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AND HIS COURT.

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From the German,

BY ADELAIDE De V. CHAUDRON.

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THE REIGN OF JOSEPH.

CHAPTER I.

THE OATH.

MARIA THERESA was no more. On the 29th day of November, of the year 1780, she went to rejoin her much loved "Franz,"—him to whom her last words on earth were addressed. In her dying moments, her pale countenance illuminated by joy, the Empress would have arisen from the arm-chair in which she sat awaiting her release. The Emperor who had devoted himself to her with all the tenderness of which his nature was capable, held her back. "Whither would your Majesty go?" asked he, terrified. Maria Theresa opened her arms, exclaiming, "To thee! To thee! I come." Her head fell back, and her dying lips were parted once more. Her son bent his head to catch the fluttering words, "Franz—my Franz——"

Maria Theresa was no more! The tolling of bells and the roll of the muffled drum, announced to Vienna that the body of their beloved Empress was being laid in the vault of the Capuchins, and that after so many years of parting, she rested once more by the side of the Emperor Francis.

The iron doors of the crypts were closed, and the thousands and tens of thousands who had followed the Empress to her grave, had returned to their saddened homes. The Emperor, too, followed by his confidants, Lacy and Rosenberg, had retired to his cabinet. His face was inexpressibly sad, and he paced his room with folded arms, utterly forgetful of his friends, whom nevertheless he had requested to follow him, and who, both in the embrasure of a window, were silently awaiting the awakening of the Emperor from his dumb grief.

At last he remembered their presence. Directing his steps towards the window, he stood before them, and looked anxiously first at one, then at the other.

"Was I an undutiful son?" asked he in a faltering voice. "I implore you, my friends, make me no courtier's reply, but speak the plain, unvarnished truth, and tell me whether I was an ungrateful son to my noble mother. Lacy, by the memory of your own mother, be honest."

"By the memory of my mother, sire," said Lacy solemnly, "No!—You bore the burthen of your filial duty with exemplary patience, and bowed your will to the will of your mother, even when you knew that she erred in judgment."

"And you, Rosenberg?" asked Joseph with a sad smile.

"My opinion, sire, is that you were a noble, all-enduring son, whose heart was not hardened against his mother, although from your childhood it had provocation to become so. Your Majesty bore with more than any other man would have done whose lips had not been locked by filial tenderness."

"I was silent but resentful," said Joseph mournfully, "I bore my burthens ungraciously, and Maria Theresa was aware of it—I have often been angered by her, but she has often wept for my sake. Oh, those tears disturb my conscience!"

"Your Majesty should remember that the Empress forgave and forgot all the dissentions of by-gone years, and that in her last illness, she expressed herself supremely happy in your Majesty's care and tenderness."

"You should remember also that with the sagacity which is often vouchsafed to the dying, Maria Theresa confessed that she had unwillingly darkened your Majesty's life by her exactions, and in the magnanimity of her regret, asked your forgiveness."

"I have said all this to myself," replied Joseph, "I have repeated it o'er and o'er in these wretched, sleepless nights; but still the dagger of remorse is in my heart, and now I would gladly give years of my life, if my mother were living that I might redeem the past by cheerful submission to her every wish!"

"Let the great Empress rest in peace!" exclaimed Lacy. "She was weary of life, and died with more than willingness. Your Majesty must cherish *your* life, mindful of the vast inheritance which your mother has left you."

"You are right, Lacy," cried Joseph warmly. "It is a noble inheritance, and I swear to you both to cherish it, not for my own sake, but for the sake of the millions of human beings of whose destinies I shall be the arbiter! I swear to be a good Sovereign to my people. By the tears which my mother has shed for me, I will dry the tears of the unfortunate, and the blessing she left me with her dying breath, I shall bestow upon the Austrians whom she loved so well.—If I should ever forget this vow, you are here to remind me of it. And now that my reign begins, I exact of you both a proof of your loyalty."

"Speak, sire," said Lacy, with a bright and affectionate smile.

"Put me to the test," cried Rosenberg, "and I shall not flinch." The Emperor laid his hands upon the shoulders of his friends, and looked at them with unmistakeable affection. "Happy is the man who possesses two such friends. But hear what I exact of you—I stand upon the threshold of a new order of things. I am at last an Emperor, free to carry out the designs, which for so many long years I have been forced to

thrust back and stifle in my sorrowing heart. I am resolved to enlighten and to elevate my subjects. But if in my zeal to do well, I should lack discretion, it is for you to check and warn me. And if I heed not your warnings, you shall persist, even if your persistance become offensive. Will you promise me to do so, dear friends?"

"We promise," said both with one breath.

"God and the Emperor have heard the promise. Give me your honest hands, my best and truest friends. You, at least, I shall never doubt; I feel that your friendship will be mine until the day of my death!"

"Your Majesty is the youngest of us three," said Lacy, "and you speak as if we would outlive you."

"Age does not count by years," replied the Emperor wearily, "but by wounds, and if you count the scars that disappointment has left upon my heart, you will find that I have lived longer than either of you. Promise, then, to be with me to the last, and to close my eyes for me."

"Your wife and children will do that for you, sire," said Rosenberg.

"I shall never marry again. My nephew, Francis, shall be my heir, and I shall consider him as my son. The Empress of Russia has consented to give him her adopted daughter in marriage, and I trust that Francis may be happier in wedlock than his unfortunate uncle. My heart is no longer susceptible of love."

"And yet it beats with such yearning love towards mankind," exclaimed Rosenberg.

"Yes—my heart belongs to my people, and there is nothing left of it for woman. For my subjects alone I shall live. Their souls shall be freed from the shackles of the church, and they shall no longer be led like children by the hands of priests or prelates! You have tranquilized my conscience, and I have received your vow of fidelity till death. With two such Mentors to advise me, I may hope at last to do something for fame!"

CHAPTER II.

PRINCE KAUNITZ.

