

am going to do. It was God Himself who prompted me to ask Ulrich if he would accompany me to my father. He was obliged to reply that he could not go to the enemy, though this enemy was to become his father-in-law. When he told me that, my heart bridled up, and was once more glad and strong. I knew all at once that I was doing right, and I will carry out my plan to the bitter end. But hush, hush! here comes Elza! I must put on a cheerful face now."

"Lizzie, my Lizzie, are you here?" asked Elza, opening the door.

"Yes, here I am, Elza," exclaimed Eliza, who hastened with a smiling face to her friend.

"And where is Ulrich? Why is he not here? Oh, I sat with such a throbbing heart at father's bedside; I longed so much for him to fall asleep! Oh, Lizzie, I have to tell you so many things! Ah, you do not know how happy I was during this splendid, charming journey! To be always by Ulrich's side, what a bliss! And how tenderly and attentively he took care of my dear old father, just like a good, grateful son, who would like to guess from his father's eyes every wish he might entertain. I often wept tears of joy on seeing him support my father, almost carrying him into the carriage, and arranging his seat for him, and on hearing him comfort the old man in gentle yet manly words. Ulrich did not speak of God and the saints, and yet what he said was pious, pious as a prayer of holy charity. Oh, how noble, good, brave, and gentle, Ulrich is!"

"And you love him, Elza, do you not?"

"Yes, I love him with all my heart, and shall for evermore. But where is he? Where is Ulrich? Was he not with you?"

"He was, Elza; he left me at the moment when you came."

"He was here so long? And what did you speak of? Oh, tell me, Eliza, what did you speak of?"

"Of you, Elza," said Eliza, with a wondrous, radiant expression.

"Ah, of me!" exclaimed Elza, joyfully. "Oh, tell me, Lizzie, do you think he loves me?"

"I do not believe it, Elza, I know it for certain. He intrusted me with an important commission for you, and asks of you a great proof of your love. Come, Elza, let us go to my room. We will be sure there not to be overheard by any one. I will tell you everything there."

 CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE WEDDING.

NIGHT had come, and the people of Innsbruck had not yet set bounds to their rejoicings. All the streets were brilliantly illuminated; a festive performance was played at the theatre, and the apartments at the imperial palace began to fill with the guests who had been invited to the ball.

But while the palace was shining with splendid lustre for the first and last time during the reign of Andreas Hofer, one of its wings had remained gloomy and silent. It seemed as though the loud voices of the world shrank from penetrating hither. Even the sentinel pacing the long, deserted corridor, trod more softly and crossed himself every time he reached the end of the passage. For the imperial chapel lay at the end of the corridor in this wing of the palace, and through the high windows there one could look down upon the altar and the holy lamp.

The sentinel had just walked up the corridor once more slowly and dreamily, when he suddenly saw two men coming along. He stood still respectfully and presented arms. These two men were Andreas Hofer, the commander-in-chief, and Old Red-beard, Joachim Haspinger, who was walking by his side, in his brown cowl and his heavy leather shoes.

On approaching the sentinel, Andreas Hofer stood still and nodded kindly to him. "It is not necessary for you, Joe, to stand here all alone and present arms. I know you are one of the best dancers in the Passeyr valley, and as there is a ball at the palace, you had better go there and dance. I believe the good God Himself will watch over His chapel here."

"Much obliged to you, commander-in-chief—much obliged to you!" exclaimed the soldier, joyfully; and he ran down the corridor as fast as his feet would carry him.

"How gay and high-spirited these young folks are!" sighed Hofer.

"And why are you not merry too, brother Andy?" asked the Capuchin. "A great honor was conferred upon you to-day; they paid you homage and cheered you as though you were the Messiah. The whole city is illuminated for your sake to-night; at the theatre, the orchestra played flourishes three times, and the whole audience rose the moment the commander-in-chief entered the house. But scarcely had the morose hero been there a quarter of an hour when he sneaked off again. I followed him stealthily, and found him at last in his office; and while the whole city is rejoicing, he sits at the table covered with papers, and weeps big tears into his beard!"

