

tion, I swear that I will not be that one ! Away with you ! Away ! In a moment it will be too late ! Do you not hear me ? Whether you go or stay, I never will leave this place again !”

Eugene staggered against the wall, and sighed heavily. Antonio knelt at his feet. At last he murmured almost inaudibly, “I will go.”

Antonio sprang from his knees, threw his cloak around the prince, and, with eager, trembling hands, adjusted his mask.

“Thank God !” said he, “we are of the same size and build. There is not the least danger of recognition. The porter will suspect nothing. The password is, ‘*One of two.*’ The gondola is moored in the place where we left it, and your friends are at the landing, awaiting you now. The marchioness knows that you are to leave Venice to-night. God in heaven bless you. And now away !”

“Antonio,” replied Eugene, greatly affected, “with my latest breath I will bless and thank you.”

Then folding the bravo in his arms, he would have spoken his thanks again, but Antonio hurried him away, closed the door, and then fell upon his knees to pray.

The password was spoken, the door was opened, and Eugene was saved ! He sprang into the gondola, and it flew across those sullen waters like an arrow. As he reached the landing, a well-known voice called out, “Eugene !”

“Max Emmanuel, I am here !” was the reply, and the friends were locked in each other’s arms.

At length the elector spoke :—“I have confronted death,” said he, “but never in my life have I passed an hour of such anguish as this. Come, Eugene, yonder lies the ship that is to bear us away from this sin-laden city. Step into my gondola, we have not a moment to lose.”

They rowed to the ship’s side ; they mounted the ladder, and before the dawn of day Venice with her palaces and their secret prisons had disappeared, and the friends were far on their way to Trieste.

## BOOK V.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A TWOFOLD VICTORY.

THE winter of 1688 had gone by ; the snows were melting from the bosom of reviving earth ; and the trees that bordered the avenues of the Prater were bursting into life. At the court of Austria nobody welcomed spring ; for its approach betokened the cessation of gayety, and the resumption of hostilities. The year 1687 had been rendered illustrious in the annals of Austrian history, by Charles of Lorraine, who, on the 12th of August, had gained a signal victory over the Turks. The rebellion in Hungary, if not suppressed, was smothered ; for the weary and exhausted Magyars had been totally crushed by the iron heel of General Caraffa, and they had submitted to Austria. The conditions of the surrender were hard : they demanded the relinquishment of some of the dearest rights of the liberty-loving Hungarians. First, they were to renounce all right of resistance against the King of Hungary ; second, they were no longer to elect their own sovereigns ; the crown of Hungary was made hereditary in the house of the Emperors of Austria. The Archduke Joseph, then ten years of age, was crowned king ; and the Hungarians were compelled to take the oath of allegiance to this irresponsible sovereign.

This being a decisive victory, the campaign ended early, and the season of festivity had therefore been a prolonged one. Not only the aristocracy of Vienna had celebrated the heroism of the victors by balls, concerts, and assemblies, but the emperor himself sometimes prevailed upon his retiring and devout empress to participate in the national gayety, by giving entertainments to her subjects at the imperial palace.



It was the festival of the Empress Eleanora, and the day was to be celebrated by the production of a new opera, entitled "*Il Pomo d'Oro*." The rehearsals had been superintended by the emperor in person; he had suggested and directed the scenery and decorations, and, to the great scandal of his confessor, Father Bischof, Leopold had more than once curtailed his devotions, to attend these rehearsals.

On the day of the performance the emperor retired early to his dressing-room, and, to honor the festival of his consort, arrayed himself with imperial magnificence. His doublet was of cloth of gold, edged with fringe of the same; his cloak of purple velvet, richly embroidered, was fastened on the shoulder by an agraffe of superb diamonds. The breeches, reaching to the knee, were of velvet, like the cloak; and the hose, like the doublet, were of cloth of gold. The shoes of purple velvet were fastened with buckles of diamonds to correspond with the agraffe of the cloak. His ruff was of gold lace, his hat was decorated with a long white plume, and on his breast he wore the splendid order of the Golden Fleece.

When Leopold entered his music-room, Kircherus, who was there, awaiting him, could not repress an exclamation of wonder at the dazzling apparition.

"You are amazed at my magnificence," said the emperor, laughing.