For three days Prince Kaunitz had not left his cabinet. No one was allowed to approach him except the servant who brought the meals, which the Prince sent away almost untouched. His household were sorely troubled at this, for no one had as yet ventured to communicate the tidings of the Empress's death. Still he seemed to know it, for pre-

cisely on the day of her demise, Kaunitz had retired to his cabinet, whence he had not emerged since.

To-day the tolling of bells and the dull sound of muffled drums had doubtless revealed to him that the funeral was at hand. Still he had questioned nobody, and sat in stupid silence, apparently unmindful of the tumult without. Even when the procession passed his own house he remained rigid in his chair, his large eyes glaring vacantly at the wall opposite.

Baron Binder who had noiselessly entered his room, and had been watching the Prince, saw two large tears rolling slowly down his face, and the sight of these tears emboldened him to approach the solitary mourner.

When he saw Binder, his lips quivered slightly, but he made no other sign. Binder laid his hand upon the shoulder of the Prince, and felt a start.

"Take compassion upon us who love you," said he, in a low, trembling voice. "Tell us what it is that grieves you, dear friend."

"Nothing," replied Kaunitz.

"This is the first time that I have ever known your Highness to speak an untruth," cried Binder, boldly. "Something grieves you; if not—why those blanched cheeks, those haggard eyes, and the tears that even now are falling upon your hands?"

Prince Kaunitz moved uneasily, and slowly turned his head.

"Who gave you the right to criticise my behaviour?" asked he in a freezing tone of displeasure. "Does it become such as you to measure or comprehend the sufferings of a great mind? If it pleases you to parade your troubles, go out and ask sympathy of the contemptible world, but leave to me the freedom of sorrowing alone! My grief is self-sustaining. It needs no prop and no consolation. Attend to your affairs of state, and go from hence. I wish no spies upon my actions."

"Ah!" said Binder tenderly, "'tis not my eyes that have acted the spies, but my heart, and——"

"Baron Binder," interrupted Kaunitz, "you are not under this roof to dissect my sentiments or to confide to me your own; you are here to assist me as a statesman. Go, therefore, and confine your efforts to the business of your office."

Binder heaved a sigh, and obeyed. It was useless to offer sympathy when it provoked such stinging resentment.

The States-Referendarius had scarcely reached his study before the folding-doors of Prince Kaunitz's entrance-rooms were flung wide open, and the valet in attendance announced,

"His Majesty, the Emperor."

A shudder was perceptible through the frame of the Prince, and he clutched at the arms of the chair in an attempt to rise.

"Do not rise," said Joseph, coming forward, "I have intruded myself upon you without ceremony, and you must receive me in like manner."

Kaunitz sank back, and inclined his head. He had not the power to make a reply. Joseph then motioned to the valet to withdraw, and drew a chair to the Prince's side.

There was a short silence, and the Emperor began: "I bring you greetings from my mother."

Kaunitz turned and gazed at the Emperor with a look of indescribable anguish. "Her last greeting," said he almost inaudibly.

"You know it then? Who has been bold enough to break this sad intelligence to you?"

"No one, your Majesty. For three days I have received no bulletins —when they ceased I knew that—Maria Theresa was no more."

"Since you know it then, my friend, I am relieved from a painful task. Yes—I bring you the last greetings of a Sovereign who loved you well!"

A sigh—which was rather a sob indicative of the inner throes that were racking the statesman's whole being, burst from his heart. His head fell upon his breast, and his whole body trembled. Joseph comprehended the immensity of his grief, and made no ineffectual attempts to quell it.

"I know," said he, "that you grieve, not only for her children, but for Austria."

I grieve for you—I grieve for Austria—and oh! I grieve for myself," murmured Kaunitz.

"You have been a faithful friend to my mother," continued Joseph, "and the Empress remembered it to her latest hour. She bade me remind you of the day on which you dedicated your life to Austria's welfare. She told me to say to you that the departure of your Empress had not released you. It had increased your responsibilities, and she expected of you to be to her son what you have ever been to her, a wise counsellor and a cherished friend. Do you accept the charge and transfer the rich boon of your services to me?"

The Prince opened his lips, but not a sound came forth. For the second time an expression of agony fluttered over his face, and no longer able to control his feelings, he burst into tears. The sight so moved the Emperor that he, too, shed tears abundantly.

Kaunitz gradually recovered himself. With an impatient movement he dashed away the last tears that had gathered in his eyes, and dried his moist cheeks with his delicate cambric handkerchief. He was himself again.

"Pardon me, your Majesty," said he, respectfully inclining his head. "You see how grief has mastered me. I have behaved like a child who is learning his first difficult lesson of self-control. Forgive this momentary weakness, and I promise that you shall never see me so overwhelmed as long as I live."

The Emperor with an affectionate smile pressed the old statesman's hand. "I have nothing to forgive, dear Prince. I have to thank you for permitting me to view the penetralia of a great man's heart. And

still more have I to thank you for the sincerity with which you have loved Maria Theresa. I accept it as a pledge of your obedience to her last wishes. May I not?"

Kaunitz looked up and answered with firmness. "Sire, this is the hour of unreserve, and I will speak the unvarnished truth. I have been expecting the last greeting of my Empress, and had I not received her command to serve your Majesty, I should have known that Austria had need of me no more, and ere long I would have followed my peerless mistress to the grave."

"How! you would have laid violent hands upon your life?"

"Oh, no, sire—I would simply have starved to death, for I never could have tasted food again, had I once obtained the conviction that I had become superannuated and useless. Your Majesty has saved my life, for I have eaten nothing since she—went; and now since I must still live for Austria, let me implore you to forget what you have seen of me to-day. If I have ever served Austria, it has been in virtue of the mask which I have always worn over my heart and features. Let me resume it then, to wear it for life. Had we worn our political mask a little longer, Frederic would not have foiled us in our Bavarian projects. We must beware of him, old though he be, for he is a shrewd, far-seeing diplomatist."

"Oh, I do not fear his prying propensities!" cried Joseph. "Let him watch our proceedings—and much good may it do him. He will see a new order of things in Austria. Will you stand by me, Prince, and lend me a helping hand until my stately edifice is complete?"

