

any longer even to appear to eat, followed them with her eyes. Hardly had they passed the door, when a new apparition, more striking than all the rest, presented itself at the threshold. It was a youth of lofty stature and admirable proportions, but with a countenance of corpse-like paleness. He was attired in black from head to foot, while a velvet cloak trimmed with sable and held by tassels and clasps of gold, hung from his shoulders. Hair of ebon blackness fell in disorder over his pale cheeks, which were further concealed by the curls of his glossy beard. He motioned away the servants who advanced to meet him, with an imperative gesture, before which they recoiled as if his gaze had fascinated them. Then he turned towards Count Christian, who followed him.

"I assure you, father," said he, in a sweet voice and winning accents, "that I have never felt so calm. Something great is accomplished in my destiny, and the peace of heaven has descended on our house."

"May God grant it, my child!" exclaimed the old man, extending his hand to bless him.

The youth bent his head reverently under the hand of his father; then raising it with a mild and sweet expression, he advanced to the centre of the hall, smiled faintly, while he slightly touched the hand which Amelia held out to him, and looked earnestly at Consuelo for some seconds. Struck with involuntary respect, Consuelo bowed to him with downcast eyes; but he did not return the salutation, and still continued to gaze on her.

"This is the young person," said the canonesse in German "whom—" But the young man interrupted her with a gesture which seemed to say, "Do not speak to me—do not disturb my thoughts." Then slowly turning away, without testifying either surprise or interest, he deliberately retired by the great door.

"You must excuse him, my dear young lady," said the canonesse; "he—"

"I beg pardon, aunt, for interrupting you," exclaimed Amelia; "but you are speaking German, which the signora does not understand."

"Pardon me, dear signora," replied Consuelo, in Italian; "I have spoken many languages in my childhood, for I have travelled a good deal. I remember enough of German to understand it perfectly. I dare not yet attempt to speak it, but if you will be so good as to give me some lessons, I hope to regain my knowledge of it in a few days."

"I feel just in the same position," replied the canonesse, in German. "I comprehend all the young lady says, yet I could not speak her language. Since she understands me, I may tell her that I hope she will pardon my nephew the rudeness of which he has been guilty in not saluting her, when I inform her that this young man has been seriously ill, and that after his fainting fit he is so weak that probably he did not see her. Is not this so, brother?" asked the good Wenceslawa, trembling at the falsehood she had uttered, and seeking her pardon in the eyes of Count Christian.

"My dear sister," replied the old man, "it is generous in you to excuse my son. The signora, I trust, will not be too much surprised on learning certain particulars which we shall communicate to her to-morrow with all the confidence which we ought to feel for a child of Porpora, and I hope I may soon add, a friend of the family."

It was now the hour for retiring, and the habits of the establishment

were so uniform, that if the two young girls had remained much longer at table, the servants would doubtless have removed the chairs and extinguished the lights, just as if they had not been there. Besides, Consuelo longed to retire, and the baroness conducted her to the elegant and comfortable apartment which had been set apart for her accommodation.

"I should like to have an hour's chat with you," said she, as soon as the canonesse, who had done the honors of the apartment, had left the room. "I long to make you acquainted with matters here, so as to enable you to put up with our eccentricities. But you are so tired that you must certainly wish, in preference, to repose."

"Do not let that prevent you, signora," replied Consuelo; "I am fatigued, it is true, but I feel so excited that I am sure I shall not close my eyes during the night. Therefore talk to me as much as you will please, with this stipulation only, that it shall be in German. It will serve as a lesson for me; for I perceive that the Signor Count and the canonesse as well, are not familiar with Italian."

"Let us make a bargain," said Amelia. "You shall go to bed to rest yourself a little, while I throw on a dressing-gown and dismiss my waiting-maid. I shall then return, seat myself by your bedside, and speak German so long as we can keep awake. Is it agreed?"

"With all my heart," replied Consuelo.

---

#### CHAPTER XXV.

"Know, then, my dear," said Amelia, when she had settled herself as aforesaid—"but now that I think of it, I do not know your name," she added, smiling. "It is time, however, to banish all ceremony between us; you will call me Amelia, what shall I call you—"

"I have a singular name, somewhat difficult to pronounce," replied Consuelo. "The excellent Porpora, when he sent me hither, requested me to assume his name, according to the custom which prevails among masters towards their favorite pupils. I share this privilege, therefore, with the great Huber, surnamed Porporina; but, in place of Porporina, please to call me simply Nina."

"Let it be Nina, then, between ourselves," said Amelia. "Now, listen, for I have a long story to tell you; and if I do not go back a little into the history of the past, you will never understand what took place in this house to-day."

"I am all attention," replied the new Porporina.

"Of course my dear Nina," said the young baroness, "you know something of the history of Bohemia."

"Alas!" replied Consuelo, "as my master must have informed you, I am very deficient in information. I know somewhat of the history of music, indeed; but as to that of Bohemia or any other country, I know nothing."

