

When Gotzkowsky raised himself from Bertram's embrace, his countenance was calm, and almost cheerful. "I thank you, my son; you have given me new courage and strength. Now I will preserve all my composure. I will humble my pride, and apply to those who in former times professed gratitude toward me. The Council of Berlin have owed me twenty thousand ducats since the time that the Russians were here, and I had to travel twice in the service of the town to Petersburg and Warsaw. These accounts have never been asked for. I will make it my business to remind the Council of them, as in the days of their need they swore eternal gratitude to me. Come, Bertram, let us see whether these worshipful magistrates are any better than other men, and whether they have any recollection of those sacred promises which they made me in the days when they needed help, and when misfortune threatened them."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RUSSIAN PRINCE.

BEFORE the door of the first hotel in Berlin stood a travelling-carriage covered with dust. The team of six post-horses, and the two servants on the coach-box, showed that it was a personage of quality who now honored the hotel with a visit; and it was therefore very natural that the host should hurry out and open the carriage door with a most respectful bow.

A very tall, thin man descended from the carriage with slow and solemn dignity, and as he entered the house gravely and in silence, his French valet asked the

host whether he had rooms elegant enough to suit the Prince Stratimojeff.

The countenance of the host expanded into a glowing smile; he snatched the candlestick hastily from the hands of the head butler, and flew up the steps himself to prepare the room of state for the prince.

The French valet examined the rooms with a critical eye, and declared that, though they were not worthy of his highness, yet he would condescend to occupy them.

The prince still remained silent, his travelling-cap drawn deep down over his face, and his whole figure concealed in the ample robe of sable fur, which reached to his feet. He motioned to the host with his hand to leave the room; then, in a few short words, he ordered his valet to see to supper, and to have it served up in an adjoining room, and as at that moment a carriage drove up to the house, he commissioned him to see whether it was his suite. The valet stated that it was his highness's private secretary, his man of business, and his chaplain.

"I will not see them to-day—they may seek their own pleasure," said the prince, authoritatively. "Tell them that our business begins to-morrow. But for you, Guillaume, I have an important commission. Go to the host and inquire for the rich banker, John Gotzkowsky; and when you have found where he lives, enter into further conversation, and get some information about the circumstances of this gentleman. I wish to learn, too, about his family; ask about his daughter—if she be still unmarried, and whether she is now in Berlin. In short, find out all you can."

The courteous and obedient valet had left the room some time, but Prince Stratimojeff still stood motionless, his eyes cast on the ground, and muttering some unin-

telligible words. Suddenly, with an impatient movement, he threw his furred robe from his shoulders, and cast his head-gear far into the room.

"Air! air! I suffocate!" cried he. "I feel as if this town lay on my chest like a hundred-pound weight, and that I have to conceal myself like a criminal from the eyes of men."

He threw his cloak open, and took a long and deep breath.

What was it, then, that so strangely excited Prince Stratimojeff, and shook his very bones as with an ague? It was the memory of former days; it was the painful and damning voice of Conscience which tormented him. What reason had he to inquire after Gotzkowsky the banker, and his daughter? How! Had the heart of Count Feodor von Brenda become so hardened, that when he returned to Berlin he should not long to hear of her whom he had once so shamefully betrayed?

It was indeed himself. Colonel Count Feodor von Brenda had become transformed into the Prince Stratimojeff. Four short years had passed, but what desolation had they not caused in his inner life!—four years of dissolute pleasure, of mad, enervating enjoyment; four bacchanalian years of sensual dissipation and extravagance; four years passed at the court of two Russian empresses! In these four years Elizabeth had died; and for a few days the unfortunate Peter III. had worn the imperial crown. But it had proved too heavy for him; and his great consort, Catharine, full of compassion and Russian humanity for him, had sought to lighten his load! Only, in her too great zeal, she had taken not only his crown, but his head, and changed his prison for a grave.

