

performed the ceremony. Consuelo and Joseph filled the stations of god-father and god-mother, and the name of Angela was confirmed to the little girl. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to music, and then followed the leave-taking. The canon was mortified at his inability to detain his friends to dinner, but he yielded to their arguments, and consoled himself with the idea of seeing them often in Vienna, where he proposed to come and spend a portion of the winter. While they were harnessing the carriage, he led them to the hot-house, in order to make them admire some new plants, with which he had enriched his collection. The day was closing, but the canon, all whose senses were highly cultivated, had made but a few steps under the crystal roof of his transparent palace, when he cried out, "I discover here an extraordinary perfume. Can the vanilla-scented gladisus have flowered? But no, it is not the aroma of my gladisus. The strelitzas are scentless; the perfume of the cyclamens is less pure and less penetrating than this. What can have happened here? If my volkameria were not dead, I should think that this was it. Alas! poor plant! I will think of it no more!"

But on a sudden the good canon gave a great start, and uttered a cry of surprise and admiration as he saw, standing before him in a large tub, the finest volkameria he had ever beheld in all his life, all covered with clusters of little white roses, centred with pink, the sweet perfume of which filled the whole hot-house, and overpowered all the commoner odors which reigned around it.

"Is this a prodigy? Whence is this foretaste of Paradise—this flower from the garden of Beatrice?" he exclaimed, in a poetic rapture.

"We have brought it hither in our carriage, with all care imaginable," said Consuelo. "Permit us to offer it to you in reparation of a horrible imprecation which escaped my lips on a certain day, and which I shall repent so long as I live."

"Oh! my dear daughter, what a gift!—and with what delicacy is it not offered! Oh! beloved volkameria, you shall have a particular name, such as I am in the habit of giving to the most splendid individuals of my collections. You shall be called Bertoni, in order to consecrate the memory of a being who exists no longer, but whom I yet loved with the affection of a father."

"Nay, good father," said Consuelo, pressing his hand, "you ought to accustom yourself to love your daughters as much as your sons. Angela is not a boy."

"And la Porporina is my daughter also," said the canon. "Yes, my daughter—my daughter," he repeated, looking alternately at Consuelo and the Bertoni volkameria with tears in his eyes.

At six o'clock in the evening Consuelo and Joseph had entered their own house; the carriage had set them down at the entrance of their suburb, and nothing betrayed their innocent escapade. Porpora was only astonished that Consuelo had not a better appetite after her drive through the beautiful meadows which surround the capital of the empire, but the canon's breakfast had perhaps rendered Consuelo a little dainty that day; the fine air, however, and the exercise she had taken, secured her a good night's rest, and on the morrow she felt herself in better health and courage than she had been since she arrived at Vienna.

## CHAPTER LXXXVII.

AMID the uncertainty of her destiny, Consuelo expecting perhaps to find an excuse or motive in her own heart, determined to write at once to Count Christian of Rudolstadt, to inform him of her relations to Porpora, of the efforts the latter had made to induce her to return to the theatre, and that she hoped yet to be able to disappoint his expectations. She spoke to him in full sincerity, and made a display of all the gratitude, devotion, and submission, which was due her old master. Making him the confidant of all her apprehensions in relation to Albert, she besought him at once to dictate a letter to the latter, the effect of which would be to procure him calm and quiet. She concluded it thus:—"I ask your lordship to grant me time to look into my own heart, and to make up my own mind. I am resolved to keep my word, and can swear before God that I am able to close my heart and mind to every new phantasy and to every new affection. If, though, I return to the theatre, I act in such a manner as to violate every promise, and renounce all hope of being able to keep my obligations; let your lordship judge me, or rather the destiny which compels me and the duty which commands me. From you I expect more than from my own reason. Can it, however, contradict my conscience?"

When this letter was sealed and given to Joseph, Consuelo felt more calm, as always happens when people are in difficulty and are able to gain time or postpone a crisis. She then prepared to pay a visit with Porpora, which he thought most important and decisive, to the much bepraised imperial poet, the Abbe Metastasio.

This illustrious personage was then about fifty years of age. His face was handsome, his address was graceful, and his conversation charming. Consuelo would have entertained the greatest sympathy for him, but for the fact that in entering the house the separate stories of which were inhabited by the imperial poet and the wig-maker Keller, she had the following conversation.

"Consuelo, (Porpora speaks,) you are about to see a handsome man, with a keen black eye, a ruddy complexion, and a fresh and smiling lip. He insists on subjecting himself to a slow and dangerous malady. He eats, sleeps, toils, and grows fat, just as any one else does; yet, he feigns to suffer from want of sleep, appetite, debility, and marasmus. Do not be so ignorant, as, when he complains of illness, to tell him that he has none, that he looks well, or any other similar fatuity. He wishes people to pity him, and is unhappy that people do not put on mourning for him before he dies. Do not, though, speak to him of death, or of any one that is dead, for he fears to die. Do not when you leave him, be so stupid as to say:—'I hope when I see you again your health will be better.' for he wishes all to think he is dying, and could he persuade others that he is dead he would be too well satisfied, provided always that he were well satisfied himself that he is really alive."

"That is a foolish mania for a great man," said Consuelo. "What can one say, if he will be either dead nor alive?"

"Speak to him of his disease, ask him a thousand questions, listen to a description of all his sufferings and troubles; and in conclusion say, that he is too careless of himself, that he is too negligent, and works too hard. By talking in this manner we shall win his favor."



