

was his first and only love, and she, young and inexperienced as she was, believed him.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

ELISE'S father had not yet returned. She was still alone, but in her soul there was neither fear nor trembling, but only a defiant grief at this apparent indifference to the danger which had threatened her, in common with the rest of Berlin, for the last two days.

She had shut herself up in her room, not that she anticipated any danger, but because she wished to be alone, because she wished to avoid Bertram, the faithful friend, who had watched over her during this time with the most attentive devotion. Truthfully had he remained in the house, deserted by her father, as a careful watchman; had never left its door; but, armed with dagger and pistol, he had stationed himself as a sentinel in the antechamber, ready to hasten at the slightest call of Elise, to defend her with his life against any attack or any danger, and Elise felt herself bound to him in gratitude, and yet this duty of gratitude was a burden to her. It was distressing and painful to her to see Bertram's quiet and mournful countenance, to read in his dimmed eyes the presence of a grief so courageously subdued. But yet she had endeavored to overcome this feeling, and she had often come to him lately to chat with him about past times and to reward him with her society for his protection and faithful presence. And yet Bertram's tender conscience was well aware of

the constraint Elise had put herself under, and the harmless and cheerful chat was to him all the more painful, as it reminded him of past times and blasted hopes.

He had, therefore, with a melancholy smile of resignation, requested Elise not to come any more into the hall, as it would be better, by the anticipated occupation of the enemy, to remain in her room, in the upper story of the house, and to lock the door in order to secure her from any possible surprise.

Elise had completely understood the delicacy and nobleness of this request, and since then had remained quiet and undisturbed in her room.

Thus the second night had commenced. She passed it like the one preceding, wandering up and down, not needing sleep, but kept awake by her thoughts and cares. In the middle of the night she was interrupted in her anxious reveries by Bertram, who came to her door, and in a low and timid voice requested permission to enter.

Elise knew very well that she could trust Bertram like a brother, as an unselfish, disinterested friend. Therefore, fearlessly she opened the door, and bade him come in. Bertram entered timidly and confused, almost overpowered by happiness, for this room into which he came was Elise's bedroom, the sanctuary of maidenhood and beauty, and he felt disposed to kneel down and pray, so evidently did this room seem to him a temple of innocence.

It appeared to him as if his unholy foot was not worthy to tread this ground, nor to approach the bed which, with its white curtains, seemed to wave before his dazzled eyes like a white swan.

In soft and gentle words he brought to Elise greeting from her father. He related to her how Gotzkowsky had visited his house, not to take rest, but to see Elise;

how, scarcely arrived there, a messenger from the Council had called him back to the town-hall. There he had commissioned Bertram to request his daughter to withdraw from the front rooms of the house, and to retire into those next to the garden, where she would be safer and have less to fear from the enemy as he marched in.

"At last, then, my father has consented to think of me," said Elise, with a bitter smile. "His patriotism has allowed him leisure to remember his only daughter, who would have remained solitary and forsaken in the midst of servants and hirelings if my noble and faithful brother had not assumed the duties of my father, and watched over and protected me." She reached out both her hands to Bertram with a look full of gratitude, but he scarcely touched them; he held them for a moment lightly and coldly in his, and then let them go. This slight and transient touch had shot through him like an electric shot, and reawakened all the sorrows of his soul.

"You will then leave this room?" asked Bertram, approaching the door.

"I will go into the hall immediately next to it."

"All alone?" asked Bertram; and then fearing that she might suspect him of wishing to force his company upon her, he added, quickly, "You ought to keep one of your maids near you, Elise."

Smilingly she shook her head. "For what purpose?" asked she. "Bertram is my protector, and I am quite safe. I have sent my maids to their rooms. They were tired from long watching and weeping; let them sleep. Bertram will watch for all of us. I have no fear, and I would not even leave this room, if it were not that I wished to comply with the rarely expressed and somewhat tardy desire of my father."

Saying which, she took the silver candelabras from the table and quietly traversed the room in order to proceed to the adjoining hall. At the door she stopped and turned round. The full light of the candles shone on her handsome, expressive face, and Bertram gazed on her with a mixture of delight and anguish.

