so confused me that I was obliged to leave the Palazzo Zustiniani last night, lest I should faint and have to keep my bed all the morning."

"Oh, Heavens!" said Consuelo, kissing the wound inflicted by her rival; "you have suffered, and still suffer."

"No, the rest has done me good: do not think of it; but tell me how you managed to get home all alone last night."

"Alone? Oh, no; the count brought me in his gondola."

"Ah, I was sure of it," cried Anzoleto, in a constrained voice. "And of course he said a great many flattering things to you in this interview."

"What could he say that he has not already said a hundred times? He would spoil me and make me vain, were I not on my guard against him. Besides, we were not alone; my good master accompanied me—ah! my excellent friend and master."

"What master?—what excellent friend?" said Anzoleto, once more reassured, and already absent and thoughtful.

"Why, Porpora, to be sure. What are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking, dear Consuelo, of your triumph yesterday evening: are you not thinking of it too?"

"Less than of yours, I assure you."

"Mine! ah, do not jest, dear friend; mine was so meagre that it rather resembled a downfall."

Consuelo grew pale with surprise. Notwithstanding her remarks

ble self-possession, she had not the necessary coolness to appreciate the different degrees of applause bestowed on herself and her lover. There is in this sort of ovation an intoxication which the wisest artists cannot shun, and which deceives some so widely as to induce them to look upon the support of a cabal as a public triumph. But instead of exaggerating the favor of her audience, Consuelo, terrified by so frightful a noise, had hardly understood it, and could not distinguish the preference awarded to her over Anzoletto. She artlessly chid him for his unreasonable expectations; and seeing that she could not persuade him, nor conquer his sadness, she gently reproached him with being too desirous of glory, and with attaching too much value to the favor of the world. "I have always told you," said she, "that you prefer the results of art to art itself. When we do our best—when we feel that we have done well—it seems to me that a little more or less of approbation can neither increase nor lessen our internal content. Hold in mind what Porpora said to me, when I first sang at the Palazzo Zustiniani: 'Whoever feels that he is truly pervaded with the love of his art has no room for fear.'"

"Oh, your Porpora and you!" cried Anzoletto, spitefully, "it is well for you to feed yourselves on those fine maxims. Nothing can be easier than to philosophise on the evils of life, when we are acquainted only with its advantages. Porpora, though poor, and his authority disputed, has won himself a great name. He has gathered laurels enough to grow gray in peace beneath their shade. You who know yourself invincible, are of course fearless. You spring at one bound to the highest step of the ladder, and reproach those who are lame that they are dizzy. It is scarce charitable, Consuelo, and is horribly unjust. And, again, your argument applies not to me. You say that the applause of the public is not to be heeded as long as we have our own. But suppose I have not the inward conscience of well-doing? And can you not perceive that I am wofully out of sorts with myself? could you not see that I was abominable? could you not hear that I sang pitifully?"

"I could not—for it was not so. You were nor greater nor less than yourself. Your own emotions deprived you of almost all your resources. That soon passed, and the music which you knew you sang well."

"And the music which I did not know?" said Anzoletto, fixing his great black eyes, rendered cavernous by weariness and vexation, upon her, "what of that?"

She heaved a sigh, and held her peace awhile. Then, embracing him as she spoke,—"The music which you do not know you must learn. Had you chosen to study seriously during the rehearsals. Did I not tell you so? But the time for reproaches has gone by. Come now, let us take but two hours a day, and you will see how quickly we will surmount the obstacles."

"Can it be done in a day?"

"It cannot be done under several months."

"And I have got to play to-morrow! Am I to go on appearing before an audience which attends to my defects more than it does to my good qualities?"

"It will so n appreciate your endeavors."

"Who can say that? It may take a distaste for me."

"It has proved the contrary."

"Ah! so you think it has treated me with indulgence?"

"If you ask me—it has, my dear; where you failed it was kind—where you made hits it did you justice."

"But in the meantime I shall get but a miserable engagement."

"The count is liberal to magnificence in all his dealings, and counts no expense. Moreover, does he not offer me more than enough to maintain us both in opulence?"

"That is to say that I am to live on your success."

"Why not? I lived long enough on your favor."

"It is not merely money of which I am thinking. Let him engage me as low as he please, I care not; but he will engage me for second or third parts."

"He cannot lay his hand on any other *primo nomo*. He has reckoned on you long, and thinks of none other than you. Besides, he is all on your side. You said he would oppose our marriage. So far from it, he seems to wish it to take place, and often asks when I am going to ask him to my wedding."

"Excellent—good, forsooth! A thousand thanks, Signor Count!"

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Only you were very wrong for not hindering me from making my debut before I had corrected these faults, which, it seems, you knew better than I did myself, by better studies. For, I repeat, you know all my faults."

"Have I ever failed in frankness with you? Have I not often warned you of them? No; you told me that the public knew nothing about it, and when I heard of the great success you had met with at the count's, the first time you sung in his palace, I thought that—"

"That the fashionable world knew no more about it than the vulgar world."

"I thought that your brilliant qualities had struck them more forcibly than your weak points, and, as I think, such has been the case with both parties."

"In fact she is quite right," thought Anzoletto to himself, "If I could but defer my debut; but it would be running the risk of seeing another tenor called into my place, who would never make way for me. Come," he added, after walking twice or thrice up and down the room, "what are my faults?"

"I have told you them very often—too much boldness, and not enough study. An energy factitious and feverish, rather than felt. Dramatic effects, the result of will rather than of sentiment. You never penetrated to the inner meaning of your part. You picked it up piecemeal. You have discovered in it only a succession of more or less brilliant hits. You have neither hit on the scale of their connexion, nor sustained, nor developed them. Eager to display your fine voice, and the facility which you possess in certain points, you showed as much power in your first as in your last entrance on the stage. On the least opportunity you strove for an effect, and all your effects were identical. At the end of your first act you were known, and known, too, by heart—but they were unconscious that there was nothing more to be known, and something prodigious was expected from you at the finale. That something you lacked. Your emotion was exhausted, and your voice had no longer the same fullness. You perceived this yourself, and endeavored to force both. Your audience perceived this, too, and to your great surprise they were cold where you thought yourself the most pathetic. The cause

was this, that when they looked for the actor's passion they found only the actor's struggle for success."