"Do we not go to ask him to write a song, music to which you will compose, and which I will sing? How can we at once advise him not to write, and then ask him to write for us?"

"In the course of conversation all this will come right. We have only to arrange matters beforehand."

The maestro wished his pupil to make herself agreeable to the poet. The natural caustic vein of his temperament did not permit him to restrain the ridiculous points of the disposition of others, and he was awkward enough to prepare Consuelo for a rigid examination, and for a perfect contempt which we always feel for those who insist on being flattered and admired. Incapable of adulation and deceit, she suffered when she heard Porpora speak of the poet's distresses, and thus cruelly ridicule his imaginary sufferings. Often she blushed and maintained a painful silence in spite of her master's telegraphic efforts to induce her to second him.

The reputation of Consuelo began to be known at Vienna; she had sung in many salons, and her admission into the Italian opera was an hypothesis which not a little agitated all the musical coteries. Metastasio was all powerful; if by flattering his self-esteem Consuelo could induce him to sympathise with her, he would confide to Porpora the task of writing music for *Attileo Regolo*, which he had completed and kept many years in his desk. The pupil then must exert her influence for the master, who did not at all please the imperial poet.

Metastasio was a true Italian, and people of that country are not so easily deceived as some others. He had penetration enough to know Porpora had but a moderate admiration for his dramatic genius, and that more than once (either right or wrong) he had criticised his timidity and his exaggerated sensibility. The icy reserve of Consuelo, the little sympathy she entertained for his sickness, did not seem that they really were the awkwardness respectful pity always inspires. He almost looked on it as an insult, and but for his politeness and knowledge of the world, would have positively refused to hear her sing. After a trifling of some minutes he consented, making an excuse of the excitability of his nerves and his fear of excitement. He had heard Consuelo sing his oratorio of Judith. It was necessary for him to hear her in scenic music. Porpora was anxious too that he should.

"What, though, shall I do, and what shall I sing," said Consuelo in a low tone, "if he is afraid of excitement?"

"Excite him," said the maestro; "he should be aroused from his torpor, because then he feels like writing."

Consuelo sang an air from *Achillo in Sciro*, which had been arranged by Caldara, in 1736, and which was the best dramatic work of Metastasio. It had been performed on the occasion of the marriage of Maria Theresa. Metastasio was as much amazed by her voice and method as when he first heard her. He resolved, though, to maintain the same cold silence she had exhibited when he spoke of his health. He could not succeed, for notwithstanding all, he was an artist, and a noble heart beat in his bosom. Besides, when a good interpreter makes the accents of a part vibrate, and recalls to him the recollection of his triumphs, he cannot be offended.

The Abbe Metastasio attempted to resist the all-powerful charm of her voice. He coughed and moved about in his chair, like a man overcome by suffering. Suddenly, though, as if overcome by recollections which were more touching even than those of his own glory, he covered his face with his handkerchief, and began to sob. Porpora,

who stood behind his chair, made a sign to Consuelo to let him alone, and rubbed his hands maliciously.

These tears which were many and sincere, reconciled Consuelo to the abbe. As soon as she had finished the air, she drew near to kiss his hand and say, with an expression he could not resist: "Alas! sir how proud I would be to have thus excited you, were it not that some remorse hangs about my heart. I am afraid I have injured your health and that poisons all my joy."

"My dear young lady," said Metastasio, completely overcome, "you do not, cannot know the good and evil you have done me. Never before did I hear any female voice which recalled to me that of my dear Marianna! You have so completely recalled both her manner and expression to me, that methought I heard her. Ah! you have crushed my very heart!" He began to weep again.

"His lordship speaks of an illustrious person whom you should always look on as a model," said Porpora to his pupil. "He speaks of the celebrated Marianna Bulgarini."

"*La Romanina*?" said Consuelo. "Ah! when I was a child, I heard her in Venice; it is the first of my happy memories, and I never will forget her."

"I see," said Metastasio, "that you have heard her, and that she has made an ineffaceable impression on you; my child, imitate her in every thing, in her play as well as in her voice, in her kindness as well as in her greatness, in her power as well as in her devotion! How beautiful she seemed in the character of Venus, my first opera at Rome; that was my first triumph."

"And does she owe her greatest success to your lordship?"

"We contributed to the fortune of each other. I could never, though, discharge my obligations to her. Never did so much love, so much perseverance, and so many delicate cares inhabit a mortal soul. Angel of my life, I will weep for you always and aspire only to rejoin you." Here Metastasio wept again. Consuelo was much moved, and Porpora pretended to be, though in spite of every effort, his countenance continued to be scornful as possible. Consuelo observed this, and resolved to reproach him for it. As for Metastasio, he saw only the effect he expected to produce—emotion and admiration in Consuelo. He was a real poet: that is to say, he preferred to weep in the presence of others rather than in the solitude of his own room, and was never so much aware of his sufferings as when he was able to describe them eloquently. Led on by the opportunity, he told Consuelo so much of the early history of his youth, in which *La Romanina* had been so conspicuous: he told of the many services that generous woman had rendered him, of her filial tenderness to her old parents, and the maternal sacrifice she made in separating from him, and sending him to seek his fortune in Vienna. When in the choicest terms he had told her how his dear Marianna, with a lacerated heart and in sobs, had besought him to abandon her, and think only of himself, he said—"Oh! had she imagined the fate which awaited me, when separated from her, had she foreseen the suffering, the terror, anguish, contests, and reverses, and even the terrible disease I was to undergo here, she would have spared each of us this terrible immolation. Alas! I did not think we bade each other an eternal adieu, and that we were never to meet again on earth."