"Bertram," said she gently and timidly, "Bertram, my brother, let me thank you for all your love and constancy. Would that I could reward you more worthily! In that case all would be different, and we would not all be so sad and despondent as we now are. But always remember, my brother, that I will never cease to love you as a sister, and that if I cannot compel my heart to love you otherwise, yet no other power, no other feeling can ever lessen or destroy my sisterly affection. Remember this, Bertram, and be not angry with me." She nodded to him with a sweet smile, and retreated through the door.

Bertram stood rooted to the floor like one enchanted, and gazed at the door through which this vision of light had departed. He then raised his eyes to heaven, and his countenance shone with excitement. "God grant that she may be happy!" prayed he, softly. "May she never be tormented by the agonies of error or repentance; may he whom she loves prove worthy of her!"

Overpowered by bitter and painful thoughts, his head sank upon his breast, and tears coursed down his cheeks. But he did not abandon himself long to his sad and anxious thoughts, nor did he allow sorrow long to take possession of his heart. After a short pause he raised himself and shook his head, as if to roll off the whole burden of care and grief with all the power of his will.

"At least I will always be at her side," said he, his countenance beaming from the noble decision. "I will

follow her like a faithful, watchful dog, and ward off from her every danger and every misfortune which comes from man and not from God. She has called me her brother! Well, a brother has both rights and duties, and I will perform them!"

CHAPTER XV.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

THE hall to which Elise had retired, next to her bedroom, was on the garden side of the house, and its glass doors opened on a porch from which handsomely ornamented bronze steps led winding down into the garden. Notwithstanding the advanced season of the year, the night was mild, and the moon shone brightly. Elise opened the glass doors and stepped out on the porch to cool her burning forehead in the fresh night air; and, leaning on the balustrade, she looked up smiling and dreamily at the moon. Sweet and precious fancies filled the soul of the young maiden, and brought the color to her cheeks.

She thought of her lover, who so lately had appeared to her as in a dream; she repeated to herself each one of his words. With a sweet but trembling emotion she remembered that he had bidden her to await him; that he had sworn to her to come, even if his way should be over dead bodies and through rivers of blood.

With all the pride of a loving girl she recalled his bold and passionate words, and she rejoiced in her heart that she could call herself the bride of a hero. Even if this hero was the enemy of her country, what did she

care? She loved him, and what to her were nationalities or the quarrels of princes? She was his—his in love and faith, in purity and innocence; what cared she for aught else?

Elise started suddenly from her dreams. She had heard a noise down in the garden, and leaned listening over the balustrade. What was the meaning of this noise? Was it perhaps some thief, who, under cover of the general confusion, had stolen into the garden? Elise remained motionless, and listened. She had not deceived herself, for she distinctly heard footsteps. A feeling of fear took possession of her, and yet she did not dare to move from the spot, nor to cry for help. Might it not be her lover, for whom she had promised to wait?

With strained attention she gazed down into the garden; her eye seemed to penetrate the darkness with its sharp, searching look. But she could distinguish nothing; not an object moved through these silent paths, where the yellow sand was sufficiently lighted up by the moon to betray any one sufficiently bold to tread them. Every thing was again quiet; but Elise shuddered at these long, black shadows cast on both sides of the alleys; she was afraid to remain any longer on the porch. She retired into the hall, the door to which she had left open on purpose to perceive any noise coming from that quarter.

Now again she became aware of steps approaching nearer and nearer. She wished to rise, but her feet refused their office. She sank back powerless into her chair and closed her eyes. She could not determine whether it was fear or happy expectation which pervaded her whole being.

And now the footsteps ascended into the porch, and came quite near to the window. Would a thief dare

to approach these lighted windows? She raised her eyes. He stood before her!—he, her beloved, the friend of her heart, her thoughts, her hopes! Feodor von Brenda stood in the doorway of the hall, and uttered softly her name. She could not rise, her feet trembled so; and in her heart she experienced an uneasy sensation of fear and terror. And yet she stretched her arms out to him, and welcomed him with her looks and her smile.

And now she lay in his arms, now he pressed her firmly to his heart, and whispered tender, flattering words in her ear.

She pushed him gently back, and gazed at him with a smile of delight. But suddenly her look clouded, and she sighed deeply. Feodor's brilliant Russian uniform pained her, and reminded her of the danger he might be incurring. He read her fear and anxiety in her countenance.