"And how do others get on?" cried Anzoleto, stamping his foot for rage. "Do you think I have not heard them all—all who have been applauded in Venice these last ten years? Did not old Stefanini screech when his voice gave out? and was he not still applauded to the echo?"

"It is quite true; and I never believed that the audience were so mistaken. I doubt not they bore in mind the time when he had all his powers, and felt unwilling to allow him to feel the defects and misfortunes of his old age."

"And Corilla—what have you to say to her—the idol whom you overthrew?—did not she force her effects, did she not make exertions painful, both to the eye and ear? Were her passions, was her excitement, real when she was vaunted to the skies?"

"It is because I knew all her resources to be fictitious, all her efforts atrocious, her acting, no less than her singing, utterly deficient, both in taste and dignity, that I came upon the stage so confidently, being satisfied, as you were, that the public did not know much about it."

"Ah, you are probing my worst wound, my poor Consuelo!" said Anzoleto, sighing very deeply ere he spoke.

"How so, my well beloved?"

"How so?—can you ask me?—we were both deceiving ourselves, Consuelo. The public knows right well. Its instincts reveal to it all which its ignorance covers with a shroud. It is a great baby, which must have amusement and excitement. It is satisfied with whatever they give it; but once show it anything better, and at once it compares and comprehends. Corilla could enthral it last week, though she sang out of tune and was short-breathed. You made your appearance, and Corilla was ruined; she is blotted out of their memories—entombed. If she should appear again she would be hissed off the stage. Had I made my debut with her, I should have succeeded as thoroughly as I did on the night when I sang after her for the first time at the Palazzo Zustiniani. But compared with you I was eclipsed. It needs must have been so; and so it ever will be. The public had a taste for pinchbeck. It took false stones for jewels; it was dazzled. A diamond of the first water is shown to it, and at a glance it sees that it has been grossly cheated. It can be humbugged no longer with sham diamonds, and when it meets them does justice on them at sight. This, Consuelo, has been my misfortune: to have made my appearance, a mere bit of Venetian bead-work, beside an invaluable pearl from the treasuries of the sea."

Consuelo did not then apprehend all the bitterness and truth which lay in these reflections. She set them down to the score of the affection of her betrothed, and rep'ed to what she took for mere flatteries by smiles and caresses only.

CHAPTER XIX.

ENCOURAGED by Consuelo's frankness, and by the faithless Corilla's perfidy, to present himself once more in public, Anzoleto began to work vigorously, so that at the second representation of *Ipermestra* he sang much better. But as the success of Consuelo was proportionably greater, he was still dissatisfied, and began to feel discouraged by this confirmation of his inferiority. Everything from this moment wore a sinister aspect. It appeared to him that they did not listen to him—that the spectators who were near him were making humiliating observations upon his singing—and that benevolent amateurs, who encouraged him behind the scenes, did so with an air of pity. Their praises seemed to have a double meaning, of which he applied the less favorable to himself. Corilla, whom he went to consult in her box between the acts, pretended to ask him with a frightened air if he were not ill.

"Why?" said he, impatiently.

"Because your voice is dull, and you seem overcome. Dear Anzoleto, strive to regain your powers, which were paralyzed by fear or discouragement."

"Did I not sing my first air well?"

"Not half so well as on the first occasion. My heart sank so that I found myself on the point of fainting."

"But the audience applauded me, nevertheless."

"Alas! what does it signify? I was wrong to dispel your illusion. Continue then; but endeavor to clear your voice."

"Consuelo," thought he, "meant to give me good advice. She acts from instinct, and succeeds. But where could I gain the experience which would enable me to restrain the unruly public? In following her counsel I lose my own natural advantages; and they reckon nothing on the improvement of my style. Come, let me return to my early confidence. At my first appearance at the count's, I saw that I could dazzle those whom I failed to persuade. Did not old Porpora tell me that I had the blemishes of genius. Come, then, let me bend this public to my dictation, and make it bow to the yoke."

He exerted himself to the utmost, achieved wonders in the second act, and was listened to with surprise. Some clapped their hands, others imposed silence, while the majority inquired whether it were sublime or detestable.

A little more boldness, and Anzoleto might perhaps have won the day; but this reverse affected him so much that he became confused, and broke down shamefully in the remainder of his part.

At the third representation he had resumed his confidence, and resolved to go on in his own way. Not heeding the advice of Consuelo, he hazarded the wildest caprices, the most daring absurdities. Cries of "oh, shame!" mingled with hisses, once or twice interrupted the silence with which these desperate attempts were received. The good and generous public silenced the hisses and began to applaud; but it was easy to perceive the kindness was for the person, the blame for the artist. Anzoleto tore his dress on re-entering his box, and scarcely had the representation terminated, than he flew to Corilla, a prey to the deepest rage, and resolved to fly with her to the ends of the earth.

Three days passed without his seeing Consuelo. She inspired neither with hatred nor coldness, but merely with terror; for in the depths of a soul pierced with remorse, he still cherished her image, and suffered cruelly from not seeing her. He felt the superiority of a being who overwhelmed him in public with her superiority, but who secretly held possession of his confidence and his good will. In his agitation he betrayed to Corilla how truly he was bound to his noble-hearted betrothed, and what an empire she held over his mind. Corilla was mortified, but knew how to conceal it. She pitied him, elicited a confession, and so soon as she had learned the secret of his jealousy, she struck a grand blow, by making Zustiniani aware of their mutual affection, thinking that the count would immediately acquaint Consuelo, and thus render a reconciliation impossible.

Surprised to find another day pass away in the solitude of her garret, Consuelo grew uneasy; and as still another day of mortal anguish and vain expectation drew to its close, she wrapped herself in a thick mantle, for the famous singer was no longer sheltered by her obscurity, and ran to the house occupied for some weeks by Anzeleto, a more comfortable abode than what he had before enjoyed, and one of numerous houses which the count possessed in the city. She did not find him, and learned that he was seldom there.

This did not enlighten her as to his infidelity. She knew his wandering and poetic habits, and thought that, not feeling at home in these sumptuous abodes, he had returned to his old quarters. She was about to continue her search, when, on returning to pass the door a second time, she found herself face to face with Porpora.