"Your edifice will need to be above all things, upon a secure foundation. It must be fast as a mountain behind which we can entrench ourselves against the stormings of the clergy and the nobility."

The Emperor gave a start of joyful surprise. "You have guessed my projects of reform, and I have not yet uttered a word!"

"I had guessed them long ago, sire, I had read them more than once upon your countenance when priests and nobles were by; and I triumphed in secret, as I thought of the day that was to come, when you would be the sole arbiter of their destinies."

"The day has come! It has come!" exclaimed Joseph exultingly. "Now shall begin the struggle in church and convent, in palace and castle; and we shall shake off ambitious prelates and princes as the lion does the insect that settles upon his mane!"

"Let the Lion beware, for the insect bears a sting, and the sting bears poison."

"We shall rob it of its sting before we rob it of its treasures. And whence comes the sting of these troublesome gnats? It resides in the *riches of the Church* and the privileges of the nobles. But the noble shall bow his haughty head to my laws, and the Church shall yield up her wealth. The lord of the soil shall come down to the level of his serf, and by the eternal heavens above me, the priest shall be made as homeless as Christ and his Apostles!"

"If your Majesty can compass this, your people will adore you as a second Messiah."

"I shall do it! I shall free my people from bondage, and if I am made to die the death of the cross, I shall exult in my martyrdom," exclaimed Joseph, with flashing eyes. "The internal administration of Austria calls for reform. The empire over which *I* am to reign must be governed according to *my* principles. Religious prejudices, fanaticism, and party spirit must disappear, and the influence of the clergy, so cherished by my mother, shall cease now and forever. Monks and nuns shall quit their idle praying, and work like other men and women, and I shall turn the whole fraternity of contemplatives into a body of industrious burghers."*

"Oh, sire," exclaimed Kaunitz, "your words affright me. Bethink you that you throw the brand of revolt among a numerous and influential class."

"We shall strip them of their armor, and so they shall become innoxious."

"Gracious heaven!" ejaculated Kaunitz. "Your Majesty will——"

"Capture the convents and carry off the booty."

"But that will be tantamount to a declaration of war against Rome."

"Exactly what I propose to bring about! I desire to teach this servant of God that I am absolute monarch of my own dominions, and that his——"

"True, sire, true, but be cautious and go warily to work."

"I have no time to temporise," cried Joseph. "What is to be done, shall be done at once; so much the more quickly that this question of stripping the convents is not only one of principle but also of expediency. They abound in objects of value and my treasury needs replenishing. The state debt is large and we must retrench. I shall not, like my gracious mother, require a budget of six millions; I intend to restrict myself to the expenditure which suffices for the King of Prussia. Of course I shall not, like the munificent Maria Theresa, dispense ducats and smiles in equal profusion; my people must be satisfied with a greeting that is not set to the music of the chink of gold. Neither shall I, like my imperial lady-mother, keep two thousand horses in my stables; moreover the pension-list shall be decreased, let the retrenchment fall upon whom it may. But all this will not suffice to straighten my financial affairs; I need several millions more, and as they are to be found in church and convent, I shall seek them there."

Prince Kaunitz had listened to this bold harangue with perfect astonishment. Several times in the course of it, he had nodded his head, and more than once he had smiled. "Sire," said he, "you have such an intrepid spirit that my scarred old heart beats responsive to the call, like an aged war-horse that neighs at the trumpet's note. Be it so, then—I shall fight at your side like a faithful champion, happy, if during the

*This whole conversation is historical. The expressions are those of the Emperor. See Letters of Joseph 2d, p. 48.

strife, I be permitted to ward off from my Emperor's head, a blow from his adversaries' hands. Remember that we go forth to fight thousands; for the people are with the clergy, and they will cry out even more bitterly than they did at the expulsion of the Jesuits."

"And they will cease to cry, as they did on that occasion," exclaimed the Emperor with a merry laugh. "Courage, Kaunitz, courage, and we shall prevail over Rome, and all monkdom, and when we shall have utilized their treasures, the people will return to their senses, and applaud the deed."*

"So be it then, your Majesty. I will help you to pluck the poison weeds, and sow in their places, good secular grain."

CHAPTER III.

THE BANKER AND HIS DAUGHTER.

The beautiful daughter of the Jewish banker, was alone in her apartments, which munificence of her wealthy father had rendered almost regal in their arrangements. Rachel, however, was so accustomed to magnificence that she had lost all appreciation of it. She scarcely vouchsafed a glance to her inlaid cabinets, her oriental carpets, her crystal lustres and her costly paintings. Even her own transcendant beauty, reflected in the large Venitian mirrors that surrounded her, was unheeded, as she reclined in simple muslin among the silken cushions of a Turkish divan.

But Rachel, in her muslin, was lovely beyond all power of language to describe. Her youth, grace and beauty were ornaments with which 'Nature's own cunning hand" had decked her from her birth. What diamond ever lit up Golconda's mine with such living fire as flashed from her hazel eye? What pearl upon its ocean-bed ever glittered with a sheen like that of the delicate teeth that peeped from between her pouting, coral lips? When she wandered, in her vapory white dresses, through her father's princely halls, neither picture, nor statue there, could compare in color or proportion with the banker's queenly daughter, herself.

She lay on the dark silk cushions of the divan like a swan upon the opalline waters of a lake at sunset. One arm, white and firm as Carrara marble, supported her graceful head, while in her right hand, she held an open letter.

* Joseph's own words. See Letters, &c., P. 49.

"Oh, my beloved," murmured she, "you hope everything from the magnanimity of the Emperor! But in what blessed clime was ever a Jewess permitted to wed with a Christian? The Emperor may remove the shackles of our national bondage but he can never lift us to social equality with the people of another faith. There is nothing to bridge the gulf that yawns between my beloved and me! It would kill my father to know that I had renounced Judaism, and I would rather die than be his murderer! Oh, my father! Oh, my lover! My heart lies between you, and yet I may not love you both! But which must I sacrifice to the other?"

