Morning was dawning when Elizabeth Christine, pale, trembling and resigned, arose from her knees.

"*Soffri e taci!*" said she, with a heart-broken smile. "It was the maxim of his youth, and shall be the motto of my whole life. *Soffri e taci!* What a sad, grave phrase it is, humble and proud at once! I have accepted my fate; I will bear it as befits a queen. Silence, my heart—be still. *Soffri e taci!*"

CHAPTER XXIV.

CORONATION DAY.

All Berlin was full of fun and jollity. The streets were crowded with people in their holiday clothes, and the houses were decorated with flowers and bunting. It was coronation day; the citizens of Berlin were to take the oath of allegiance to Frederick, the nobles and officials to do homage to him. All the world poured toward the castle. Everyone was eager to see him come out on the balcony in coronation dress and greet his people, his queen at his side—the beautiful young woman with the gentle smile and the clear, cloudless brow. Everyone wished to see the rich equipages of the nobles on their way to court, and if possible, gather up some of the coin which, according to an old custom, must be stamped this day and scattered to the people.

Packed shoulder to shoulder the people stood on the square watching the balcony on which the king was to appear, and crowded hastily up the steps of the cathedral, between the Brüder and the Breiter Streets, to watch the spectacle the better. The windows of the surrounding houses were filled with gayly dressed women holding bouquets to be waved at the adored young monarch. Even the roofs were covered with troops of merry boys.

All was joy and enthusiasm. Everyone longed to cheer the king who had done so much in the few short weeks of his reign to bless his people, who had opened the granaries, diminished the import duties, banished the torture, facilitated divorce, and abolished ecclesiastical compulsion; who permitted the pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to resume the robes for mass, the decorated altars, the confessional—all things which Frederick William had forbidden with the utmost rigor; who had called back the religious sects

that had been banished with persecution from Prussia, and permitted each of his subjects to be happy after his own fashion, setting a limit at the same time to the caprice and tyranny of the priests and prohibiting the imposition of fines and punishments by the clergy.

Everyone wished to welcome this high-hearted king, himself a poet and philosopher, honoring the poets and philosophers of his country. Had he not called back the famous scholar Wolfe to Halle, whom Frederick William had banished; resurrected the long-buried Academy of Science, given Berlin two newspapers, and commanded that the internal affairs of the nation be freely and fearlessly discussed in them? All this had Frederick William accomplished in the few brief weeks of his reign, and how much might still be hoped from him!

But not alone the people in the square were dreaming of the golden age; the nobility and higher officials who filled the rooms of the castle were filled with hope and proud rejoicing, and looked forward to a future full of splendid festivities, pomp, and display. Pöllnitz wished to realize his grand ideal and embody in the young the ideal cavalier whom he had once sketched to the dead king. Pöllnitz wished to show the world that not the court of France only could celebrate festivities worthy of the "Arabian Nights," but that Prussia, too, could pour out millions with spendthrift extravagance.

The king had given Pöllnitz power, and Pöllnitz was determined to use it to this end. He sketched the most fabulous plans, reviewed every day of his life the whole array of court beauties to find the tempter who should bewitch the young king and beguile him into the net of luxury that Pöllnitz was restlessly weaving for him. The king did not love his wife; that was an open secret for the whole court. There was the beautiful young Madame von Wreeche, who, with her husband, her brothers, and sisters, had shown so much self-sacrificing devotion to the crown prince at Küstrin, and whom the crown prince, as everyone knew, had loved with the most ardent, boundless passion. Then there was Madame Morien, *le tourbillon*, who had so often cheered and amused the crown prince and to whom he had evidently devoted a warmer feeling of late. Finally, there was Doris Ritter, the poor young girl who had, for Frederick's sake, burdened with shame and disgrace, been whipped through the streets of Berlin, whose sole offence lay in her being Frederick's first love. Now that the king was free, would he not remember her and reward her who had suffered for him all misfortune, sorrow, and dis-

grace? Could not Doris Ritter once more attain power and distinction, transform her low estate into a crown of martyrdom?