"How—what—did you never meet again?" said Consuelo, whose eyes were filled with tears. The words of Metastasio had a wonderful power over her. "Did she never come to Vienna?"



"She never did," said the abbe, completely overpowered.  
 "After so much devotion, did she not dare to come hither to see you?" said Consuelo, perfectly disregarding Porpora's gestures.

Metastasio was apparently absorbed in his own ideas and said nothing.

"But she may yet do so," said Consuelo candidly. "She certainly will. That would restore your health."

The abbe grew pale and expressed the greatest terror. The maestro coughed as loud as he could, and Consuelo remembering that La Romanina had been dead more than ten years, saw how indiscreet she had been, by reminding the poet of the departed, especially as he hoped to meet her again only in the tomb. She bit her lips, and soon retired with Porpora, who bore away as the fruits of this visit, only vague promises and forced civilities, such as everybody receives.

"How stupid you have been!" said he to Consuelo as soon as they were alone.

"Yes—yes; I see I have been. I forgot that La Romanina is no longer alive; think, maestro, if you please, that this loving and heart-broken man is attached to life as much as you please; I, though, am persuaded that sorrow for the loss of her he loved is the only cause of his sickness; and that, though some superstitious terror makes him tremble at death, he is not the less weary of life."

"My child," said Porpora, "people who are rich, honored, flattered, and in good health, are never weary of life: when people have no other passions or cares than such as he has, they either do not tell the truth, or play a part when they curse their existence."

"Tell me not that he never had any other passions. He loved Marianna, and I now know why he gave that name to his god-daughter, and to his niece Marianna Martiez." Consuelo was near saying the name of Joseph, but did not, for she paused abruptly.

"Go on," said Porpora: "his god-daughter, his niece, or his daughter."

"People say so: but what matters that?"

"It would prove the abbe soon found consolation for the absence of her he loved: when, though, you asked (may God forgive your stupidity) why Marianna did not come here to see him, he did not reply. I will, for him. La Romanina had indeed done him the greatest service which a man can ever receive from a woman. She had fed, lodged, dressed, succored, and sustained him in every condition of life. She even aided him in obtaining the position of *poeta cesareo*. She became the servant, the nurse, the benefactress of his old parents. All this is true—Marianna had a noble heart: I knew her well: it is also true that she was very anxious to see him again, and wished to be received at the Court Theatre. This also is true: the abbe took no interest in her, and never would permit her. True, the most tender letters imaginable passed between them; I am sure those of the poet were admirable: so were hers, for they were printed. Though he said to his *diletissima amica* that he longed for the day of their reunion, that he toiled to bring about that happy dawn, *Maitre Renard* managed so well, that the unfortunate singer never chanced to subside into the crowd of his illustrious and *lucrutare* loves, nor to meet the third Marianna, (some fatality existed, connecting him with women of that name,) the noble and all powerful Countess of Athlan, mistress of the last Cæsar. All say the result of this affair was a secret marriage; and I therefore think it in singular bad taste for him to tear his hair

for poor Romanina, whom he suffered to die of chagrin, while he was writing madrigals to the ladies of the imperial court."

"You comment and decide on all this like a cruel cynic, my dear maestro," said Consuelo, with not a little emotion.

"I speak as every one else does. Public rumor sustains all this Bah! there are many actors who belong to no theatre. That is an old proverb."

"Public rumor is not always well informed: at all events, it is never very charitable. You see, maestro, I cannot think a man so renowned and gifted is only an actor playing his part. I have seen him shed real tears; and even though he should reproach himself for having forgotten his own Marianna too soon, remorse must increase the sincerity of his present regrets. I had, at all events, rather deem him weak than base. He was made an abbe, overwhelmed with benefits; the court was very devout, and amours with actresses would have given rise to great scandal. He did not wish exactly to betray and deceive la Bulgarini . . . He was afraid—he hesitated—he gained time, and she died."

"And, therefore, he thanked Providence," said the pitiless maestro. "Now our empress sends him boxes and rings with her cypher in brilliants, and golden pots of Spanish tobacco; seals made of one brilliant, all of which glitter not a little in the eyes of the poet, filled as they are with tears."

"And can this console him for having crushed la Romanina's heart?"

"Perhaps not. Yet, for these trifles, he crushed it—"  
 "A sad vanity; for my part, I could scarcely keep from laughing when he showed us his golden chandelier, with its golden capital, and the ingenious device the empress caused to be engraved on it—"

*'Perche possa risparmiare i suoi occhi.'*"

"Therefore was it that he appreciated the compliment, and said emphatically:—*Affettuosa espressione, valutabile piu dell'oro.* Oh! poor man!"

"Unfortunate man," said Consuelo, with a sigh. She returned home very sad, for she had involuntarily compared the relation of Marianna and Metastasio, and herself and Albert. "To hope and to die," said she. "Is this the fate of those who love passionately? To make us wait and make us die! Is this the fate of those who passionately pursue the chimera of glory?"

"Why muse thus?" said the maestro. "I think, in spite of all your indiscretions, everything is as it should be, and that you have overcome Metastasio."

"The conquest of so weak a soul as his is a poor triumph. I fancy one who was too timid to receive la Bulgarini in the imperial theatre, will not have courage enough to receive me."