"Do not be afraid, my sweet one," whispered he gently, drawing her into his arms. "No danger threatens us. My people are now masters of the town. Berlin has surrendered to the Russians. *The enemy* is now conqueror and master, and no one would dare to touch this uniform. Even your father must now learn to yield, and to forget his hatred."

"He will never do it," sighed Elise sadly. "You do not know him, Feodor. His will never bends, and the most ardent prayers would not induce him to grant that to his heart which his judgment does not approve of. He is not accustomed to yield. His riches make him almost despotic. Every one yields to him."

"He is the king of merchants," said Feodor, as he passed his fingers playfully through the dark tresses of the young girl, whose head rested on his shoulder. "His money makes him as powerful as a prince."

"That is exactly my misfortune," sighed Elise.

The colonel laughed, and pressed a kiss upon her forehead. "Dreamer," said he, "do you call yourself miserable because you are the daughter of a millionaire?"

"Millions alone do not make one happy," said she sadly. "The heart grows cold over the dead money, and my father's heart is cold toward his daughter. He has so many thousand other things to do and think of besides his daughter! The whole world has claims upon him; every one requires his advice, submits to and obeys him. From all parts of the world come letters to be answered, and, when at last, late in the evening, he remembers he is something besides the king on 'Change, the man of speculation, he is so tired and exhausted, that he has only a few dull words for his child, who lives solitary in the midst of all this wealth, and curses the millions which make her poor."

She had spoken with increasing excitement and bitterness. Even her love had for a moment been eclipsed by the feeling of an injured daughter, whose grief she now for the first time disclosed to her lover.

As she finished speaking, she laid her arm on Feodor's shoulder, and clung still more closely to him, as if to find in his heart protection and shelter against all pain and every grief. Like a poor, broken flower she laid herself on his breast, and Feodor gazed at her with pride and pity. At this moment he wished to try her heart, and discover whether he alone was master of it. For that purpose had he come; for this had he risked this meeting. In this very hour should she follow him and yield herself to him in love and submission. His long separation from her, his wild soldier's life had crushed out the last blossoms of tender and chaste affec-

tion in his heart, and he ridiculed himself for his pure, adoring, timid love. Distrust had resumed power over him, and doubt, like a mildew, had spread itself over his last ideal. Elise was to him only a woman like the rest. She was his property, and as such he wished to do with her as he chose.

But yet there was something in her pure, loving being which mastered him against his will, and, as it were, changed his determination. In her presence, looking into her clear pure eye, he forgot his dark designs and his dreary doubts, and Elise became again the angel of innocence and purity, the saint to whom he prayed, and whose tender looks shed forgiveness on him.

This young girl, resting so calmly and confidently on his breast, and looking at him so innocently and purely, moved him, and made him blush for himself and his wild, bold desires. Silent and reflecting he sat at her side, but she could read in his looks, in his smile, that he loved her. What further need had she of words?

She raised her head from his breast, and looked at him for a long time, and her countenance assumed a bright, happy expression.

"Oh," said she, "do I call myself poor when I have you? I am no longer poor since I have known you, but I have been so; and this, my friend, must be the excuse for my love. I stood in the midst of the cold glitter of gold as in an enchanted castle, and all around me was lifeless, stiffened into torpidity by enchantment, and I knew no talisman to break the charm. You came, and brought with you love. The talisman was found; a warm life awoke in me, and all the splendor of gold crumbled into dust. I was rich then, for I loved; now I am rich, for you love me!"

"Yes, I love you," cried he; "let your father keep his treasures. You, and only you, do I desire."

She sprang up startled from his arms. In the overpowering happiness of the hour she had entirely forgotten the danger which threatened her lover. She suddenly remembered, and her cheek paled.

"My father!" cried she, "if he should come at this moment! His look alone would be enough to kill me." And anxiously and tremblingly she clung to Feodor.

"Fear not, dear one," he whispered, "he is not coming. God protects and watches over those who love each other. Do not think of danger. Banish all care, all fear. This hour belongs to us, and as I now fold you in my arms with delight, so let it be always and forever. For you know, precious child, that you are mine, that you can never belong to another; that you have pledged yourself, and at some future time must follow me as your husband."

"I know it, I know it," she murmured; and, in blissful self-forgetfulness, she leaned her head on his shoulder, and listened with beating heart to the burning, passionate words which he poured into her ear.