"But I told you, brother, that couriers had arrived from the valley of the Adige, and informed me that the prospects of our cause are very gloomy there. The people are split up into factions, which are engaged in bitter wranglings. How can I rejoice at the extraordinary honors paid to me, when there are such dark spots in the country?"*

"Do not think of that now, Andy. The Lord has helped us hitherto, and He will help us henceforward; for our cause is just, and no enemy is able to stand up against it."

"And do you think, brother, that what we are going to do now is also good and just?" asked Hofer, hesitatingly.

"Yes, I do, Barbone. Lizzie Wallner is a noble, brave girl, and the good God and His angels love her."

"Well, if you say so, brother Capuchin, it must be all right; for you are a priest of the Lord, and would certainly not consent to cheat God in so holy a place."

"God cannot be cheated," said the Capuchin, solemnly; "only short-sighted man can. Now, Lizzie Wallner has keen eyes and a pure heart; hence she looks into the future, and

* Andreas Hofer's own words.—See "Bilder und Erinnerungen aus Tyrols Freiheitskämpfen von 1809," by Loritza, p. 13.

sees what the short-sighted Bavarian cannot see, and helps him and herself to escape from the abyss into which both of them would otherwise fall. She is a genuine heroine, and I am proud and fond of her. Otherwise I should not have come to Innsbruck to-day. I came only for her sake and at her urgent request. We are exceedingly busy at the earth-works near the Pass of Lueg, and look from day to day for the Bavarians to attack us. Hence I must return there this very night, that I may be with our men to-morrow in case there should be a fight."

"God grant that you may be victorious!" sighed Andreas.

"But hark! the clock strikes nine, and the sexton is already lighting the candles on the altar."

"But he has been instructed to light only two of them, lest there should be too much light," said the Capuchin. "Let us go down now, brother Andreas, and do not forget what you have to do. When the bride enters by the small side-door, you go to meet her, take her hand, and conduct her to the altar. After they are married, you offer her your hand again and beg of her permission to accompany her to the door of her room."

"All right, I will do so," said Andreas. "Come, let us go down to the chapel."

A dim twilight reigned in the small chapel. Only two of the tall wax-lights burned on the altar, and shed their flickering rays on the vigorous form of the Capuchin, who was standing in front of it, and praying in a low voice with clasped hands. Close to him, near the steps of the altar, stood Andreas Hofer, his head bent down, and his hands clasped on the small crucifix which was to be seen about his neck by the side of the gold medal and chain.

Footsteps were heard now in the aisle of the chapel, and a tall man in dark civilian's dress approached the altar. Andreas Hofer drew himself up to his full height and went to meet him.

"God bless you, Captain Ulrich!" he said, kindly; "I hope you will accept me as witness of your marriage."

"I thank you, commander-in-chief, for consenting to be our witness," said Ulrich, cordially; "and I thank you also,

Father Haspinger, for coming to Innsbruck from such a distance to marry us."

"I come whenever Eliza Wallner calls me and needs me," said the Capuchin, solemnly.

A small side-door now opened, and a female form in a long white silk dress came in. Her head was covered and concealed with a white veil, which surrounded her whole form like a cloud, and flowed down to the ground. On her head, over the veil, she wore the diadem of the virgin and bride, a blooming myrtle-wreath.

While Andreas Hofer went to meet her and took her hand to conduct her to the altar, Ulrich contemplated her with a throbbing heart, and unutterable bliss filled his bosom.

"She has kept her word," he thought; "she has doffed the costume of the Tyrolese girls and thereby divested herself of her whole past. Oh, how splendid her form looks in this dress; she seems taller and prouder, and yet so lovely and sweet."

He gazed at her as she approached slowly with a light springing step, leaning on Andreas Hofer's arm; he saw only her! He did not hear a door opening softly yonder in the vestry, which contained several latticed windows; he did not see the dark female form which approached the windows, and whose pale face looked out for a moment and then disappeared hastily. He saw only her, his beloved, his bride, who stood now by his side, whose hot, trembling hand now rested in his own, and who returned gently the tender pressure of his hand.