The Guards shouted for the new empress as they had

done for the old. In the presence of their beautiful young sovereign they remembered with delight the graciousness of her predecessor, who, in the fulness of her kindness and power, had made princes of the subalterns, and great lords of the privates.

Why should not Catharine resemble Elizabeth in that respect, and show favor to the splendid soldiers of the Guards? She was merciful. She was a gracious mistress to all her subjects, but especially so to the handsome men of her empire. And the Count von Brenda was a very handsome man. He had been the favorite of Elizabeth, why should he not also be the favorite of Catharine? The former had treated him with motherly kindness, for she was old; but Catharine was young, and in her proud breast there beat an ardent heart—a heart that was so powerful and large, that it had room for more than one lover.

The young count had been for some short months the declared darling of the empress, and the whole world did homage to him, and looked upon it as a matter of course that Catharine should make him Prince Stratimojeff, and bestow on him not only orders and titles, but lands and thousands of slaves.

What a mad, intoxicating, joyous life was his! How all the world envied the handsome, rich prince, surrounded by the halo of imperial favor! But nevertheless a cloud lay always on his brow, and he plunged into the sea of pleasure like one ill of fever, who seeks something to cool the heat which is consuming him. He threw himself into the arms of dissipation, as the criminal condemned to execution, who in the intoxication of champagne revels away the last hours of life in order to banish the thought that Death stands behind him, reaching forth his hand to seize him.

Thus did the prince strive in the wild excitement of pleasure to kill thought and deaden his heart. But there would come quiet hours to remind him of the past, and, at times, in the middle of the night, he would start up from his couch, as if he had heard a scream, a single heart-piercing cry, which rang through his very soul.

But this scream existed only in his dreams, those dreams in which Elise's pale, sad face appeared, and made him tremble before her indignant and despairing grief. Near this light figure of his beloved appeared another pallid woman, whose sorrowful looks tortured him, and struck his soul with anguish. He thought he saw his wife, the late Countess Lodoiska von Sandomir, who, with weeping eyes, demanded of him her murdered happiness, her youth, her life.

She was dead; she had died of grief, for she had felt that the man for whom she had sacrificed every thing—her youth, her honor, and her duty—despised her, and could never forgive her for having cheated him into taking her for his wife. She died the victim of his contempt and hatred. Not suddenly, not as with a lightning-stroke, did his contempt kill, but slowly and steadily did it pierce her heart. She bore the torture for one desolate, disconsolate year, and then she died solitary and forsaken. No loving hand dried the death-sweat on her cold forehead; no pitying lips whispered words of love and hope to her; yet on her death-bed, her heart was still warm toward her husband, and even then she blessed him.

A letter written by her trembling hand in her last hours, full of humble, earnest love, of forgiving gentleness, which her husband the prince found on his writing-table, as well as another, directed to Elise Gotz-

kowsky, and enclosed in the first, bore witness to this fact.

Lodoiska had loved her husband sufficiently to be aware of the cause of his wild and extravagant life, to know that in the bottom of his heart he was suffering from the only true love of his life—his love for Elise; and that all the rest was only a mad and desperate effort to deaden his feelings and smother his desire.

Elise's image followed him everywhere; and his love for her, which might have been the blessing of a good man's life, had been a cruel curse to that of a guilty one. In the midst of the wild routs, the private orgies of the imperial court, her image rose before him from these waves of maddening pleasure as a guardian angel, hushing him often into silence, and stopping the wanton jest on his quivering lips.

At times during these feasts and dances, he was seized with a boundless, unspeakable dread, a torturing anxiety. He felt inexpressibly desolate, and the consciousness of his lost, his wasted existence haunted him, while it seemed as if an inner voice was whispering—“Go, flee to her! with Elise is peace and innocence. If you are to be saved, Elise will save you.”