Of a sudden, with the rapidity of lightning, she sprang up, as if an electric shock had pervaded her body, and listened eagerly.

As Feodor was about to speak, to inquire the cause of her sudden terror, she quickly pressed her hand to his mouth. "Silence," whispered she softly. "I heard it distinctly. My father is coming hither through the garden!"

They both listened in silence. In the quiet of the night Gotzkowsky's voice was now heard. He ordered his servants to shut the garden gates carefully, and watch them well, as the Russians entering the town would pass by this wall.

"You are right," said Feodor; "it is your father. Truly this is an unlucky accident."

"He will kill me if he finds you here," murmured Elise, clinging, half fainting, to her lover's arm.

"I will protect you with my life," said he, pressing her more firmly to him.

"No, no!" cried she breathlessly; "he must not find you here. No one must see you. Oh, Feodor, listen to me. He is not alone; Bertram and his servants are with him. Oh, my God, they will kill you! Save yourself; leave me, Feodor, and conceal yourself!" And drawing him with irresistible strength to the door, she whispered, "In there, in my bedroom conceal yourself."

"Never," said he firmly and decidedly. "Never will I hide myself, or sneak away like a coward!"

"You must do it," entreated she; and as she saw that he hesitated and drew back unwillingly, she continued: "Not for your sake—for the sake of my honor, Feodor. Remember it is night, and I am alone with you."

"Yes, you are right," said Feodor sadly. "Hide me; no spot must tarnish your honor."

With convulsive haste, Elise drew him to the door of her chamber. Gotzkowsky's voice was heard just outside the window.

"Quick! hasten, they are coming!" said she, pulling the door open, and pushing him hurriedly on.

"He is saved," cried her heart joyfully, as she closed the door after him, and, sinking down, half fainting in a chair, her lips murmured, "Have mercy, gracious God; have mercy on him and me!"

At this moment her father, accompanied by Bertram and the factory workman, Balthazar, entered the room through the door of the balcony.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FUGITIVE.

GOTZKOWSKY at length returned to his home. Sad and sorrowful was his soul, and his brow, at other times so smooth and clear, was now dark and clouded. He mourned for his country, for the fruitless battles, the blood shed in vain, and, in the bitter grief of his heart, he asked himself what crime he had committed, that to him should be assigned the painful duty of deciding to which of the enemies they should surrender. And yet the decision was imperative, and Berlin had to be surrendered to the Russians.

In gloomy sadness, hardly casting a passing glance at his daughter, whose anxiety and death-like paleness he did not even perceive, Gotzkowsky entered the hall, Bertram carefully bolting the doors behind him, and then in an undertone gave Balthazar and the servants directions for the protection of the house.

"What a dreadful night!" said Gotzkowsky, sinking down on a sofa exhausted; "my heart aches as much as my limbs."

For a moment he closed his eyes, and lay silent and motionless. Elise was still leaning trembling and breathless on the chair near the door. Gotzkowsky raised his head, and his eyes sought his daughter. As he perceived her, a gentle and pleased expression passed over his face, and his brow grew clearer. He hastened to her and raised her in his arms.

"Bless you, Elise, my child! for two days have I been nothing but citizen and soldier; now at last I am permitted to remember that I am a father. I had almost

forgotten it during these wild sad days. Good-evening, my darling child!"

Elise kissed his hand respectfully, and muttered a low welcome.

Gotzkowsky said in a gentle tone, "This is a comfort which makes me forget all my sufferings. Come, my children, let us for one bright hour put aside all care and trouble, and be happy and cheerful together. Let us have breakfast. This poor, weak body needs refreshment, for it reminds me that, for two days, I have been living on prison fare, bread and water. Come, then, let us breakfast. Bertram, sit by my side, and our sweet little housekeeper will help us to coffee."

Elise rose with difficulty and gave the necessary orders to the servants; and while the latter were hurrying to and fro, serving up breakfast, Gotzkowsky reclined on the sofa, half asleep from exhaustion; and Bertram and Elise sat opposite to each other in silence. Suddenly there were heard in the distance wild yells, and loud noises and cries. Then hasty steps flew up the staircase; the hall door was pulled open, and a soldier rushed in. With breathless haste he bolted the door behind him, threw off the white cloak which concealed his figure, and the broad-brimmed hat which covered his head, and sank with a loud sigh into a chair. Gotzkowsky hurried up to him and looked at him attentively. Elise, with an instinctive feeling of the danger which threatened Feodor, turned to the door behind which he was hidden.