And now Father Haspinger raised his voice and spoke in devout and impressive words to the bride and bridegroom of the solemnity of this sacred hour, of the importance of the union which they were about to enter upon before God, and of the sacred duties the fulfilment of which they were to vow before the altar.

"And now I ask you, Captain Ulrich von Hohenberg," he said, in a loud voice, "will you take your betrothed here for your wife, and love and cherish her all your life long?"

He replied in a loud, joyous voice, "Yes."

"And you, young maiden," added the Capuchin, "will you

take your betrothed here for your husband, and love and cherish him all your life long?"

A low, timid "Yes" fell from her lips. Stifled sobs and groans resounded in the direction of the vestry.

"Join hands, then," said the Capuchin, solemnly, "and let me exchange your rings in token of your union. I marry you now in the name of God, and henceforth you are man and wife. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Kneel down now and receive the benediction."

The bride and bridegroom knelt down hand-in-hand before the altar; the concealed woman knelt down in the vestry alone, trembling and quivering with anguish.

When the benediction had been given and the bride and bridegroom rose, she rose likewise from her knees. "Holy Virgin," she prayed in a low voice, "give me strength now! Thou beholdest my heart, and seest what I am suffering! Oh, be with me in Thy mercy, and give me strength and constancy!"

The ceremony was over now, and Andreas Hofer approached the bride.

"As your father was prevented from being present," he said, "permit me to take his place and conduct you to your room. I suppose you do not object to it, Captain Ulrich!"

"On the contrary, I am obliged to you for taking the place of my sweet bride's father. Lead the way, I will follow you."

"No, sir, wait a moment," exclaimed Father Haspinger, solemnly. "I must speak a few words with you privately."

"And I have to thank you for your kindness in coming to our wedding," said Ulrich, standing still in front of the altar, and following only with his eyes his bride, who was just leaving the chapel with Andreas Hofer by the side-door.

"Captain Ulrich," said the Capuchin, after the door had closed behind the two, "I have complied with Eliza Wallner's request, and married you to your betrothed. You are now man and wife, and nothing but death can separate you from your wife. Do not forget this, sir. But will you also do what I am now about to ask of you?"

"I promise to do it, if it be in my power."

"In the vestry yonder is one who wishes to see you. Go to

her. But promise me by all that is sacred to you that you will listen to her calmly ; that, whatever she may say to you, you will not inveigh against her ; and that you will overcome your heart and submit like a brave man to that which cannot be helped."

"I do not comprehend what you mean," said Ulrich, smilingly, "but I promise to submit like a brave man to that which cannot be helped."

"Go, then, to the vestry," said Father Haspinger ; "I will leave the chapel, for no one except God should hear what she has to say to you."

He bowed to Ulrich, and quickly walked down the passage to the large door of the chapel. Ulrich hastened to the vestry, and, opening the door, murmured to himself: "What a strange mystery ! Who can await me here ?"

"I await you here, sir," said a low, tremulous voice.

Ulrich looked up, and stared at her who stood before him with clasped hands and gazed at him with beseeching eyes.

"Eliza !" he exclaimed, starting back with a cry of horror ; "Eliza, you are here ?"

"Yes, I am here," she said ; "I am here to implore your forgiveness."

"My forgiveness ?" he asked, trembling, and pressing both his hands to his temples. "My God ! my head swims—I believe I shall go mad ! Eliza is here, she stands before me in her peasant costume, and she left me only a few moments ago in a white bridal dress, and with a myrtle-wreath on her head. What does this quick transformation mean, and how was it possible ?"

"It is no transformation, sir," said Eliza, bashfully. "I am Eliza Wallner, the peasant-girl, and she who left you in the chapel is your wedded wife, the young Baroness von Hohenberg—"

"You are my wedded wife, you alone ?" he cried, impetuously.

"No, sir, I am not !"

"You are not ?" he cried, vehemently. "And who is she who went from me there ?"