"Your majesty, say rather that I am struck with admiration than with amazement. You are as glorious as the god of day; and if the Muses were to trip by, they would surely mistake you for their Phœbus, and, quitting Parnassus, make themselves at home in Vienna."

"And be driven away with contumely; for, being heathen maidens, Father Bischof would speedily exorcise and exile them back to Greece. And now tell me what you think of the new opera. Do you expect it to be successful?"

"Indeed I do, your majesty. It is, to my mind, heavenly."

"And to mine also. 'Tis the very music with which to lull the dying soul to rest. I have spared nothing to bring it out handsomely, and it has certainly been a golden apple to my purse, for it has already cost me thirty thousand ducats. But I tell you this in confidence, Kircherus: were my generals to

hear of it, they would cry out that money is to be had for every thing except the army."

"I wish there were no army to swallow up your majesty's resources, and that we might be allowed to enjoy our music in peace," growled Kircherus.

"Hush, Kircherus; you are an artiste, and know nothing of the exigencies of political existence. I would I were such a heavenly idiot as you; but God has decreed otherwise. It is my duty to declare war or peace, as becomes the ruler of a great people; and so disinclined am I to strife, and so inclined to peaceful arts, that I sometimes think I have been purposely thwarted by God, and cast upon an epoch of perplexity and dissension, that my character might be invigorated by its exigencies. Even now I go reluctantly from art, to hold a council of war. I fear it is about to be anything but amicable; so, do your best to console me on my return, and see that all goes well as regards the opera."

The officers of the war department had been for more than half an hour awaiting the appearance of the emperor. One only was absent, the Duke of Lorraine, who had excused himself on a plea of indisposition.

"He is craftier than I had supposed," said the Margrave of Baden to his nephew. "He avoids the unpleasant responsibilities of debate, and shields himself behind the orders of the emperor."

"Because he awaits a reappointment to the chief command," replied Louis. "For him is the glory of our victories; for us the danger. But I have a missile to throw into the camp of the enemy; it is from Max Emmanuel, who votes with us."

"Ah, indeed!" said the margrave, with a satisfied air. "Then I think we may hope to thwart this insolent pretender, who considers me incapable of directing the war department of Austria."

"He has offered me a public affront," returned Louis, indignantly. "I had a right to command the Slavonian cavalry; and he bestowed it upon Dunewald, who is nothing but his creature. I have therefore followed the example of Max Emmanuel, and shall resign my commission to-day."



"I would give millions if, after your defection, he were defeated by the Turks. But he has the most unconscionable luck. And then, that silly Prince of Savoy, who blows such blasts in his praise. Louis, you ought not to be so intimate with Prince Eugene—he is one of our enemies."

"Oh no," replied Louis, smiling. "Eugene is the enemy of no man. Say nothing against *him*, uncle, if you love me. He is a youth of noble spirit, incapable of envy; recognizing every soldier's merit except his own. Our cousin of Savoy is destined to become a great man."

"He is already a great man," replied the margrave, with a sneer. "Not twenty-five years of age, and a knight of the Golden Fleece—a protégé of the emperor, the favorite of Charles of Lorraine!"

At this moment the doors were opened, and Leopold, followed by a small, slender officer, entered the council-chamber.

"The Prince of Savoy!" muttered the margrave, impatiently.

"Eugene!" said Louis to himself, as, bowing his head with the rest, he wondered what could be the meaning of his cousin's presence.

"My lords," said the emperor, taking his seat, "I have invited Prince Eugene of Savoy to assist at this council—not only as a listener, but as one of us; and I shall call upon him to give his opinion as such, upon the matters that come under discussion to-day."

"Pardon me, your majesty, if, as president of this council, I remind you that the Prince of Savoy is too young and inexperienced for such a discussion, and that no man in active service, under the rank of a field-marshal, ever participates in the debates of the war department."

"Your highness is quite right, and I thank you for the reminder. We have no desire to infringe the etiquette of the council-chamber; and as we have invited the prince therein, we must repair our oversight by qualifying him to sit.—Prince of Savoy, we hereby create you field-marshal, and trust that, as such, you may win so many laurels that the world will pardon your youth in favor of your genius."

Eugene crimsoned to his temples, and kissed the hand

which Leopold extended. "My liege," said he, in a voice choked with emotion, "your majesty heaps coals of fire on my head. May God give me grace to earn these unparalleled honors!"