Pöllnitz had determined to fix his eye upon Doris Ritter first of all; to find her, draw her forth from her exile and humiliation, provided, of course, that the king proved cold and indifferent to both the other ladies.

But the coronation day unfortunately offered no opportunity for ascertaining the king's feelings. In vain had Pöllnitz hoped to see the period of festivities begin with that day. In vain had he proposed to the king to close the day with a splendid ball in the palace, to which the nobility should be invited. "This must be no day of rejoicing for me," the king had answered, "for it is not only my coronation day, but a day which marks anew the death of my father, who had to die before his successor could be crowned. They are sad memories and heavy duties which this day brings, and I will give them no outward appearance of rejoicing. So give your gold-scattering fancy a rest, Baron Pöllnitz; I am no Haroun al Raschid, but a German prince, and the luxury of the Orient can appear only incognito at the court of a European prince —never officially.

Accordingly, the arrangement of the throne-room had been confided by the king directly to the castellan, and Baron Pöllnitz bore no responsibility; he could criticise the room with a scornful shrug, could confess with joyful pleasure that he would never have consented to such an arrangement, never have lent his name to such poverty-stricken preparations.

The throne, placed before the main wall, was a long, narrow platform, and upon it an old arm-chair whose upholstery showed signs of wear in divers places. Is that the throne on which a king is about to receive the first homage of his nobles? A disdainful smile rested still upon Pöllnitz's lips, when the door opened and the king, followed by his three brothers and the royal princes, entered the room.

Pöllnitz could scarcely restrain a cry of horror. The king wore neither the royal mantle nor the crown, nor had he the richly embroidered robes which he was wont to wear at court festivities. He wore the simple uniform of his guard regiment, and nothing, not even a star on his breast, distinguished him from the generals and staff-officers who surrounded him. And yet, as he stood upon his poor throne, with his three brothers behind him, the princes and generals at either side of the throne—as he stood there alone, erect—there was no one who could be compared to him.

Minister von Arnim's solemn speech found slight attention, and Von Görne's answer perhaps less. What these gentlemen expounded in lengthy paragraphs Frederick had said with glance before they began. His ardent, proud, self-conscious glance had said to each person present, "I am thy king, thy ruler; before me shall thy soul bow down in homage and yield me the oath of allegiance!" And they had all bowed before him, not because accident had made him heir to a throne, but because they were forced to recognize the supremacy of his intellect. Loud and joyous, from thankful hearts, rang out the oath of allegiance from young and old. The king stood upon his unpretentious throne and listened to them, no muscle of his face revealing his inward satisfaction. Impassive and unapproachable he looked, receiving homage, not with the vanity of youth, but with the quiet of a sage accepting what belongs to him, not blinded by a gift.

The act of homage had come to an end; the king descended the three steps again and beckoned his escort. The gentlemen hastened to open the doors leading to the balcony, and bore great sacks filled with coin. The air was filled with the shouts of the multitude. The king had appeared upon the balcony and greeted his people with upraised arm and friendly greeting.

For the first time that day the king's face beamed with pleasure. He took the hand of Prince Augustus William, who was standing next him, and his eyes were flooded with tears, as he said in a low voice full of emotion: "See, these are all my children, and they demand of their father that he love and protect them, make them a great and prosperous nation." And he waved his hand again, and the people shouted again their enthusiasm for the king, who now drew from the proffered bowl a handful of gold and silver coin and scattered it among the multitude.

