

collation with God, which, during long years, I had implored, prostrate upon these mouldering bones. When I first saw you, Consuelo, I began to hope; when you pitied me, I thought I was saved. See this wreath of withered flowers ready to fall into the dust, and which encircles the skull that surmounts the altar. You do not recognise it, though I have watered it with many a bitter yet soothing tear. It is you who gathered them, you who sent them to me by the companion of my sorrows, the faithful guardian of this sepulchre. Covering them with kisses and tears, I anxiously asked myself if you could ever feel any true and heartfelt regard for one like myself—a pitiless fanatic, an unfeeling tyrant—”

“But what are the crimes you have committed?” said Consuelo, firmly, distracted with a thousand varying emotions, and emboldened by the deep dejection of Albert. “If you have a confession to make, make it here to me, that I may know if I can absolve and love you.”

“Yes, you may absolve me; for he whom you know, Albert of Rudolstadt, has been innocent as a child; but he whom you do not know, John Ziska of the Chalice, has been whirled by the wrath of Heaven into a career of iniquity.”

Consuelo saw the imprudence of which she had been guilty, in rousing the slumbering flame and recalling to Albert's mind his former madness. This, however, was not the moment to combat it, and she was revolving in her mind some expedient to calm him, and had gradually sunk into a reverie, when suddenly she perceived that Albert no longer spoke, no longer held her hand—that he was not at her side, but standing a few paces off, before the monument, performing on his violin the singular airs with which she had been already so surprised and charmed.

CHAPTER LV.

ALBERT at first attuned his instrument to several of those ancient chants, the authors of which are either unknown to us, or forgotten among the Bohemians; but the precious airs and melodies of which Zdenko had retained by ear, whence the Count had discovered the text by dint of study and meditation. He had so thoroughly fed his spirit on these compositions, which seem at a first hearing rude and barbaric, but which are deeply touching and truly fine in the ear of a serious and enlightened judgment, that he had so far assimilated them to himself as to have attained the power of carrying out long improvisations on the idea of those themes, of mingling with them his own ideas, of recovering and developing the primitive sentiment of the compositions, and of abandoning himself to his own personal inspirations, without allowing the original character, so striking and austere, of those ancient chants, to be lost or altered in his ingenious and scientific interpretation of them. Consuelo had promised herself that she would hear, and collect these invaluable specimens of the ardent popular genius of old Bohemia. But all power of criticism soon forsook her, as well on account of the meditative humor in which she fancied to be, as in consequence of the vague and rambling tone which pervaded that music, all unfamiliar to her ear.

There is a style of music which may be called natural, because it is

not the offspring of science or reflection, but of an inspiration which sets at defiance all the strictness of rules and convention. I mean popular music, and especially that of the peasantry. How many exquisite compositions are born, live and die, among the peasantry, without ever having been dignified by a correct notation, without ever having deigned to be confined within the absolute limits of a distinct and definite theme. The unknown artist who improvises his rustic ballad while watching his flocks, or guiding his ploughshare, and there are such even in countries which would seem the least poetical, will experience great difficulty in retaining and fixing his fugitive fancies. He communicates his ballad to other musicians, children like himself of nature, and these circulate it from hamlet to hamlet, from cot to cot, each modifying it according to the bent of his own individual genius. It is hence that these pastoral songs and romances, so artlessly striking or so deeply touching, are for the most part lost, and rarely exist above a single century in the memory of their rustic composers. Musicians completely formed under the rules of art rarely trouble themselves to collect them. Many even disdain them from very lack of an intelligence sufficiently pure, and a taste sufficiently elevated to admit of their appreciating them. Others are dismayed by the difficulties which they encounter the moment they endeavor to discover that true and original version, which, perhaps, no longer retains its existence even in the mind of its author, and which certainly was never at any time recognised as a definite and invariable type by any one of his numerous interpreters.

Some of these have altered it through ignorance, others have developed, adorned and embellished it, as an effect of their superiority, because the teachings of their art have not instructed them to repudiate its natural and instinctive spirit. They are not themselves aware that they have transformed the primitive composition, nor are their artless auditors more conscious of it than they. The peasant examines not nor compares. When heaven has made him a musician, he sings as the birds sing, especially as sings the nightingale, whose improvisation is everlasting, although the infinitely varied elements of its strain are the same for ever. Moreover, this popular genius is unlimited in its exuberance.* It has no need to commit its

* If you consider with any attention the bagpipe-players who perform the office of fiddlers in the rural districts in the centre of France, you will perceive that they do not know above two or three hundred compositions, all of the same style and character, which are however never borrowed the one from the other, and you will also ascertain that in less than three years this immense collection is entirely renewed. Not very long ago I had the following conversation with one of these wandering musicians:—“You have learned a little music, have you not?”—“Certainly—I have learned to play the thorough-bass-bagpipe, and the key-bagpipe.”—“Where did you take your lessons?”—“In the Bourbonnais, in the woods.”—“Who was your master?”—“A native of the woods.”—“Do you know your notes?”—“I believe so.”—“In what key do you play?”—“What key I what does that mean?”—“Do n't you play in re?”—“I don't know what you mean by re.”—“What are the names of your notes?”—“We call them notes. They have no particular names.”—“How do you retain so many different airs?”—“By ear.”—“By whom are these airs composed?”—“By many persons, famous musicians of the woods.”—“Do they compose many?”—“They are always composing. They never cease from it.”—“Have they any other occupation?”—“They cut wood.”—“Are they regular woodcutters?”—“Almost all of them are woodcutters. They say among us that music grows in the woods. It is there we always find it.”—“And do you go to the woods in quest of it?”—“Every year. Petty musicians do not go thither; they catch by ear whatever they hear on the roads and repeat it as well as they can. But to get the true account one must go and listen to the

productions to record; for it produces them as it cultivates them, without pausing for repose; and it creates incessantly, as nature creates, and from which he draws his inspiration.