"You have already earned them," replied Leopold, "and Austria is proud to have won such a hero to her cause.—And now, my lords, to business. President of the council, what is the condition of our army at present?"

"Your majesty, the army is not, as yet, armed and provisioned; but it will be in a condition to oppose the enemy as soon as the marshes of Hungary are sufficiently dry to allow of an advance."

"That means simply that nothing has been done," replied the emperor, in tones of dissatisfaction, "and that the winter has been spent in total inaction. It means also that this year as well as last our soldiers are to feel the want of the necessities of life; and that for lack of money, munition, and stores, our most advantageous marches will have to be relinquished."

"I see that the Duke of Lorraine has already accused and calumniated me," said the margrave, sullenly.

"The Duke of Lorraine has at times complained of the want of munition, stores, and forage; but he neither calumniates nor accuses any one. He has remarked that, instead of being sustained by the war department, he has been hampered and harassed by its opposition to his plans. Even his officers have manifested a spirit of such insubordination, that they have seriously interfered with his successes."

"That means that he has complained of me," interposed Louis of Baden.

"Yes, margrave, it does; and we are both surprised that a hero of your recognized ability and renown should fail in a soldier's first duty—obedience to orders."

"Your majesty," exclaimed Louis, "I am no subordinate officer to receive or obey orders from another! I am an independent prince of the German empire, in every respect the equal of the Duke of Lorraine."

"Except as an officer in the Austrian army," replied Leopold, "in which character the Duke of Lorraine is your chief.



You have not sufficiently considered this matter of your rank as an officer in my service ; let me hope that, for the future, you will acknowledge and respect the authority of your commander-in-chief. I myself have found him ever ready to acknowledge and respect mine."

"The will of the emperor, to us, is law," said the Margrave Herman. "But your imperial majesty has hitherto exacted of your officers that they should receive your mandates through the medium of the minister of war. The Duke of Lorraine, who claims such strict obedience from others, has set at defiance the mandates issued from this council-chamber. As president of the same, I complain of the insubordination of your majesty's commander-in-chief. He has not carried out the orders received from the war department."

"He would have been more than mortal had he done so ; for the war department has required of him feats that were physically impossible. We can trace out upon this green cloth before me any number of strategic movements, which, supposing the enemy to be of one mind with ourselves, would annihilate him beyond a doubt. But as he is apt to do the very reverse of what we would prescribe, the man upon whom rests the responsibility of confronting him, must use his reason, and modify orders according to circumstances. *What is to be*, you cannot include in your paper plans of attack ; but the Duke of Lorraine has met every emergency as it presented itself on the field, and every true Austrian should be his friend."

"Your majesty," cried the margrave, greatly irritated, "the president of this council must nevertheless persist in his conviction that the highest court of military jurisdiction is here, and that the commander-in-chief of the army is its subordinate."

"You mistake the extent of its power," replied the emperor, with composure. "It is merely expected of the general-in-chief that he act in concert with the war department."

"Which the Duke of Lorraine has never done !" cried the margrave, impetuously.

"Perhaps the blame lay in the injudicious exactions of the minister of war," replied Leopold, carelessly ; "and if, despite

of all the obstacles that were placed in his way, he has subdued Hungary, you have no part in his glory, my lord ; for in every case your judgment has been contrary to his."

"It follows, then, that I have not filled my office to the satisfaction of your majesty," said the margrave, choking with anger.

"I regret to say that I have less confidence in your judgment than in your ability, my lord ; the former is unhappily often obscured by prejudice," replied Leopold, calmly.

"Your majesty," cried the margrave, "in this case I shall feel compelled—"

"I do not wish you to say or do any thing on compulsion, my lord ; I prefer to assign you a position in which your talents, being unfettered by your antipathies, will shine with undimmed lustre. You have complained of late that the duties of the war department have become irksome to you ; if so, I can give you an appointment less onerous to you, but equally important to the state. I am just now in need of an intelligent representative before the imperial Diet. This charge I commit to you, premising that you must start for your post immediately, that you may infuse some life into the stagnant councils of the ambassadors of the princes of Germany."

"Your majesty wishes to banish me from court ?" asked the margrave, pale with anger.