"In that case," replied Amelia, "I must tell you enough of it to render my story intelligible. Some three hundred years ago, the people among whom you find yourself, were great, heroic, and unconquerable. They had, indeed, strange masters, and a religion which they did not very well understand, but which their rulers wished to

impose by force. They were oppressed by hordes of monks while a cruel and abandoned king insulted their dignity, and crushed their sympathies. But a secret fury and deep-seated hatred fermented below; the storm broke out; the strangers were expelled; religion was reformed; convents were pillaged and razed to the ground, while the drunken Wenceslas was cast into prison, and deprived of his crown. The signal of the revolt had been the execution of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, two wise and courageous Bohemians, who wished to examine and throw light upon the mysteries of Catholicism, and whom a council cited, condemned, and burned, after having promised them safe conduct and freedom of discussion. This infamous treason was so grating to national honor, that a bloody war ravaged Bohemia, and a large portion of Germany, for many years. This exterminating war was called the war of the Hussites. Innumerable and dreadful crimes were committed on both sides. The manners of the times were fierce and cruel over the whole earth. Party spirit and religious fanaticism rendered them still more dreadful; and Bohemia was the terror of Europe. I shall not shock your imagination, already unfavorably impressed by the appearance of this savage country, by reciting the horrible scenes which then took place. On one side, it was nothing but murder, burnings, destructions; churches profaned, and monks and nuns mutilated, hung, and thrown into boiling pitch. On the other side, villages were destroyed, whole districts desolated, treasons, falsehoods, cruelties, abounded on every side. Hussites were cast by thousands into the mines, filling abysses with their dead bodies, and strewing the earth with their own bones and those of their enemies. These terrible Hussites were for a long time invincible; even yet their name is not mentioned without terror; and yet their patriotism, their intrepid constancy and incredible exploits, have bequeathed to us a secret feeling of pride and admiration, which young minds, such as mine, find it somewhat difficult to conceal.

"And why conceal it?" asked Consuelo, simply.

"It is because Bohemia has fallen back, after many struggles, under the yoke of slavery. Bohemia is no more, my poor Nina. Our masters were well aware that the religious liberty of our country was also its political freedom; therefore they have stifled both."

"See," replied Consuelo, "how ignorant I am! I never heard of these things before, and I did not dream that men could be so unhappy and so wicked."

"A hundred years after John Huss, another wise man, a new sectarian, a poor monk called Martin Luther, sprang up to awaken the national spirit, and to inspire Bohemia, and all the independent provinces of Germany, with hatred of a foreign yoke and revolt against popedom. The most powerful kings remained Catholics, not so much for love of religion, as for love of absolute power. Austria united with them in order to overwhelm us, and a new war, called the Thirty Years' War, came to shake and destroy our national independence. From the commencement of this war, Bohemia was the prey of the strongest; Austria treated us as conquered; took from us our faith, our liberty, our language, and even our name. Our fathers resisted courageously, but the imperial yoke has weighed more and more heavily upon us. For the last hundred and twenty years, our nobility, ruined and decimated by exactions, wars, and torments, have been forced to expatriate themselves, or turn renegades by abjuring their origin, Germanising their names (pay attention to this), and renouncing the

liberty of professing their religious opinions. They have burned our books, destroyed our schools—n a word, made us Austrians. We are but a province of the empire, and you hear German spoken in a Slavonic state; that is saying enough."

"And you now suffer and blush for this slavery? I understand you, and I already hate Austria with all my heart."

"Oh! speak low," exclaimed the young baroness. "No one can, without danger, speak thus under the black sky of Bohemia; and in this castle there is but one person, my dear Nina, who would have the boldness or the folly to say what you have just said: that is my cousin Albert."

"Is this, then, the cause of the sorrow which is imprinted on his countenance? I felt an involuntary sensation of respect on looking at him."

"Ah, my fair lioness of St. Mark," said Amelia, surprised at the generous animation which suddenly lighted up the pale features of her companion; "you take matters too seriously. I fear that in a few days my poor cousin will inspire you rather with pity than with respect."

"The one need not prevent the other," replied Consuelo, "but explain yourself, my dear baroness."

"Listen," said Amelia; "we are a strictly Catholic family, faithful to church and state.—We bear a Saxon name, and our ancestors, on the Saxon side, were always rigidly orthodox. Should my aunt, the canoness, some day undertake to relate, unhappily for you, the services which the counts and German barons have rendered to the holy cause, you will find that, according to her, there is not the slightest stain of heresy on our escutcheon. Even when Saxony was Protestant, the Rudolstadt's preferred to abandon their Protestant electors, rather than the communion of the Romish church. But my aunt takes care never to dilate on these things in presence of Count Albert; if it were not for that, you should hear the most astonishing things that ever human ears have listened to."

"You excite my curiosity without gratifying it. I understand this much, that I should not appear before your noble relatives, to share your sympathy and that of Count Albert for old Bohemia. You may trust to my prudence, dear baroness; besides, I belong to a Catholic country, and the respect which I entertain for my religion, as well as that which I owe your family, would ensure my silence on every occasion."

"It will be wise; for I warn you once again that we are terribly rigid upon that point. As to myself, dear Nina, I am a better compound—neither Protestant nor Catholic. I was educated by nuns, whose prayers and paternosters wearied me. The same weariness pursues me here, and my aunt Wenceslawa, in her own person, represents the pedantry and superstition of a whole community. But I am too much imbued with the spirit of the age, to throw myself, through contradiction, into the not less presumptuous controversies of the Lutherans: as for the Hussites, their history is so ancient that I have no more relish for it than for the glory of the Greeks and Romans. The French way of thinking is to my mind; and I do not believe there can be any other reason, philosophy, or civilization, than that which is practised in charming and delightful France, the writings of which I sometimes have a peep at in secret, and whose liberty, happiness, and pleasures, I behold from a distance, as in a dream, through the bars of my prison."