But he had not the strength to obey the warning voice of his heart; he was bound in gilded fetters, and, even if love were absent, pride and vanity prevented him from breaking these bonds. He was the favorite of the young empress, and the great of the empire bowed down before him, and felt themselves happy in his smile, and honored by the pressure of his hand. But every thing is changeable. Even the heart of the Empress Catharine was fickle.

One day the Prince Stratimojeff received a note from his imperial mistress, in which she intrusted him with

a diplomatic mission to Germany, and requested him, on account of the urgency of the occasion, to start immediately.

Feodor understood the hidden meaning of this apparently gracious and loving letter; he understood that he had fallen into disgrace—not that he had committed any error or crime. It was only that Count Orloff was handsomer and more amiable than himself, or at least that he seemed so to the empress. Therefore Feodor's presence was inconvenient to her; for at that time in the commencement of her reign, Catharine had still some modesty left, and the place of favorite had not yet become an official position at court, but only a public secret. As yet, she avoided bringing the discharged favorite in contact with the newly appointed one, and therefore Feodor had to be removed before Count Alexis Orloff could enter on his duties.

Prince Feodor Stratimojeff crushed the perfumed imperial note in his hand, and muttered through his set teeth: "She has sacrificed me to an Orloff! She wishes to send me away, that she may more securely play this new farce of love. Very well; I will go, but not to return to be deceived anew by her vows of love and glances of favor. No! let this breach be eternal. Catharine shall feel that, although an empress, she is a woman whom I despise. Therefore let there be no word of farewell, not even the smallest request. She bids me go, and I go. And would it not seem as if Fate pointed out to me the way I am to go? Is it not a strange chance that Catharine should choose me for this mission to Germany?"

It was indeed a singular accident that the empress unintentionally should have sent back her discharged favorite to the only woman whom he had ever loved. He was sent as ambassador extraordinary to Berlin, to press

more urgently her claims on a Prussian banker, to bring up before the Prussian department for foreign affairs the merchant John Gotzkowsky with regard to her demand for two millions of dollars; and, in case he refused to pay it, to try in a diplomatic way whether Prussia could not be induced to support this demand of the empress, and procure immediate payment.

This was the mission which Catharine had confided to Prince Stratimojeff, who, when he determined to undertake it, said to himself: "I will take vengeance on this proud woman who thinks to cast me off like a toy of which she has tired; I will show her that my heart is unmoved by her infidelity; I will present to her my young wife, whose beauty, youth, and innocence will cause her to blush for shame."

Never had he been so fascinating and lively, so brilliant and sparkling with wit, as on the evening preceding his departure. His jests were the boldest and freest; they made even the empress blush, and sent her blood hot and bounding through her veins. The court, that would have been delighted to have seen the long-envied and hated favorite now abashed and humbled before his newly-declared successor, remarked with astonishment and bitter mortification that the humiliation was changed into a triumph; for the empress, charmed by his amiability and wit, seemed to turn her heart again toward him, and to entreat him with the tenderest looks to forgive her faithlessness. She had already forgotten the unfortunate embassy which was to remove Feodor from her court, when he himself came to remind her of it.

While all countenances were still beaming with delight over a precious *bon mot* which Feodor had just perpetrated, and at which the empress herself had laughed

aloud, he stepped up to her and requested her blessing on his voyage to Germany, which he was going to commence that night.

Catharine felt almost inclined to withdraw her orders and request him to remain, but she was woman enough to be able to read pride and defiance in his face. She therefore contented herself with wishing him a speedy return to his duty. Publicly, in the presence of the whole court and her new favorite, she afforded Prince Stratimojeff a fresh triumph: she bade him kneel, and taking a golden chain to which her portrait was attached, she threw the links around his neck. Kissing him gently on the forehead, with a gracious smile full of promise, she said to him only, "*Au revoir!*"

CHAPTER IX.

OLD LOVE—NEW SORROW.