"Certainly not, your highness," replied the emperor, gently. "I send you on an honorable embassy, and one whereat I need a capable and fearless advocate. The question to be decided before the imperial Diet is one of life or death to Austria, nay—to Germany. France is evidently preparing for war with the German empire. Her fortresses on the eastern frontier are all garrisoned ; her troops are approaching ; and under some pretext or other, they will cross our boundary lines. This being the case, the princes of the empire must cease their everlasting petty dissensions, and band themselves together for the defence of Germany. Be it your task to strengthen the bond of unity between them, and to convince them that in close alliance with Austria safety is to be found for all. I know of no man who can serve my interests at Regensburg as well as you, my lord ; while, happily, I can



find a substitute for your presidential chair at home, in Count von Starhemberg. And now, farewell ; and let me hear from you as soon as possible."

The emperor extended his hand to the margrave, who, scarcely able to control his dissatisfaction, barely raised it to his lips, and hurried away.

"My lords," said the emperor, "let us proceed to business. The spring is nigh, and a new campaign is about to be planned. Count von Starhemberg, as president of this assembly, will be so good as to impart his views."

Count von Starhemberg bowed :—"Your majesty, it appears to me that our policy is to avoid a general engagement. The end of this campaign is the reduction of Belgrade, and great precaution must be used if we are to succeed. I would divide the army, so as to begin operations at three points simultaneously, and weaken the enemy, by scattering his forces. By detaching, we can easily defeat them, and capture their arsenals. This accomplished, we proceed to Belgrade, and, with the conquest of this Turkish stronghold, we end not only the campaign, but the war."

As Von Starhemberg concluded this harangue, the emperor addressed himself to Prince Louis of Baden.

"Your majesty," replied he, "I have no opinion to offer, for my views coincide altogether with those of Count von Starhemberg."

"And you, Count von Kinsky ?"

"Your majesty, I sustain the president."

The same replies were forthcoming from Counts Liechtenstein and Puchta, and the emperor, having heard each one, relapsed into silence. After a pause, he spoke. "There reigns a remarkable unanimity of opinion here, among the councils of the war department," said he, with some emphasis. "Five members having but one mind as to the prosecution of the war ! Not one variation from the plan of the president—not one suggestion—not even from so experienced and able a general as Louis of Baden ! This is singular and surprising. We have yet to hear the youngest member of the council. Field-Marshal Prince of Savoy, speak without restraint, and fear not to express your own views."

"Pardon me, your majesty," said Eugene, blushing, "if I venture to dissent from the opinions expressed by those who are my seniors in years, and my superiors in experience. But it is the duty of a man, when called upon to speak, to speak honestly ; and I should be untrue to my most earnest convictions, were I to give in my adherence to the plan proposed."

Amazement was depicted upon the faces of the assembled councillors ; not only amazement, but disapprobation of Eugene's boldness. The emperor, however, looked kindly at the prince, and bade him proceed.

"With your majesty's permission, I am of the opinion that the entire army be concentrated in an attack upon Belgrade. To divide our forces will enfeeble them doubly ; their numbers would be inconsiderable, and their command by one chief, impossible. Division is weakness—concentration is strength. Belgrade is our goal, and to Belgrade let us march at once. Let us possess the key of Turkey, and then we can make conditions with the Sultan."

"I honor your frankness, prince," replied the emperor. "I should respect it, were my opinion on the subject adverse to yours. But it is not. My lords, I regret that we are not all of one mind ; but I must decide in favor of the campaign as proposed by Field-Marshal Eugene of Savoy. I cannot consent to have the army crippled by division ; we must put forth all our strength, if we are to lay siege to Belgrade, and to this one end let our warlike preparations be directed."

"Your majesty's will is law," replied Count von Starhemberg. "It only remains for you to name the one to whom the chief command of the Austrian forces is to be intrusted."

"It is to be intrusted to him who has commanded it with such signal ability—to the Duke of Lorraine, my lord.—And now, gentlemen," added the emperor, rising, "the sitting is ended."

"Your majesty," interposed Louis of Baden, "I crave a few moments more."

The emperor gave consent, and the young prince came forward and spoke.

"Your majesty, the *chief* command of the army being given to the Duke of Lorraine, it follows that neither the



Elector of Bavaria nor I have any independent position ; we are to obey the orders of the Duke of Lorraine. This being the case, Max Emmanuel has commissioned me to announce with the utmost respect that it does not become a reigning prince to be the instrument of any other man's will. His subjects have already complained of the subordinate rank of their sovereign, and he cannot allow their sense of honor to be wounded by a renewal of such affront. He therefore tenders his resignation. He will withdraw the Bavarian troops, and take no part in your majesty's projected campaign against the Turks."