"You each moment surprise me more," said Consuelo, innocently "How does it come that just now you appeared full of heroism, in recalling the exploits of your ancient Bohemians? I believed you a Bohemian, and somewhat of a heretic."

"I am more than heretic, and more than Bohemian," replied Amelia, laughing; "I am the least thing in life incredulous altogether; I hate and denounce every kind of despotism, spiritual or temporal; in particular I protest against Austria, which of all old duennas is the most wrong-headed and devout."

"And is Count Albert likewise incredulous? Is he also imbued with French principles? In that case, you should suit each other wonderfully?"

"Oh, we are the farthest in the world from suiting each other, and now, after all these necessary preambles, is the proper time to speak of him."

"Count Christian, my uncle, was childless by his first wife. Married again at the age of forty, he had five girls, who as well as their mother all died young, stricken with the same malady—a continual pain, and a species of slow brain fever. This second wife was of pure Bohemian blood, and had besides great beauty and intelligence. I did not know her. You will see her portrait in the grand saloon, where she appears dressed in a bodice of precious stones and scarlet mantle. Albert resembles her wonderfully. He is the sixth and last of her children, the only one who has attained the age of thirty; and this not without difficulty; for without apparently being ill, he has experienced rude shocks and strange symptoms of disease of the brain, which still cause fear and dread as regards his life. Between ourselves, I do not think that he will long outlive this fatal period which his mother could not escape. Although born of a father already advanced in years, Albert is gifted with a strong constitution, but, as he himself says, the malady is in his soul, and has ever been increasing. From his earliest infancy, his mind was filled with strange and superstitious notions. When he was four years old, he frequently fancied he saw his mother beside his cradle, although she was dead, and he had seen her buried. In the night he used to awake and converse with her, which terrified my aunt Wenceslawa so much that she always made several women sleep in his chamber near the child, whilst the chaplain used I do not know how much holy water, and said masses by the dozen, to oblige the spectre to keep quiet. But it was of no avail, for the child, although he had not spoken of his apparitions for a long time, declared one day in confidence to his nurse, that he still saw his own dear mother; but he would not tell, because Mr. Chaplain had said wicked words in the chamber to prevent her coming back.

"He was a silent and serious child. They tried to amuse him; they overwhelmed him with toys and playthings, but these only served for a long time to make him more sad. At last they resolved not to oppose the taste which he displayed for study, and in effect this passion being satisfied, imparted more animation to him, but only served to change his calm and languishing melancholy into a strange excitement, mingled with paroxysms of grief, the cause of which it was impossible to foresee or avert. For example, when he saw the poor, he melted into tears, stripped himself of his little wealth, even reproaching himself that he had not more to give. If he saw a child beaten, or a peasant ill-used, he became so indignant that he would

swoon away, or fall into convulsions for hours together. All this displayed a noble disposition and a generous heart; but the best qualities, pushed to extremes, become defective or absurd. Reason was not developed in young Albert in proportion to feeling and imagination. The study of history excited without enlightening him. When he learned the crimes and injustice of men, he felt an emotion like that of the barbarian monarch, who, listening to the history of Christ's passion and death, exclaimed while he brandished his weapon, 'Ah! had I been there, I should have cut the wicked Jews into a thousand pieces!'

"Albert could not deal with man as they have been and are. He thought Heaven unjust in not having created them all kind and compassionate like himself; he did not perceive that from an excess of tenderness and virtue, he was on the point of becoming impious and misanthropic. He did not understand what he felt, and at eighteen was as unfit to live among men, and hold the place which his position demanded in society, as he was at six months old. If any person expressed in his presence a selfish thought, such as our poor world abounds with, and without which it could not exist, regardless of the rank of the person, or the feelings of the family towards him, he disliked immediately an invincible dislike to him, and nothing could induce him to make the least advance. He chose his society from among the most humble, and those most in disfavor with fortune and ever nature. In the plays of his childhood he only amused himself with the children of the poor, and especially with those whose stupidity or infirmities had inspired all others with disgust or weariness. This strange inclination, as you will soon perceive, had not abandoned him.

"As in the midst of these eccentricities he displayed much intelligence, a good memory, and a taste for fine arts, and his father and his good aunt Wenceslawa, who tenderly cherished him, had no cause to blush for him in society. They ascribed his peculiarities to his rustic habits; and when he was inclined to go too far, they took care to hide them under some pretext or other from those who might be offended by them. But in spite of his admirable qualities and happy dispositions, the count and the canoness saw with terror this independent, and in many respects insensible nature, reject more and more the laws of polite society and the amenities and usages of the world."

"But as far as you have gone," interrupted Consuelo, "I see nothing of the unreasonableness of which you speak."

"Oh," replied Amelia, "that is because you are yourself, so far as I can see, of an open and generous disposition. But perhaps you are tired of my chatter, and would wish to sleep?"

"Not at all, my dear Baroness," replied Consuelo. "I entreat you to continue."