"Consuelo," said he in a low voice, "it is useless to hide from me your features. I have just heard your voice, and cannot be mistaken in it. What do you here at this hour, my poor child, and whom do you seek in this house?"

"I seek my betrothed," replied Consuelo, while she passed her arm within that of her old master; "and I do not know why I should blush to confess it to my best friend. I see very well that you disapprove of my attachment, but I could not tell an untruth. I am unhappy; I have not seen Anzeleto since the day before yesterday at the theatre; he must be unwell."

"He unwell!" said the professor, shrugging his shoulders. "Come, my poor girl, we must talk over this matter; and since you have at last opened your heart to me, I must open mine also. Give me your arm: we can converse as we go along. Listen, Consuelo, and attend earnestly to what I say. You cannot—you ought not—to be the wife of this young man. I forbid you, in the name of God, who has inspired me with the feelings of a father towards you."

"Oh, my master," replied Consuelo, mournfully, "ask of me the sacrifice of my life, but not that of my love."

"I do not ask it—I command it," said Porpora, firmly. "The lover is accursed—he will prove your torment and your shame, if you do not forswear him for ever."

"Dear master," replied she, with a sad and tender smile, "you have told me so very often; I have endeavored in vain to obey you. You dislike this poor youth; you do not know him, and I am certain you will alter your mind."

"Consuelo," said the master, more decidedly, "I have till now, I know, made vain and useless objections. I spoke to you as an artist, and as to an artist—as I only saw one in your betrothed. Now I

speak to you as a man—I speak to you of a man—and I address you as a woman. This woman's love is wasted: the man is unworthy of it, and he who tells you so knows he speaks the truth."

"Oh, Heaven! Anzeleto—my only friend, my protector, my brother—unworthy of my love! Ah, you do not know what he has done for me—how he has cared for me since I was left alone in the world. I must tell you all." And Consuelo related the history of her life and of her love, and it was one and the same history.

Porpora was affected, but not to be shaken from his purpose.

"In all this," said he, "I see nothing but your innocence, your virtue, your fidelity. As to him, I see very well that he has need of your society and your instructions, to which, whatever you may think, he owes the little that he knows, and the little he is worth. It is not, however, the less true, that this pure and upright lover is no better than a castaway—that he spends his time and money in low dissipation—and only thinks of turning you to the best account in forwarding his career."

"Take heed to what you say," replied Consuelo, in suffocating accents. "I have always believed in you, oh, my master! after God; but as to what concerns Anzeleto, I have resolved to close my heart and my ears. Ah, suffer me to leave you," she added, taking her arm from the professor—"it is death to listen to you."

"Let it be death then to your fatal passion, and through the truth let me restore you to life," he said, pressing her arm to his generous and indignant breast. "I know that I am rough, Consuelo—I cannot be otherwise; and therefore it is that I have put off as long as I could the blow which I am about to inflict. I had hoped that you would open your eyes, in order that you might comprehend what was going on around you. But in place of being enlightened by experience, you precipitate yourself blindly into the abyss. I will not suffer you to do so—you, the only one for whom I have cared for many years. You must not perish—no, you must not perish."

"But, my kind friend, I am in no danger. Do you believe that I tell an untruth when I assure you by all that is sacred that I have respected my mother's wishes? I am not Anzeleto's wife, but I am his betrothed."

"And you were seeking this evening the man who may not and cannot be your husband."

"Who told you so?"

"Would Corilla ever permit him?"

"Corilla!—what has he to say to Corilla?"

"We are but a few paces from this girl's abode. Do you seek your betrothed?—if you have courage, you will find him there."

"No, no! a thousand times no!" said Consuelo, tottering as she went, and leaning for support against the wall. "Let me live, my master—do not kill me ere I have well begun to live. I told you that it was death to listen to you."

"You must drink of the cup," said the inexorable old man; "I but fulfil your destiny.—Having only realised ingratitude, and consequently made the objects of my tenderness and attention unhappy, I must say the truth to those I love. It is the only thing a heart long withered and rendered callous by suffering and despair can do. I pity you, poor girl, in that you have not a friend more gentle and humane to sustain you in such a crisis. But such as I am I must be; I must act upon others, if not as with the sun's genial heat, with the lightning's

blasting power. So then, Consuelo, let there be no faltering between us. Come to this palace. You must surprise your faithless lover at the feet of the treacherous Corilla. If you cannot walk, I must drag you along—if you cannot stand, I shall carry you. Ah, old Porpora is yet strong, when the fire of Divine anger burns in his heart.”

“Mercy! mercy!” exclaimed Consuelo, pale as death. “Suffer me yet to doubt. Give me a day, were it but a single day, to believe in him—I am not prepared for this affliction.”

“No, not a day—not a single hour,” replied he inflexibly. “Away! I shall not be able to recall the passing hour, to lay the truth open to you; and the faithless one will take advantage of the day which you ask, to place you again under the dominion of falsehood. Come with me, I command you—I insist on it.”

“Well, I will go!” exclaimed Consuelo, regaining strength, through a violent reaction of her love. “I will go, were it only to demonstrate your injustice and the truth of my lover; for you deceive yourself unworthily, as you would also deceive me. Come, then, executioner as you are, I shall follow, for I do not fear you.”

Porpora took her at her word; and, seizing her with a hand of iron, he conducted her to the mansion which he inhabited. Having passed through the corridors and mounted the stairs, they reached at last a terrace, whence they could distinguish over the roof of a lower building, completely uninhabited, the palace of Corilla, entirely darkened with the exception of one lighted window, which opened upon the sombre and silent front of the deserted house. Any one at this window might suppose that no person could see them; for the balcony prevented any one from seeing up from below. There was nothing level with it, and above, nothing but the cornice of the house which Porpora inhabited, and which was not placed so as to command the palace of the singer. But Corilla was ignorant that there was at the angle a projection covered with lead, a sort of recess concealed by a large chimney, where the maestro with artistic caprice came every evening to gaze at the stars, shun his fellows, and dream of sacred or dramatic subjects. Chance had thus revealed to him the intimacy of Anzoleto with Corilla, and Consuelo had only to look in the direction pointed out, to discover her lover in a tender tête-à-tête with her rival. She instantly turned away: and Porpora, who dreading the effects of the sight upon her, had held her with superhuman strength, led her to a lower story in his apartments, shutting the door and window to conceal the explosion which he anticipated.