ELISE was in her room. Her face expressed a quiet, silent resignation, and her large dark eyes had a dreamy but bright look. She sat in an easy-chair, reading, and whoever had seen her with her high, open forehead and calm looks, would have thought her one of those happy and fortunate beings whom Heaven had blessed with eternal rest and cheerful composure, who was unacquainted with the corroding poison of passionate grief. No trace of the storm which had raged through her life could be seen on her countenance. Her grief had eaten inwardly, and only her heart and the spirit of her youth had died; her face had remained young and handsome. The vigor of her youth had overcome the grief of her

spirit, and her cheeks, although colorless and transparent in their paleness, were still free from that sallow, sickly pallor, which is the herald of approaching dissolution. She was apparently healthy and young, and only sick and cold at heart. Perhaps she only needed some sunbeams to warm up again her chilled heart, only some gleam of hope to make her soul young again, and strong and ready once more to love and to suffer. She had never forgotten, never ceased to think of the past, nor of him whom she had loved so unspeakably, whom her soul could not let go.

The memories of the past were the life of the present to her. The tree in the garden which he had admired, the flowers he had loved and which since then had four times renewed their bloom, the rustling of the fir-trees which sounded from the wall, all spoke of him, and caused her heart to beat, she knew not whether with anger or with pain. Even now, as she sat in her room, her thoughts and fancies were busy with him. She had been reading, but the book dropped from her hand. From the love-scenes which were described in it her thoughts roamed far and wide, and awakened the dreams and hopes of the past.

But Elise did not like to give herself up to these reveries, and at times had a silent horror even of her own thoughts. She did not like to confess to herself that she still hoped in the man who had betrayed her. She had, as it were, a sympathizing pity with herself; she threw a veil over her heart, to hide from herself that it still quivered with pain and love. Only at times, in the quiet and solitude of her chamber, she ventured to draw aside the veil, to look down into the depths of her soul, and, in agonizing delight, in one dream blend together the present and the past. She leaned back in

her chair, her large dark eyes fixed on vacancy. Some passage in the book had reminded her of her own sad love, had struck on her heart like the hammer of a bell, and in response it had returned but one single note, the word "Feodor."

"Ah, Feodor!" she whispered to herself, but with a shudder at the name, and a blush suffused her otherwise pale cheeks for a moment. "It is the first time my lips have spoken his name, but my heart is constantly repeating it in hopeless grief, and in my dreams he still lives. I have accepted my fate; to the world I have separated from him; to myself, never! Oh, how mysterious is the heart! I hate and yet I love him." She covered her face with her hands, and sat long silent and motionless. A noise at the door aroused her. It was only Marianne, her maid, who came to announce that a strange gentleman was outside, who earnestly requested to speak to her. Elise trembled, she knew not why. A prophetic dread seized her soul, and in a voice scarcely audible she asked the name of her visitor.

"He will not give his name," answered the maid. "He says the name is of no consequence. He had a letter to deliver from the Countess Lodoiska, of St. Petersburg."

Elise uttered a cry, and sprang from her seat—she knew all. Her heart told her that he was near. It must be himself. She felt as if she must hasten to her father for protection and safety; but her feet refused to carry her. She trembled so, that she was obliged to hold on to the arm of a chair to keep herself from falling. She motioned with her hand to deny him admittance, but Marianne did not understand her; for, opening the door, she invited the stranger in, and then left him.

And now they stood in presence of each other, silent

and breathless—Elise trembling with excitement and bitter feeling, wrestling with her own emotion, and deeply abashed by the meeting. Both uttered an inward prayer—but how different were their two aspirations!

"Now, God or devil!" thought Feodor, "give my words power, lend enchantment to my tongue, that I may win Elise!"

Elise prayed to herself: "Have mercy on me, O God! Take this love from me, or let me die."