As the coin fell the crowd pressed toward that point, struggling and pushing to get this memento of the coronation day. Even a woman threw herself boldly into the tussle. She had stood motionless looking at the balcony, but as the king threw down money she had plunged forward with outstretched hands, crying in a passionate voice: "Give me one of those coins—only a little silver one; give it me for a memento." And suddenly there arose a strange murmur among the people by whom the woman stood. They looked at her, whispered together, drew back shy and frightened, as though they dreaded contact with this woman who had first begged so humbly and earnestly, and now with folded arms, wrinkled

brow, scornful smile, and lips pressed tightly together, stood in the midst of a little circle that separated her from the rest of the crowd.

"It is she!" "Yes, it is she!" they whispered.

"She has come to look at the king, for whom she suffered so much; for his sake she was laden with shame and disgrace, cast out from among the honorable and pure, and still she mixes herself in among us, and comes hither to see the king," said a harsh, pitiless voice.

"She has been dishonored," said another; "but we know that she is innocent, and though she has been cast out and reviled, we may well pity her. She, too, has a right to one of the coins which the king's hand has touched." And the speaker approached her and gave her a gold and a silver coin, saying: "There, poor, unhappy woman, take these coins, and may they proclaim a better and a happier future for you too."

The poor woman looked with a firm, tearless look into the good-natured face of the worthy citizen. "No," she said, "for me there is no better time, but only shame and want. But I thank you for your sympathy, and accept this silver coin from you in memory of this hour and this day."

She hid the coin in her pocket. Then she strode proudly through the circle that had formed around her, and was lost in the crowd. The waves of the multitude closed behind her and no one heeded her further. Everyone looked up to the balcony, where the king stood with his splendid escort. No one up there had noticed the little scene which had taken place among the people, no one had heeded the woman who had made a path for herself through the crowd to the old cathedral, from whose steps, leaning on one of the pillars of its columns, she gazed up to the balcony on which the king was standing.

The coins had all been scattered; the king had shown himself to the people, and now he must, according to etiquette, leave the balcony and return to the parlor to make *la grande tournée* and speak a few friendly words to such of the nobility and higher officials as were assembled there. But the king remained. He had beckoned to the princes and the retinue to leave the balcony. He stood, with his arms leaning upon the balustrade of the balcony, looking thoughtfully down at the black sea below him. Often his eye wandered to the cathedral, and each time a shudder passed through the woman who stood leaning against a pillar of the portal. But the king did not see her. His glance wandered unheedingly about.

He saw nothing of the outer world, for his mental vision was turned inward, and he saw only his own heart.

In the great *salon* the gentlemen of the nobility were standing in indignant silence. A cloud rested upon every brow, and black looks abounded. Not even Pöllnitz could manage to keep up the charming stereotyped smile which played about his lips at other times; even he felt the bitter insult, that the king let his nobles and higher officials wait so long merely to gaze upon the disgusting, grimy, unmeaning mass known as the people. Only one group of three gentlemen seemed cheerful and confident, and their eyes glowed with hope and pleasure.

"Ah, the Messieurs von Wreeche have come, too," thought Pöllnitz, and his frown grew still darker. "They have come to get their reward for the good services rendered the crown prince, and they are unquestionably dangerous rivals of us all. The king will doubtless show them especial favor for having suffered so much for him, and been seven years banished from court for his sake. I will go to them and hear what the king promises." And he slipped through the crowd until he stood near the group.

At last there was a movement in the assembly; everyone bowed his head in reverent greeting.

The king had left the balcony and entered the *salon*. He began the *grande tournée*, and passing along the rows of gentlemen, had a friendly word for each. At last he reached the Von Wreeches and paused before them. Every eye was turned to the group. The company held its breath and listened. Frederick's eyes had lost their gayety and grown dark.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it is a long time since we met last at the court of the King of Prussia. Nor do I believe that you find here him whom you seek, for you are doubtless seeking the crown prince. But here there is only a king—a king who demands that his majesty be revered and that no one doubt him, even when his commands seem hard and cruel. He who rebels is always worthy of punishment, even when he acts in all good intention. I, gentlemen, shall never tolerate that, and one will and one law only will have validity in my court."