"The artilleryman, Fritz!" cried Gotzkowsky, with visible astonishment.

"Yes, it is me," groaned the soldier. "Save me, Gotzkowsky; do not deliver me up to these barbarians!"

Gotzkowsky laid his hand on his shoulder with a

friendly smile. "I would not betray the enemy himself, if he sought refuge in my house; and you ask me not to betray the most valiant and renowned defender of Berlin. Bertram, this man here, this simple cannoneer, has performed miracles of valor, and earned for himself an enviable name in these last unfortunate days. It was he who had charge of the only two cannon Berlin possessed, and who, never tiring, without rest or relaxation, sent death into the ranks of the enemy. Be assured, my son, you have fought these two days like a hero, and it cannot be God's wish that, as a reward for your bravery, you should fall into the hands of the enemy."

"They pursue me everywhere," said the artilleryman. "Hunted by De Lacy's chasseurs like a wild beast, I fled down the street hither. You told me yesterday that if ever I wanted a friend in need, you would be one to me. Therefore have I come to you. The Austrians have sworn vengeance on the cannoneer, whose balls swept their ranks so murderously, and have set a large price on my head."

"Ah!" cried Gotzkowsky, laughing, "the Austrians advertise rewards before they have got the money to pay them. Let them set a thousand ducats on your head, my son. They will have to do without the ducats, and your head too, for Berlin will give them neither. If we must pay the money, the Russian shall have it; and as for your head, well, I will pay for that with my life. You have fought like a lion, and like lions we will defend you."

"What have I gained by fighting?" said Fritz, with a mournful shrug of the shoulders. "The enemy have succeeded in getting into the town, and their rage is fearful. They have sworn to kill me. But you will not give me up! and should they come here and find me,

then have pity on me and kill me, but do not give me up to the enemy!"

"To kill you, they must kill both of us first!" cried Bertram, taking the brave cannoneer by the hand. "We will hide him in your house; won't we, Father Gotzkowsky?"

"Yes, and so safely that no one will be able to find him!" cried Gotzkowsky, cheerfully, raising the soldier up by the hand. "Follow me, my son. In my daughter's chamber is a safe hiding-place. The mirror on the wall covers a secret door, behind which is a space just large enough to conceal a person. Come."

He led the artilleryman toward the door of Elise's room. But before this door Elise had stationed herself, her cheeks burning and her eyes flashing. The danger of her lover lent her courage and determination, and enabled her to meet the anger of her father unflinchingly.

"Not in there, father!" said she, in a tone almost commanding; "not into my room!"

Gotzkowsky stepped back in astonishment, and gazed at his daughter. "How," asked he, "do you forbid me the entrance?"

"Behind the picture of the Virgin in the large hall is a similar hiding-place," said Elise, hurriedly; "carry him thither."

Gotzkowsky did not answer immediately. He only gazed firmly and inquiringly into Elise's countenance. Dark and dismal misgivings, which he had often with much difficulty suppressed, now arose again, and filled his soul with angry, desperate thoughts. Like Virginius of old, he would have preferred to kill his daughter to delivering her into the hands of the enemy.

"And why should he go there, and not remain here?" asked he at last with an effort.

"Remember, father," stammered she, blushing, "I—"

She stopped as she met the look of her father, which rested on her with penetrating power—as she read the rising anger of his soul in the tense swollen veins of his brow, and his pale, trembling lips.

Bertram had witnessed this short but impressive scene with increasing terror. Elise's anxiety, her paleness and trembling, the watch which she kept over that door, had not escaped him, even on his entrance, and filled him with painful uneasiness. But as he now recognized in Gotzkowsky's features the signs of an anger which was the more violent for the very reason that he so seldom gave way to it, he felt the necessity of coming to the assistance of his distressed sister. He approached her father, and laid his hand lightly on his shoulder.

"Elise is right," said he, entreatingly. "Respect her maiden hesitation."

Gotzkowsky turned round upon him with an impatient toss of the head, and stared him full in the face. He then broke into a fit of wild, derisive laughter.