She paused and raised her eyes imploringly to heaven. Her cheeks flushed, her bosom heaved, and no longer able to restrain her agitation, she sprang from the divan, and light as a gazelle, crossed the room, and threw open the window.

"No, my lover," said she, "no, I cannot renounce you. A woman must leave father and mother, to follow him who reigns over her heart! I will leave all things, then, for you my Günther!" And she pressed his letter to her lips; then folding it, she hid it in her bosom.

A knock at the door caused her to start slightly, and before she had time to speak the Jewish banker entered the room.

"My dear father!" exclaimed Rachel joyfully, flying to him and putting her arms around his tall athletic form.

Eskeles Flies stroked her dark hair, and pressed a kiss upon her brow. "I have not seen you for two days, father," said Rachel, reproachfully.

"I have been absent inspecting my new factories at Brünn, my daughter."

"And you went without a word of adieu to me!"

Adieu is a sorrowful word, my child, and I speak it reluctantly; but a return home is joy unspeakable, and you see that my first visit is to *you*, dear child. To-day I come as a messenger of good tidings."

Rachel raised her head and a flush of expectation rose to her face.

"Do the good tidings concern us both?" asked she.

"Not only ourselves, but our whole people. Look at me Rachel, and tell me wherein I have changed since last we met."

Rachel stepped back and contemplated her father with an affectionate smile. "I see the same tall figure, the same energetic, manly features, the same dear smile, and the same——no, not quite the same dress. You have laid aside the yellow badge of inferiority that the Jew wears upon his arm."

"The Emperor has freed us from this humiliation, Rachel. This burthen of a thousand years, has Joseph lifted from our hearts, and under his reign, we are to enjoy the rights of men and Austrians!"

"The Emperor is a great and magnanimous Prince!" exclaimed Rachel.

"We have been trampled so long under foot," said the banker scornfully, "that the smallest concession seems magnanimity. But of what avail will be the absence of the badge of shame? It will not change the

peculiarity of feature which marks us among men, and betrays us to the Christian's hate."

"May our nation's type be ever written upon our faces," exclaimed Rachel. "The Emperor will protect us from the little persecutions of society."

"He will have little time to think of us, he will have enough to do to protect himself from his own enemies. He has decreed the dispersion of the conventual orders, and as he has refused to yield up the goods of the church, his subjects are becoming alienated from a man who has no regard for the request of the Pope. Moreover, he has proclaimed universal toleration."

"And has he included us among the enfranchised, dear father?"

"Yes, my child, even we are to be tolerated. We are also to be permitted to rent estates, and to learn trades. Mark me—not to *buy* estates, but to rent them; we are not yet permitted to be landed proprietors."*

But they cannot prevent the Jew from accumulating gold—'yellow, shining gold,' and riches are our revenge upon Christendom, for the many humiliations we have endured at its pious hands. They have withheld from us titles, orders, and rank, but they cannot withhold money. The finger of the Jew is a magnet, and when he points it, the Christian ducats fly into his hand. Oh, Rachel, I look forward to the day when the Jews shall monopolise the wealth of the world—when they shall be called to the councils of Kings and Emperors, and furnish to their oppressors the means of reddening the earth with one another's blood! We shall pay them to slaughter one another, Rachel, and that shall be our glorious revenge!"

"My dear, dear father," interposed Rachel, "what has come over you that you should speak such resentful words? Revenge is unworthy of the noble sons of Israel; leave it to the Christian whose words are love while his deeds are hate."

"His words to the Jew are as insolent as his deeds are wicked. But I know very well how to exasperate and humble the Christians. I do it by means of my rich dwelling and my costly equipages. I do it by inviting them to come and see how far more sumptuously I live than they. The sight of my luxuries blackens their hearts with envy; but most of all they envy the Jewish banker, that his daughter so far outshines in beauty their Gentile women!"

"Dear father," said Rachel coloring, "you go to extremes in praise as in blame. You exaggerate the defects of the Christian, and the attractions of your daughter."

Her father drew her graceful head to him, and nestled it upon his breast. "No, my child, no, I do not exaggerate your beauty. It is not I alone, but all Vienna, that is in raptures with your incomparable loveliness."

"Hush, dear father. Would you see me vain and heartless?"

* Ramshorn. Joseph 2d, P. 259.

"I would see you appreciate your beauty, and make use of it."

"Make use of it? How?"

"To help your father in his projects of vengeance. You cannot conceive how exultant I am when I see you surrounded by hosts of Christian nobles, all doing homage to your beauty and your father's millions. Encourage them, Rachel, that they may become intoxicated with love, and that on the day when they ask me for my daughter's hand, I may tell them that my daughter is a Jewess, and can never be the wife of a Christian!"

Rachel made no reply: her head still rested upon her father's bosom and he could not see that tears were falling in showers from her eyes. But he felt her sobs, and guessing that something was grieving her, he drew her gently to a seat.

"Dear, dear child," cried he anxiously, "tell me why you weep."

"I weep because I see that my father loves revenge far more than his only child, and that he is willing to peril her soul by defiling it with wicked coquetry. Now I understand why it is that such a profligate as Count Podstadsky has been suffered to pollute our home by his visits!"

The banker's face grew bright. "Then, Rachel, you do not love him," said he, pressing his daughter to his heart.

"Love him!" exclaimed Rachel with a shudder, "love a man who has neither mind nor heart!"

"And I was so silly as to fear that your heart had strayed from its duty, my child, and that the tears which you are shedding were for him! But I breathe again, and can exult once more in the knowledge of his love for you."

"No, father," said Rachel, "he does not love me. He loves nothing except himself; but he wearies me with his importunities."

"What has he done to you, my daughter?"

"During your absence he came three times to see me. As I refused to see him, he had resort to writing, and sent me a note requesting a private interview. Read it for yourself, father. It lies on the table."

The banker read and his eyes flashed with anger. "Unmannerly wretch!" exclaimed he, "to use such language to my daughter! But all Vienna shall know how we scorn him! Answer his note favorably, Rachel, but let the hour of your interview be at midday, for I wish no one to suppose that my daughter receives Christians by stealth."