"As far as art is concerned, Metastasio now governs the empress."

"In matters of art Metastasio will give the empress no advice she is apparently unwilling to receive. It is all nonsense to speak of the favorites and counsellors of her majesty. . . . I have seen the features of Maria Theresa, and I tell you, maestro, she is too prudent to have lovers, and too imperious to have friends."

"Well," said Porpora, in a thoughtful manner, "we must gain the empress herself. You must sing some morning in her apartments, and she must speak to and talk with you. They say she only loves virtu-



ous persons; and if she has the eagle eye people say, she will appreciate and love you. I will at once go to work so that I may bring you *tête-à-tête*."

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

ONE morning, when Joseph was sweeping the antechamber of Porpora, he forgot that the room was small, and the maestro's slumbers light, and he sang aloud a musical phrase which occurred to him, to which, with his brush, he kept up a kind of accompaniment. Porpora, offended at being awakened before his time, turned over in his bed and sought to go to sleep; but as he was pursued by this beautiful and fresh voice, which sang a phrase of much expression and beauty, he put on his *robe de chambre*, and looked through the key-hole, half pleased and half offended, also, at the idea of any one venturing to compose in his room before he chose to get up. How great was his surprise to hear Beppo singing and drumming, following out his idea, while he seemed intent on domestic cares.

"What is that you are singing," said the maestro, in a loud voice, as he threw open the door. Joseph, confused as a man might be who was suddenly awakened, threw down his broom and bunch of feathers, and was about to leave the house rapidly as he could. But for a long time, he had abandoned the hope of becoming Porpora's pupil, yet delighted in hearing the studies of Consuelo and the maestro, and in receiving secretly the instruction of that kind friend, when Porpora was absent. He would not then on any account have been dismissed; and to remove any suspicion, determined at once to tell a falsehood.

"What am I singing?" said he, looking down. "Alas! maestro, I do not know."

"Does any man sing anything he does not know? You do not tell the truth."

"I assure you, maestro, I do not. You terrified me so much, that I have already forgotten. I know it was wrong to sing so near your room, and was so engrossed that I thought myself far away. I said, now you can sing, for there is no one near to hear you, and say Hush, you sing false: you could not learn music."

"Who said you sang false?"

"Everybody."

"Well," said the maestro, in a stern voice, "I say you do not. Who tried to teach you music?"

"Why, Maestro Reuter, whom my friend Keller shaves, and who, after one lesson, bade me go about my business, saying I was an ass."

Joseph knew enough of the maestro to be aware that he had no great respect for Reuter; and on this allusion to him, placed no small reliance as a stepping-stone to the good graces of Porpora, though he expected the latter to be useful to him. Reuter, though, in his visits, never deigned to notice his old pupil.

"Master Reuter is an ass himself," muttered Porpora. "That, though, is not the question," said he aloud. "I wish you to tell me where you fished out that passage;" and he sang the one Joseph had, perhaps, sang ten times without thinking of it.

"Oh, that!" said Haydn, who had begun to form a better opinion

of the disposition of his master, though he was not yet sure of it; "it is something I have heard la signora sing."

"Ah! Consuelo? my daughter? I did not know that. Then you listen at this door?"

"No, monsieur; but the music is heard in all the rooms, even in the kitchen, and people must hear."

"I do not like to be served by persons with such a memory, and who, perhaps will shout out my unpublished ideas in the streets. Pack up your things to-day, and in the evening seek another place."

This blow fell like a thunderbolt on poor Joseph, who went to the kitchen in tears. Consuelo soon heard the story of his misfortune, and restored his confidence by promising to regulate matters.

"What, maestro," said she to Porpora, as she handed him his coffee, "would you dismiss the poor lad, who is laborious and faithful, because probably for once in his life, he did not sing false?"

I tell you that servant is a meddling fellow, and a liar—that he has been induced by some enemy of mine to enter my service, so as to obtain the secret of my compositions, and appropriate them before they are published. I venture to swear the fellow already knows my new opera by heart, and copies the manuscripts as soon as my back is turned. How many of my ideas have I not found in those pretty operas which turned the heads of all Venice, while mine were swept away; and people said,—'That old fellow, Porpora, gives us new operas, the airs of which are sung at every corner.' Now this morning the fool betrayed himself, and sang a phrase which certainly comes from Mynheer Hasse, of which I have made a note; and to avenge myself, will put it in my new opera, to repay the trick he has so often played me."

"Be careful, maestro; that phrase has, perhaps, been published. You do not know all our cotemporary publications by heart."

"I have heard them, though; and I tell you it is too remarkable for me to forget it."

"Well, maestro, thank you for the compliment, for the phrase is mine."

This was not true, for the phrase in question had that very morning been shut up in the head of Haydn. She, though, had already learned it, in order to be able to conquer the distrustful investigations of the maestro. Porpora asked her to sing it. She did so at once, pretending that she had tried to arrange it on the previous evening, to gratify the Abbe Metastasio; the first verses of his pretty pastoral:

Gia reide la primavera,  
Col suo fiorito aspetto;  
Glia il grato zeffiretto  
Echerza fra l'erbe e i fiori.  
Tornan le frondi agli alberi  
L'erbette al prato tornano;  
Sol non ritorna a me  
La pace del mio cor."

