

father does not manifest a complaisant friendliness toward these refractory princely children, and wink at their independence, they will renounce the whole connection and quit the paternal mansion. We should then, indeed, be the holy father of Christendom, but no longer have any children under the paternal authority! For having so expressed myself, I shall never be pardoned by the cardinals and princes of the Church; it has made them my deadly enemies, and yet it is with these principles alone that I have succeeded in bringing the refractory Portuguese court again under my parental control!

“But here in this pleasant place let us dismiss such unpleasant thoughts,” the pope more cheerfully continued, after a pause. “Here I will forget that I am pope; here I will never be anything more than brother Clement of the Franciscan convent, nor shall the cares and troubles of the pope, nor his holiness or infallibility, accompany him to this dear quiet place. Here I will be only a man, and forgetting my cramping highness and my forced splendor, will here right humanly enjoy the sun and this soft green grass, and in deep draughts inhale this sweet balsamic air. Ah, how happy one may yet be if he can for a moment escape from the envelope of dignity by which he is kept a chrysalis, and freely exercise the butterfly wings of manhood! And hear me for once, brother Lorenzo, so very human has your pope here become, that he feels a right fresh human appetite. If all here is as it used to be at the convent, then must you have something to appease my hunger.”

Brother Lorenzo nodded with a sly smile. Stepping to the side of the grassy bank, and slipping aside a small door

concealed by the grass, he disclosed a walled excavation, filled with fruits and pastry.

“I see you have forgotten nothing!” joyfully exclaimed Ganganelli, taking some of the fragrant fruit which Lorenzo tendered him. “Ah, you make me very happy, Lorenzo.”

Saying this, he threw his arm around Lorenzo’s neck, and silently pressed him to his bosom.

Brother Lorenzo was equally silent, but he no longer laughed; his usually cheerful face assumed a wonderfully clear and pleased expression, and two large tears rolled down over his cheek—but they were tears of joy.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DEATH-SENTENCE.

AN approaching bustling, a vehement calling and screaming, disturbed the two old men. It was Lorenzo who was called, and he quickly glided through the bushes to look after the cause of this disturbance. But soon he returned with a melancholy face and depressed mien.

“Brother Clement,” said he, “it is already all over with our enjoyment, which has been so great for me that I forgot to remind you that the pope cannot neglect the hour in which he gives audience. That hour has now come, and your anteroom is already filled with princes and prelates.”

“And yet you speak of the great happiness of being

pope," said Ganganelli, rising with a sigh from the grassy bank. "I am not allowed an hour for recreation, and yet people think—but no," said Ganganelli, interrupting himself and laughing, "we should not be ungrateful, and it would be ungrateful for me now to complain. If I have not had an hour for recreation, well, I have had half an hour, and even that is much!"

And, beckoning to brother Lorenzo to follow him, the pope crept through the bushes that separated the place from the more frequented part of the garden.

As he then walked up the grand alley, his face and his whole form assumed a very different appearance. The mild friendliness had vanished from his features, pride and dignity were now expressed by them, and his tall, erect form had in it something noble and imposing; it was no longer the stooping form of age, but only that of a somewhat elderly hero. The brother Clement had been transformed into the prince of the Church, who was about to receive his vassals.

They now saw a tall, manly form hastening down the alley directly toward the pope.

"Who is it?" asked Ganganelli, half turning toward Lorenzo, who was following him.

"It is Juan Angelo Braschi, the former treasurer, to whom you yesterday sent the cardinal's hat."

"Ah, the beautiful Braschi," sadly murmured Ganganelli. "The beloved of the favorite of my nephew, of the Cardinal Rezzonico. Ah, how bad the world is!"

In fact, he whom Ganganelli called the "beautiful" Braschi, well deserved that epithet. No nobler or more

plastic beauty was to be seen; no face that more reminded one of the divine beauty of ancient sculpture, no form that could be called a better counterfeit of the Belvedere Apollo. And it was this beauty which liberal Nature had imparted to him as its noblest gift, which helped Juan Angelo Braschi, the son of a poor nobleman of Cesara, to his good fortune, his highest offices and dignities. Not for his merits, but solely for his beauty, did the women bestow upon him their love; and as among these women there were some who exercised an important influence upon powerful cardinals, Braschi had quickly mounted from step to step, crowding aside those who had nothing but their merits and services to speak for them.