And without a greeting the king passed on. The Messieurs von Wreeche stood with downcast eyes, trembling and rudely shaken, while the face of Pöllnitz beamed again with cheerfulness and contentment.

"Now," he said to himself, "they have fallen into complete disfavor. The king seems disposed to punish those who conferred benefits upon the crown prince. Louis XII. said that

it was unworthy of a king of France to revenge the injury done to a prince of France. The King of Prussia, on the contrary, seems to hold it beneath his dignity to reward the benefits shown the Crown Prince of Prussia. He thinks of the time when he will have a crown prince, and he wishes to terrify all at the thought of devoting themselves to him and neglecting the duties due the legitimate head of the State. But what is the meaning of yonder crowd? Why does the lord marshal approach the king with such an excited and joyful face? I must find out what is going on there."

And again he made his way through the ranks of courtiers, and successfully reached a place just behind the king as the lord marshal, with a loud and excited voice, said:

"Sire, I have to ask a favor. There in the anteroom is a young man who begs permission to cast himself at your feet, and take the oath of allegiance and boundless devotion. He has come from America to do homage to your Majesty; for scarcely had he heard of the incurable illness of the dead king than he quit his asylum to travel night and day, arriving to-day, and, as I trust, at a fortunate moment."

"What is the name of the young man for whom you feel such deep interest?" asked the king, after a pause.

The lord marshal gazed up at him affronted and anxious. He thought Frederick's heart must have told him who it was that stood out there waiting to greet the young king after long exile in America.

"Sire, your Majesty requires me to mention the name?" he asked, hesitatingly.

"I require it."

The lord marshal drew a long breath. "Then, your Majesty, it is my nephew, Lieutenant von Keith, returned from America to throw himself at your feet."

Not a muscle of the king's face moved.

"I know no Lieutenant von Keith," he said, sternly. "He who once was so called, was stricken by his majesty, my father, in deep disgrace from the officers' list, and the hangman hung him in effigy upon the gallows. But if Herr von Keith is still alive he had done better to remain in America, where, perhaps, no one knows of his crime and disgraceful punishment."

"Your Majesty will not receive him, then?"

"You may thank God that I ignore his existence," said the king, solemnly; "for if I should remember that he lives I should have to execute the sentence that the Prussian court-martial pronounced against him!" And passing the lord marshal with a slight nod, the king directed some trifling words to the gentleman next him.

"Now," said Pöllnitz, with a grin, "the king seems to have lost his memory altogether. God grant that he may not have forgotten that it was I who, with infinite trouble and pains, induced Frederick William to pay the crown prince's debts and present him with the Trakehner stud!"

CHAPTER XXV.

DORIS RITTER.

When the king had left the balcony the poor young woman on the steps of the cathedral arose, as though awakening from a deep dream, and looked about her, frightened and anxiously. The sight of the king had drawn her out of the present into happy by-gone days. Now that he had vanished, the blissful memories, too, were gone, and she looked with sad eyes out upon the forlorn present.

She drew her shawl with a violent movement closer about her lean figure and, making her way through the crowd, hastened down the steps and across the square to the pleasure garden. When she had passed the Dogs' Bridge and gradually left the crowd behind her she breathed more easily and paused to rest upon one of the chain-posts of the guard-house. Then she went on, across the fortress trenches and the deserted region that lay beyond, down the Linden Promenade to a house that stood near the great square of the Brandenburger Gate. It was a miserable little house, with dirty window-panes and a grimy color. The low, narrow door looked inhospitable enough, as though it meant to admit no one to the silent rooms within, where no sign of life was to be discovered. Yet it was meant for work, and would have been less poverty-stricken if the great iron bell over the door had oftener filled the room with its merry jingle; for behind this door there was a store, and the bell, if rung by buyers, would have rung courage, hope, and joy into the hearts of the inhabitants. But it was almost always silent, unless some servant caught in the rain, or some crone who might have made her purchases much better a few thousand paces farther on, came to this poor little shop for the sake of the shorter walk. And yet it seemed as though this shop had