"I will obey you, father," replied Rachel with a sigh, "but I would be better satisfied to thrust him, without further ceremony, from the door. I cannot write to him, however, that would be a compromise of my own honor; but I will send him a verbal message by my own faithful old nurse. She knows me too well to suspect me of clandestine intercourse with a wretch like Podstadsky."

"Why not send the girl who delivered his letter?"

"Because I discharged her on the spot for her indiscretion."

"Bravely done, my precious child. You are as wise and as chaste as Israel's beauteous daughters have ever been. I shall reward you for

despising the Christian Count. But I must go. I must go to double my millions and lay them all at my Rachel's feet."

He kissed his daughter's forehead, and rose from the divan. But as he reached the door, he turned carelessly,

"Has the Emperor's private Secretary visited you of late?"

"He was here yesterday," said Rachel blushing.

"Did you receive him?"

"Yes, dear father, for you yourself presented him here."

Eskeles Flies was silent for a while. "And yet," resumed he, "I believe that I was wrong to invite him hither. In your unconscious modesty, you have not perceived, my child, that Günther loves you with all the fervor of a true and honest heart. He may have indulged the thought that I would bestow my daughter upon a poor little imperial Secretary, whose brother enjoys the privilege of blacking the Emperor's boots. Although I laugh at his presumption, I pity his infatuation, for he is an excellent young man. Be careful—or rather, receive him no longer. You see, Rachel, that towards an estimable man, I do not encourage coquettry; on the contrary, I plead for poor Günther. He must not be exposed to a disappointment. It is understood, then, that you decline his visits."

He smiled kindly upon his daughter, and left the room.

Rachel looked after him with lips half parted, and face as pale as marble. She stood motionless until the sound of her father's footsteps had died away; then sinking upon her knees, she buried her face in her hands and cried out in accents of despair,

"Oh, my God! I am to see him no more!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE COUNTESS BAILLOU.

The beautiful Countess Baillou was about to give a ball. She had invited all the *haut ton* of Vienna, and they had accepted the invitations. And the Countess had been but four weeks in the Austrian capital; she had no relations there and no one of the aristocracy had ever heard her name before. But she had come to Vienna provided with letters of introduction and money; and these two keys had opened the salons of the fashionables to the beautiful stranger.

Her splendid equipage had been seen in the parks, and her magnificent diamonds at the theatre. All the young men of fashion had directed their *lorgnettes* towards her box, admiring not only her extraordinary

beauty, but the grace and *abandon* of her attitude, as she leaned back in her velvet arm-chair. She had not long been seated when the door of the box opened, and a young man entered whom the lady greeted with a cordial smile. Every one knew the visiter to be Count Podstadsky-Liechtenstein, the richest, haughtiest and handsomest cavalier in all Vienna. Podstadsky was the son of a distinguished nobleman, high in the Emperor's favor; he had just returned from his travels, and all the Viennese gallants were eager to imitate him in everything. To see him in the box of the beautiful stranger was to fire the ambition of every man to know her; the more so that the haughty Podstadsky, instead of accepting a seat, was standing in an attitude of profound respect before her, which he maintained until he took his leave.

Podstadsky of course was assailed with questions in relation to the Countess. He had known her in Italy as the wife of a wealthy old nobleman to whom her parents had sacrificed her before she was eighteen. She had been sincerely admired in Rome, not only on account of her beauty, but of her wit, goodness and above all of her admirable behavior towards her repulsive old husband. Her conduct had been so exemplary that she had been called "*La Contessa del cuore freddo.*"* Podstadsky confessed that even he had been desperately in love with her, but finding her unapproachable, had left Rome in despair. What then was his delight when a few moments ago, he had learned from her own lips that she was a widow, and had come to spend a season in Vienna.

The consequence of this recital was that Podstadsky's young acquaintances were clamorous for presentation to *La Contessa.* He stepped in her box to inform the lady of their wishes, but soon retuned with the unwelcome tidings that the Countess would receive no male visitor unless he came in the company of a lady. This of course increased the longing of the gallants, ten-fold, and the next day when her equipage was seen coming in the park, it was followed by many an eager horseman, jealous beyond expression of Count Podstadsky who was admitted to the blessed privilege of riding near the lady of their thoughts.

Some days later, the young Countess left her cards and letters of introduction, and as they were from Orsinis, Colonnas and other grandees of Rome, her hotel was crowded with elegant equipages, and she was admitted into the charmed circles of the first society in Vienna.

As for the furniture of her hotel, it surpassed anything in the city.

Her orders of every kind had been princely. Her sofas and chairs were of embroidered satin, her tables of inlaid wood and *verde antique*, her carpets the richest Persian, her paintings and statuary of rarest value. She had bespoken several services of gold, and jewellers were revelling in her orders for *parures* such as Princesses would have been proud to possess.

One quality which the Countess Baillou possessed, gave her unbounded popularity with those whom she patronised. Her purchases were all promptly paid in new Austrian bank-notes, and tradesman vied with

* The Countess with the cold heart.

tradesman as to who should have the privilege of her custom.

Finally, her palace was furnished, and the day of her ball had dawned. Every invitation had been accepted; for the world was curious to see the splendors of her fairy abode, and to see the fairy emerge from the retreat where she had buried herself up to the date of this grand reception.

And now the long *suites* were lit up, and room after room was one blazing sea of light, gold, crystal, bronze and marble. Here and there were charming *boudoirs*, where those who were weary of splendor, could retire to converse in the soft, subdued light that was shed upon them from veiled lamps. The whole was closed by magnificent conservatories, where flourished the flowers and fruits of every clime, where tropical birds were seen fluttering among the branches of the orange tree, or dipping their beaks in the classic basins of the fountains that were gently plashing there.