Consuelo's heart abounded with all that candor, that poetic taste and highly wrought sensibility, which are essential to the comprehension and ardent love of popular music. In that point she was a great artiste; and the learned theories which she had fathomed had detracted in nothing from her genius of that freshness and sweetness which constitute the treasure of inspiration and the youth of the soul. She had often told Anzoleto, without letting the Porpora know it, that she loved some of the barcarolles of the fishermen of the Adriatic better than all the science of *Padre Martini* and of *Maestro Durante*. The boleros and canticles of her mother had been to her the sources of her poetic life, whence she never was wearied of drawing even to their depth her beloved recollections. What impression, then, ought not the musical genius of Bohemia to have produced on her, the inspiration, a pastoral and warrior, and fanatical people, grave and gentle in the midst of the most puissant elements of energy and activity. Albert played this music with a rare comprehension of the national spirit, and of the energetic and pious sentiment which had given it birth. He added to it, in his improvisation, the deep melancholy and piercing regret which slavery had impressed on his own personal character, and on that of his people; and that mixture of bravery and sadness, of enthusiasm and debasement, those hymns of gratitude blended with moans of distress, were the most perfect and deepest expositions of the feelings of unhappy Bohemia, of unhappy Albert.

It has been truly said that the object of music is the awakening of emotions. No other art so sublimely can arouse human sentiments in the inmost heart of man. No other art can paint to the eyes of the soul the splendors of nature, the delights of contemplation, the character of nations, the tumult of their passions, and the languor of their sufferings, as music can. Regret, hope, terror, meditation, consternation, enthusiasm, faith, doubt, glory, tranquillity, all these and

woodcutters of the Bourbonnais."—"And how do they get it?"—"It comes to them while walking in the woods, while returning to their houses at night, while resting from their toils on Sunday."—"And do you compose?"—"A little, but very rarely; and what I do is worth little or nothing. One must be born in the woods to compose, and I am from the plains. There is no one superior to myself in the accent, but as to invention, we know nothing about it, and it is better for us not to attempt it."

I tried to get him to explain what he meant by the accent. He could not, however, make any hand of it. Perhaps because he understood it too well himself, and thought me incapable of understanding. He was young, grave, and dark-complexioned as a Calabrian Pifferaso, he travelled from village fête to village fête, playing all day, and slept but once in three nights, because he had to travel from eighteen to twenty-four miles before sunrise, in order to arrive at his next scene of operations. But he seemed all the better for it—drank measures of wine sufficient to fuddle an ox, and never complained, like Sir Walter Scott's Trumpeter, of having lost his wind. The more he drank, the graver and the prouder he became. He played admirably, and had good reason to be proud of his accent. We observed that his playing was a perpetual modification of each theme. It was impossible to write a single one of these themes without taking a notation for every one of fifty various versions. In this probably lay his merit and his art. His replies to my questions gave me a clue, I believe, to the true etymology of the word bourree, which is the term they give to their provincial dances. Bourree is the usual name for a fagot, and the woodchoppers of the Bourbonnais have given that name to their musical compositions, even as Master Adam gave that of CHEVILLES to his poetical compositions.

more are given to us and taken from us by music, at the suggestion of her genius, and according to the bent of our own. She even creates the aspect of realities, and without falling into the childish pursuit of mere effects of sound, or into a narrow imitation of real noises, she makes us behold, through a vaporous veil, which aggrandizes and renders divine all that is seen through it, the exterior objects whither she transports our imaginations. Some chaunts will cause the gigantic phantoms of antique cathedrals to rise before our eyes, at the same time that they will give us to penetrate into the inmost thoughts of the people who built them, and prostrated themselves within their walls in order to give utterance to their religious hymns. To him who knows to express powerfully and artlessly the music of divers peoples, and to him who knows to listen to it as it should be listened to, it will not need to encircle the world, to visit the different nations, to examine their monuments, to read their books, to traverse their upland plains, their mountains, their gardens, or their deserts. A Jewish chaunt, well given, sets us in the interior of the synagogue, and as every true Scottish air contains all Scotland, so is all Spain to be found in a true Spanish air. Thus, I have often been in Poland, in Germany, at Naples, in Ireland, in the Indies, and thus I know those men and those countries better than if I had examined them for so many years. It required but an instant to transport me to them, and to make me live with all that life which gives them animation. It was the essence of that life which I assimilated to myself under the fascination of the music.

By degrees Consuelo ceased to listen, ceased even to hear Albert's violin. Her whole soul was attentive; and her senses, closed up against the reception of direct impressions, were awakened in another world, as if to guide her very being through unknown realms, peopled with new existences. She saw the spectres of the olden heroes of Bohemia moving to and fro in a strange chaos, at once horrible and magnificent; she heard the funereal tolling of the convent bells, when the dreadful Taborites rushed down from the summits of their fortified mountains, emaciated, half-naked, fierce and gory. Then she saw the angels of death assembled among the clouds with the sword and the chalice in their hands. Suspended in serried bands above the heads of prevaricating pontiffs, she saw them pour out on the accursed land the cup of divine wrath. She fancied she could hear the flapping of their heavy wings, and the dripping of the blood of the Redeemer in heavy gout behind them, extinguishing the conflagration enkindled by their fury. At one time, it was a night of dread and darkness, through which she could hear the groans and the leath-rattle of the trunks abandoned on the battle-field. At another, it was a scorching day, the heat of which she dared not encounter, through which she saw the terrible blind chief rush by like the thunderbolt, in his scythed car, with his open casque, his rusty corselet, and the gory bandage covering his eyeless sockets. The temples of their own accord flew open to his coming; the monks fled into the entrails of the earth, carrying away and concealing their treasures and their relics in the skirts of their garments. Then the conquerors brought forward emaciated old men, beggars, covered with sores like Lazarus; madmen ran up to meet them, chanting and gibbering like Zdenko, executioners polluted with black gore; young children with pure hands and angelic faces; warrior-women carrying stacks of pikes and resinous torches, all took their seats about a table; and an angel