CHAPTER XX.

BUT there was no explosion. Consuelo remained silent, and as it were stunned. Porpora spoke to her. She made no reply, and signed to him not to question her. She then rose, and going to a large pitcher of iced water which stood on the harpsichord, swallowed large draughts of it, took several turns up and down the apartment, and sat down before her master without uttering a word.

The austere old man did not comprehend the extremity of her sufferings.

“Well,” said he, “did I deceive you? What do you think of doing?”

A painful shudder shook her motionless figure—she passed her hand over her forehead.

“I can think of nothing,” said she, “till I understand what has happened to me.”

“And what remains to be understood?”

“Every thing! because I understand nothing. I am seeking for the cause of my misfortune without finding anything to explain it to me. What have I done to Anzoleto that he should cease to love me? What fault have I committed to render me unworthy in his eyes? You cannot tell me, for I searched into my own heart and can find there no key to the mystery. O! it is inconceivable. My mother believed in the power of charms. Is Corilla a magician?”

“My poor child,” said the maestro, “there is indeed a magician, but she is called Vanity; there is indeed a poison, which is called Envy. Corilla can dispense it, but it was not she who molded the soul so fitted for its reception. The venom already flowed in the impure veins of Anzoleto. An extra dose has changed him from a knave into a traitor—faithless as well as ungrateful.”

“What vanity, what envy?”

“The vanity of surpassing others. The desire to excel, and rage at being surpassed by you.”

“Is that possible? Can a man be jealous of the advantages of a woman? Can a lover be displeased with the success of his beloved? Alas! there are indeed many things which I neither know nor understand.”

“And will never comprehend, but which you will experience every hour of your existence. You will learn that a man can be jealous of the superiority of a woman, when this man is an ambitious artist: and that a lover can loathe the success of his beloved when the theatre is the arena of their efforts. It is because the actor is no longer a man, Consuelo—he is turned into a woman. He lives but through the medium of his sickly vanity, which alone he seeks to gratify and for which alone he labors. The beauty of a woman he feels a grievance; her talent extinguishes or competes with his own. A woman is his rival, or rather he is the rival of a woman; he has all the littleness, all the caprice, all the wants, all the ridiculous airs of a coquette. This is the character of the greatest number of persons belonging to the theatre. There are indeed grand exceptions, but they are so rare, so admirable, that one should bow before them and render them homage, as to the wisest and best. Anzoleto is no exception; he is the vainest of the vain. In that one word you have the explanation of his conduct.”

“But what unintelligible revenge. What poor and insufficient means! How can Corilla recompense him for his losses with the public? Had he only spoken openly to me of his sufferings (alas! it needed only a word for that,) I should have understood him perhaps—at least I would have compassionated him, and retired to yield him the first place.”

“It is the peculiarity of envy to hate people in proportion to the happiness of which it deprives them; just as it is the peculiarity of selfish love to hate in the object which we love, the pleasure which we are not the means of procuring him. Whilst your lover abhors the public which leads you with glory, do you not hate the rival who intoxicates him with her charms?”

"My master, you have uttered a profound reflection, which I would fain ponder on."

"It is true. While Anzoletto detests you for your happiness on the stage, you hate him for his happiness in the boudoir of Corilla."

"It is not so. I could not hate him; and you have made me feel that it would be cowardly and disgraceful to hate my rival. As to the passion with which she fills him, I shudder to think of it—why, I know not. If it be involuntary on his part, Anzoletto is not guilty in hating my success."

"You are quick to interpret matters, so as to excuse his conduct and sentiments. No; Anzoletto is not innocent or estimable in his suffering like you. He deceives, he disgraces you, whilst you endeavor to justify him. However, I did not wish to inspire you with hatred and resentment, but with calmness and indifference. The character of this man influences his conduct. You will never change him. Decide, and think only of yourself."

"Of myself—of myself alone? Of myself, without hope or love?"

"Think of music, the divine art, Consuelo; you would not care to say that you love it only for Anzoletto?"

"I have loved art for itself also; but I never separated in my thoughts these inseparable objects—my life and that of Anzoletto. How shall I be able to love anything when the half of my existence is taken away?"

"Anzoletto was nothing more to you than an idea, and this idea imparted life. You will replace it by one greater, purer, more elevating. Your soul, your genius, your entire being, will no longer be at the mercy of a deceitful, fragile form; you shall contemplate the sublime ideal stripped of its earthly covering; you shall mount heavenward and live in holy unison with God himself."

"Do you wish, as you once did, that I should become a nun?"

"No; this would confine the exercise of your artistic faculties to one direction, whereas you should embrace all. Whatever you do, or wherever you are, in the theatre or in the cloister, you may be a saint, the bride of heaven."

"What you say is full of sublimity, but shrouded in a mysterious garb. Permit me to retire, dear master; I require time to collect my thoughts and question my heart."

"You have said it, Consuelo; you need insight into yourself. Hitherto in giving up your heart and your prospects to one so much your superior, you have not known yourself. You have mistaken your destiny, seeing that you were born without an equal, and consequently without the possibility of an associate in this world. Solitude, absolute liberty, are needful for you. I would not wish you a husband, or lover, or family, or passions, or bonds of any kind. It is thus I have conceived your existence, and would direct your career. The day on which you give yourself away, you lose your divinity. Ah, if Mingotti and Moltini, my illustrious pupils, my powerful creations, had believed in me, they would have lived unrivalled on the earth. But woman is weak and curious; vanity blinds her, vain desires agitate, caprices hurry her away. In what do these disquietudes result?—what but in storms and weariness, in the loss, the destruction, or vitiating, of their genius. Would you not be more than they, Consuelo?—does not your ambition soar above the poor concerns of this life?—or would you not appease these vain desires, and seize the glorious crown of everlasting genius?"

Porpora continued to speak for a long time with an eloquence and energy to which I cannot do justice. Consuelo listened, her looks bent upon the ground. When he had finished, she said, "My dear master, you are profound; but I cannot follow you sufficiently throughout. It seems to me as if you outraged human nature in proscribing its most noble passions—as if you would extinguish the instincts which God himself has implanted, for the purpose of elevating what would otherwise be a monstrous and anti-social impulse. Were I a better Christian, I should perhaps better understand you; I shall try to become so, and that is all I can promise."