"I had repeated my first phrase frequently, when I heard in the ante-chamber Master Beppo singing it as valorously as possible. I begged him to hush. After about an hour I heard him singing it on the stairway, so completely disfigured that I got out of humor with it."

"How, then, is it that he sings so well to-day? What has happened in his sleep?"

"I will explain, maestro. I observed the lad had a strong and even



an accurate voice, but sang falsely, from a bad ear, mind, or memory I amused myself by making him go through the scales, after your method, to see whether that would succeed in a person with the musical faculty but partially developed.

"It will always succeed," said Porpora. "There is no such thing as a false voice and an ear which is practiced—"

"Precisely what I say," said Consuelo, who was anxious to come to the end. "That is precisely what has happened—at the conclusion of the first lesson I had taught him what Reuter and all those Germans never could have given him an idea of. I then sang my composition to him, and for the first time he repeated it precisely correct. It was a perfect revelation to him." 'Ah! mademoiselle,' said he, 'had I been taught thus, perhaps I would have been able to learn like others. I will confess, though, that I never could understand the instructions at St. Stephen's.'"

"He has then really been to that institution?"

"Yes; and was expelled with disgrace; you need only ask Reuter. He will tell you that Joseph is a hard case, and that it is musically impossible to form him."

"Come hither you," said Porpora to Beppo, who stood behind the door with tears in his eyes. "Place yourself beside me, and let me find out if you understood the lesson you received yesterday."

The malicious maestro then began to teach Joseph the elements of music in the confused, pedantic and involved manner which is peculiar to the Germans.

Had Joseph, who knew too much, not too fully comprehended the elements, in spite of Porpora's efforts to make them obscure, and suffered his knowledge to appear, he would have been lost. He was shrewd enough to perceive the snare set for him, and exhibited such resolute stupidity, that after a long and obstinate contest, the maestro was completely satisfied.

"I see that your powers are very small," said the latter as he arose and continued a deception of which the others were not the dupes. "Take up your broom again, and if you wish to continue in my service, never try to sing."

After a lapse of about two hours, whether he was stimulated by a desire to return to an art which he had long neglected, Porpora remembered that he was a singing master, and recalled Joseph to the stool. He explained to him the same principles, but now did so distinctly, with that powerful and deep logic which moves and classifies all things; in one word, with that wonderful rapidity of which men of genius alone are capable.

Now Haydn saw that he might appear to understand, and Porpora was enchanted by his triumph. Though the maestro taught him things he had long studied and knew as well as possible, this lesson was of a positively certain use to him; it taught him how to teach; and as at times when Porpora did not need him, he gave music lessons in the city, he resolved to make use of this excellent demonstration as a means of preserving his patrons.

"Well, maestro," said he to Porpora, continuing to keep up the play until the end of the lesson, "I like this music better than the other, and think I can learn it; but as for this morning's lesson, I had rather go back to Saint Stephen's than attempt to learn it."

"It is, though, what you were taught at that institution. Are there two musics?—no more than there are two Gods."

"I beg your pardon, maestro; there is the music of Reuter, which fires me to death, and yours which does not—"

"I thank you for your compliment, Signor Beppo," said Porpora, not at all displeased at the compliment.

Thenceforth Porpora gave Haydn lessons, and they soon reached the lessons of Italian song and the first ideas of lyrical composition. He made such rapid progress that the maestro was at once charmed, mazed and surprised. When Consuelo saw his old suspicions about to spring up again, she advised Haydn how to act so as to dissipate them—a little apparent neglect, a feigned pre-occupation were sometimes necessary to arouse the passion for imparting knowledge in Porpora's mind, for it is always the case that something of resistance is required to arouse to the greatest energy any very powerful faculty. It often happened that Joseph was forced to pretend weariness and inattention, to obtain these precious lessons, at the idea even of neglecting which he trembled. The pleasure of contradiction and the desire of success contended in the ill-tempered and quarrelsome mind of the old professor. Beppo never puffed so much by his lessons as when they were received clearly, eloquently, and ironically from the ill-temper of Porpora.

While the house of Porpora was the scene of these seemingly frivolous events, the consequences of which, however, have so much to do in the history of the art, since the genius of one of the most voluminous and celebrated composers of his time received its final expansion and completion, things exerting a more immediate influence on the romance of Consuelo's life were taking place. La Corilla, who had better capacity for attending to her own business, gained ground every day, and perfectly recovered from her confinement, was making arrangements for a renewal of her engagement at the theatres of the court—a great virtuoso and a mediocre musician, she pleased the director and his wife much better than Consuelo. All knew the learned Porporina would bring exalted taste with her, and that in her mind there was no admiration for the operas of Maestro Holzbauer and his wife's talent. It was well known that great artists, when badly seconded, and forced to become expressions of meagre thoughts, do not always preserve, when they are overpowered by violence done their taste and conscience, that matter of routine, that perfect sang-froid which mediocre persons bear so cavalierly in the representation of the worst works amid the cacophony of compositions badly studied and badly understood by their companions.