radiant and beautiful as those whom Albert Durer has painted in his composition of the Apocalypse, offered to their parched lips the wooden goblet, the chalice of pardon, of restoration, and of holy equality.

This angel reappeared in all the visions which at that time passed before the eyes of Consuelo. As she looked at him earnestly, she recognised him for Satan, the most beautiful of the immortals after the Father, the saddest after the Saviour, the proudest among the proud. He dragged after his steps the chains he had broken; and his bab-wings, all soiled and drooping, gave token of the sufferings and the captivity he had undergone. He smiled mournfully upon the crime-polluted men, and pressed the little children to his heart.

On a sudden, it seemed to Consuelo that Albert's violin was speaking, and that it spoke with the voice of Satan. "No," it said, "my brother Christ loved you not better than I love you. It is time that you should know me, and that in lieu of calling me the enemy of the human race, you recover in me the friend who has aided you through the great struggle. I am not the demon. I am the archangel of legitimate resolution, and the patron of grand conflicts. Like Christ, I am the friend of the poor man, of the weak, and of him that is oppressed. When he promised you the sign of God upon the earth—when he announced to you his return among you, he meant to say that, after having undergone persecution, you should be recompensed, by conquering liberty and happiness with me and with himself. It is together that we were to return, and it is together that we do return, so united one to the other, that we are no longer two, but one. It is he, the divine principle, the God of the Spirit, who descended into the darkness into which ignorance had cast you, and where I underwent, in the flames of passion and indignation, the same torments which the Scribes and Pharisees of all ages caused him to endure upon his cross. Lo! I am here with you forever, my children; for he has broken my chains—he has extinguished my funeral pyre—he has reconciled me to God and to you. And henceforth craft and terror will no longer be the lawful inheritance of the weak, but independence and self-will. It is he—it is Jesus, who is the merciful, the tender, and the just. I am just also, but I am strong, warlike, stern, and persistent. O people! dost thou not recognize him who hath spoken to thee in the secrecy of thy heart, since thou didst first exist, and who in all thy troubles hath consoled thee, saying, 'Seek for pleasure. Renounce it not. Happiness is thy due—demand it, and thou shalt have it. Dost thou not see on my brow all thy sufferings, and on my wounded limbs the scars of the fetters which thou hast borne? Drink of the chalice which I offer thee. Therein thou wilt find my tears, blended with thine and with those of Christ; thou wilt taste them as burning and as salubrious as those which he shed.'"

That hallucination filled the heart of Consuelo with grief and pity blended. She fancied she could see and hear the disinherited angel weeping and groaning beside her. She saw him pale but beautiful, with his long tresses dishevelled about his thunderstricken brow, but still proud, still gazing up to heaven. She admired him, while she yet shuddered through the odd habit of fearing him; and yet she loved him with that pious and fraternal love which is inspired by the sight of puissance in suffering. It seemed to her that from the midst of the Communion of the Bohemian fathers, it was she that he addressed; that he addressed her with gentle reproaches for her dis-

trust and terror; and that he attracted her toward him by a glance of magnetic influence, which she had not the power to resist. Fascinated, without the power to restrain herself, she arose, she darted toward him with extended arms and trembling knees. Albert dropped his violin, which gave forth a plaintive sound as it fell, and received the girl in his arms, uttering a cry of surprise and delight. It was he to whom Consuelo had been listening, and at whom she had been looking, while she was pondering upon the rebellious angel. It was his face, similar to that which she had conjured up to herself, which had attracted and subjugated her; it was his heart against which she had pressed herself, saying in a stifled voice—"To thee! to thee, angel of sorrow! to thee, and to thy God for ever."

But scarcely had Albert's trembling lips touched her own, before she felt a cold and thrilling pain, chill by turns, and by turns enkindle her breast and her brain. Awakened suddenly from her illusion, she experienced so violent a shock throughout the whole of her frame that she thought herself at the point of death, and tearing herself away from the arms of the count she fell against the bones of the altar, a portion of which gave way with her weight with a horrible noise. As she felt herself covered with these remnants of the human frame, and as she saw Albert, whom she had just clasped in her arms and rendered in some degree the master of her soul and of her liberty in a moment of frenzied excitement, she underwent a pang of terror and anguish so horrible that she hid her face in her dishevelled hair crying in a voice interrupted by sobs,—“Hence! Hence! in the name of heaven, give me light and air. Oh, my God! take me from this sepulchre and restore me to the light of day.”

Albert seeing her grow pale and toss her head, darted toward her, and endeavored to take her in his arms, in order to carry her out of the cavern; but in her terror she did not understand him, and recovering herself with an effort from her fall, she took flight toward the further end of the cavern, recklessly and without taking heed of any obstacles, or of the sinuous channels of the stream which crossed and recrossed before her footsteps, and which in several places were very dangerous. “In God's name,” Albert exclaimed as she fled, “not here—not this way—stop! stop! death is before your feet, wait until I come!”