With a free and noble demeanor, Braschi now approached the pope, who remained standing at some distance awaiting him, with a calm and proud self-possession. Braschi dropped upon one knee, and pressing the hem of the pope's garment in his lips, said:

"Pardon me, most holy father, that I have ventured to seek you here. But my lively gratitude would not be longer restrained. It impelled me toward you with the wings of the wind. I must be the first to fall at your feet to stammer out to you my inexpressible thanks."

Proudly nodding his head the pope motioned him to rise.

"It is well," said he, "and you have lent your gratitude an abundance of words. It is true you were only treasurer, and I have permitted you to take a great step in making you a cardinal. But remember, my lord cardinal, that I have promoted you only because I wished to take

from you the office of treasurer, as I need a man for that post whose honesty no one could call in question!"*

Thus speaking he passed on with a ceremonious salutation, leaving the new cardinal rooted to the earth with terror, his beautiful brow distorted with rage.

"He shall expiate that," muttered Braschi, gnashing his teeth, as the pope slowly pursued his way. "By the Eternal, the proud Franciscan shall expiate that! Ah, the day will come when he will fully remember these words!"

Meantime, Ganganelli wandered calmly on, followed by his faithful Lorenzo, with a smile of joy at this dismissal and humiliation of the proud and handsome Cardinal Braschi.

The pope suddenly stopped, and turning to Lorenzo, said:

"What a strange thought has passed through my head! I have made this miserable coxcomb Braschi a cardinal because he was not honest enough for a treasurer, but in doing so I have paved the way for him to the papal throne! Would it not be strange, Lorenzo, if I have thus myself provided my successor? His dishonesty and intriguing disposition has made him a cardinal. Why can it not also make him a pope? The world is indeed so strange!"†

* The pope's own words.—See Gorani, vol. ii., p. 27.

† Juan Angelo Braschi, whom Pope Clement XIV. made a cardinal, was in fact Ganganelli's successor, and took possession of the papal chair as Pius VI. He was chosen after a very stormy conclave, and indeed the different parties voted for him on the ground that he belonged to no party, and because they thought he was so very much occupied with his own beauty that he would think of nothing else, and, while occupied with the care of his face, would leave the cares of state to others.

"What dreams those are," murmured Lorenzo, shrugging his shoulders; "the idea that a Braschi could be the successor of the noble Ganganelli!"

Many cardinals and princes of the Church, many noblemen and foreign ambassadors, were assembled in the pope's audience-room, and as Ganganelli entered, they all received him with joyful acclamations, and humbly fell upon their knees before the head of the church, the vicegerent of God, who, with solemn majesty, bestowed upon them his blessing, and then condescendingly conversed with them. That was a ceremony to which the pope was obliged to subject himself once a week, and which he reckoned as not one of the least of the troubles attendant upon his exalted position. Hence he was well pleased when this hour was over, and he at length was relieved of the presence of all these eulogistic and flattering gentlemen.

Only Cardinal Bernis had remained behind, and to him Ganganelli, giving him his hand, and drawing a deep breath, said:

"What a mass of false and hypocritical phrases we have again been obliged to swallow! These cardinals have the impudence to speak to me of their love and veneration; they do not hesitate so to lie with the same lips which to-day have already pronounced blessings and pious words of edification! But let us forget these hypocrites. Business is over, and it is kind of you to come and chat with me for one little hour. You know I love you very much, my good friend Bernis, although you do pay homage to the heathen divinities, and, as a real renegade, have constituted yourself a priest of the muses."

"Ah, you speak of my youthful sins," said the cardinal, smiling. "They are long since past, and sleep with my youthful happiness."

"That must be a wide bed which enables them all to find place side by side," responded Ganganelli, laughing, and holding up his forefinger threateningly to the cardinal.

"But what is that you are drawing from your breast-pocket with such an important air?"

"A letter from the Marquise de Pompadour, holy father," seriously replied the cardinal—"a letter in which I am commanded to communicate to you, the father of Christendom, the acquiescence of France in your proposed abolition of the order of the Jesuits. Here is a private letter addressed to me by the marquise, and here the official letter signed by King Louis, which is destined for your holiness."

The pope took the papers, and while he was reading them his face turned deadly pale, and a dark cloud gathered upon his brow.