The Countess had just emerged from her dressing-room. Her dress for the evening, was of white satin, and the coronal of brilliants which flashed among the braids of her black hair, was worthy to be the bridal-diadem of a Queen. The Countess Baillou was tall and stately in her beauty; hers was the fascination of the dark-eyed Italian, united to the Majesty of a daughter of ancient Rome, and the union was irresistible. Her throat was slender, her head small, and her classic oval face was of a pale, pearly hue, without a tinge of the rose, which while it lends animation to a woman's face, detracts from the camelia-like purity of genuine patrician beauty.

The Countess glided across the room, and throwing back her head took a critical survey of her apartments. They presented a combination of taste with magnificence, and their mistress was satisfied.

She turned to her steward who was breathlessly awaiting the result of his lady's inspection. "Not bad," said she, in a rich, melodious voice. "I am quite pleased with your labors."

"Will my lady walk through the rooms to see the conservatories?" asked the steward.

"Why so?" asked she with indifference. "I have no doubt that all is as it should be; I am too weary of splendor to take much interest in it. See, however, that the tables are spread with every luxury that can tempt the palates of my guests."

"I hope, your ladyship will be satisfied. The two cooks from Paris profess, the one to have learned his art under the Prince de Soubise, the other to have received his receipts for pastry from the Duke de Richelieu."

"Let them both do their best," said the Countess languidly, "and remember that expense is to be no obstacle to the carrying out of my orders."

With these words, she dismissed the steward, and sank back into the recesses of an arm-chair. But when he had fairly left, and she knew that she was alone, her aspect changed. She rose quickly from the chair, and

walked through her rooms, surveying their splendor with visible exultation.

How peerless was her beauty as she swept through those empty rooms, her diamonds reflected from mirror to mirror, her rich dress falling in heavy folds about her perfect form! He who had seen her there would have taken her for the Princess who had just awakened from her hundred years' sleep, looking around her palatial solitude to see who it was that had broken the spell of her enchanted trance. Her face was lit up with triumph as she went, and at times when something of rare value met her eyes, she laughed aloud in the ecstacy of her pride!

Suddenly the stillness was broken by the sound of a man's footstep. The laugh of the Countess ceased, and she drew on her mask of indifference. She turned slowly around, and dropped it again—for the intruder was Count Podstadsky.

Just in the midst of the dancing-room, under the blaze of a crystal chandelier they met. The Countess gave him her hand, and he grasped it in his own, looking earnestly at her fair, bewitching face. She returned the glance with her large flashing eyes, and so they stood for a time together. There was a secret between those two.

The Countess spoke first. Her mouth relaxed into a scornful smile. "Count Carl Von Podstadsky-Liechtenstein," said she, "you are a man, and yet you tremble."

"Yes, Arabella, I tremble, but not for me. As I look upon you, in the fullness of your incomparable beauty, my blood freezes with terror, and a voice whispers to me, 'Have mercy on this woman whose beauty is so akin to that of angels! You both stand upon the edge of a precipice; shield her at least from the ruin which threatens you!'"

The Countess raised her snowy shoulders. "German sentimentality," said she. "If you mix sentiment with your cards, we shall lose the game, Count Podstadsky. Hear, then, what I have to say to you. It is true that we stand upon the brow of a precipice; but we must contemplate it fearlessly, and so we shall grow accustomed to our danger, and learn to escape it. Why do you wish to rescue me, Carl? I do not wish to be rescued. I like the giddy brink, and look down with defiance into the abyss that blackens the future before me."

"Give me some of your courage," sighed the Count. "Let me drink confidence from the depths of your fearless, flashing eyes, my angel."

"Angel!" said Arabella with a mocking laugh. "If so, at least call me your fallen angel; for when I took the unfathomable leap which leads from innocence to guilt, your arms were outstretched to receive me. But pshaw! what bootless retrospection!—I am here, Carl, true as steel; ready to stand or fall at your side. Feel my hand, it is warm—feel my pulse, it beats as evenly as though I had never slept a night out of Eden."

"You are a heroine, Arabella. The magnificence around us affrights my cowardly soul; while you——surely I heard your silvery laugh when I entered this room a while ago."

"To be sure you did, faint-hearted knight of the card table! I laughed for joy when I thought of my former misery and compared it with my present splendor; the more so, that I am the bold architect who raised the edifice of my own fortune. We need not be grateful to heaven for our luck, Carl, for we are not in favor with the celestial aristocracy; we have no one to thank for our blessings but ourselves."

"And will have no one to thank but ourselves when ruin overtakes us."

"Possibly," said Arabella, with a shrug. "But remember that we have already been shipwrecked, and have not only saved ourselves but have brought glorious spoils with us to shore. So away with your misgivings; they do not become the career you have chosen."

"Right, Arabella, right.—They do not indeed! But promise me that I shall always have you at my side to share my fate, whatever it bring forth."

"I promise," said she, raising her starry eyes to his, and clasping with her small firm hand his cold and clammy fingers. "I promise, by the memory of Rome, and the dark rolling waters of the Tiber, from which you rescued me that night. And now let us pledge each other in a draught from the depths of the Styx.—Look around you, Carl, and realize that all this magnificence is ours, and that to-night I play the hostess to the proud aristocracy of Vienna. But one question before the curtain rises—how goes the affair with the banker's lovely Rachel?"

"Gloriously!—She loves me, for she has consented to receive me day after to-morrow, during her father's absence."

"Go, then, and the blessings of your fallen angel go with you! Play your game cautiously, and let us hear the chink of Herr Eskeles Flies' gold near the rustling of our fragile bank-notes. And now go. Return in half an hour, that I may receive you in presence of our fastidious guests. They might not approve of this tête-à-tête, for you are said to be a sad profligate, Carl!"

She kissed her little jewelled hand, and while her Carl disappeared through a secret door on one side of the room, she glided forward with grace and elegance inimitable, to receive the high-born ladies who were just then passing the portals of her princely abode.

CHAPTER V.

THE EXPULSION OF THE CLARISSERINES.