Amelia resumed her narrative in these words.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"You say, dear Nina, that hitherto you discover nothing extravagant in the actions or manner of my poor cousin. I am about to give you better proofs of it. My uncle and aunt are without doubt the best Christians and the most charitable souls in the world. They liberally dispense alms to all around them, and it would be impossible to display less pomp or pride in the use of riches than do these worthy relatives of mine. Well, my cousin made the discovery that their manner of living was altogether opposed to the spirit of the Gospel. He wished that, after the example of the early Christians, they should sell all they had, and become beggars, after having distributed the proceeds among the poor. If, restrained by the respect and love which he bore them, he did not exactly use words to this effect, he showed plainly what he thought, in bitterly deploring the lot of the poor, who are only born to toil and suffer, whilst the rich live in luxury and idleness. When he had given away in charity all his pocket-money, it was in his estimation but as a drop of water in the sea, and he demanded yet larger sums, which they dared not refuse him, and which flowed through his hands as water. He has given so much that you will no longer see a poor person in all the country which surrounds us, and I must add that we find our position nothing the better for it; inasmuch as the wants and demands of the lower orders increase in proportion to the concessions made to them, and our good peasants, formerly so mild and humble, begin to give themselves airs, thanks to the prodigality and fine speeches of their young master. If we had not the power of the imperial government to rely upon, which affords us protection on one hand, while it oppresses us on the other, I believe that, more especially since the succession of the Emperor Charles, our estates and castles might have been pillaged twenty times over by the bands of war-famished peasants which the inexhaustible benevolence of Albert, celebrated for thirty leagues round, has brought upon our backs.

"When Count Christian attempted to remonstrate with young Albert, telling him that to give all in one day was to deprive us of the means of giving any the next, 'Why, my beloved father,' he replied, 'have we not a roof to shelter us which will last longer than ourselves, whilst thousands of unfortunates have only the cold and inclement sky above their heads? Have we not each more clothes than would suffice for one of these ragged and shivering families? Do I not see daily upon our table more meats and good Hungarian wine than would suffice to refresh and comfort these poor beggars, exhausted with fatigue and hunger? Have we a right to refuse when we have so much more than we require? Are we even permitted to use what is necessary whilst others are in want? Has the law of Christ changed?'

"What reply could the count, the canoness and the chaplain, who had educated this young man in the austere principles of religion, make to these fine words? They were accordingly embarrassed when they found him take matters thus literally, and hold no terms with those existing arrangements on which, as it appears to me, is founded the whole structure of society.

"When these affectionate and sensible parents perceived that he

was in full train to dissipate his patrimony within a few years, and to get himself immured in a prison, as a rebel to the holy church and holy empire, they at last adopted, but not without much pain, the device of sending him to travel, hoping that when he should come to mix with men, and to observe the fundamental laws, which are nearly identical in every part of the civilized world, he would become habituated to live like other people. They committed him therefore to the charge of a crafty Jesuit, a man of the world, and a man of intellect, if ever there was one, who comprehended his part at half a word, and conscientiously undertook to perform all that they dared not ask of him in direct words. To speak plainly it was judged necessary to corrupt and tame his wild spirit, and to fashion it to the yoke of social life, by infusing into it, drop by drop, the fascinating, yet necessary, poisons of ambition, of vanity, of indifference to all matters, religious, moral, or political. Do not frown so, as you listen to me, my dear Porporina. My worthy uncle is a good and simple-minded person, who has always, from his youth upwards, received all these things precisely as they were set before his mind, and who has had the good fortune through his whole life to reconcile toleration with religion, and that without hypocrisy or over-deep scrutiny. In a century and a state of society like ours, in which but one such man as Albert is found among millions such as we, he who keeps pace with the world and its progress is the wise man; he who would recede two thousand years into the past, merely scandalises his fellows, and makes not a single convert.

"For eight successive years Albert travelled in Italy, France, England, Prussia, Poland, Russia, nay, even among the Turks. He returned home through Hungary, Southern Germany, and Bavaria. He conducted himself with perfect prudence during his travels, not spending anything above the liberal allowance which his relatives had assigned to him, writing them very gentle and affectionate letters, in which he never alluded to anything beyond the things which had actually fallen under his eyes, and without making any deep observations on any matter whatever, or giving his tutor reason to reproach him either with offence or ingratitude.

"On his return hither, at the beginning of the last year, after the first embraces of his family, he withdrew himself, they say, entered the room in which his mother died, remained shut up there for several hours, and then came forth alone, all pale and haggard, to wander alone on the mountain.

"During this time the abbe spoke in confidence with the Canoness Wenceslawa, and with the chaplain, who had required of him a full and sincere relation of the condition, moral and physical, of the young count. 'Count Albert,' said he to them, 'whether he has been changed in character in the course of his travels, or whether I had formed a false impression of him from the description which you gave me of his childhood, has behaved towards me from the first hour of our acquaintance precisely as you see him to-day—gentle, calm, long-suffering, patient, and exquisitely polite. This excellent conduct on his part has never varied for a single instant, and I should be the most unjust of men, could I devise a complaint of any kind against him. Nothing of those things which I apprehended, nothing of ill-regulated expenses, of rude habits, of wild declamations, of enthusiastic asceticism, have occurred. He has never once asked me to allow him to administer himself the little fortune with which you