"France also acquiesces," said he, when he had finished the reading. "How is it, then—were you not yourself against the abolition of the order, and were you not in accordance with the Spanish ambassador, your friend of many years?"

"This friendship of many years is to-day destroyed by a fish, and drives us a helpless wreck upon the wildly-rolling waves," said the cardinal, shrugging his shoulders.

Ganganelli paid no attention to him. Serious and thoughtful, he walked up and down the room, while his heavenward-directed eye seemed to address a great and all-

important question to the Being there above, which received no answer.

"I clearly see how it will be," finally murmured the pope, as if talking to himself. "I shall complete the work I have begun—it is God Himself who has opened the way for it, but this way will at the same time lead me to my grave."

"What dark thoughts are these?" said Bernis, approaching him. "This bold and high-hearted resolution will not bring you death, but fame and immortality."

"It will at least lead me to immortality," said the pope, with a faint smile. "The dead are all immortal. But think not so little of me as to suppose I would now timidly shrink from doing that which I have once recognized as right and necessary. Only there are necessities of a very painful and dreadful kind. Such a necessity is war. And is it not a war that I commence, and does it not involve the destruction of all those thousands who call themselves the followers of Loyola, and belong to the Society of Jesus? Ah, believe me, this Society of Jesus is a hydra, and we shall never succeed in entirely extirpating it. I may now cleave the head with my sword, and with the same blow I may separate my own head from my body; but a day will come when the head of this hydra will have grown again, and when it will rise from the dead with renewed vitality, while I shall be mouldering in my grave. Say not, therefore, that I know not how to destroy them, and if you do say it, at least add that I lacked not the will, but that I gave for it my own life."

Thus speaking, the pope slightly nodded an adieu to the

cardinal, and withdrew into his study, the door of which he carefully closed after him.

There was he long heard to walk the room with measured steps. Then all was still. No one ventured to disturb him. Hours passed. Lorenzo, with a fearful presentiment, knelt before the door. He laid his ear to the keyhole and tried to listen. All was still within, nothing stirred. At length he ventured to call the pope's name—at first low and tremulously, then louder and more anxiously, and as no answer was received, he at last ventured to open the door.

At his writing-table sat the pope; his face deadly pale, with staring eyes and great drops of perspiration on his forehead. Immovable sat he there, his right hand, which held a pen, resting on a parchment lying upon the table before him.

Like an image of wax, so stiff, so motionless was he, that Lorenzo, shuddering, made the sign of the cross upon his brow. Then, noiselessly advancing, he timidly and anxiously touched the pope's shoulder. Ganganelli shuddered, and a slight trembling pervaded his members; he then drew a long breath, and, casting a dull glance at his faithful friend, said:

"Lorenzo, let my coffin be ordered, and pray for my soul. I have just now signed my own death-sentence. See, there it lies. I have signed the decree abolishing the order of the Jesuits! I must therefore die, Lorenzo. It is all over and past with our shady place and our recreations. My murderers are already prowling around me, for I tell you I have myself signed my death-sentence!"*

* The pope's own words.—See Gorani, vol. ii., p. 41.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FESTIVAL OF CARDINAL BERNIS.

AND this day of the festival had finally come. With what joyful impatience, with what anxious desire, had Natalie looked forward to it—how had she importuned her friend, Count Paulo, with questions about Cardinal Bernis, about the people she would meet there, about the manners and usages with which she would have to conform!

"I am anxious and fearful," said she, with amiable modesty; "they will find occasion to laugh at me, and you will be compelled to blush for me, Paulo. But you must tell these wise men and great ladies that it is my very first appearance in society, and that they must have consideration for the awkwardness and ineptitude of a poor child who knows nothing of the world, its forms, or its laws."

"For you no excuse will be necessary," responded Paulo, pressing the delicate tips of her fingers to his lips. "Only be quite yourself, perfectly true and open, inoffensive and cheerful! Forget that you are in an assemblage; imagine yourself to be in our garden, under the trees and among the flowers, and speak to people as you speak to your trees and flowers."

"But will the people give me as true and cordial answers as my trees and flowers?" asked Natalie, thoughtfully.

"They will say to you more beautiful and more flattering things," said Paulo, smiling. "But now, Natalie, it is time to be thinking of your toilet. See, the sun is already