Even when, thanks to the miracles of kindness and talents, they triumph over those around them and their parts, the envious are not satisfied, the composer guesses at their inward suffering, and constantly dreads to see their factitious inspiration grow cold and endanger his success. The public itself, amazed and troubled it knows not why, guesses at the monstrous anomaly of genius subjected to a vulgar idea, struggling in the narrow chains it has suffered to be cast around it, and almost sighs at the applause it receives. M. Holzbauer, was well aware of the small estimate Consuelo placed on his music. She had unfortunately exhibited her opinion on an excursion she had made when, being disguised as a boy, she fancied she had to do with one of those personages to be met with but once in a life-time. She spoke frankly, without any idea that some day or other her fate would be at the mercy of the artist friend of the canon. Holzbauer had not forgotten the circumstance, and piqued to the very quick, though he



retained his calmness discretion and courtesy, he swore to prevent her success. As though he was unwilling that Porpora's pupil should have any reason to find fault with his revenge and base susceptibility he had told Consuelo of the affair of the breakfast at the presbytery. This *recontre* did not seem to make any impression on the director who appeared to have nearly forgotten the features of the little Bertoni, and who had not the least idea that the wandering singer and la Porporina were one and the same person. Consuelo could not but enter into a labyrinth of conjectures in relation to the conduct of Holzbauer in regard to her. "During my travels," said she, "was I so perfectly disguised, and did the arrangement of my hair so completely change my face, that a man who looked at me with clear and penetrating eyes as his, could not recognise me?"

"Count Hoditz did not know you when he saw you for the first time at the ambassador's," said Joseph, "and perhaps had he not seen your note he never would have done so."

"True, but the Count has such a haughty and contemptuous way of looking at people, that he really does not see them. I am sure he would have had no idea of my sex, but for the information he received from Baron Trenck. On the other hand, Holzbauer, when he first saw me here, and whenever he sees me, fixes on me those attentive and curious eyes which I observed at the Presbytery. For what reason does he always conceal that secret of a foolish adventure which might seriously injure my reputation, if he pleased to place a bad interpretation on it, and might perhaps really offend the maestro, who thinks I came to Vienna without difficulty, hindrance, or any romantic incidents, at the very time that Holzbauer deprecates my manner and method, and deserts me as much as possible to avoid the necessity of engaging me? He hates and repels me, yet though he has the most powerful arms in the world against my success, does not use them—"

The explanation of this mystery Consuelo soon discovered. Before, though, we tell what happened to her, we must remind all that a powerful coterie was at work to supplant her. That Corilla was beautiful and coquettish; that the Prime Minister Kaunitz often saw her, and loved to intermingle in green-room cabals, and that Maria Theresa, to repose from her great cares, amused herself by gossip about such matters with her Minister, laughed at the interest he took in such trifles, though she herself had sympathy with them, inasmuch as they exhibited to her in miniature a spectacle somewhat analogous to that witnessed in the three principal courts of Europe, each of which was governed by female intrigue—her own, that of the Czarina, and that of Madame de Pompadour.

#### CHAPTER LXXXIX.

It is well known that Maria Theresa gave an audience every week to all who wished to speak with her—a paternally hypocritical custom, which her son Joseph II. religiously observed, and which is yet observed in Austria. Besides, Maria Theresa willingly gave private audiences to all who wished to enter her service. Never was any sovereign more easily approached.

Porpora obtained an audience, in order that the empress, being able to see the honest face of Consuelo distinctly, might perhaps conceive some decided sympathy for her; so at least the maestro hoped. Aware how her majesty insisted on good morals and discreet deportment, he said she would be struck by the candor and modesty which were so evident in every lineament of his pupil. They were introduced into one of the small rooms of the palace, into which an instrument had been placed, and into which, after about a quarter of an hour, the empress came. She had just received some distinguished persons and wore her court dress, as she appears on the coins bearing her effigy, in a brocade robe, with a crown on her head and a little Hungarian sabre by her side. In that dress she was truly beautiful, not with the impressive and ideal nobility which her courtiers attributed to her, but fresh, joyous, and with an open and happy face, a confiding and attractive bearing. This was indeed the queen, Maria Theresa, whom the magnates proclaimed with their drawn swords on a day of great enthusiasm. At the first glance, though, she seemed a good rather than a great sovereign, she had no coquetry, and the familiarity of her manners denoted a calm mind without any feminine cunning. When one regarded her fixedly, and when she spoke earnestly, something of cold cunning was visible in her smiling and affable face. This cunning, though, was masculine and imperial, and seemed to partake not in the least of gallantry.

"You will let me hear your pupil at once," said she to Porpora, "I am already aware of her great knowledge, and I cannot forget how she pleased me in the oratorio of *Betulia Liberata*. I wish, though, first to converse privately with her. I have many questions to put to her, and as I rely on her frankness, I hope to be able to accord to her the protection she asks of me."

Porpora left at once, reading in her Majesty's face that she wished to be entirely alone with Consuelo. He went into the next gallery, where he suffered much with cold, for the court, ruined by the expenses of the war, was governed with great economy, and the character of Maria Theresa was not at all in opposition to the exigencies of her position.

When she was thus tête-à-tête with the daughter and mother of Cæsars, the heroine of Germany, and the greatest woman then in Europe, Consuelo felt neither troubled nor intimidated. Whether her artistic education made her thus indifferent to all the pomp which glittered around Maria Theresa, or because her noble and pure soul felt itself equal to all mortal grandeur, she waited with calmness of manner and serenity of mind until it should please her majesty to question her.

The empress sat on a sofa, and pulled a little one side her baldric of gems, which pressed a little too much her round white shoulder, and spoke thus:

"I repeat to you, my child, that I place a high estimate on talent, and that I have no doubt of your knowledge and excellence in your art. You must, though, have been told that to me talent is nothing without good conduct; and that I esteem a pure and pious heart more highly than great genius."