charged me for his uses, and never once expressed the slightest dissatisfaction at my application of it. It is true that I always took care to anticipate his wishes, and if a beggar approached the carriage I made haste to send him away perfectly satisfied, almost before he had time to stretch out his hand. This mode of acting appears to have succeeded perfectly, and as his lordship was never again saddened by the contemplation of misery, his ancient prejudices on that subject apparently ceased to trouble him. I have never heard him scold or blame any person, or express an unfavorable opinion on any institution. That ardent devotion, the very excess and extravagance of which alarmed you, made way for a regularity of conduct, and for practices entirely becoming a man of the world. He was present in the most brilliant courts, and participated in the noblest entertainments without manifesting either enthusiasm or disgust for anything. Everywhere his fine face, his handsome carriage, his unemphatic politeness, and the good taste which always guided his conversation, were subjects of remark and approbation. His morals have remained ever as pure as those of a perfectly well-conducted girl, without ever declining into prudery or bad taste. He visited theatres, nunneries, monuments, conversed soberly and judiciously of the fine arts. In a word, I cannot conceive in what respect he can have caused your lordship and ladyship any uneasiness, never having, for my part, seen a gentleman more perfectly reasonable. If there be anything extraordinary about him, it is precisely this moderation, prudence, and self-possession—this absence of all the excitements and passions, such as I have never met in any other young man, so advantageously circumstanced by nature, birth, and fortune.

"This, moreover, was but the natural confirmation of the frequent letters which the abbe had written to the family, but in which they had always apprehended some exaggeration on his part, so that they were, in fact, never perfectly reassured until at the moment when he affirmed the complete cure of my cousin, without seeming to fear that his conduct before the eyes of his parents would belie his asseveration. The abbe was overloaded with gifts and caresses, and the return of Albert from his walk was eagerly expected. His absence was long, and when at length he returned, just as they were about to sit down to supper, he was so pale, and the gravity of his countenance was so remarkable, that all were struck by it. In the first moment of his affectionate pleasure, on his return, his features had expressed a calm and settled satisfaction, which had already vanished. All were astonished, and questioned the abbe in whispers concerning the change. He looked at Albert, and then turning with some surprise to those who were questioning him, in a corner of the apartment—"I see nothing unusual," he said, "in the expression of Monsieur le Comte. This is the calm and peaceful aspect which he has ever worn during the eight years that I have had the honor of accompanying him."

"Count Christian seemed content with this answer. 'When we last saw him,' said he to his sister, 'he was still bedecked with all the florid beauty of youth, and was sometimes, alas! fired by some touch of internal fear, which kindled his cheeks and fired his eyes. He has now returned to us emboldened by the sun of southern climes, a little aged, perhaps, by fatigue, and a little touched with that gravity which so well becomes a finished and mature man. Do you not think, my dear sister, that, after all, he is better so?'

"I think his expression is very sad under the mask of this gravity,

answered my excellent aunt, 'and I have never seen a man of twenty-eight so phlegmatical, and so little given to conversation. He only replies to us in monosyllables.'

"Monsieur the count has always been very sparing of his words," answered the abbe.

"Such was not his habit formerly," said the canoness, 'if he had his weeks of silence and meditation, he had likewise his days of expansiveness, and his hours of eloquence.'

"I have never seen him," resumed the abbe, 'to vary from the reserve which your lordships notice in him at this moment.'

"Were you then better satisfied with his demeanor when he talked too much, and too wildly, and used expressions which made us all tremble?" said Count Christian to his frightened sister; 'of a truth this is the very way with women.'

"But he at least existed then," she replied; 'now he resembles the inhabitant of some other sphere, who takes no interest in the affairs of this world.'

"That is the constant and enduring character of the count," said the abbe, 'he is a man entirely concentrated within himself—who imparts none of his impulses to any one—and who, if I must speak out exactly what I think, is very slightly affected by any impressions from things external. Such is the case with many cold, sensible, and reflective persons; he is so constituted, and I am of opinion that by endeavoring to excite him, the only result would be to disturb and confuse a mind disinclined to action and to every perilous exertion.'

"Oh, I could swear that this is not his true and natural character," said the canoness.

"I have little doubt, however," returned the priest, 'that madame the canoness will see cause to overcome the prejudices she seems to have formed against so rare an advantage.'

"Indeed, my sister," said the count, 'I think that monsieur the abbe speaks very wisely. Has he not brought about, by his care and condescension, the result which we have so earnestly desired? Has he not turned aside the calamities which we dreaded? Albert gave us every token of turning out a prodigy, an enthusiast, a rash-headed visionary. He comes back to us just such as we ought to desire him to be, in order to command the esteem, the confidence, and the consideration of his equals.'

"But as lifeless as an old volume!" cried the canoness; 'or perhaps hardened to everything or disdaining everything which does not answer to his hidden instincts. He does not even seem glad to see us, who awaited his return with such impatience.'

"Monsieur le Comte was himself impatient to return," said the abbe; 'I saw it clearly enough, though he did not manifest it openly. He is by no means of a demonstrative character. Nature framed him of a reserved temper.'

"On the contrary," she exclaimed, 'nature framed him demonstrative. Sometimes, indeed, he was tender, sometimes he was violent, even to excess. He often vexed, but then again he would cast himself into my arms, and I was at once disarmed.'

"To me he has never been guilty of aught for which to make a reparation.'

"Believe me, sister, things are much better as they now are.'

"Alas!" said the canoness, 'and will he always wear that calm and constrained face, which chills my very soul?'