But his outcries only added to Consuelo's fears. She leaped the rivulet twice with bounds as active as though a fawn, and without the slightest knowledge of what she was doing. At length she struck her foot in a dark spot planted with cypress trees, against an eminence of the soil, and fell with her hands outstretched before her, upon a piece of fresh lately dug ground.

The slight shock altered the disposition of her nerves. A sort of stupefaction succeeded to her apprehensions, and panting, overpowered, and having no longer the lightest recollection of what had affected her, she let the count overtake her and draw near to her side. He had rushed away in pursuit of her, and had the presence of mind to snatch up in haste, even as he ran by, one of the torches which were fixed among the rocks, in order that he might at least have the power of giving her light among the windings of the rivulet, in case he should not overtake her, until she had reached a portion of it, which he knew to be deep, and toward which she appeared to be making her way.

Astonished and half stunned by motions so sudden and so contrary

in their effect, the young man did not presume either to address or to lift her from the ground. She had seated herself on the mound of earth over which she had stumbled, and like himself was too timid to say a word to him. Confused and shy, she sat gazing mechanically on the ground through her lowered eyelids before the spot where she was seated. Suddenly she observed that the mound whereon she sat had the *shape* and dimensions of a tomb, and that she was actually seated on a grave, which had been but recently filled up, and which was strewn with cypress boughs scarcely yet withered, and flowers not quite faded. She started to her feet in haste, and in a new fit of terror which she could not subdue, exclaimed, "Oh, Albert, whom have you buried here?"

"I have buried here," replied Albert, unable to conceal an emotion of anguish, "that which the world contained the most dear to me before I made your acquaintance. If it was a sacrilege, inasmuch as I committed it in the idea that I was fulfilling a sacred duty, and at a moment when I was almost delirious, God will pardon me for it. I will tell you in some future time whose body it is that rests here. But at this moment your feelings are too much excited to bear the recital, and you want to be once more in the open air. Come, Consuelo, let us leave this spot in which, within a single moment, you have made me the happiest and the most unhappy of men."

"Oh yes," she replied, "let us go hence. I know not what exhalations arise here from the bosom of the ground, but I feel that I am dying of them, and that my reason is forsaking me."

They issued forth together, without exchanging a word farther. Albert walked in front, stopping and lowering his torch at every stone they encountered, in order that his companion might see and avoid it. But when he was about to open the door of the cell a recollection far removed, as it would seem, from the bent of her mind at that moment, but which was connected with her artistical propensities, was awakened in the mind of Consuelo.

"Albert," said she, "you have forgotten your violin, near the spring. That wonderful instrument, which aroused in me emotions of which until this day I have been ignorant, shall never with my consent be delivered up to certain destruction in that humid place."

Albert made a gesture which was intended to convey to her that there was now nothing on earth with the exception of herself which was of any value in his eyes. But she persisted, saying, "It has caused me much pain, and yet—"

"If it has only given you pain," he replied bitterly, "let it perish. I will never touch it again while I live. Oh! I care not how soon it is ruined."

"I should speak falsely were I to say so," answered Consuelo, recovering her feelings of respect toward the musical genius of the count. "The emotion was greater than I could bear, and enchantment was turned to agony. Go, my friend, bring it thence. I will replace it with my own hands in its casket, until I recover courage to bring it forth, replace it in your hands, and listen to it once again."

Consuelo was touched by the expression of gratitude which the count's features assumed as he received that permission to hope. He returned into the cavern in order to obey her, and thus left to herself for a few minutes, she began to reproach herself with her weak terrors and her groundless though horrible suspicions. She recollected trembling and blushing as it recurred to her, how in that fit of feverish

delirium she had cast herself into his arms; but she could not help admiring the modest and chaste timidity of that man who adored her, and who yet had not availed himself of that opportunity to address her with a single word of love. The sorrow which she observed in all his features, the languid and disheartened demeanor which he bore, told her that he had conceived no presumptuous hope either for the present or the future. She gave him credit for so much delicacy of heart, and determined to soften by kinder words than she had yet used, the bitterness of the farewell which she was about to take of him on their leaving the cavern.

But the recollection of Zdenko seemed to pursue like a vengeful phantom to the very last, and to accuse Albert in spite even of herself.

As she drew near to the door her eyes fell on an inscription in Bohemian, the whole of which with the exception of a single word, she easily understood, inasmuch as she knew it by heart. A hand, which could be no other than that of Zdenko, had traced on the black and gloomy portals these words in chalk—"May He who has been wronged grant thee—"

What followed was incomprehensible to Consuelo, and that circumstance caused her acute uneasiness. Albert returned and replaced his violin in the case, without her having the power to assist him as she had promised to do. She again felt all the impatience to quit the cavern which she had experienced at first. When he turned the key in the rusty lock, she could not refrain from laying her finger on the mysterious word, and turning a glance of interrogation upon him.

"That signifies," replied Albert, answering her look with a sort of strange calmness, "May the Angel, who has ever been misunderstood, the friend of the unhappy, he, Consuelo, of whom we spoke but now."

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

"May Satan, I say, grant thee pardon!"

"Pardon for what?" she asked, turning pale as she spoke.

"If suffering deserves pardon," answered the count with melancholy calmness, "I have a long prayer to offer."