She took her leave, apparently tranquil, but in reality deeply agitated. The great though austere artist conducted her home, always preaching, but never convincing. He nevertheless was of infinite service in opening to her a vast field of serious thought and inquiry, wherein Anzoletto's particular crime served but as a painful and solemn introduction to thoughts of eternity. She passed long hours, praying, weeping, and reflecting; then lay down to rest, with a virtuous and confiding hope in a merciful and compassionate God.

The next day Porpora announced to her that there would be a rehearsal of *Ipermestra* for Stefanini, who was to fill Anzoletto's part. The latter was ill, confined to bed, and complained of a loss of voice. Consuelo's first impulse was to fly to him and nurse him. "Spare yourself this trouble," said the professor, "he is perfectly well; the physician of the theatre has said so, and he will be this evening with Corilla. But Count Zustiniani, who understands very well the meaning of it, and who consents without much regret that he should put off his appearance, has forbidden the physician to reveal the falsehood, and has requested the good Stefanini to return to the theatre for some days."

"But, good Heavens! what does Anzoletto mean to do? is he about to quit the theatre?"

"Yes—the theatre of San Samuel. In a month he is off with Corilla for France. That surprises you? He flies from the shadow which you cast over him. He has entrusted his fate to a woman whom he dreads less, and whom he will betray so soon as he finds he no longer requires her."

Consuelo turned pale, and pressed her hands convulsively on her bursting heart. Perhaps she had flattered herself with the idea of reclaiming Anzoletto, by reproaching him gently with his faults, and offering to put off her appearance for a time. This news was a dagger stroke to her, and she could not believe that she should no more see him whom she had so fondly loved. "Ah," said she, "it is but an uneasy dream; I must go and seek him; he will explain everything. He cannot follow this woman; it would be his destruction. I cannot permit him to do so; I will keep him back; I will make him aware of his true interests, if indeed he be any longer capable of comprehending them. Come with me, dear master; let us not forsake him."

"I will abandon you," said the angry Porpora, "and forever, if you commit any such folly. Entreat a wretch—dispute with Corilla? Ah, Santa Cecilia! distrust your Bohemian origin, extinguish your blind and wandering instincts. Come! they are waiting for you at the rehearsal. You will feel pleasure in singing with a master like Stefanini, a modest, generous, and well-informed artist."

He led her to the theatre, and then for the first time she felt an ad-

horror of this artist life, chained to the wants of the public, and obliged to repress one's own sentiments and emotions to obey those of others. This very rehearsal, the subsequent toilet, the performance of the evening, proved a frightful torment. Anzoleto was still absent. Next day there was to be an opera buffa of Galuppi's—*Arcifanfano Re de' Matti*. They had chosen this farce to please Stefanini, who was an excellent comic performer. Consuelo must now make those laugh whom she had formerly made weep. She was brilliant, charming, pleasing to the last degree, though plunged at the same time in despair. Twice or thrice sobs that would force their way found vent in a constrained gaiety, which would have appeared frightful to those who understood it. On retiring to her box, she fell down insensible. The public would have her return to receive their applause. She did not appear; a dreadful uproar took place, benches were broken, and people tried to gain the stage. Stefanini hastened to her box, half dressed, his hair dishevelled, and pale as a spectre. She allowed herself to be supported back upon the stage, where she was received with a shower of bouquets, and forced to stoop to pick up a laurel crown. "Ah, the pitiless monsters!" she murmured, as she retired behind the scenes.

"My sweet one," said the old singer, who gave her his hand, "you suffer greatly; but these little things," added he, picking up a bunch of brilliant flowers, "are a specific for all our woes; you will become used to it, and the time perhaps will arrive when you will only feel fatigue and uneasiness when they forget to crown."

"Oh, how hollow and trifling they are!" thought poor Consuelo. Having re-entered her box, she fainted away, literally upon a bed of flowers which had been gathered on the stage and thrown pell-mell upon the sofa. The tire-woman left the box to call a physician. Count Zustiniani remained for some instants alone by the side of his beautiful singer, who looked pale and broken as the beautiful jasmynes which strewed her couch. Carried away by his admiration, Zustiniani lost his reason, and yielding to his foolish hopes, he seized her hand and carried it to his lips. But his touch was odious to the pure-minded Consuelo. She roused herself to repel him, as if it had been the bite of a serpent. "Ah! far from me, said she, writhing in a species of delirium; far from me all love, all caresses, all honied words!—no love—no husband—no lover—no family for me! my dear master has said it—liberty, the ideal, solitude, glory!" And she melted into tears so agonizing that the count was alarmed, and casting himself on his knees beside her strove to tranquilize her; but he could find no words of soothing import to that pierced soul; and despite his efforts to conceal it, his passion would speak out. He perfectly understood the despairing love of the betrayed one, and he let too much of the ardor of the hopeful lover escape him. Consuelo seemed to listen, and mechanically drew her hand away from his, with a bewildered smile, which the count mistook for encouragement.

Some men, although possessing great tact and penetration in the world, are absurd in such conjunctures. The physician arrived and administered a sedative in the style which they called *drops*. Consuelo was then wrapped up in her mantle and carried to her gondola. The count entered with her, supporting her in his arms, and always talking of his loves, with some degree of eloquence, which, as he imagined, must carry conviction. At the end of a quarter of an hour, obtaining no response, he implored a reply, a glance.

"To what then shall I answer?" said Consuelo, "I have heard nothing."

Zustiniani, although at first discouraged, thought there could not be a better opportunity, and that this afflicted soul would be more accessible than after reflection and reason. He spoke again, but there was the same silence, the same abstraction, only that there was a not-to-be-mistaken effort, though without any angry demonstration, to repel his advances. When the gondola touched the shore, he tried to detain Consuelo for an instant to obtain a word of encouragement. "Ah, signor," said she, coldly, "excuse my weak state. I have heard badly, but I understand. Oh yes, I understand perfectly. I ask this night, this one night, to reflect, to recover from my distress. To-morrow, yes, to-morrow, I shall reply without fail."