"It is the proud and noble face which becomes a man of his rank," replied the abbe.

"It is a face of marble!" cried the canoness. "When I look at him I think I see my mother, not as I knew her, warm, sympathizing and benevolent, but as they have painted her, motionless, and icy cold, in her frame of black oak."

"I repeat to your ladyship, that for eight years, Count Albert has worn no other than that one habitual expression."

"Alas! and it is then eight years since he has smiled on any person?" said the good aunt, unable any longer to restrain her tears. "For during two whole hours which I have spent in gazing on him, not the slightest symptom of a smile has animated his wan, set lips! Oh! I feel inclined to spring upon him, and clasp him to my heart, as of old, reproaching him with his indifference, and blaming him, as I was wont, in order to see whether he will not, as he used, cling to my neck and sob forth his affection."

"Beware of committing any such imprudence, my dear sister," said Count Christian, compelling her to turn away her eyes from Count Albert, whom she still gazed at through her tears. "Listen not to the weakness of a maternal heart. Surely we know but too well that an excessive sensibility has been the scourge of our beloved son's life and reason. By diverting his thoughts, and removing from him all over-violent emotions, monsieur the abbe, in conformity with our advice, and with the recommendations of his physicians, has succeeded in calming his agitated soul. Do not then undo all that he has done, by yielding to the whims of a childish affection."

"The canoness yielded to his reasoning, and endeavored to habituate herself to the icy exterior of Count Albert, but she could by no means accustom herself to it, and she often whispered in her brother's ear, 'you may say as you will, Christian, but I fear that they have rendered him idiotic, by treating him, not as a man, but a peevish infant.'"

"In the evening, when they were parting for the night, they all embraced. Albert received his father's blessing with deep affection, and when the canoness pressed him to her bosom, he perceived that she was trembling, and that her voice faltered perceptibly. Then he began to tremble likewise, and tore himself from her arms as if a keen pang had shot through him. 'You see, sister,' whispered the count in her ear, 'he is no longer used to encounter such emotions, and you are only giving him pain.' At the same time, scarcely satisfied with his own argument, he watched him narrowly, by no means free himself from emotion, in order to discover if, by his conduct toward the abbe, he manifested any particular predilection for that person; but Albert merely bowed to his tutor, with distant and reserved politeness.

"My son," said the count, 'I believe that I have fulfilled your intentions, and satisfied the desires of your heart, in requesting monsieur the abbe not to leave you, as he had expressed some idea of doing, and in prevailing on him to remain with us as long as possible. I would not have your happiness at rejoining our family embittered to you by a single regret, and I trust that your worthy friend will assist you in procuring you this unmingled happiness.'

"Albert replied only by a low bow, and at the same moment strange smile quivered across his lips.

"Alas!" cried the canoness, as he withdrew, 'is that the fashion of his smile now?'

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"DURING Albert's absence, the count and the canoness had formed innumerable projects for the future welfare of their dear child, among which that of marrying him occupied a prominent place. With his fine face, his noble birth, and his fortune still unimpaired, Albert could have aspired to a connection with the noblest families in the kingdom. But in case his indolence, and shy, retiring disposition should make him unwilling to bring himself forward, and push his fortune in the world, they kept in reserve for him a young person of equally high birth with himself, since she was his cousin-germain, and bore the same name; she was not so rich, indeed, but was young, handsome, and an only daughter. This young person was Amelia, baroness of Rudolstadt, your humble servant and new friend.

"She," said they, when conversing together, by the fireside, 'has as yet seen nobody. She cannot hope for a better match; and as to the eccentricities of her cousin, the old associations of their childhood, the ties of relationship, and a few months' intimacy with us, will go far to overcome her repugnance to them, and bring her round to tolerate, were it only for the sake of family feeling, what might be unendurable to a stranger.' They were sure of the consent of my father, who never had any will but that of his elder brother and his sister Wenceslawa; and who, to say the truth, has never had a will of his own.

"When, after a fortnight's careful observation of his manners, the constant melancholy and reserve, which appeared to be the confirmed character of my cousin, became evident to them, my uncle and aunt concluded, that the last scion of their race was not destined to win renown by great or noble deeds. He displayed no inclination for a bright career in arms, diplomacy, or civil affairs. To every proposal he mildly replied that he should obey the wishes of his relations, but that for his own part he desired neither luxury nor glory. After all, this indolent disposition was but an exaggerated copy of his father's, a man of such calm and easy temperance, that his imperturbability borders on apathy, and his modesty is a kind of self-denial. What gives to my uncle's character a tone which is wanting in his son's, is his strong sense, devoid of pride, of the duties he owes to society. Albert seemed formerly to understand domestic duties, but public ones, as they were regarded by others, concerned him no more than in his childhood. His father and mine had followed the career of arms under Montecuculi against Turenne. They had borne with them into the war a kind of religious enthusiasm, inspired by the Emperor. A blind obedience to their superiors was considered the duty of their time. This more enlightened age, however, strips the monarch of his false halo, and the rising generation believe no more in the divine right of the crown than in that of the tiara. When my uncle endeavored to stir up in his son's bosom the flame of ancient chivalric ardor, he soon perceived that his arguments had no meaning for a reasoner who looked on such things with contempt.