"She is your wife, who loves you with all her heart," said

Eliza, solemnly ; "she is the wife whom your parents selected for you from your earliest youth ; she is Elza von Hohenberg."

Ulrich uttered a cry of rage and despair, and rushed upon Eliza with uplifted hand, pale as a corpse, and with flashing eyes.

She bent her head and whole form before him. "Strike me, I deserve your anger," she said, humbly.

Ulrich dropped his arm with a groan. "Then you have cheated me, wretched girl !" he cried, furiously. "You wished to revenge yourself on me, you lied to me, you betrayed me, you enmeshed me with hypocritical falsehoods, and played an infamous game with me ! Well, why do you not laugh ? Your efforts were successful, you have revenged yourself. Oh, I am in despair ; my rage and grief will break my heart. Why do you not laugh ?"

"I do not laugh, sir, because I see that you grieve, and because God knows that I would give up my heart's blood to spare you an hour of suffering."

He burst into scornful laughter. "And yet you have treated me so infamously ? You have played a miserable comedy with me, and perjured yourself ?"

"Sir, I have not perjured myself," cried Eliza. "I have fulfilled faithfully the oath I swore to you when you took leave of me and went to procure my Elza's release."

"You have fulfilled it ? False girl ! repeat your oath to me, that I may convict you of perjury."

"I said that if you would bring back Elza, you should receive your bride, who loved you with infinite tenderness, at the hands of the priest, whether it was early in the morning or late at night !"

"Well, then, have you fulfilled your oath ? Have you not perjured yourself ?"

"I have fulfilled my oath ; I have not perjured myself. Elza loves you, sir ; she loves you with infinite tenderness."

"Oh, what miserable, insidious sophistry !" cried Ulrich, sinking despairingly on a chair. "Your words were as full of duplicity as your heart is ; and I, poor, short-sighted dupe,

believed your words! And not you alone, but Elza, too, has cheated me—she whom I loved as a sister, and whom I should have loved even better, if you had not stepped in between us, if I had not seen you. Elza has betrayed me too; she did not shrink from playing so unworthy a part! Oh, it will break my heart, it will break my heart; I lose in this hour all that I loved! Nothing remains to me but contempt, scorn, and dreadful loneliness!”

He buried his face in his hands and wept bitterly.

“Sir,” exclaimed Eliza, with a cry of despair, kneeling down before him, “you weep?”

“Yes, I weep,” he sobbed; “I weep for my fallen angels, my lost paradise! I am a man; therefore I am not ashamed of my tears.”

Eliza lifted her eyes and clasped hands to heaven. “Holy Virgin,” she exclaimed, “give strength to my words, that he may hear and understand me!”

She rose from her knees, stepped close up to Ulrich, and laid her hand on his shoulder. “Sir,” she said, “do you remember yet what I said to you on taking leave of you on the mountain? I reminded you of it the other day, but you forgot it again. I said to you: ‘You are a nobleman, and I am a peasant-girl; you are a Bavarian, and I, thank God, am again an Austrian. We do not suit each other, and can never become husband and wife.’ That is what I said to you, and I repeated it to you the other day, but you would not understand it.”

“Because I loved you, Eliza; because I felt that my love would be strong enough to surmount all obstacles!”

“Was your love strong enough to prevail on you, sir, to go to my father, Anthony Wallner, and ask him to bless you, his son-in-law? See, I asked you to do so, because I knew that you would refuse, and because I thought it would convince you that we could never become man and wife and ought to part. For without the blessing of my parents I could never follow a husband into the world; nor would you want a wife who did not bring with her either the blessing of her parents or that of your own, for you are a good and excellent man. That was the reason, sir, why we could not

become man and wife, even though it should break our hearts.”

“*Our* hearts?” he cried, impetuously. “Do not speak of your heart; it is cold and hard.”