"To-morrow! dear Consuelo, oh, it is an age! But I shall submit—only allow me at least to hope for your friendship."

"Oh, yes, yes! there is hope," replied Consuelo, in a constrained voice, placing her foot upon the bank; "but do not follow me," said she, as she motioned him with an imperious gesture back to the gondola; "otherwise there will be no room for hope."

Shame and anger restored her strength, but it was a nervous, feverish strength, which found vent in hysteric laughter as she ascended the stairs.

"You are very happy, Consuelo," said a voice in the darkness, which almost stunned her; "I congratulate you on your gaiety."

"Oh, yes," she replied, while she seized Anzoleto's arm violently, and rapidly ascended with him to her chamber. "I thank you, Anzoleto. You were right to congratulate me. I am truly happy—oh, so happy!"

Anzoleto, who had been waiting for her, had already lighted the lamp, and when the bluish light fell upon their agitated features, they both started back in affright.

"We are very happy, are we not, Anzoleto?" said she, with a choking voice, while her features were distorted with a smile that covered her cheeks with tears. "What think you of our happiness?"

"I think, Consuelo," replied he, with a calm and bitter smile, "that we have found it troublesome; but we shall get on better by-and-bye."

"You seemed to me to be much at home in Corilla's boudoir."

"And you, I find, very much at your ease in the gondola of the count."

"The count! You knew, then, Anzoleto, that the count wished to supplant you in my affections?"

"And in order not to annoy you, my dear, I prudently kept in the background."

"Ah, you knew it; and this is the time you have taken to abandon me."

"Have I not done well?—are you not content with your lot? The count is a generous lover, and the poor, condemned singer would have no business, I fancy, to contend with him."

"Porpora was right: you are an infamous man. Leave my sight! You do not deserve that I should justify myself. It would be a stain were I to regret you. Leave me, I tell you; but first know, that you can come out at Venice and re-enter San Samuel with Corilla. Never shall my mother's daughter set foot upon the vile boards of a theatre again."

"The daughter of your mother the *zingara* will play the great lady in the villa of Zustiniani, on the shores of the Brenta. It will be a fair career, and I shall be glad of it."

"Oh my mother!" exclaimed Consuelo, turning towards the bed and falling on her knees, as she buried her face in the counterpane which had served as a shroud for the *zingara*.

Anzoleto was terrified and afflicted by this energetic movement, and the convulsive sobs which burst from the breast of Consuelo. Remorse seized on his heart, and he approached his betrothed to raise her in his arms; but she rose of herself, and pushing him from her with wild strength, thrust him towards the door, exclaiming as she did so, "Away—away! from my heart, from my memory!—farewell forever!"

Anzoleto had come to seek her with a low and selfish design; nevertheless it was the best thing he could have done. He could not bear to leave her, and he had struck out a plan to reconcile matters. He meant to inform her of the danger she ran from the designs of Zustiniani, and thus remove her from the theatre. In this resolution he paid full homage to the pride and purity of Consuelo. He knew her incapable of tampering with a doubtful position, or of accepting protection which ought to make her blush. His guilty and corrupt soul still retained unshaken faith in the innocence of this young girl, whom he was certain of finding as faithful and devoted as he had left her days before. But how reconcile this devotion with the preconceived design of deceiving her, and, without a rupture with Corilla, of remaining still her betrothed, her friend? He wished to re-enter the theatre with the latter, and could not think of separating at the very moment when his success depended on her. This audacious and cowardly plan was nevertheless formed in his mind, and he treated Consuelo as the Italian women do those madonnas whose protection they implore in the hour of repentance, and whose faces they veil in their erring moments.

When he beheld her so brilliant and so gay, in her buffa part at the theatre, he began to fear that he had lost too much time in maturing his design. When he saw her return in the gondola of the count, and approach with a joyous burst of laughter, he feared he was too late, and vexation seized him; but when she rose above his insults, and banished him with scorn, respect returned with fear, and he wandered long on the stair and on the quay, expecting her to recall him. He even ventured to knock and implore pardon through the door; but a deep silence reigned in that chamber, whose threshold he was never to cross with Consuelo again. He retired, confused and chagrined, determined to return on the morrow, and flattering himself that he should then prove more successful.—"After all," said he to himself, "my project will succeed; she knows the count's love, and all that is requisite is half done."

Overwhelmed with fatigue, he slept: long in the afternoon he went to Corilla.

"Great news!" she exclaimed, running to meet him with outstretched arms; "Consuelo is off."

"Off! gracious Heaven!—whither, and with whom?"

"To Vienna, where Porpora has sent her, intending to join her there himself. She has deceived us all, the little cheat. She was engaged for the emperor's theatre, where Porpora proposes that she should appear in his new opera."

"Gone! gone without a word!" exclaimed Anzoleto, rushing towards the door.

"It is of no use seeking her in Venice," said Corilla with a sneering smile and a look of triumph. "She set out for Palestrina at day-break, and is already far from this on the mainland. Zustiniani, who thought himself beloved, but who was only made a fool of, is furious, and confined to his couch with fever; but he sent Porpora to me just now, to try and get me to sing this evening; and Stefanini, who is tired of the stage, and anxious to enjoy the sweets of retirement in his cassino, is very desirous to see you resume your performances. Therefore prepare for appearing to-morrow in *Ipermestra*. In the mean time, as they are waiting for me, I must run away. If you do not believe, you can take a turn through the city, and convince yourself that I have told you the truth."

"By all the furies!" exclaimed Anzoleto, "you have gained your point, but you have taken my life along with it."