In sad silence these two, so long separated, stood opposite to each other—both hesitating, he knowing that he was guilty, she ashamed of the consciousness of her love. But finally he succeeded in breaking the silence. He whispered her name, and as she, alarmed and shuddering, looked up at him, he stretched out his arms imploringly toward her. And then she felt, thought, knew nothing but him. She uttered a cry, and rushed forward to throw herself in his arms. But suddenly she stopped. Her dream was at an end, and now awaking from the first ecstasy of seeing him again, she collected herself, and stood before him in the whole pride and dignity of her offended honor. She found courage to sacrifice her own heart, and, with cold, constrained manner, bowing to him, she asked, "Colonel von Brenda, whom do you wish to see?"

The prince sighed deeply, and let his arms drop. "It is over," said he; "she no longer loves me!"

Low as these words had been spoken, Elise had seized their purport, and they touched her to the quick. "What do you wish?" she continued.

"Nothing!" said he, despondently. "I have made a mistake. I expected to find a faithful heart, a woman like an angel, ready in the hour of meeting to forget all

else, and take refuge in this heart; to forgive, and, with her blessing, to wipe out the curse of my existence. This is what I sought. But God is just, and I did not deserve such happiness. I submit."

"Oh, my God!" said Elise to herself, "it is the same voice which once charmed me." She no longer found strength in herself to bid him go. She would have given her life blood to be able always to be thus near him.

"This time, young lady," said Feodor, "I come only as a messenger, the executor of the will of one who is dead." He took a letter from his bosom and handed it to Elise. "I bring you," he said solemnly, "the last will of my wife, Countess Lodoiska."

"She is no longer alive?" cried Elise, and involuntarily an almost joyful tone pervaded her voice.

This did not escape the prince. "I will win her," said he to himself. His eyes shone brighter, his countenance looked prouder, and his heart beat higher with triumphant joy. Elise had taken the letter, and still held it in her hand. "Will you not read it?" asked he, gently, and her heart trembled at the pleading tone of his voice.

"Yes, I will read it," she answered, as if awaking from a dream, and breaking the seal hastily.

The prince fixed his sharp, piercing eyes on her, and seemed to wish to read in her looks her inmost thoughts, and feeling them favorable to him, he approached still closer to her.

The letter was short and hastily written, but every word entered her soul and brought tears to her eyes. It ran thus:

"My dear Elise, when you receive this letter I shall be no more, and the heart which has suffered so much

will be at rest. But when I have found repose in the grave, do you fulfil my trust. I leave you the dearest legacy that I possess. I give you back your property, the heart and love of Feodor, which never ceased to belong to you. I never have been able to win this love to myself. He gave me his hand, his heart remains yours, and that is killing me. Take it then, it is my legacy to you; and if you accept it my purified spirit will bless your reunion.

LODOISKA."

The letter dropped from her hand; completely overpowered by deep and solemn emotions, she sank in her chair, and hid her tears with her hands. Feodor felt that she was again his, that he had regained his sway over her. He rushed toward her, falling at her feet, and passionately snatching her hands from her face, he exclaimed, "Elise! in this moment her spirit is hovering over us. She blesses this love which she has already forgiven. Oh, if you only knew what I have suffered for you, you would, at least, not be angry with me. You would pardon me for the sake of what I have undergone."

"Have I then not suffered also?" she asked, turning her face, covered with tears, toward him.

"Oh! leave me here at your feet," he continued. "Look upon me as a poor pilgrim who has wandered to the holy Sepulchre in order to cleanse his heart of its sins at the sanctuary by sincere repentance and prayers for forgiveness. You are my sanctuary, to you my heart bends; the poor pilgrim has come to you to confess and be shrived before he dies. Will you, my Madonna, hear him? May I tell you what I have endured, how much I have suffered?"

"Speak," she said, half conscious, but eagerly listen-

ing to the music of his voice. "Tell me what you have suffered, that I may forget my own sufferings when I gave you up."