"We shall take time to consider the subject," replied Leopold, in a tone of unconcern, "and will speak with the elector in person. Have you anything else to say?"

"Yes, your majesty," said Louis. "I, also, consider it beneath my dignity to serve under a foreign prince, and I owe it to my own self-respect to act with the elector, and to tender my resignation."

The emperor looked searchingly at the troubled countenance of the margrave, who blushed beneath his gaze, and cast down his eyes.

"And you, too, would abandon your colors?" asked Leopold.

The eyes of the margrave flashed fire. "I false to my colors!" exclaimed he.

"You," repeated the emperor. "With your rank, as Margrave of Baden, I have nothing to do. You are an officer in my army, and have taken the oath of allegiance to me, as your lord and emperor. I ask you if you deem it honorable to desert your flag on the eve of a campaign? Do we not call such conduct by the name of cowardice?"

"Your majesty," cried Louis, vehemently, "I a—!"

"I do not speak of you," interrupted Leopold, calmly. "I ask you, if, at the moment of engaging the enemy, one of your ablest officers were to come to you with the proposition you have just made to me, by what word would you characterize the act?"

"Your majesty—I—I—" stammered the margrave.

"You cannot answer, my lord, but I will answer for you.

You would say to such a man, 'He who deserts his post in the hour of danger is a coward.' But you, Margrave of Baden, are a man of honor, and therefore you will withhold your vaulting ambition. You will not strive with the destiny which makes Charles of Lorraine an older and more experienced, but not a braver man than you ; but you will return to your duty, and emulate his greatness. Ambition is inseparable from valor ; but it must be checked by reason, or it degenerates into envy. What would you think of a crown prince who should feel humiliated at his subordinate rank when compared with that of his father? When you entered my service, the Duke of Lorraine was already general-in-chief of the armies of Austria ; and, as he has always led them to victory, it would be in the highest degree unjust to supersede him by another. He who would command, must first learn to obey. Margrave of Baden, I cannot accept your resignation."

"I will do my duty," replied Louis, bowing low before the emperor's reproof. "I submit myself to your majesty's decision, and remain."

"Say, rather," returned Leopold, smiling affectionately upon the young prince, "say rather that you go, for the campaign must open at once. Be diligent, Count von Starhemberg ; inaugurate your preparations this very day ; and you, Field-Marshal Prince of Savoy, hasten to Innspruck, to communicate to the Duke of Lorraine the result of our council of war."

"I thank your majesty," replied Eugene, "for this gracious command. May I be permitted to retire, and make my preparations to leave?"

The emperor bowed his head, and addressed the Margrave of Baden. "As there is no such urgency attending the movements of your highness, I will be happy to consider you as my guest, and shall expect the pleasure of your company at the opera.—You also, gentlemen," added he to the other members of the war department. "The empress is already in the theatre, awaiting our coming."

And with these words, the emperor, followed by his councilors, left the room. Without, the court was waiting to accompany him ; and, when the lord-chamberlain had announced



to the world that his majesty the emperor was about to visit the opera, the long, brilliant cortège set itself in motion.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE DUMB MUSIC.

THE court entered the theatre. The emperor's suite took possession of the boxes on either side of the one appropriated to the imperial family, while Leopold, followed by Prince Eugene, whom he delighted to honor, entered the imperial box.

"I wish to present our new field-marshal to the empress," said he to his courtiers.

The empress was seated in one corner of the box, busily engaged with a piece of embroidery. She was so absorbed in the mysteries of silk and golden stitching, that she scarcely remarked the entrance of the court. For a moment her eyes met those of the emperor, to whom she bowed and smiled; then, bending her head again, she resumed her work.

The emperor took a seat by her, and watched her flying fingers with affectionate interest. "Your majesty is unusually industrious to-day," said he, smiling, and touching the embroidery.

"I was merely beguiling the hour of expectation which has passed away with your majesty's presence, by completing a flower on this altar-cloth, intended for the chapel of the blessed Eleanor, my namesake."

"The blessed Eleanor must excuse you to-day if I claim your presence here," replied the emperor. "And let me implore you for a while to fold those busy hands, and give your attention to the music which has been gotten up for your especial gratification."