once known better days, had once laid claim to elegance and taste. In both windows, near the house-door—and the three formed the whole front of the house—a tasteful arrangement of plants and flowers was to be seen, large blue porcelain pots such as are used for preserved ginger, nuts and raisins in glass dishes, lemons, oranges, dainty bags of coffee, and small Chinese boxes with real tea. But the bags and boxes were empty; the oranges and lemons were hardened and dried by time; the ginger-pots revealed no more their once piquant contents; and even the dusty, half-obliterated sign over the door, that had once represented a gorgeous negro rolling tobacco-leaves, was now but a reminiscence of by-gone days; for the tobacco had long since vanished from the chests, and the little that remained had crumbled to dust. The shop offered only small and insignificant wares in these days—chicory for the poor; the ill-smelling, home-made tallow-candles with which poverty lights up its wretchedness; a few crumbling bonbons in a glass box on the counter; hard, old, oily herrings in an ill-smelling cask; a little syrup in a small one, and a small quantity of hard sugar in a hanging-case on the wall.

Such was the whole inventory of the shop, the whole property of this family which, with its misery, misfortune, despair, and suffering, dwelt alone in the house. Its only means of support was the poor young woman now returning from the pageant with scarcely the courage to open the door that led to her prison.

At last she made an effort, and smoothing away the locks of hair that fell over her brow and hung down upon her lean cheeks, she pressed the door open and strode into the shop. The bell jangled, and a little door opened, through which a pale, ill-clad boy hastened into the shop, and stepping forward with a wan smile, asked the wishes of the new-comer.

But in the midst of his question he subsided, the smile died out of his wilted and aged features, and he stared with troubled mien at the poor woman who was opening the lid of the shop table to go into the inner rooms of the house.

"Ah! it is you, mother," he said, sorrowfully. "I hoped it was somebody to buy something. Then we should have had money to get some bread and need not cry for hunger."

"Money!" said his mother, anxiously. "Did I not give you money, just before I went away, to buy bread for you and your sister?"

"Yes, but father came just then and threatened to beat me if I did not give him the money at once. I did so and he

went away, and we have been alone ever since, and have cried with hunger, while our father enjoyed himself in the beer-house and our mother went to look at the coronation that we too would gladly have seen. I must stay at home and tend the store, that no one has come into, and take care of the poor little sister that cried the whole time for bread which I could not give her."

There was something hard, sullen, hateful in the tone and demeanor of the speaker. He darted such dark, wrathful looks at his mother, who was walking about the shop, that she shuddered before them.

"Why do you look at me so angrily and sadly? Why do you not greet your poor mother as kindly as usual and give her a kiss as reward for all her sorrow and trouble?"

She had seated herself, weary and worn, on an old wooden bench and stretched her arms to her son with a look of unutterable love and tenderness. But the boy did not come to embrace her. He stood opposite her and shook his head with a look of fierce dislike.

"First give us bread, mother," he said, roughly; "then perhaps I may embrace you."

The woman looked with horror into the hard, cold face. She pressed her hand upon her high, pale forehead, as though she would drive away the madness that threatened to confuse her thoughts, and upon her heart whose wild, feverish beating nearly smothered her.

"My God, my God!" she murmured, "am I mad already—am I dreaming? Is that my son—my Karl who loved me so tenderly—my boy, the comfort of my sorrow, the only confidant of my tears? Am I, whom he stares at with such a hateful stare, his mother—his mother who would give her life for him without a murmur—who has hungered and suffered cold for him and worked for him through whole long winter nights—his mother who, for his sake, has had the courage *not* to die, but to bear want, misery, and wretchedness? Karl, my son, come quick to thy mother, for thou knowest well that she loves thee boundlessly and will die if thou no longer lovest her."