And he swooned away on the Persian carpet of the false Corilla.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF all others the Count Zustiniani was the person most put out in his part by the flight of Consuelo. After having allowed it to be said and, indeed, induced all Venice to believe, that the wonderful new actress was his mistress, how was he to explain, in a manner tolerably satisfactory to his own self-love, the fact, that on his first word of declaration, she had abruptly and mysteriously evaded his hopes and desires? Some persons were of opinion that, jealous of his treasure, he had concealed her in one of his country houses. But when Porpora was heard to declare, with his wonted stern gravity, the part which his pupil had adopted—of going in advance of him into Germany—there was no more to be done, but to seek the causes of her singular resolution. The count, in order to divert men's minds, affected to be neither vexed nor surprised; but still his annoyance leaked out in spite of him, and the world ceased to attribute to him, in this instance, the success on which he so greatly prided himself. The greater part of the truth, in fact, soon became known to the public—to wit: Anzoleto's faithlessness, Corilla's rivalry, and the despair of the poor Spaniard, who was now warmly pitied and tenderly regretted. Anzoleto's first impulse was to hurry to Porpora; but he had met with the sternest repulses from him. "Cease questioning me, young ambitious fool, heartless and faithless that you are," replied the master, with noble indignation. "You never deserved that noble girl's affection, and never shall you learn of me what has become of her. I will exert all my cares to prevent you from ever getting on her traces; and I hope that, should you ever chance to meet her at some future day, her image will be effaced from your heart and memory, as completely as I hope and endeavor to effect that it shall be."

From the house of Porpora, Anzoleto had hastened to the Corte Minelli, where he found Consuelo's room occupied by a new tenant, who was already in possession,—and fitted up with the instrument

and materials of his trade. He was a glass-worker, who had long dwelt in the same house, and was now gaily moving his workshop into his new premises.

"Ah, ha! so this is you, my boy?" he cried to the young tenor; "so you have come to see me in my new lodging? I shall do very well here, and my wife is delighted at having means to lodge her children here down stairs. What are you looking for? Has Consuelo forgotten anything? Look away, my boy, look away; you cannot disturb me."

"What have they done with her furniture?" asked Anzoleto, disturbed, and really cut to the heart at seeing no vestige more of Consuelo in this spot, consecrated to the only pure joys of his whole past existence.

"The furniture is down yonder in the court; she made a present of it to mother Agatha, and a good deed that was. The old woman is poor, and will make a little money out of it. Oh! Consuelo had a good heart. She has not left a farthing of debt in the court, and made every one a slight gift at her departure. She took nothing with her but her crucifix. It is strange, nevertheless, that she should have gone off in the dead of night without letting a soul know of it! Master Porpora came here this morning, and settled all her business; it was just like executing a will. All the neighbors were sorry for it; but after a while they all consoled themselves, knowing that she is gone to live in a fine palace on the Canalazzo, now that she has become rich and a great lady. For my part, I was always sure that she would make a fortune with her voice, she worked so hard. And when are you to be married, Anzoleto? I hope that you will buy some trifles of me to make presents to the girls of the neighborhood."

"Oh, surely, surely," answered Anzoleto, without knowing what he said; and he hurried away with hell in his heart, and saw all the beldames of the place bidding at auction in the court-yard for Consuelo's bed and table—that bed on which he had so often seen her sleep, that table at which she had sat so often! "Oh, my God! already not a sign left of her!" he cried, wringing his hands involuntarily, and he felt pretty well inclined to go and stab Corilla.

Three days afterwards he came upon the stage again with Corilla. They were hissed tremendously, one and the other, and the curtain fell amid a storm of censure, with the piece unfinished. Anzoleto was furious, and Corilla utterly unmoved. "Behold the worth of your protection to me," he cried, in threatening tones, as soon as he was again alone with her. The prima donna answered him with infinite composure—"You worry yourself about nothing, my child," said she; "it is not difficult to perceive that you know nothing about the world, and are unused to its caprices. I was so well prepared for this evening's reception, that I did not even give myself the trouble of going over my part; and the only reason why I did not warn you what was to come, is, that I knew you had not the courage to come upon the stage at all, with the certainty of being hissed. Now you must be made aware what we have to look for. The next time we shall be treated worse yet. Three, four, perhaps six or eight appearances of this kind will pass in succession. But, if we were the most wretched ounglers in the world, the spirit of independence and contradiction will raise up for us some zealous partisans. There are so many folks who think to elevate themselves by running down others, that there must needs be some who think to raise themselves by helping others

forward. After ten or a dozen contests, during which the theatre will be a battle field—half hissing, half applause—the opposition will get tired, our obstinate supporters will get sulky, and we shall enter upon a new state of affairs. That portion of the public which supported us, why, itself knew not, will listen to us very coldly; we shall have, as it were, a new debut; and then all is our own way, thank God! for we have but to fire the audience, and to remain masters of the field. I promise you great success from that moment, dear Anzoleto; the charm which weighed you down of late, is dissipated. You will breathe, thenceforth, an atmosphere of unmixed favor and sweet praises, and your powers will be restored straightways. Remember the effect of your first appearance at Zustiniani's; you had not then the time to establish yourself firmly on that victorious footing—a star, before which yours paled, culminated in the sky; but that star has, in its turn, been unsphered, and you may prepare yourself again with me to scale the empyrean."

All fell out to the letter, as Corilla foretold it. For, of a truth, the two lovers were made to pay very dearly for the first few days, for the loss the public had undergone in the person of Consuelo. But the hardihood which they exerted in braving the storm, lasted longer than the indignation, which was too lively to be durable. The count lent his encouragement to Corilla's efforts. As to Anzoleto,—not until he had made every exertion in vain, to attract a *primo uomo* to Venice at so advanced a season, when all the engagements have been made with all the principal theatres in Europe, did the count come to a decision, and receive him as his champion in the strife which was about to commerce between his theatre and the public. The career and reputation of that theatre had been, by far too brilliant, that it should lose it with this or that performer. Nothing of the nature of the present contest was likely to affect the course of usages so long established. All the boxes had been hired for the season; and the ladies were in the habit of receiving their visits, and chatting in them as usual. The real amateurs of music were out of sorts for some time, but they were too few in number to produce any perceivable effect. Moreover, in the long run, they got bored by their own anger, and Corilla, having sung one evening with unwonted animation, was unanimously called for. She reappeared, drawing Anzoleto on the stage along with her, although he had not been recalled, appearing to yield to her gentle violence with modest timidity. In a word, before a month had elapsed, Consuelo, was forgotten like the lightning which flashes and vanishes along a summer sky. Corilla was the rage as much as ever, and perhaps deserved to be so more than ever; for emulation had given her an enthusiasm, and love an expression of sentiment which she had lacked before. As for Anzoleto, though he had got rid of no one of his faults, he had contrived to display all the unquestionable qualities which he did possess. His fine personal appearance captivated the women; ladies vied for his presence at evening parties, the more so that Corilla's jealousy added something piquant to the coquetries which were addressed to him. Clorinda, moreover, devolved all her theatrical resources, that is to say, her full blown beauty and the voluptuous nonchalance of her unexamined dulness, which was not without its attraction for spectators of a certain order. Zustiniani, in order to divert his mind from the real disappointment he had undergone, had made her his mistress, loaded her with diamonds, and thrust her forward into first parts, hoping to

fit her to succeed Corilla in that position, since she was definitely engaged at Paris for the following season.