The empress quietly folded her work, and rose from her tabouret.

"Allow me to present to your majesty the youngest field-marshal in the army," said Leopold, signing to Eugene to advance.

"I congratulate your highness," replied the empress, while Eugene knelt and kissed her hand. "Are you, indeed, so very young, prince?"

"No, your majesty," said he, sadly. "I am so old, that I wonder my hair is not gray."

"Indeed! How old are you, then?"

"Your majesty, I am forty-six years of age," replied Eugene.

"Why, how can you say such a thing," exclaimed Leopold, "when everybody knows you to be just twenty-three?"

"Your majesty, are not the years of active service reckoned by the soldier as double?"

"Yes, assuredly, my young field-marshal."

"Then, my liege, I am forty-six years of age, for my life has been one long war with troubles and trials."

The empress looked sympathizingly into the deep, sad eyes of the young prince, and saw that he spoke the truth.

"Have you then had many sorrows?" asked she, gently.

"Ay, your majesty; I have struggled and suffered since childhood, for I have ever been a soldier of misfortune."

"But you are no longer one," said Leopold, laying his hand upon Eugene's shoulder; "you have taken the oath of allegiance to Austria, and misfortune has now no claim upon you."

Eugene looked up, and the face of the emperor was beaming with kindness. "Whatever betide, my liege," returned he, "I am yours for life, and Austria is my land of adoption."

"I am glad to hear it; and now there is but one thing wanting to make you a subject after my own heart. You must marry an Austrian wife that shall make you as happy a husband as myself, and transform earth into heaven, as her majesty has done for me. It is in commemoration of my own happiness that I have chosen the opera of 'Il Pomo d'Oro' to celebrate the empress's festival. 'Il Pomo d'Oro'—that is, a happy union—the golden apple of paradise."

And the emperor, enchanted to have turned the conversation to a subject which was to him of supreme interest, offered his arm to the empress, and conducted her to the front of the box.

As soon as their majesties appeared, the spectators rose and



cheered them enthusiastically. The imperial pair took their seats, and behind them stood Prince Eugene, the only other occupant of the box.

The emperor now waved his hand as a signal to the marshal of the household, who, raising his gilded staff, conveyed the imperial command to the leader of the orchestra. "His majesty is graciously pleased that the opera shall commence," cried the lord-chamberlain.

The leader bowed to the emperor, and took his place, which was conspicuously raised above that of the other musicians.

"His majesty is graciously pleased to allow all present to be seated," was the second cry of the emperor's mouth-piece. And now was heard a rustling of ladies' silks, and of cavaliers' velvets, and the grateful spectators took their seats, while the emperor, with a look of extreme satisfaction, opened the score of the Pomo d'Oro, laid it on the ledge of the box, and began to hum the overture.

"Have you your text-book?" asked he of the empress. "I ordered one for your especial use; a synopsis of the opera, with the principal airs only. I hope that you received it. This one is too heavy for you."

The empress pointed to a purple-velvet book at her side, and slightly bowed her head.

Leopold nodded, much pleased, and then gave his attention to the stage.

The audience breathlessly awaited the opening. The leader flourished his baton. The violins raised their bows, the haut-boys and horns were clapped to the mouths of their respective performers, bass-voils were seized, harps were clutched, and drumsticks were raised in the air.

Nevertheless, not a sound was heard from the orchestra!

The emperor looked up from his score, and there, to be sure, was the leader, his baton going from left to right—there were the violins busy with their bows; the wind instruments were blowing for dear life; the harpists were tugging at their strings; the drumsticks were going with all their might—and not a sound! The musicians might just as well have been so many phantoms.

The emperor, in his bewilderment, turned to the empress,

who was so profoundly engaged with her score, that she murmured the words thereof half aloud.

"Do you hear the music?" asked her husband.

She started a little, and, blushing deeply, looked very much confused. "Yes, yes," replied she, absently; "it is very fine."

"I must then have lost my hearing," said Leopold; "for I hear nothing." And a second time he glanced at the orchestra, where the music was proceeding with the utmost energy.

"I cannot unriddle the mystery," thought the emperor, "for the empress hears the music and pronounces it fine. Prince Eugene," added he, aloud, "Do *you* hear any thing?"

"Not a sound, your majesty."

The emperor, looking very much relieved, beckoned to the lord-chamberlain, and sent him to inquire into the matter.