They entered the gallery, and did not again break silence until they had reached the people's cavern. But when the light of day from without began to fall with its bluish tints on the face of the count, Consuelo saw that two streams of tears were flowing silently down his cheeks. She was deeply affected, and when he drew nigh with a timid air to carry her across the outlet of the stream, she preferred wetting her feet in that brackish water to allowing him to lift her in his arms. She excused herself on the ground of the languor and weariness which he seemed to experience, and was already on the point of dipping her slipper in the mud when Albert said, extinguishing the torch as he spoke—

"Fare you well, then, Consuelo. I see by the aversion you manifest toward me that I must return into everlasting night; and like a ghost, evoked by you for one brief moment, return to my tomb, having succeeded in terrifying you only."

"No. Your life belongs to me," cried Consuelo, turning round and staying him. "You swore to me that you would never re-enter that cavern except in my company, and you have no right to take back your oath."

"And wherefore would you impose the burthen of human life on the mere phantom of a man. He who is alone but the shadow of a

mortal, and he who is loved of none, is alone everywhere, and with all men."

"Albert, Albert, you rend my heart. Come, carry me forth. fancy, that in the full light of day, I shall clearly perceive my own destinies."

CHAPTER LVI.

ALBERT obeyed her; and when they had begun to make their way downward from the base of the Schreckenstein into the lower vallies, Consuelo indeed felt that the agitation she had experienced was passing away. "Pardon me;" she said, "pardon me for the pain I have given you;" as she leaned gently on his arm and walked forward. "It is very certain I myself was attacked by a fit of frenzy in the cavern."

"Why recall it to your mind, Consuelo? I should never have spoken of it, not I. I well know that you would fain efface it from your memory. I must also endeavor to forget it."

"My friend, I do not desire to forget it, but to ask your pardon for it. If I were to tell you the strange vision which came over me as I listened to your Bohemian airs, you would see that I was indeed out of my senses when I gave you such a shock of surprise and alarm. You cannot believe that I wished to disturb your reason and your peace of mind for any pleasure. Oh, God! Heaven is my witness, that even now I would gladly give my life for you."

"I know that you place no inestimable value on life, Consuelo. And I know that I should cling to life with the utmost avidity, if—"

"If—what? Proceed."

"If I were loved, as I love."

"Albert, I love you as much as it is permitted me to love. I should love you, doubtless, as you deserve to be loved, if—"

"If—what? It is your turn now to proceed."

"If insurmountable obstacles did not render it a crime in me to do so."

"And what are these obstacles? I seek for them in vain as they exist around you. I can find them only in the recesses of your own heart—in your recollections—where they doubtless have a real being."

"Speak not of my recollections. They are detestable to me; and far rather would I die than live again the years that are passed by. But your rank in the world, your fortune, the opposition and indignation of your parents,—where do you suppose I can find courage to face all that? I possess nothing in the world but my pride and my disinterestedness; and what would remain to me, were I to sacrifice these?"

"My love would remain to you, and your own also, if you loved me I feel that this is not so; and I will but ask of you a little pity. How can it be that you should feel humiliated by granting me a little happiness as it were an alms? Which of us is it that would so fall prostrate before the knees of the other? In what respect should my fortune degrade you? Could we not speedily distribute it among the poor, if it should prove as wearisome to you as it does to me? Do

you not believe that I have long since resolved to employ it, as it should seem good to my tastes, or my ideas of right; in other words, to rid myself of it, as soon as the death of my father shall add the pain of inheriting wealth to the pain of separation? What then? Do you fear to be rich? Lo! I have vowed myself to poverty. Do you fear to be ennobled by my name? My name is an assumed one, and my true name is proscribed. I will never re-assume it. To do so would be to injure the memory of my father. But in the obscurity in which I shall bury myself, no one shall be dazzled by it, I swear to you; and you will not have the power to reproach me with it. To conclude. As to the opposition of my parents—oh! if there were no obstacle but that—only tell me that there is no other, and you shall see the result."

"It is the greatest of them all—the only one which all my devotion, all my gratitude to you, would not allow me to conquer."

"You are deceiving me, Consuelo. Swear that this is the only obstacle—you dare not swear that you are not deceiving me."

Consuelo hesitated. She had never told a falsehood; and yet she now desired to make reparation to her friend for the pain she had given him—him who had saved her life, and watched over her during several months with all the anxiety of a tender and intelligent mother. She flattered herself that she was taking away the sting of her refusal by framing obstacles, which she did, in truth, believe to be insurmountable. But Albert's reiterated questions confused her, and her own heart was a labyrinth, in the mazes of which she actually lost her way; for she could not say with certainty whether she loved or hated this strange man, toward whom a potent and mysterious sympathy had impelled her, while an invincible apprehension, and something that closely resembled aversion, made her tremble even now at the idea of an engagement.

It seemed to her, at that moment, that she actually hated Anzoleto. Could it be otherwise, when she compared him with his brutal selfishness, his abject ambition, his cowardice, and his perfidy; with this Albert, so generous, so humane, so pure, and so greatly endowed with all the loftiest and most romantic virtues? The only cloud which could overshadow her judgment concerning this parallel, was the attempt on the life of Zdenko, with which she could not help charging him. And yet was not this very suspicion a disease of her imagination, a moral nightmare which the explanation of a moment might suffice to set at rest? She resolved to make the experiment, and pretending to be absent and not to have understood Albert's last question, "My God!" she cried, as she stopped to gaze at a peasant who was passing by at some distance, "I thought I saw Zdenko."

Albert shuddered, dropped Consuelo's arm, which he had been holding, and advanced a few paces; then he stopped abruptly and turned back. "How strange an error is this, Consuelo?—That man has not a single feature of resemblance to—" he could not bring himself to utter the name of Zdenko, and his face was entirely changed as he spoke.