"Yes," said he, "we will respect her maiden hesitation. You have spoken wisely, Bertram. Listen: you know the partition behind the picture of the Madonna in the picture-gallery. Carry our brave friend thither, and take heed that the spring is carefully closed."

Bertram looked at him sadly and anxiously. He had never before seen this man, usually so calm, so passionately excited.

"You will not go with us, father?" asked he.

"No," said Gotzkowsky, harshly; "I remain here to await the enemy."

He cast on Elise, still leaning against the door, a threatening look, which made her heart tremble.

Bertram sighed, and had not the courage to go and forsake Elise in this anxious and critical moment.

"Hasten, friend," said Gotzkowsky, sternly. "The life of a brave man is at stake. Hasten!"

The young man dared not gainsay him, but he approached Gotzkowsky, and whispered softly: "Be lenient, father. See how she trembles! Poor sister!"

And with a painful glance at Elise, he took the hand of the artilleryman, and led him out of the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EAVESDROPPER.

ELISE was now alone with her father. She had sunk down near the fatal door, and her colorless lips murmured faint prayers.

Gotzkowsky stood there, still relentless; but his agitated countenance, his lowering brow, his flashing eyes, betrayed the deep and passionate emotion of his soul. Struck and wounded fatally in his most sacred feelings, he felt no pity, no compassion for this poor trembling girl, who followed his every motion with a timid, anxious eye. His whole being was filled with burning rage against his daughter, who, his misgiving heart told him, had trampled his honor in the dust.

A long and dreadful pause occurred. Nothing was heard but Gotzkowsky's loud, heavy breathing, and Elise's low-muttered prayers. Suddenly Gotzkowsky drew himself up, and threw his head proudly back. He then walked to the door leading into the balcony, and to the opposite one, and ascertained that they were both

closed. No one could intrude, no one interrupt this fearful dialogue.

Elise was terribly conscious of this, and could only whisper, "Pity, pity, merciful God! I shall die with terror!"

Gotzkowsky approached her, and, seizing her hand, raised her rapidly from the floor. "We are alone now," said he with a hoarse, harsh voice. "Answer me, now. Who is concealed there in your room?"

"No one, my father."

"No one!" repeated he, sternly. "Why, then, do you tremble?"

"I tremble because you look at me so angrily," said she, terrified.

Her father cast her hand passionately from him. "Liar!" cried he. "Do you wish me to kill him?"

He took his sword from the table, and approached the door.

"What are you going to do, my father?" cried she, throwing herself in his way.

"I am going to kill the thief who stole my daughter's honor," cried Gotzkowsky, his eyes flashing with rage.

"Father, father, by the God in heaven I am innocent!" cried she, convulsively, striving to hold him back.

"Then let me have the proof of this innocence," said he, pushing her back.

But she sprang forward with the agility of a gazelle, rushed again to the door, and clung with both hands to the lock.

"No, no, father, I remain here. You shall not insult yourself and me so much as to believe what is dishonorable and unworthy of me, and to require a proof of my innocence."

This bold opposition of Elise only excited Gotzkowsky's anger the more, and was to him a fresh proof of her guilt. His rage overpowered him; with raised arm and flashing eye he strode up to Elise, and cried out: "Away from the door, or by Heaven I will forget that I am your father!"

"Oh," cried she breathlessly, "you have often forgotten that, but think now; remember that I am the daughter of the wife whom you loved! Trust me, father. By the memory of my mother, I swear to you that my honor is pure from any spot; and, however much appearances may be against me, I am nevertheless innocent. I have never done any thing of which my father would have to be ashamed. Believe me, father; give me your hand and say to me—'I believe your innocence; I trust you even without proof!'"

She sank down on her knees, raising her arms imploringly to him, while burning tears streamed down her cheeks. Gotzkowsky gazed at her long and silently, and his child's tears touched the father's heart.

"Perhaps I do her injustice," said he to himself, looking thoughtfully into her weeping face. "She may be really innocent. Let us try," said he, after a pause, pressing his hands to his burning temples. As he let them drop, his countenance was again calm and clear, and there was no longer visible any trace of his former anger. "I will believe you," said he. "Here, Elise, is my hand."

Elise uttered a cry of joy, sprang up from her knees, rushed toward her father, and pressed her burning lips on his extended hand. "My father, I thank you. I will ever be grateful to you," cried she, fondly.