"Since it is thus," my uncle observed to my aunt, 'we will not thwart him. Let us not counteract this melancholy remedy, which has at least restored to us a passionless, in place of an impetuous man. Let his life, in accordance with his desire, be tranquil, and he may be

come studious, and philosophic as were many of his ancestors, an ardent lover of the chase like our brother Frederick, or a just and beneficent master, as we ourselves try to be. Let him lead from henceforward the untroubled and inoffensive life of an old man; he will be the first Rudolstadt whose life shall have known no youth. But as he must not be the last of his race, let us marry him, so that the heir of our name may fill up this blank in the glory of our house. Who knows but it may be the will of Providence that the generous blood of his ancestors now sleeps in his veins only to reawaken with a fresh impulse in those of his descendants?"

"So it was decided that they should break the ice on this delicate subject to my cousin Albert.

"They at first approached it gently; but as they found this proposal quite as unpalatable as all previous ones had been, it became necessary to reason seriously with him. He pleaded bashfulness, timidity, and awkwardness in female society.

"Certainly," said my aunt, "in my young days I would have considered a lover so grave as Albert more repulsive than otherwise; and I would not have exchanged my hump for his conversation."

"We must then," said my uncle, "fall back upon our last resource, and persuade him to marry Amelia. He has known her from infancy, looks upon her as a sister, and will be less timid with her; and, as to firmness of character she unites animation and cheerfulness, she will by her good-humor dissipate those gloomy moods into which he so frequently relapses."

"Albert did not condemn this project, and, without openly saying so, consented to see and become acquainted with me. It was agreed that I should not be informed of the plan, in order to save me the mortification of being rejected, which was always possible on his part. They wrote to my father, and as soon as they had secured his consent, they took steps to obtain the dispensation from the Pope which our consanguinity rendered necessary. At the same time my father took me from the convent, and one fine morning we arrived at the Castle of the Giants—I very well pleased to breathe the fresh air, and impatient to see my betrothed; my good father full of hope, and fancying that he had ingeniously concealed from me a project which he had unconsciously betrayed in every sentence he uttered in the course of the journey.

"The first thing that struck me in Albert was his fine figure and noble air. I confess, dear Nina, that my heart beat almost audibly when he kissed my hand, and that for some days I was charmed by his look, and delighted by the most trifling word that fell from his lips. His serious, thoughtful manner was not displeasing to me. He seemed to feel no constraint in my society; on the contrary, he was unreserved as in the days of childhood; and when, from a dread of failing in politeness, he wished to restrain his attention, our parents urged him to continue his ancient familiarity with me. My cheerfulness sometimes caused him to smile involuntarily, and my good aunt, transported with joy, attributed to me the honor of this improvement which she believed would be permanent. At length he came to treat me with the mildness and gentleness one displays towards a child, and I was content—satisfied that he would shortly pay more attention to my little animated countenance, and to the handsome dresses by which I studied to please him. But I had soon the mortification to discover that he cared little for the one, and that he did not even ap-

pear to see the other. One day my good aunt wished to direct his attention to a beautiful blue dress, which suited my figure admirably. Would you believe it?—he declared its color to be a bright red! His tutor, the abbe, who had honied compliments ever ready on his lips, and who wished to give his pupil a lesson in gallantry, insinuated that he could easily guess why Count Albert could not distinguish the color of my dress. Here was a capital opportunity for Albert to address to me some flattering remarks on the rose of my cheeks or the golden hue of my hair. He contented himself, however, with drily telling the abbe that he was as capable of distinguishing colors as he was, and with repeating his assertion that my robe was red as blood. I do not know why this rudeness of manner and eccentricity of expression made me shudder. I looked at Albert, and his glance terrified me. From that day I began to fear him more than I loved him. In a short time I ceased to love him at all, and now I neither love nor fear him: I merely pity him. You will by degrees understand why.

"The next day we were to go to Taus, the nearest village, to make some purchases. I had promised myself much pleasure from this excursion, as Albert was to accompany me on horseback. When ready to set out, I of course expected that he would offer me his arm. The carriages were in the court, but he did not make his appearance, although his servant said that he had knocked at his door at the usual hour. They sent again to see if he were getting ready. Albert always dressed by himself, and never permitted a servant to enter his chamber until he had quitted it. They knocked in vain; there was no reply. His father, becoming uneasy at this continued silence, went himself to the room, but he could neither open the door, which was bolted inside, nor obtain a reply to his questions. They began to be frightened, when the abbe observed in his usual placid manner, that Count Albert was subject to long fits of sleep, which might almost be termed trances, and if suddenly awakened, he was agitated, and apparently suffered for many days, as from a shock. 'But that is a disease,' said the canoness, anxiously.

"I do not think so," said the abbe. 'He has never complained of anything. The physicians whom I brought to see him when he lay in this state, found no feverish symptoms, and attributed his condition to excess of application to study; and they earnestly advised that this apparently necessary repose and entire forgetfulness should not be counteracted by any mode of treatment.'

"And is it frequent?" asked my uncle.

"I have observed it only five or six times during eight years; and not having annoyed him by my attentions, I have never found any unpleasant consequences."

"And do these last long?" I demanded in my turn, very impatiently.

"Longer or shorter, according to the want of rest which precedes or occasions these attacks; but no one can know, for the count either does not himself recollect the cause, or does not wish to tell it. He is extremely studious, and conceals it with unusual modesty."

"He is very learned then?" I replied.