"You nevertheless thought it was he yourself, an instant ago," said Consuelo, who was watching him keenly.

"I am extremely short-sighted, and I ought to have remembered that such a meeting were impossible."

"Impossible! Is Zdenko, then, very far distant hence?"

"Sufficiently distant, that you have no more need to dread his mad

"Can you not explain to me the origin of his sudden hatred to me, after the evidences of sympathy which he gave me at first?"

"I told you that it is the consequence of a dream that he had on the eve of your descent into the cavern. He saw you in his dream following me to the altar, at which you consented, as he imagined, to plight me your faith, and there you began to sing our old Bohemian hymns in a voice so powerful that it made the whole church tremble. Then while you were singing, he saw me turn pale, and sink through the pavement of the church, until I was wholly swallowed up, and lay dead in the sepulchre of my ancestors. Then he saw you hastily throw off your bridal wreath, push a flagstone with your foot so that it instantly covered me, and then dance upon that funereal slab, singing incomprehensible words in an unknown tongue, with all the symptoms of the most immoderate and cruel joy. Full of frenzy, he threw himself upon you, but you had already vanished away in smoke, and he awoke bathed in sweat and frantic with passion. He even awoke me, for his cries and imprecations made the whole vault of the cell ring and re-echo. I had much trouble in inducing him to relate his dream to me, and yet greater difficulty in preventing him from believing that he could perceive in it the real course of my future destiny. It was by no means an easy task to convince him; for I was myself under the influence of a sort of sickly excitement of my spirits, and I had never before attempted to dissuade him from reposing faith in his dreams and visions. Nevertheless, I thought that I had succeeded; for during the day which followed that wild and perturbed night, he seemed to retain no recollection of it, for he made no allusion to it; and when I requested him to go and speak with you of me, he made no objection. He thought you had never even entertained an idea of coming to seek me where I then was, and that there was no possibility of doing so, nor did his delirium break forth again until he saw you undertake it. At least he did not allow me to discover his hatred toward you until he met us together on our return through the subterranean galleries. Then he told me laconically, in the Bohemian language, his intention and firm determination to deliver me from you—for it is so that he expressed himself—and to destroy you the first time he should meet you alone; because you were the scourge of my life, and because he could read my death written in your eyes. Pardon me for repeating these last outpourings of his madness, and understand now wherefore it was necessary for me to remove him, both from you and myself. Let us speak of this no more, I implore you; it is too painful a subject of conversation. I loved Zdenko as a second self. His madness had assimilated itself and identified itself with my own, to such a degree that our thoughts, our visions, nay, but even our own physical sufferings had become spontaneously the same. He was, moreover, simpler and more artless, and by so much more a poet than myself; his temperament was more equable, and the visions which I beheld hideous and menacing, became gentle and mournful, as apprehended by the organization of his mind, tenderer, and more serene than mine. The great difference between us was the irregular occurrence of my seizures, and the continuous character of his frenzy. While I was at one time a prey to fierce delirium, or a cold and astounded spectator of my own misery, he lived in a sort of continual dream, during which all external objects assumed a symbolical form, and this species of hallucination was always so gentle and affectionate, that in my lucid intervals—which

were of a surety the most painful hours of my life—I felt an actual need of the peaceful and ingenuous aberrations of Zdenko to reanimate me and reconcile me to life."

"Oh, my friend," said Consuelo, "you ought to hate me, and I hate myself for having deprived you of a friend so dear and so devoted. But has not his exile lasted long enough? By this time may he not be cured of a mere passing fit of violence, which—"

"He is cured of it *probably*," interrupted Albert, with a strange and bitter smile.

"Well then," continued Consuelo, who was anxious to divest herself of the idea of his death, "Why do you not recall him? I assure you, I shall see him again without any apprehension, and together we shall easily bring him to lay aside his prejudices against me."

"Do not talk thus, Consuelo," said Albert, dejectedly. "His return is henceforth impossible. I have sacrificed my best friend, him who was my companion, my attendant, my support, my artless, ignorant, and obedient child, my solicitous and laborious mother, the purveyor of all my wants, of all my innocent and melancholy pleasures—him who defended me against myself during my fits of despair, and who employed both strength and stratagem to prevent me from quitting my cell, when he saw me incapable of maintaining my own dignity, and my own course of life in the world of the living, and in the society of other men. I made that sacrifice without retrospect and without remorse, because it was my duty so to do. Because in encountering the perils of the cavern, in restoring to my reason and the perception of my duties, you were become more precious, more sacred to me than Zdenko himself."

"This is an error—this is almost a blasphemy, Albert! The courage of one moment must not be compared with the devotion of a life."

"Do not imagine that a selfish and savage passion prevailed with me to act as I have acted. I should have well known how to stifle such a passion in my own breast, and to have locked myself up in my cavern with Zdenko, rather than break the heart and destroy the life of the best of men. But the voice of God had spoken to me distinctly. I had resisted the fascination which was overpowering me. I had avoided you; I had determined to abstain from seeing you, so long as the dreams and presentiments, which led me to hope that in you I should find the angel of my safety, should not be fulfilled, until the frenzy into which a lying dream cast Zdenko, disturbing the whole tenor of his pious and gentle organization, he shared all my aspirations, all my fears, all my hopes, all my religious desires concerning you. The unhappy being misconceived you on the very day in which you were revealing yourself. The celestial light which had always illuminated the mysterious regions of his spirit was suddenly extinguished, and God condemned him by sending upon him the spirit of frenzy and of fury. It was my duty, therefore, also to abandon him; for you had appeared to me more wrapped in a blaze of glory; you had descended toward me, upborne on wings, as if a prodigy, and you had the command of words, for the unsealing of my eyes, which your calm intellect and artistic education rendered it impossible for you to have studied or prepared. Pity and charity inspired you, and under their miraculous influence you spoke to me words, which it was necessary for me to comprehend, in order to conceive and understand the truth of human life."