The audience, meanwhile, were quite as astounded as their sovereign. However, after a time they began to whisper and smile; and finally, as the drummer performed an extra flourish with his drumsticks, a voice was heard to cry out, "Bravo! bravo!"

This was the signal for a general burst of laughter, which the marshal of the household, though he shook his baton furiously, was impotent to quell. While the merriment was at its height the lord-chamberlain returned, and his countenance was expressive of extreme indignation.

Leopold, who for a moment had forgotten his Spanish formality, and had retired to the back of the box, advanced eagerly to meet him.

"What says the leader?" asked he, hastily.

"The leader, your majesty, is in despair, and is as much at a loss to account for the eccentricity of his orchestra as the audience themselves. He says that the last rehearsal was perfectly satisfactory."

"Go, then, to the musicians. See the first violin, Baron von Rietmann, and tell him that the overture must commence."

The lord-chamberlain went off on his mission, while Leopold, in undisguised impatience, stood at the door of his box waiting. The empress, apparently not cognizant of any thing



around her, kept her eyes steadfastly riveted on her book. Prince Eugene had risen, and stood behind the emperor.

"What think you of this *opéra comique*?" asked Leopold.

"It is past my comprehension, your majesty. I cannot conceive how they presume to—"

The emperor suddenly interrupted him. "I begin to apprehend the difficulty," said he, laughing. "My musicians are all of high rank, and, as noblemen and artistes, they have a two-fold pride. They know perfectly well that I cannot do without them, and they occasionally take advantage of the fact to annoy me. They have some cause of complaint, I confess, and—Ah! What says Baron Rietmann?"

"My liege,"—replied the chamberlain, pale and breathless.

"Do not look so terrified," said Leopold; "what says the baron?"

"Your majesty, I am ashamed to be the bearer of his message," sighed the chamberlain. "He says their instruments will be dumb until the arrears due the orchestra for the last three months are paid!"

At this the emperor burst into an audible fit of laughter; then, remembering himself, he glanced anxiously at his impassible empress, to see if she had overheard him. No; she was perfectly unconscious of any thing but her book.

"Rietmann is a bold fellow," said Leopold at length, "but he is a great artiste, and I forgive his presumption. He is quite correct, however, as regards the orchestra. The imperial treasury has been drained for the army, and nothing remains for my musicians."

"Your majesty must order the army to refill the treasury at the expense of the enemy," said Eugene, with a smile. "It is said that the grand-vizier has immense treasures in Belgrade."

"Capture them all, field-marshal, for we are sorely in need of them. But let us try first to compromise with these musical rebels here.—Go, my lord-chamberlain, to Baron Rietmann, and say that the arrears due the orchestra shall be paid to-morrow, and thereunto I pledge my imperial word.—Now, Prince Eugene, let us resume our seats. I presume that my golden promises will restore the dumb to speech."

And so they did. Scarcely had the lord-chamberlain whispered the emperor's dulcet words into the baron's ear, before a signal passed between the musicians, and the overture began.\*

The scenic effect of the opera was beautiful. The fountains were of real water, and graceful naiads disported within their marble basins; and there was lightning and thunder; there were transformations of men into animals, and finally, there was a golden apple which fructified into a bewitching fairy. She sang so delightfully that the emperor, in his enthusiasm, let fall his score, and applauded with all his might.

The fairy was encored, and as she was about to repeat her aria, the emperor turned to the empress and requested leave to be allowed the use of her text-book for a few minutes. In his eagerness he did not remark her exceeding confusion; but as, taking the book from her hands, he gave a glance at its pages, he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

And no wonder! For, instead of an opera-score, he found a prayer-book!

"I hope your majesty will excuse me," stammered the empress. "In absence of mind, I brought my prayer-book instead of the score."

"And your majesty was praying for us," replied Leopold, half-vexed, half-amused. "But in our sinful way, we, too, are praying; for surely music such as this is both prayer and praise; and He who taught the nightingale her song, must surely rejoice to hear from human tongues the strains which He has revealed to inspired human genius!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE RETIREMENT OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

THE imperial army, in five divisions, had marched to the Turkish frontier. They had traversed Transylvania, taking, on their way, the fortresses of Grosswardein, Sziget, and Ca-

\* This scene is historical.—See "Life and Deeds of Leopold the Great."