The stroke so long apprehended by the church had fallen. Joseph had thrown down the gauntlet, and had dealt his first blow to the chair

of St. Peter. This blow was directed towards the chief pastors of the Austrian Church, the Bishops. Their allegiance, spiritual as well as temporal, was due to the Emperor alone, and no order emanating from Rome could take effect without first being submitted for his approval. The Bishops were to be re-instated in their ancient rights, and they alone were to grant marriage-dispensations and impose penances.

But this was only one step in the new "Reformation" of the Emperor Joseph. He dissociated all spiritual communities whatever, from connection with foreign Superiors, and freed them from all dependence upon them. They were to receive their orders from native bishops alone, and these in their turn were to promulgate no spiritual edict without the approbation and permission of the reigning Sovereign of Austria.

These ordinances did away with the influence of the head of the church in Austria, but they did not sufficiently destroy that of the clergy over their flocks. This, too, must be annihilated; and now everything was ready for the great final blow which was to crush to the earth every vestige of church influence within the dominions of Joseph the Second. This last stroke was the dispersion of the religious communities. Monks and nuns should be forced to work with the people. They were no longer to be permitted to devote their lives to solitary prayer, and every contemplative order was suppressed.

The cry of horror which issued from the convents was echoed throughout the land, from palace to hovel. The people were more than indignant—they were terror-stricken; for the Emperor was not only an unbeliever himself, he was forcing his people to unbelief. The very existence of religion, said they, was threatened by his tyranny and impiety!

Joseph heard all this and laughed it to scorn. "When the priests cease their howls," said he, "the people, too, will stop; and they will thank me for what I am doing." When they see that the heavens have not fallen because a set of silly nuns are startled from their nests, they will come to their senses, and perceive that I have freed them from a load of religious prejudices.

But the people were not of the same opinion. They hated the imperial free-thinker, who with his brutal hands, was thrusting out helpless women from their homes, and was robbing the very altars of their sacred vessels, to convert them into money for his own profane uses.

All this, however, did not prevent the execution of the order for the expulsion of the nuns. In spite of priests and people, the decree was carried out on the 12th of January, of the year 1782. A multitude had assembled before the convent of the Clarisserines, whence the sisters were about to be expelled, and where the sacred vessels, and vestments, appertaining to the altars, were to be exposed for sale at auction!

Thousands of men were there, with anxious looks fixed upon the gates of the convent before which the deputies of the Emperor, in full uniform, stood awaiting the key which the Prioress was about to deliver into their hands. Not far off, the public auctioneers were seated at a table with

writing-materials, and around them swarmed a crowd of Jewish tradesmen eagerly awaiting the sale!

"See them," said a priest to the multitude, "see those hungry Jews, hovering like vultures, over the treasures of the church! They will drink from the chalice that has held the blood of the Lord, and the Pix which has contained his body, they will convert into coin! Alas! Alas! The Emperor who has enfranchised the Jew, has disfranchised the Christian! Unhappy servants of the most High! Ye are driven from His temple that usurers and extortioners may buy and sell, where once naught was to be heard but praise and worship of Jehovah!"

The people had come nearer to listen, and when the priest ceased, their faces grew dark and sullen, and their low mutterings were heard like the distant murmurings of a coming storm, while many a hand was clenched at the Jews, who were laughing and chatting together, greatly enjoying the scene.

"We will not permit it, father," cried a young burgher, "we will not allow the sacred vessels to be bought and sold!"

"No—we will not allow it," echoed the people.

"You cannot prevent it," replied the priest, "for the Emperor is absolute master here. Neither can you prevent the expulsion of the pious Clarisserines from the home which was purchased for them with the funds of the church. Well!—Let us be patient. If the Lord of Heaven and Earth can suffer it—so can we—But see—they come—the victims of an unbelieving Sovereign!"

And the priest pointed to the convent-gates, through which the procession had begun to pass. At their head came the Prioress in the white garb of her order, her head enveloped in a long veil, her face pale and convulsed with suffering, and her hands which held a golden crucifix, tightly clasped over her breast. Following her in pairs, came the nuns—first those who had grown gray in the service of the Lord, then the younger ones, and finally the novices. The people looked with heartfelt sympathy at the long, sad procession which silent as spectres wound through the grounds of the home which they were leaving forever.

The imperial commissioners gave the sign to halt, while their eyes blinded by tears, the people gazed upon the face of the venerable Prioress, who obedient to the Emperor's cruel decree, was yielding up the keys and the golden crucifix. She gave her keys with a firm hand; but when she relinquished the cross, the emblem of her office, and of her Faith, the courage of the poor old woman almost deserted her. She offered it, but as the Commissioner extended his hand, she shrank involuntarily, and once more pressed the cross to her quivering lips. Then raising it on high, as if to call upon Heaven to witness the sacrilege, she bowed her head and relinquished it forever.

Perhaps she had hoped for an interposition from heaven; but alas! no sign was given, and the sacrifice was complete.

The priest who had addressed the crowd advanced to the Prioress. "Whither are you going, my daughter?" said he.

The Prioress raised her head, and stared at him with vacant, tearless eyes. "We must go into the wide, wide world," replied she. "The Emperor has forbidden us to serve the Lord."

"The Emperor intends you to become useful members of society," said a voice among the crowd. "The Emperor intends that you shall cease your everlasting prayers, and turn your useless hands to some account. Instead of living on your knees, he intends to force you to become honest wives and mothers, who shall be of some use to him, by bearing children, as you were told to do when your mother Eve was driven from *her* Paradise!"

Every head was turned in eager curiosity to discover the speaker of these bold words; but in vain, he could not be identified.

"But how are you going to live?" asked the priest, when the murmurs had ceased.

"The Emperor has given us a pension of two hundred ducats," said the Prioress, gently.

"But that will not maintain you without——"

"It will maintain honest women who deserve to live," cried the same voice that had spoken before. "Ask the people around you how *they* live and whether they have pensions from the crown. And I should like to know whether a lazy nun is any better than a peasant's wife? And if you are afraid of the world, go among the Ursulines who serve the Emperor by educating children. The Ursulines are not to be suppressed."