"And what did I ever speak to you so forcible and so wise? Of a truth, Albert, I have no idea of it."

"Nor I, myself. But it seemed to me that God himself dwelt in the sound of your voice and in the serenity of your gaze. By your side I understood in one instant, all that, if alone, I should never have comprehended in my whole life. I knew before that time that my life was an expiation, martyrdom, and I sought out the accomplishment of my destiny in darkness, in solitude, in tears, in indignation, in study, in asceticism, in macerations. You presented to my sight a different life, a different martyrdom; one of patience, of gentleness, of endurance, of devotion. The duties which you explained to me so artlessly and simply, beginning with those which I owed my family, had all been forgotten by me; and my family, in the excess of its goodness, had suffered me to overlook my own crimes. I have repaid them, thanks to you; and from the first day of my doing so, I knew, by the calmness which reigned within me, that I had done all that God required at my hands for the present. I know that I have not done all; but I expect fresh revelations from God as to the remainder of my existence; but I have now all confidence, since I have discovered the oracle which I can henceforth consult. It is you, Consuelo! Providence has given you power over me, and I will not revolt against His decrees, by endeavoring to escape from it. I ought not then to hesitate an instant between the superior power invested with the capacity of regenerating me, and the poor passive creature, who up to that time had only shared my distresses and bowed before my storms of frenzy."

"You speak of Zdenko? But how know you that God has not predestined me to cure him also? You must have seen that I had already gained some power over him, since I succeeded in convincing him by a single word, when his hand was already raised to kill me."

"O my God! it is true. I have broken faith; I was afraid; I knew the oaths of Zdenko. He had sworn to me, contrary to my wishes, to live for me alone, and he kept his oath ever since I have been alive, in my absence just as before, and since my return. When he swore that he would *destroy* you, I did not once conceive that it was possible to prevent him from carrying out his resolution, and I took the plan of offending him, of banishing him, of breaking his spirit, and of *destroying* him."

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

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

"Oh! heaven! heaven! you have not *killed* him, Albert!" Consuelo, as she suffered that terrible word to escape her lips, clung with tenacious energy to Albert's arm, and gazed at him with terror, mingled with painful pity. She recoiled from the cold and haughty aspect which that pale face assumed, in the expression of which agony seemed to be actually petrified.

"I have not *killed* him," he made answer, "and yet I have, of a surety, taken his life from him. Will you dare to impute it to me as a crime; you for whom I would perhaps kill my father in the same manner; you for whom I would brave all remorse, and break all the dearest ties, all the most cherished realities? If I have preferred the regret and repentance which devour me, to the fear of seeing you assassinated by a madman, have you so little *pity* in your heart as to

hold that remorse perpetually up to my eyes, and to reproach me with the greatest sacrifice I have ever been enabled to make to you? Ah, you also! you also have your moments of cruelty. Cruelty cannot be extinguished in the heart of any single being who is one of the human race."

There was so much solemnity in this reproach, which was the first that Albert ever had dared to make to Consuelo, that she was deeply alarmed, and felt—more keenly than it had ever befallen her to feel it before—how great was the terror with which he inspired her. A sort of humiliation which, though, perhaps, childish, is nevertheless inherent in the heart of woman, succeeded to the sweet sense of pride against which she had vainly striven, as she heard Albert describe the passionate veneration with which she had inspired him. She felt herself debased, and misunderstood then, beyond a doubt; for she had not sought to penetrate his secret without a direct intention of doing so, or at least without a desire of responding to his love, should he succeed in justifying himself. At the same time, she saw that she was herself the guilty in the eyes of her lover; for if he had killed Zdenko, the only person in the world who had no right to condemn him irrevocably for the deed, was she whose life had required, at the hands of the unhappy Albert, the sacrifice of another life, which under other circumstances, would have been infinitely precious to him.

Consuelo had not a word to reply. She would fain have spoken of some other topic, but her tears cut short her speech. Albert, now repentant, would have humiliated himself in his turn, but she implored him to speak no more on a subject so appalling to his spirit, and promised him in a sort of bitter satisfaction never again to pronounce a name which awakened in herself no less than in him, emotions so fearful. The rest of their walk was darkened by constraint and piercing anguish. They vainly endeavored to hit upon some other topic. Consuelo knew neither what she was saying nor to what she was listening. Albert, on the contrary, appeared calm as Abraham or Brutus after the performance of the sacrifices enforced upon them by stern destinies. That mournful tranquillity, deeply rooted, and weighing upon the breast with something of the weight of madness, was not without some resemblance to a lingering remnant of that disease, and Consuelo could only justify her friend to her own mind by remembering that he was a madman. If in an open conflict of strength against strength he had slain his adversary, in an attempt to save her, she would have discovered in the deed only a newer cause for gratitude, perhaps for admiration of his vigor and courage. But this mysterious murder, committed, doubtless, amid the darkness of the cavern; this tomb hollowed out in the very place of holy prayer; and this ferocious silence after an incident so horrible; this stoical fanaticism with which he had dared to lead her into the cavern, and there to deliver himself up to the charms and ecstasies of music, all this was too horrible, and Consuelo felt that the love of such a man could never penetrate her heart. Then she began to ask herself at what time he could have committed this murder. "I have never seen," she said to herself, "during these three months, so deep a frown on his forehead that I should attribute it to remorse! and yet had he not one day seen drops of blood on his hand, when I would have offered mine to him. Oh! horror! horror! He must be either of ice or marble, or he must love me with ferocity; and I—I

who desired to be the object of an illimitable passion—I, who regretted that I had been but so feebly loved—I then have received from heaven such a love as this for a compensation.”