“What do you know about my heart?” she asked. “I do not bear it on my lips, nor in my eyes either. It rests deep in my bosom, and God alone sees and knows it. But I, sir, know another heart; I gazed deeply into it, and discovered in it the most fervent love for you, sir. This other heart is that of my Elza: Elza loves you! And you know that I love Elza, and therefore you must believe me, even though you distrust me in other respects. I shall love my Elza as long as I live, and I swore to her never to abandon her, never to deceive her. She confides in me, sir; she did not conceal from me a single fold of her heart. Should I have told her, ‘Captain Ulrich, whom you love, and whom your father wants to become your husband, loves me; and I, whom you call your best friend, although she is but a peasant-girl, while you are the daughter of a nobleman, will take your lover from you and make him my husband?’ No, sir, never could I have said so; never should I have been capable of breaking Elza’s heart; I preferred to break my own!”

“She does not know that I love you? She ought to have known it, inasmuch as she consented to play this unworthy part and take your place before the altar.”

“She did not know any thing about it; I deceived her. I told her you sent me as a love-messenger to her, and that I had taken it upon myself to obtain her consent to a clandestine marriage with you, because you were obliged to set out for Munich this very night, and because you wished to take with you the certainty that she would be yours forever, and that you might have the right of protecting her after God had taken her father from her and made her an orphan. Sir, Elza loves you, and therefore she consented, and became your wife.”

“And her father? Did he, too, consent to the deception?”

“Her father, sir, is very sick, and I believe he is on his death-bed. Elza told him nothing of it, for the excitement,

the joy might have killed him. I told her it was your will that she should be silent; and because she loves you and would comply with all your wishes, she was silent, obeyed your call, and came all alone to the altar to become your wife."

"My wife! she is not my wife! The marriage is null and void, and I shall never acknowledge it."

"Elza is your wife, sir, your wife before God and man. A priest married you, and you swore before the altar to love and cherish her. Oh, sir, I beseech you, do not repudiate my Elza, for she loves you; and by repudiating Elza you will repudiate me, for Elza is the better half of my heart. In making her happy, think that you make me happy; and in loving her, think I feel that you love me!"

"Oh, Eliza," cried Ulrich, gazing at her as she stood before him with a glowing countenance, "Eliza, you angel, why can I not possess you?"

"Because it is not God's will, sir! 'The blessing of the parents builds houses for the children,' says the proverb; hence we could not build a house, sir, for we had not the blessing of our parents. Now you have it, Elza brings it to you, and she brings you love, sir, and happiness. No, do not shake your head; she brings you happiness. You do not believe it now, for your heart grieves, and he who has such a wound thinks that it never will heal. But love is a good surgeon. Elza will dress your heart and heal it."

"And your heart, Eliza, will it heal, too? For your heart has likewise a wound, and, whatever you may say to the contrary, you loved me."

"I loved you!" she exclaimed. "No, say rather I still love you! If I had not loved you, should I have been strong enough to withstand your supplications and resist my own heart in order to secure *your* happiness? Oh, be happy, then,—be happy through me and for my sake! Fold Elza to your heart, love her and let her love you; and when in future days, happy in Elza's arms, and surrounded by her sweet children, you remember the past and its grief smilingly, do not forget me, but say, 'Lizzie was right after all! She loved me faithfully!'"

"Faithfully?" he asked, bursting into tears. "Your heart will heal likewise, Eliza; you will forget me in the arms of another husband."

"No, sir! My heart, I hope, will heal, but God alone will heal it, and no other husband. I am not able to love another man, and I believe, moreover, I have something else to do. The fatherland needs brave hands, and I belong to my fatherland and my father. We shall have war again, sir, war with the Bavarians. Thank God, you will not be among our enemies! I shall carry our wounded out of the thickest of the fight, and nurse them; and if a bullet hits me, well, then, I shall die for the fatherland, and it will gladden your heart, also, to hear that Lizzie Wallner died as a brave daughter of the Tyrol. I pray God to let me die in this manner. Amen! But now, sir, go to your young bride. She will be wondering already at your long absence. Oh, go to her, sir, and be kind and loving to her; let her never suspect what has taken place between us, and that you did not marry her of your own accord."

"I cannot dissemble, Eliza; I cannot turn my heart like a glove."