Consuelo stood erect, and heard this exordium with great respect. It did not though seem correct to her to speak her own praises; and as she also had the greatest repugnance to speak of virtues she practised in such simplicity, she waited for the empress to question her



more directly about her principles and her resolutions. It was then precisely the time to speak to her, in the parase of a well-turned madrigal, about her angelic piety, her sublime virtues and the impossibility of error with such an example before her eyes. Delicate minds are always afraid to insult a great character by proffering to them commonplace praise. Sovereigns, though, if not the dupes of this vulgar incense, are at least so used to it that they esteem it a mere matter of etiquette. Maria Theresa was amazed at the young girl's silence; and in a manner less gentle and less encouraging, said: "Now I know, my dear girl, that your conduct is not very exact, and that, not being married, you live on terms of great intimacy with a young man of your profession, the name of whom I do not recall just now."

"I can make but one reply to your Imperial Majesty," said Consuelo, with some excitement at this accusation: "I have never committed one fault which would render me incompetent to bear the glance of your Majesty without modest pride and gratified joy."

Maria Theresa was struck with the proud expression which the face of Consuelo assumed. Five or six years before it would doubtless have occasioned pleasure and sympathy. Maria Theresa was royal at heart, and the exercise of her power had given a kind of intoxication to her mind which made her wish to see all bow and kneel to her. Maria Theresa wished to be the only free agent in her dominions, either as a queen or a woman; she was then shocked at the proud smile and frank glance of the young girl, who was to her but as a worm, and with whom she wished to amuse herself, as people do with a slave, urged on from curiosity to talk.

"I have asked you, mademoiselle, the name of the young man who lives with you in the house of the Maestro Porpora," said the empress with emotion.

"His name is Joseph Haydn," said Consuelo with calmness.

"Well, on account of his devotion to you he entered the service of Porpora as a valet de chambre. The maestro is ignorant of the young man's motives, while you, who encourage him, are not."

"Some one has slandered me to your Majesty. This young man never had any affection for me, (Consuelo thought she was speaking the truth.) I know that he loves another. If any deception is practised towards my very estimable master, the motive is innocent and perhaps even praiseworthy. Love of art alone decided Joseph Haydn to enter the service of Porpora. Since your Majesty deigns to examine the character of your humblest servants, and as it is evident that nothing escapes the clearness of your perception, I am sure you will do justice to my sincerity if you wish to examine my cause."

Maria Theresa had too much penetration not to distinguish the accents of truth. She had not yet forgotten the heroism of her bygone days, though she was on that declivity of absolute power which gradually extinguishes even the noblest souls.

"Young girl, I think you true, and your words chaste; but I discover in you too much pride, and a distrust of my maternal kindness, which makes me fear that I can do nothing for you."

"If I have to do with the maternal kindness of Maria Theresa," said Consuelo, touched by that phrase, the commonplace nature of which she was unfortunate, ignorant of, "I am ready to kneel to implore it, but—"

"Go on my child," said Maria Theresa, who, for some unknown

reason, was anxious to bend her strange visitor. "Say what you think."

"If though I have to do with imperial justice, I have nothing to confess; for a purer breath does not sully the atmosphere which even the gods breathe. I feel myself fully worthy of your protection."

"Porporina," said the empress, "you are a woman of talent, and your originality, which would offend another, does you no injury in my mind. I have told you that I believe you frank, yet I know that you have something to confess. Why do you hesitate to do so? You love Joseph Haydn, and I do not doubt but that your liaison is pure. You love him for the very pleasure of seeing him frequently. Let me suppose your anxiety originates in the wish to witness his progress in music,—it makes you venture to expose your reputation, the most precious treasure with which a woman is endowed. You perhaps are afraid that your master and your adopted father, will not consent to your marriage with a poor and powerless artist. Perhaps also, for I will believe all you say, the young man loves another, and proud, as I see you are, you conceal your love, and sacrifice your good name, without any personal satisfaction from this devotion. Well, my dear child, while you have the opportunity which now presents itself, but which perhaps will do so no more, I would open my heart to my sovereign, and would say—'To you, who can do anything, and wish to do good, I confide my fate. Remove all obstacles in the way of my prosperity. By one word you can change the wishes of my tutor and of him I love;—you can make me happy, restore to me the respect of the public, and place me in so honorable a position that I will be able to enter the service of the court.' This is the confidence you should have in the maternal interest of Maria Theresa, and I regret that you have not."

"I understand very well," said Consuelo to herself, "that from some caprice, from childish despotism, you wish the Zingarella to clasp your knees, because you see hers do not tremble before you, and that this is a rare phenomenon. Well, you will not have that gratification, at least until I see you deserve this honor."

These and other reflections passed rapidly through her mind, while Maria Theresa was preaching to her. She said the fortune of Porpora now depended on the hazard of the die, on a mere imperial whim, and that she might, to secure her master's prosperity, slightly humiliate herself. She expected that Maria Theresa would immediately appear great to her, so as to justify her adoration.

When the empress had finished her homily, Consuelo replied—"I will reply to all your Majesty wishes, if you deign to command me."

"Yes—speak! speak!" said the empress, piqued at her impassive countenance.

"I will then tell your Majesty that for the first time in my life have I learned that my reputation has been compromised by the presence of Joseph Haydn in the maestro's house. I thought myself too insignificant to attract public attention, and had I been told, when coming to the imperial palace, that the empress herself thought of and censured me, I would have fancied that I dreamed."