The boy stood motionless opposite her. "No, mother, you do not love us—me or little Anna, for if you did you would not have left us to go where people laugh and rejoice while your children wept at home."

"Child, child! I did not go from idle curiosity," she said, sorrowfully; "I went to question the oracle of your future, to see whether for my children the chance of hope and comfort

is still there. I wished to read in a human face whether the man still has a heart, or whether he too is cold and heartless, as all princes are."

She had forgotten that she was speaking to her son. But he listened intently and a sly, scornful smile played over his colorless lips.

"Ah!" he said, "you think he might give you money now for your misfortune and your disgrace. But father told me to-day that all the gold in the world is not enough to pay for shame, and that there is nothing save death or brandy for helping one forget that one is a disgraced or accursed child of the human race. Father told me—" The boy was silent and stepped backward, for his mother had arisen, and stood, deathly pale, before him with flaming eyes, trembling with rage.

It was no woman's head, but that of a Medusa; not the gaze of a loving and tender mother, but of a maniac.

"What did thy father say?" she cried. "Thou wilt not tell me? Speak or I'll murder thee, speak or I'll dash my brains out against yonder wall and thou wilt be the murderer of thy mother."

"You will beat me if I tell you what father said," he answered, defiantly.

"No, no, I will not beat thee. Child, child, have pity on thy mother. Tell me what thy father told thee, with what words he poisoned thy heart, that the love for thy poor mother has died so quickly. Tell me all, my son. I will not beat thee; I will bless thee, though the words should pierce my heart like swords."

She wished to draw her son to her, but the boy drew back passionately.

"No! you shall not kiss me. Father says you make every one whom you touch unhappy and despicable, and we should be rich and happy if you were not our mother."

The poor woman shuddered; her arms sank powerless at her side, her eyes were tearless, dazed.

"What more did thy father say?" she murmured.

She looked at her boy with such death-like misery that he dropped his eyes, realizing how he had tortured her.

"Father was drunk," he said, sullenly. "When he heard that you had gone away he was furious—stamped, clinched his fists, and swore so dreadfully that little Anna cried with fright, and I, too, wept, and begged him to be still, and not blame you so, for it gave me pain, for then I loved you still."

"Then he loved me still!" she moaned, wringing her hands.

"But father laughed at me, and said you did not deserve to be loved, for you were to blame for all our misery. And only because he had married you had he taken to drink—to see and hear nothing of how people pointed their fingers at him. Oh, mother, you are horribly pale and tremble so. I will say nothing more. I will forget everything that father said, and love you again, mother."

The boy cried with fear. The old love had awakened in him again; he approached his mother and wished to embrace her. But now it was she who repulsed him.

"I am not trembling," she said, while her teeth chattered, as if in a chill—"I am not trembling, and thou shouldst not forget what thy father has said to thee. Thou shalt tell me all. Go on! go on! I must hear all."

The boy looked at her with shy, sad looks. His voice, that had been so defiant, was soft and mild, his eyes were filled with tears.

"Father said he had married you because he was sorry for you, and because you had brought him a couple of thousand thalers. But there had been no blessing, only disgrace, with the money. He said you were worse than the hangman, whom everyone fears and despises, for you had been stripped on the market-place, and whipped naked through the open streets, and the street-boys had thrown mud at you, and the stones of the pavement had been stained with your blood that ran from the blows of the hangman's lash."

The poor woman shrieked aloud, and fell fainting to the floor. The boy threw himself upon her crying and moaning, and the little girl, who had been lying asleep upon a straw bed in the corner, awoke and came running to beg her mother for bread.

The woman did not move. She lay, deathly pale, with closed eyes and open mouth, cold and lifeless, unconscious alike of the plaint of her tiny daughter and the kisses and tears of her son.

Suddenly, the boy heard the house door-bell, once and a second time.