Corilla regarded this rivalry, from which she had nothing whatever to apprehend, either present or future, without a touch of annoyance or of alarm; she even took a mischievous pleasure in displaying the coldly impudent incapacity of her rival, which was haunted by no difficulties.

In the full tide of his prosperity and success, (for the count had given him a very good engagement,) Anzoleto was weighed down by disgust and self-reproach, which prevented his enjoying his onerous good fortune. It was truly pitiful to see him dragging himself to rehearsals, linked to the arm of Corilla in her haughty triumph, pale, languid, handsome, as a man can be, ridiculously over-dressed, worn out like one overdone with adoration, fainting and unbraced among the laurels and the myrtles which he had so liberally and so indolently won. Even when upon the stage, when in the midst of a scena with his fiery mistress, he could not refrain from defying her by his haughty attitude and the superb languor of his impertinence. When she seemed to devour him with her eyes, he replied to the public by a glance, which appeared to say—"Fancy not that I respond to all this love! Far from it; he who shall rid me of it, shall serve me largely."

In real truth, Anzoleto, having been corrupted and spoiled by Corilla, poured out upon her those phials of selfishness and ingratitude, which she urged him to pour out against all the world beside. There was but one true, one pure sentiment which now remained in his heart; it was the indestructible love which he still cherished, in despite of all his vices, for Consuelo. He could divert his mind from it, thanks to his natural levity, but cure it he could not; and that love came back upon him as a remorse—as a torture—in the midst of his guilty excesses. Faithless to Corilla, given up to numberless intrigues—avenging himself to-day upon the count with Corilla, to-morrow amusing himself with some fashionable beauty—the third day with the lowest of their sex; passing from mystic appointments to open revelries, he seemed struggling to bury the past in the oblivion of the present. But in the midst of these disorders, a ghost seemed to haunt him; and sighs would burst from his breast, as he glided in his gondola at dead of night, with his debauched companions, beside the dark buildings of the Corte Minelli. Corilla, long since conquered by his cruel treatment, and inclined, as all base spirits are—to love the more in proportion as they are the more scorned and outraged—began herself to hate him, and to grow weary of her fatal passion.

One night as Anzoleto floated with Clorinda through the streets of Venice in his gondola, another gondola, shot by them rapidly—its extinguished lantern proving its clandestine errand. He scarcely heeded it; but Clorinda, who was ever on thorns from her fear of discovery, said to him—"Let us go slower; 'tis the count's gondola; I know his barcarole."

"Is it—Oh, then," cried Anzoleto, "I will overtake him, and find out what infidelity he is at to-night."

"No, no; let us go back," cried Clorinda. "His eye—his ear, is so quick. Do not let us intrude upon his leisure."

"On! I say, on!" cried Anzoleto to the gondolier; "I must overtake that gondola ahead of us."

Spite of all Clorinda's tears, all her entreaties, it was but a second ere the boats clasped together, and a burst of laughter from the other gondola

dola fell upon Anzoleto's ear. "Ah! this is fair war—it is Corilla enjoying the breeze with the count." As he spoke, Anzoleto jumped to the bow of his gondola, snatched the oar from his barcarole, and darting on the track of the other gondola, again grazed its side; and whether he heard his own name among Corilla's bursts of laughter, or whether he was indeed mad, he cried aloud, "Sweetest Clorinda, unquestionably, you are the loveliest and the dearest of your sex."

"I was just telling Corilla so," said the count, coming easily out of his cabin, and approaching the other barque. "And now as we have both brought our excursions to an end, we can make a fair exchange, as honest folks do of equally valuable merchandise."

"Count, you but do justice to my love of fair play," replied Anzoleto, in the same tone. "If he permit me, I will offer him my arm, that he may himself escort the fair Clorinda into his gondola."

The count reached out his arm to rest upon Anzoleto's; but the tenor, inflamed by hatred, and transported with rage, leaped with all his weight upon the count's gondola and upset it, crying with savage voice—"Signor count, *gondola for gondola!*" Then abandoning his victims to their fate, and leaving Clorinda speechless with terror and trembling for the consequences of his frantic conduct, he gained the opposite bank by swimming, took his course through the dark and tortuous streets, entered his lodging, changed his clothes in a twinkling, gathered together all the money he had, left the house, threw himself into the first shallop which was getting under way for Trieste, and snapped his fingers in triumph as he saw in the dawn of morning, the clock-towers and domes of Venice sink beneath the waves.

 CHAPTER XXII.

In the western range of the Carpathian mountains, which separates Bohemia from Bavaria, and which receives in these countries the name of the Boehmer Wald, there was still standing, about a century ago, an old country seat of immense extent, called, in consequence of some forgotten tradition, the Castle of the Giants.—Though presenting at a distance somewhat the appearance of an ancient fortress, it was no more than a private residence, furnished in the taste, then somewhat antiquated, but always rich and sumptuous, of Louis XIV. The feudal style of architecture had also undergone various tasteful modifications in the parts of the edifice occupied by the Lords of Rudolstadt, masters of this rich domain.

The family was of Bohemian origin, but had become naturalized in Germany, on its members changing their name, and abjuring the principles of the Reformation, at the most trying period of the Thirty Years' War. A noble and valiant ancestor, of inflexible Protestant principles, had been murdered on the mountain in the neighborhood of his castle, by the fanatic soldiery. His widow, who was of a Saxon family, saved the fortune and the life of her young children by declaring herself a Catholic, and entrusting to the Jesuits the education of the heirs of Rudolstadt. After two generations had passed away, Bohemia being silent and oppressed, the Austrian power permanently established, and the glory and misfortunes of the Reformation at last