"Oh!" he continued, with a shudder, "I shall never forget that fearful moment when I became aware of the deception, and discovered that it was not you, but Lodoiska, whom I held in my arms. A raving madness seized me, which threatened my own life. Lodoiska turned aside the dagger, and pronounced your name. That name recalled me to life, to the knowledge of my crime. I submitted to the punishment which I had merited, and which you had imposed upon me. I led Lodoiska to the altar, at which I had hoped to see you. I made her my wife, and my heart pronounced *your* name, while my lips bound me to *her*. It was a terrible hour, a fearful agony raged within me, and it has never left me since. It was there, when Lodoiska pressed me to her heart. It was present in the tumult of battle. Then, however, when death raged around me, when destruction thundered from the enemy's cannon, then I became cheerful, and the pang left me as I rushed amid the enemy's ranks. But even death itself retreated before me—I found on the battle-field only honor and fame, but not the object for which I fought, not death. I lived to suffer and to expiate my crime toward you, Elise. But one hope sustained me, the hope one day to fall at your feet, to clasp your knees, and to sue for forgiveness."

Completely overcome by his own passionate description, he bowed his head on her knees, and wept aloud. He had succeeded in rousing his own sympathy; he believed in his own grief. He had so feelingly played the part of a repentant sinner, an ardent lover, that for a moment probability and reality had become blended

in one, and he felt himself thoroughly possessed by crushing repentance.

But Elise believed in him. His voice sounded like music in her ear, and every fibre of her heart thrilled and quivered. The past with its griefs and sorrows was gone forever, he was once more there, with no stranger to come between them, and she only felt that she loved him without bounds.

He embraced her knees, looking pleadingly up in her face. "Elise, forgive me," cried he; "say but one word, 'Pardon,' and I will go away in silence, and never again dare to approach you."

Elise had no longer power to withstand him. She opened her arms, and threw them with passionate tenderness around his neck. "Feodor, love does not forgive, it loves," she cried with unspeakable rapture, and tears of delight burst from her eyes.

Feodor uttered a cry of joy, and sprang up to draw her to his breast, to cover her face with kisses, to whisper words of delight, of tenderness, of passionate love, in her listening ear. "Oh! now all is right again—now you are again mine. These four years are as if they had not been. It was all a mournful dream—and we are now awake. Now we know that we love each other, that we belong to each other, forever. Come, Elise, it is the same hour which then called us to the altar. Come, the priest waits. For four long years have I hoped for this hour. Come, my beloved."

He threw his strong arm around her and raised her to his breast to draw her forth with him. As Elise drew herself gently back, he continued still more passionately: "I will not let you go, for you are mine. You have betrothed yourself to me for life or death. Come, the priest is waiting, and to-day shall you be my wife. This

time no unfriendly hand shall impose itself between us, and Lodoiska no longer lives."

"But my father lives," said Elise, as earnestly and proudly she freed herself from Feodor's arms. "Without his consent I do not leave this threshold. It was for that the Lord punished us. My father's blessing was not upon our love, and I had sinned grievously against him. Now, it is expiated, and Fate is appeased. Let us go hand in hand to my father, and ask his blessing on our love, that love which has remained undiminished through so many years of grief."

"I submit to you. I will obey your will in every thing. But will not your father reject me? I feel that he must hate me for the tears I have caused you to shed."

"He will love you when he sees that you have taught me to smile once more," said she gently. "Come to my father."

She wished to draw him along with her. But his consciousness of guilt held him back. He wanted the daring courage to face this man whom he had been sent to ruin; and involuntarily he shrank back from his own deeds. I dare not go before him so suddenly and unprepared," said he hesitatingly.

"Then allow me to prepare him for your presence."

"And if he denies his sanction?"

"He will not do it."

"He has sworn never to allow you to marry a Russian."

"Oh, that was long ago," said she, smiling, "when Russia was our enemy. Now we are at peace. The bloody streams of discord are dried up, and an angel of peace rules over all countries. Even my father will feel his influence, and make peace with you and me."