"If it is father he will beat me!" thought the lad, slowly rising and going to open the door. "He forbade me to say a word to mother, and I have had to tell her everything."

The bell rang a third time. Karl sprang forward and opened the door with trembling hands. There stood, not his father, but a richly dressed gentleman, who pushed the boy aside with a friendly smile and stepped into the shop.

"I should like to buy some tobacco, my little lad," he said, glancing about the shop with a disdainful smile; "so call the worthy Schömmer, and let him give me a package from his finest canister."

"My father is not at home," said little Karl, staring at the handsome, friendly, brilliantly clad visitor with wide-open eyes.

"Well, I did not come precisely on his account," murmured the gentleman, with an odd smile. "Call thy mother, Madame Schömmer, and tell her I would gladly make a trade with her."

"My mother is lying on the floor in the back room, and I think she is dead," said Karl, bursting into tears.

"Dead! Truly that would be most inconvenient for me, for I have calculated on her being alive. But what did she die of? Is there no physician with her?"

"No one is with her but my little sister. Listen how she is crying."

"Yes, I hear that, and it is no very edifying music. No one else is with her, do you say? Where is thy father?"

"My father is at the beer-house, and no one lives in the house, for no one will come to us."

"Well, if you are all alone I may venture to go to your mother in the back room," said the stranger, with a loud, heartless laugh. "It is to be hoped that she is merely fainting, and as I have had vast experience of fainting women, I shall doubtless succeed in restoring this one. Show me the way, my little Cupid, and lead me to thy mother, the fainting Madame Venus."

He laughingly pushed the boy who had never ceased to stare at him, forward, and followed him with noiseless tread into the back room.

The woman lay stiff and motionless on the floor, and little Anna knelt beside her, begging pitifully for bread.

"Is this thy mother, Madame Schömmer?" asked the gentleman, with a curious look at the poor, corpse-like woman.

"Yes, that is my mother," said the boy, weeping.

"Mother, mother, wake up! Give me bread; I am so hungry!" moaned little Anna.

"Mother, open your eyes!" pleaded the little boy, kneeling beside her and covering her face with kisses. "Wake up and I will love you again, and will believe nothing of all that father said. He was drunk and talked nonsense, as he always does when he has had too much beer and brandy. Oh, dear, dear mother, wake up!"

"She will wake up," said the stranger, who had leaned over her and laid his hand upon her temples and breast—"she will wake up, for she is, as I thought, only fainting, and not dead."

The boy uttered a shout of delight and sprang to his feet. "My mother is not dead," he said, laughing and weeping together. "She will wake up again, she will love me again and be happy."

"Mother, mother, give me bread!" pleaded little Anna.

"Art thou so very hungry?" asked the gentleman, whom the whining began to annoy.

"Yes, we are both very hungry," said the boy, smiling through his tears. "We have had nothing to eat to-day, for mother gave us money, before she went away, to get bread and milk with. But afterward father came and took the money away to buy beer and brandy with."

"Oh! a worthy father," cried the gentleman, laughing and giving the boy a gold-piece from his purse. "There, son, you have money. Take your sister and go to the baker to buy buns. Then sit down in the house-door and eat them, and do not come in here until I call you. But if your father should come, then come at once and tell me, my son."

The children fled, beaming with joy and paying no further attention to their fainting mother. At the door, however, Karl turned around once more and asked:

"But who will tend the shop if the bell rings, and someone wants to buy something?"

"I will do it," said the stranger, laughing. "I will watch over your mother and the store. So go!"

The children ran happily away. The stranger was alone with the fainting woman.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OLD AND NEW SORROW.

A FEW moments he stood idly there, untroubled about the poor fainting woman and making no endeavor to revive her. He watched her face with an inquisitive look, not from pity for her condition, but coldly, full of his own egotistical purposes.

"Hm," he murmured. "In spite of her leanness, she bears traces of great beauty, and I believe that, properly cared for