Maria Theresa interrupted her, and fancied that she saw something of irony in this reflection of Consuelo. "You must not be astonished," said she in a rather emphatic tone, "that I interest myself in the minutest details of the lives of those for whom I am responsible to God."



"We may be astonished," said Consuelo adroitly, "at what we admire. If great things are the most simple, they are, at least, rare enough to surprise us at first."

"You should also," added the empress, "comprehend the particular interest I feel for you and all the artists whom I love to make the ornaments of my court. In every part of the world, the theatre is a school for scandal and an abyss of turpitude. I have a disposition praiseworthy at least, even though it be impracticable, to reinstate and to purify in the mind of God and man, the profession which has been subjected to blind contempt, and even to religious persecution in other nations. While in France, the church shut its doors in their faces, I wish in my States to remove all obstacles. I have never admitted, either into my Italian opera troupe, my company of French comedians, or the national theatre, any but persons of well-known morality, or who bona fide, have resolved to reform their conduct. You know my actors are married, that I even become sponsor for their children at the baptismal font, and resolve, by every possible favor, to encourage the legitimacy of births and the observance of the marriage tie."

"Had we known that," said Consuelo, "we would have besought your majesty to be the god-mother of Angela, in my place. Your majesty sows to gather a good harvest, and had I a fault on my conscience, I would be glad to find in her a confessor, charitable as God's own self. But—"

"Continue the subject of which you were speaking just now."

"I was saying," said Consuelo, "that being ignorant of the blame attached to the residence of Joseph Haydn, in our house, I was not so very devoted in exposing myself to it."

"I understand," said the empress; "you deny all?"

"How can I confess an untruth!" said Consuelo; "I have neither any love for my master's pupil, nor have I any wish to marry him. Even if the case were otherwise, I would not accept a hand offered me by imperial decree."

"Then you wish to remain unmarried?" said the empress, rising. "Then I must tell you, it is a condition of life which, in the point of view of respectability, does not offer all the securities I require. It is also inconvenient for a young person to appear in certain *roles*, and represent certain passions, unless sanctioned and protected by a husband. You might have triumphed over your opponent, Madame Corilla, of whom I have heard much good, but who, by no means, pronounces Italian as well as you do. She, though, is a married woman and the mother of a family—a circumstance which gives her great advantages, in case you persist in remaining in your present condition." Consuelo could not refrain from muttering between her teeth, "Married!" She was completely overpowered at the idea of that virtuous—remarkably virtuous—person being preferred to her.

"Yes, married!" said the empress positively, and angry at the suspicion expressed in relation to her protégée. "She gave birth to a child recently, which she has confided to a laborious ecclesiastic—the Canon \* \* \* \*—to receive a religious education. Certainly, that worthy person would not have taken charge of it, unless he knew the mother had a right to his esteem."

"I am sure of it," said Consuelo, a little consoled at the idea that the canon was approved of and not censured for his adoption; she was, though, most indignant.

"This history is written, and thus monarchs are instructed," said she when the empress, with a stern air, had left the room, making as she passed but a slight inclination of the head. "Well, something of good can always be extracted from misfortune, and the human errors have often a good result. The canon will not lose his priory—Corilla will, if the empress interferes, become a virtuous woman, and I have not knelt to one who is no better than I am."

"Well!" said Porpora, with an anxious voice from the gallery in which he had been impatiently walking and twisting his hands; "I hope we have succeeded."

"No, my kind maestro, we have failed."

"How calmly you say this! What the devil is the matter?"

"You must not mention the devil; he has no chance to show himself at court. When we are out of the palace I will tell you all."

"Well, what is the matter?" said Porpora impatiently, as soon as they had passed the ramparts.

"Do you remember, maestro, what we said of the Prime Minister, Kaunitz, when we left the Margrave's?"

"We said he was an old gossip. Has he foiled us?"

"Certainly. Well, now I tell you her Majesty, the empress, Queen of Hungary, is also a gossip."

## CHAPTER XC.

CONSUELO told Porpora all she thought he should know of the motives of Maria Theresa for the kind of disgrace to which she had been subjected. The rest would, perhaps, have irritated, disturbed, and offended the maestro with Joseph Haydn, without any benefit at all. She also decided not to tell her young friend what she concealed from Porpora. Rightly enough she contemned the vague accusations which she knew had been made by two or three enemies, to the empress, and which had no public circulation. The ambassador Korner, to whom she confided every thing, approved of her following this course; and to prevent malice from obtaining possession of these seeds of slander, acted prudently and wisely. He persuaded Porpora to remain at his hotel with Consuelo, and Haydn entered the service of the ambassador, being admitted to the table of the private secretaries. Thus the old maestro was freed from want, and Joseph continued to render him some personal services, which enabled him to see him often and to take his lessons. Consuelo was protected from all malicious insinuations.

In spite of this, Corilla was engaged instead of Consuelo for the Imperial Theatre. The latter had not been able to please Maria Theresa. This great queen, though laughing at the green-room intrigues which Kaunitz and Metastasio half displayed to her in the most charming manner, wished to assume the *role* of an incarnate and crowned providence amid a troupe of strolling actors, who professed to her to be repentant sinners and converted demons. It may be imagined that among these hypocrites, who received little pensions and presents for their so-called piety, were found neither Caffariello, Fariñelli, la Tesi, nor Madame Hasse; none, in fine, of those great