Then she began once more to consider at what moment Albert could have performed his horrible sacrifice, and she began to imagine that it must have been during the time when her terrible malady did not permit her to take the slightest notice of external events. Then again when she called to mind the delicate and tender attentions which Albert had lavished on her, she could not reconcile the two several phases of this man's character, who was at once so different from himself and from other men.

Absorbed in these painful musings, she received the flowers which Albert, knowing that she was very fond of them, was wont to gather for her as they walked along; but it was with a trembling hand and an abstracted mind that she received them. She did not even think to leave him so as to enter the chateau alone, and suffer it to appear that they had not been so together tête-à-tête. Whether it so happened that Albert thought of it no more than she, or that he was determined to carry on his deception with his family no longer, he did not remind her of it, so that at the entrance of the chateau, they found themselves face to face with the canoness. Consuelo, and probably Albert also, now for the first time saw the features of this woman, whose goodness of heart, for the most part, concealed her ugliness, despite her leanness and deformity, kindled by anger and disdain.

“It is, indeed, time that you should return home, Mademoiselle,” said she to La Porporina, in tones trembling and broken with agitation. “We were greatly alarmed concerning Count Albert. His father, who has not chosen to breakfast without him, was anxious to have a conversation with him this morning, which you have thought proper to forget. And as regards yourself, there is a slight young man in the drawing-room, who calls himself your brother, and who is waiting for you with more impatience than politeness.”

And with these singular words, poor Wenceslawa, alarmed at her own courage, turned her back abruptly, and ran to her room, where she wept and coughed for above an hour.

CHAPTER LVII.

“My aunt is in a strange mood,” said Albert to Consuelo, as they ascended the steps leading to the terrace. “I ask your pardon in her behalf, dear lady; be sure that this very day she will change both her manners and language toward you.”

“My brother!” cried Consuelo, astonished at the message which had been delivered to her, and not hearing what the Count had said.

“I did not know that you had a brother,” said Albert, who had paid more attention to his aunt's ill temper than to that event. “Undoubtedly it will be a pleasure to you to see him, dear Consuelo, and I am rejoiced—”

“Rejoice not, Monsieur Le Count,” said Consuelo, of whom a sad presentiment was rapidly taking possession. “Perhaps it is a great

calamity which is at this moment preparing for me, and I—” she stopped trembling and disturbed, for she had been on the point of asking his advice and protection, but she feared to connect herself with him too closely, and scarcely knowing whether to receive or to avoid one who introduced himself to her presence through the medium of a lie; she felt her limbs yielding under her, and turning very pale, clung to the balustrades on the last step of the terrace stair.

“Do you apprehend some painful intelligence from your family?” asked Albert, who was beginning to grow uneasy.

“I have no family,” replied Consuelo, compelling herself to proceed. She was on the point of saying “I have no brother,” but a vague apprehension prevented her from doing so. But as she crossed the dining-room, she heard the boot of the traveller creaking on the drawing-room carpet, as he walked to and fro impatiently. With an involuntary movement she drew nearer to the young count, and pressed his arm, entwining her own around it, as if to take refuge in his love from the sufferings whose approach she foresaw.

Albert, as he perceived the movement, felt all his mortal apprehensions awakening anew. “Do not go in without me,” he whispered “I divine some presentiments which never have deceived me, that this brother is your enemy and mine. I am chilled to the heart; I am terrified; as if I were about to be compelled to hate some one.”

Consuelo disengaged the arm which Albert held tightly clasped to his bosom. She trembled at the idea that he was about to conceive one of those singular notions, one of those implacable conclusions, of which the supposed death of Zdenko had given her so frightful an example. “Let us separate here,” she said, speaking in German, for what was said could be heard in the adjoining room. “I have nothing to fear at this time, but if in future any peril should threaten me, count upon me, Albert, I will apply to you.”

Albert yielded with visible reluctance. But, fearing to offend her delicacy, he did not dare to disobey her; still he could not resolve to leave the dining-room, and Consuelo, who understood his hesitation, closed the double doors of the drawing-room behind her, in order that he might neither hear or see what should pass therein.

Anzoleto, for it was he, as she had but too surely divined through his audacity, and too well recognised by the sound of his footsteps, had prepared himself to meet her impudently with a fraternal embrace on her entrance in the presence of witnesses. But when he saw her enter alone, pallid, indeed, but cold and stern, he lost all his courage, and cast himself stammering before her feet. He had no occasion to feign tenderness or joy, for he really felt the two sentiments on seeing her once again whom he had never ceased to love amid all his treasons. He burst into tears, and as she would not let him take her hands, he covered the skirts of her raiment with tears and kisses. Consuelo had not looked to find him thus. During four months she had thought of him continually as he had showed himself on the night of their rupture, bitter, ironical, despicable and hateful above all men. That very morning she had seen him pass by, with an insolent deportment and an air of recklessness which was all but impudent; and now he was on his knees, humbled, repentant, bathed in tears, as in the stormiest days of their passionate reconciliations. Handsomer than ever, for his simple travelling costume, which, though rude, became him well; his fine features had gained a more masculine character, from the exposure to the weather on his road.