"Do I ask you to do so? Have you not always loved Elza? Love her now, then; love her for my sake, love me in her! Go, sir; Elza is waiting for you. I shall go too. Our good Haspinger is waiting for me, and I shall go with him to my father. We shall never meet again, and therefore I will give you now my wedding-present. You asked me for it this morning, and I refused; but now I will give it to you voluntarily. Close your eyes, sir, for you must not see what I give you; and do not open them until I tell you to."

"I will close my eyes, Eliza, but I shall see you nevertheless in my heart."

She glided up to him with a noiseless step. Faithful to his word, he had closed his eyes firmly. She gazed at him long and tenderly, as if to engrave his features deeply on her heart; then she bent over him and imprinted a kiss on his forehead.

"God bless you, Ulrich," she whispered, and kissed his forehead once more. "Farewell!"

And before he was able to prevent it, or even know it, she glided to the small door leading from the vestry into the street.

Ulrich heard the jar of the door, and opened his eyes. Eliza stood in the open door, and cast a last, parting glance on him. Joachim Haspinger stood behind her.

"Eliza," cried Ulrich, hastening to her, "you will leave me?"

He would have seized her hand, but Haspinger stepped between them. "Go to your bride, sir," he said, imperatively. "Eliza will accompany me and go to her father!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE TREATY OF PEACE.

THE Emperor Francis was still at Prince Lichtenstein's castle of Totis, in Hungary, but for some days past there had no longer reigned there the profound silence and calm monotony which had prevailed during the first days of the imperial sojourn. Couriers came and went, equipages rolled up, and conveyed to the castle some of the Austrian diplomats, with whom the emperor conversed a long while in his cabinet, whereupon they departed again. Even Baron von Thugut, the all-powerful ex-minister, had been drawn from his tranquil retirement, and called to the headquarters of the Emperor Francis at Totis. Francis had locked himself up with him in his cabinet, and conversed with him in so low a tone that Hudelist, although he had applied his ear to the keyhole, had been unable to hear a single word of importance; and the emperor was so reticent as to the subject of his conversation with Thugut, that the Empress Ludovica, although, after Thugut's departure, she had sought frequently to fathom the meaning of his presence there in her interviews with the emperor, did not receive the slightest information from her husband.

Great commotion reigned at Castle Totis already early in

the morning of the 12th of October. Prince Lichtenstein had arrived in the first place, and Count Bubna had come soon afterward. The emperor had gone with the two diplomatists to his cabinet; they had left it several hours afterward, and departed immediately.

Count Metternich had likewise arrived at Totis, and repaired at once to the emperor's rooms. The count ordered the footman in the anteroom to announce him to his majesty, but the servant shook his head with a polite smile.

"It is unnecessary for me to announce your excellency," he said. "His majesty ordered me to conduct your excellency at once to his cabinet. Be so gracious, therefore, as to follow me, your excellency."

And he hastened, with a noiseless step, through the apartments. Count Metternich followed him quickly, and an imperceptible sneer played over his fine youthful face as he was walking through these sumptuous rooms, whose deserted appearance was the best proof of the precarious situation of the emperor.

The footman stood now before the door of the imperial cabinet; after waiting until his excellency had come close up to him, he opened this door, and said, in a loud voice, "His excellency, Count Metternich!"

When the count entered the cabinet, the emperor was sitting at his writing-table, and holding in his hand a paper which he had read, but which he laid down now, to rise and greet the count. It did not escape Metternich's keen, prying eyes, that the emperor's face was more serene to-day than it had been for a long time past; and, on bowing deeply to his majesty, he asked himself what might be the cause of this unusual serenity, and who might have brought the glad tidings which had awakened so remarkable a change.

"Welcome, count, welcome!" said the emperor, in his sonorous voice, and with a graceful smile. "I sent for you because I am exceedingly anxious to learn the progress of your peace-negotiations at Altenburg. Is there no prospect yet of a speedy termination of this abominable war?"

"Your majesty, I regret to say that the negotiations are progressing very slowly," said Count Metternich, mournfully.