Feodor did not answer immediately. He stood

thoughtful and contemplative, weighing the necessary and unavoidable, and considering what he should do. One thing only was clear. Neither Elise nor Gotzkowsky must be allowed to suspect on what extraordinary mission his empress had sent him thither. Only when Elise was irrevocably bound to him, when she was his without recall, when Gotzkowsky had given his consent to their union, then would he dare to disclose it to him. It was necessary, above all, to postpone the negotiations about the Russian demands for a day, and therefore he only gave his agents his instructions, and imposed on them silence and inactivity for a day longer. The principal thing, however, was to convince Elise and her father that their union should suffer no delay, because he was only allowed to remain a few hours. He put his arm around Elise's slender waist and pressed her to his heart. "Listen to me, my beloved; my time has been but sparingly dealt out to me. I have come on with courier horses, so as to allow me more leisure on my return with you. But to-day we must leave, for the army is on the frontier, equipped and ready for war. Only out of special favor did the empress allow me a short leave of absence, to fetch my wife. In her clemency she has done what she was able to do, and I must now obey her orders to return speedily, if I do not wish to bring her anger down upon me. That nothing might prevent or delay us, I have brought a chaplain of our Church with me, to bless our union. You see, my beloved, that every thing is ready, and all that is wanting is the wreath of myrtle in your hair."

"And the blessing of my father," she replied solemnly.

Feodor's brow darkened and an angry expression flashed across his countenance. Elise did not perceive it,

for, in her noble forgetfulness of self, she had leaned her head on his breast, and all doubt and distrust were alien to her free and confiding love. The love of a woman is of divine nature; it forgives all, it suffers all; it is as strong in giving as in forgiving. Every woman when she loves is an inspired poetess; the divine frenzy has seized her, and poetic utterances of ecstasy issue from her trembling lips. This poor girl, too, had become inspired. Confidingly happy, she reposed on the breast of the man whom she had never ceased to love, whom she had blest in the midst of her bitterest tears, whom she had prayed for, earnestly entreating God to have mercy on him.

"Do you go to your father," said Feodor, after a pause. "Pray for his consent and his blessing on both of us—I hasten to prepare every thing. Tell your father that my whole life shall be spent in the endeavor to redeem every tear you have shed for me with a smile; that I will love him as a son to whom he has given the dearest treasure of life, his Elise."

He pressed her to his heart and kissed her forehead. Elise raised her face from his breast, and smiled on him with loving emotion. But he placed his hands over her eyes; he was not callous enough to be able to bear those innocent, yielding, tender looks.

"I must be gone," he said. "But this shall be our last separation, and when I return, it shall be to lead you to the altar. In an hour, dearest, you must be ready. At the end of that time, I will come to take you to St. Petersburg, and present you at the empress's court as my bride, the Princess Stratimojeff."

He looked down at her with an air of triumph, to see what impression his words would have on her. He had expected to prepare a pleasurable surprise for her with

the princely title—to see her blush with proud satisfaction. But Elise felt neither elevated nor honored by the high rank. What did she care whether Feodor was a prince or a poor officer, so that he only loved her, and would never again forsake her?

She replied, with some surprise, "Princess Stratimojeff! What does that mean?"

"For three months," said he with a proud smile, "I have been Prince Stratimojeff. The empress gave me this title. The world calls me prince, but you—you will call me your Feodor?"

"Oh," said she feelingly, "my heart called you so when you did not hear me."

"Well, then, go wind the wreath of myrtle in your hair, and wait for me. In an hour I will return."

He hastened to the door, but on the threshold he turned to send a farewell greeting to her. Their eyes met and rested on each other, and suddenly a deep, indescribable feeling of grief came over him. It seemed to him as if he would never see her again; as if the threshold once crossed, Elise was lost to him forever. Once again he returned, and folded her passionately in his arms, and, completely overpowered by his painful presentiments, he bowed his head on her shoulder, and wept bitterly. He then tore himself loose. "Farewell!" he cried, but his voice sounded hoarse and rough—"farewell! in an hour I will return for you. Be prepared, do not keep me waiting in vain. Farewell!"