Gotzkowsky held her hand firmly in his own, and while speaking to her approached, apparently by acci-

dent, the door so bravely defended by Elise. "You are right, my child; I was a fool to doubt you, but I am jealous of my honor, the most precious property of an honest man. Much can be bought with gold, but not honor. True honor is bright and clear as a mirror, and the slightest breath dims it. Oh, how would this envious, grudging, malignant world rejoice if it could only find a spot on my honor! But woe to him who dims it, even if it were my own child!"

Elise turned pale and cast down her eyes. Gotzkowsky perceived it. He still held her hand in his, and approached the door with her, but he compelled his voice to be gentle and mild.

"I repeat," said he, "I wronged you, but it was a terrible suspicion which tortured me, and I will confess it to you, my child. The Russian flag of truce which came into town to negotiate with the authorities was accompanied by ten soldiers and two officers. While the commissioner was transacting business in the Council-chamber above, they remained below in the lower story of the building. I accompanied the commissioner, as he left the Council, down-stairs, and we found his military escort in a state of anxiety and excitement, for one of the officers had left them two hours before, and had not yet returned, and they had called and hunted for him everywhere. The Russians were furious, and cried out that we had murdered one of their officers. I succeeded in quieting them, but my own heart I could not quiet; it felt convulsively cramped when I heard the name of this missing officer. Need I name him?"

Elise did not answer. She looked at her father, with tears in her eyes, and shook her head languidly.

Gotzkowsky continued: "It is the name of a man to whom I formerly showed much friendship; toward whom

I exercised hospitality, and whom I made free of my house, and who now shows his gratitude by stealing the heart of my daughter, like a pitiful thief. Oh, do not attempt to deny this. I know it, Elise; and if I have hitherto avoided speaking to you about this matter, it was because I had confidence in your sound sense, and in the purity of heart of a German girl to sustain you in resisting a feeling which would lead you astray from the path of duty and honor. I do not say that you loved him, but that he wished to seduce you into loving him clandestinely, behind your father's back. That is his gratitude for my hospitality."

Speaking thus, Gotzkowsky pressed his daughter's hand more firmly in his own, and continued approaching more closely to the door. "Only think," continued he, "the mad thought crossed my mind—'How if this man should be rash and foolhardy enough to have gone to my daughter?' But I forgot to tell you his name. Feodor von Brenda was the name of the treacherous guest, and Feodor von Brenda was also the name of the officer who left the commissioner, perhaps in search of some love adventure. But why do you tremble?" asked he in a loud tone, as her hand quivered in his.

"I do not tremble, father," replied she, striving for composure.

Gotzkowsky raised his voice still higher till it sounded again. "Forgive me this suspicion, my daughter. I should have known that, even if this insolent Russian dared to renew a former acquaintance, my daughter would never be so mean, never stoop so low as to welcome him, for a German girl would never throw away her honor on a Russian boor."

"Father," cried Elise, terrified and forgetting all her prudence, "oh, father! do not speak so loud."

"Not so loud? Why, then, some one can hear us?" asked Gotzkowsky, pressing the arm of his daughter. "I will speak loud, I will declare it aloud. He is a scoundrel who conceals himself in a dastardly and dishonorable manner, instead of defending himself! a coward who would put the honor of a maiden in the scale against his own miserable life. No German would do that. Only a Russian would be base enough to hide himself, instead of defending his life like a man!"

At this moment the door of the bedroom was violently torn open, and the Russian colonel appeared on the threshold, his cheeks burning and his eyes flashing with anger.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TWO CANNONEERS.

ELISE uttered a cry of terror, and stared at her lover with wide-opened eyes. But Gotzkowsky's countenance was illuminated with a dark and savage joy. "Ah, at last, then!" said he, letting go the arm of his daughter, and grasping his sword.

But the colonel advanced proudly and collectedly toward him. "Here am I, sir," said he; "here am I, to defend myself and avenge an insult."

"I have driven you out of your hiding-place, as the fox draws the badger out of his kennel," cried Gotzkowsky, with derisive laughter, purposely calculated to irritate the anger of the young officer to the highest pitch.

The two men stood opposite to each other, and gazed at one another with faces full of hatred and rage.