"Extremely learned."

"And he never displays it?"

"He makes a secret of it—nay, does not himself suspect it."

"Of what use is it, in that case?"

"Genius is like beauty,' replied this Jesuit courtier, casting a soft

look upon me; 'both are favors of Heaven which occasion neither pride nor agitation to those who enjoy them.'

"I understood the lesson, and only felt the more annoyed, as you may suppose. They resolved to defer the drive until my cousin should awake; but when at the end of two hours I saw that he did not stir, I laid aside my rich riding-dress, and set myself to my embroidery, not without spoiling a good deal of silk and missing many stitches. I was indignant at the neglect of Albert, who over his books in the evening had forgotten his promised ride with me, and who had now left me to wait, in no very pleasant humor, while he quietly enjoyed his sleep. The day wore on, and we were obliged to give up our proposed excursion. My father, confiding in the assurance of the abbe, took his gun, and strolled out to kill a few hares. My aunt, who had less faith in the good man's opinion, went up stairs more than twenty times to listen at her nephew's door, but without being able to hear the faintest breathing. The poor woman was in an agony of distress. As for my uncle, he took a book of devotion, to try its effect in calming his inquietude, and began to read in a corner of the saloon with a resignation so provoking that it half tempted me to leap out of the window with chagrin. At length towards evening, my aunt, overjoyed, came in to inform us that she had heard Albert rise and dress himself. The abbe advised us to appear neither surprised nor uneasy, not to ask the count any questions, and to endeavor to divert his mind and his thoughts, if he evinced any signs of mortification at what had occurred.

"But if my cousin be not ill, then he is mad!" exclaimed I, with some degree of irritation.

"I observed my uncle change countenance at this harsh expression, and I was struck with sudden remorse. But when Albert entered without apologizing to any one, and without even appearing to be aware of our disappointment, I confess I was excessively piqued and gave him a very cold reception, of which, however, absorbed as he was in thought, he took not the slightest notice.

"In the evening, my father fancied that a little music would raise his spirits. I had not yet sung before Albert, as my harp had only arrived the preceding evening. I must not, my scientific Porporina, boast of my musical acquirements before you; but you will admit that I have a good voice, and do not want natural taste. I allowed them to press me, for I had at the moment more inclination to cry than to sing, but Albert offered not a word to draw me out. At last I yielded, but I sang badly, and Albert, as if I had tortured his ears, had the rudeness to leave the room after I had gone through a few bars. I was compelled to summon all my pride to my assistance to prevent me from bursting into tears, and to enable me to finish the air without breaking the strings of my harp. My aunt followed her nephew: my father was asleep; my uncle waited near the door till his sister should return, to tell him something of his son. The abbe alone remained to pay me compliments, which irritated me yet more than the indifference of the others. 'It seems,' said I to him, 'that my cousin does not like music.'

"On the contrary, he likes it very much," replied he, 'but it is according—'

"According to the manner in which one performs," said I, interrupting him.

"Yes," replied he, in no wise disconcerted, 'and to the state of

his mind. Sometimes music does him good, sometimes harm. You have, I am certain, agitated him so much that he feared he should not be able to restrain his emotion. This retreat is more flattering to you than the most elaborate praise.'

"The compliments of this Jesuit had in them something so sinister and sarcastic that it made me detest him. But I was soon freed from his annoyance, as you shall presently learn.

---

 CHAPTER XXVIII.

"On the following day, my aunt, who never speaks unless strongly moved, took it into her head to begin a conversation with the abbe and the chaplain, and as, with the exception of her family affections which entirely absorb her, she is incapable of conversing on any topic but that of family honor, she was ere long deep in a dissertation on her favorite subject, genealogy, and laboring to convince the two priests that our race was the purest and the most illustrious, as well as the most noble, of all the families of Germany, on the female side particularly. The abbe listened with patience, the chaplain with profound respect, when Albert, who apparently had taken no interest in the old lady's disquisition, all at once interrupted her.

"It would seem, my dear aunt," said he, 'that you are laboring under some hallucination as to the superiority of our family. It is true that their titles and nobility are of sufficient antiquity, but a family which loses its name, abjures it in some sort, in order to assume that of a woman of foreign race and religion, gives up its right to be considered ancient in virtue, and faithful to the glory of its country.'

"This remark somewhat disconcerted the canoness, but as the abbe had appeared to lead profound attention to it, she thought it incumbent on her to reply.

"I am not of your opinion, dear child," said she; 'we have often seen illustrious houses render themselves still more so, and with reason, by uniting to their name that of a maternal branch, in order not to deprive their heirs of the honor of being descended from a woman so illustriously connected.'

"But this is a case to which that rule does not apply," answered Albert, with a pertinacity for which he was not remarkable. 'I can conceive the alliance of two illustrious names. It is quite right that a woman should transmit to her children her own name joined with that of her husband; but the complete abolition of the latter would appear to me an outrage on the part of her who would exact it, and an act of baseness on the part of him who would submit to it.'

"You speak of matters of very remote date, Albert," said the canoness, with a profound sigh, 'and are even less happy than I in the application of the rule. Our good abbe might, from your words, suppose that some one of our ancestors had been capable of such meanness. And since you appear to be so well informed on subjects of which I supposed you comparatively ignorant, you should not have made a reflection on this kind relative to political events, now thank God, long passed away!'