"True," said some among the crowd, "why should they not work as well as we, or why do they not go among the Ursulines and make themselves useful?" And thus were the sympathies of the people withdrawn from the unhappy nuns. They, meanwhile, went their way, chaunting as they went, "*Cujus animam gementem, contrestantem et dolentem pertransivit gladius.*"

While the Clarisserines were passing from sight, the people, always swayed by the controlling influence of the moment, returned quietly to their homes. Three men with hats drawn over their brows, pressed through the crowd, and followed the procession at some distance.

"You see," said one of the three, "how a few words were sufficient to turn the tide of the people's sympathies, and to confound that fanatic priest in his attempts to create disturbance."

"Which he would have succeeded in doing but for your Majesty——"

"Hush Lacy, hush. We are laboring men, nothing more."

"Yes," growled Lacy, "and you put us to hard labor, too, when you embarked in this dangerous business. It was a very bold thing to come among this excited multitude."

"I was determined to watch the people, and counteract, if possible, the effect of the sly black-coats upon my subjects. Was it not well that I was there to rescue them from the miseries of revolt?"

"Yes. I think there was danger at one time that mischief would result from the pious comedy of the Prioress."

"To be sure there was," cried the Emperor. "But this time, I won the field through a few well-directed words. And now let us go and see the show at the two other convents. Perhaps we may come in time to send another well-directed arrow in the midst of the sisterhoods!"

CHAPTER VI.

COUNT PODSTADSKY'S ESCORT.

"You promise that he shall remain but five minutes in my room, father?" said Rachel.

"I give you my word that he shall stay just long enough for me to complete my preparations to escort him home."

"What mean you, dear father? At least tell me what you intend to do."

"I merely intend a jest, dear child," said Eskeles Flies, laughing. "A jest which shall announce to the people of Vienna that the Jewish banker has no desire to receive the visits of the Christian Count. Ah, eleven o'clock! The hour for your interview. Farewell, my daughter, your lover comes."

The banker disappeared through a tapestry-door, and scarcely had he closed it when Count Podstadsky was announced.

Rachel had so unconquerable an aversion to Podstadsky that instead of going forward to greet him, she actually stepped back, and raised her hand as if to ward him off. But the Count was not easily repulsed. "At last my angel," said he, "my hour of happiness is here, at last you are mine, and I—am the happiest of mortals!"

"Who tells you that I am yours?" said Rachel, still retreating.

"Yourself, my Houri, when you consent to receive me alone. How shall I prove to you the extent of my adoration?"

"Oh, you can easily do that," said Rachel, "by becoming a Jew for the love of me."

At the idea of his becoming a Jew, Podstadsky burst out into a fit of laughter, but Rachel affected not to hear it.

"You know that by becoming a Jew," continued she, "you would be at liberty to marry me and inherit my father's ducats."

At mention of her father's wealth, Podstadsky felt that he had laughed too soon; the thought of the banker's millions made him feel rather grave. They were worth anything short of such a *lèse noblesse* as apostacy.

"What to me are your father's ducats?" cried he vehemently. "I

love nothing here but his daughter, and my love is sufficient for me. I ask nothing but the priceless treasure of your heart. Come, sweet one, come."

"Away with you," cried Rachel, unable to endure his insolence longer. "If I have permitted you to sully the purity of my home with your presence, it was that I might tell you once for all how I despise you! Now begone, sir."

"And allow me to accompany you home," said a mocking voice behind; and as Podstadsky turned with a start to see whence it came, he met the fiery black eyes of Eskeles Flies, who approached with a tall wax-light in his hand.

The Count trembled inwardly, but recovering his self-possession, he asked with a haughty smile, "Are we in the Carnival, and do you represent the Israelitish god of Love?"

"Yes, Count," said the banker, "and his torch shall light you home, lest you stumble on your way, and fall into the pit of dishonor. Come and receive the ovation prepared for you."

So saying, Eskeles Flies opened the door, and the Count looked out with dismay.

The long hall was lined on both sides with the liveried servants of the banker, each holding in his hand a wax-light, whose yellow flame flared to and fro, as the air from the open door below came in fitful puffs up the wide marble staircase.

"Come," said the banker, advancing with his flambeau. Podstadsky hesitated. If his sense of honor was dead, his vanity was not, and it winced at the slightest touch of ridicule. Was there no escape from this absurd escort? He looked around and saw no hope of rescue. Behind him Rachel had locked the door, and the servants were so closely ranged together that it was vain to attempt a passage through that living wall of fire. He had no alternative but to laugh derisively and step into the ranks. The procession moved on and gathered strength as it moved; for on the stair-case, in the lower hall, and at the front of the house they were joined by throng after throng, each man of which, like the commander-in-chief, was armed with a flambeau. This was bad enough of itself, but the Count's body-guard were all in a titter, and every man enjoyed the jest except himself.

They had by this time reached the street, and what was the rage and mortification of the proud Austrian grandee, when he saw that curiosity had drawn thither a concourse of people, who kept up with the procession, wondering what on earth could be the meaning of it.*

"See," cried one, "Herr Eskeles Flies has caught a marten in his hen-roost and is lighting him home."

"And the marten is the fine Count Podstadsky-Liechtenstein," cried another. "I know him. He rejoices in the title of the 'woman-killer.' Only look how he sneaks along as the tribe of Israel are dogging him home!"

* This scene is historical. See Letters of a French traveller, vol. 1, p. 405. Friedel's letters from Vienna. Vol. 2d, p. 30.

"The Israelites are escorting him home," jeered the multitude, and the procession moved on, never stopping until it had reached the Count's own hotel. Once there, Eskeles Flies, in a loud voice, bade him adieu, and requested to know whether he should accompany him further.

"No," replied Count Podstadsky, trembling with passion, "and you shall answer to me for this outrage. We shall see whether the unbelieving Jew can mock the Christian with impunity!"

"Accuse me before the public tribunals," answered the banker, "and I shall enter *my* complaint against you."

"Indeed!" said Podstadsky contemptuously. "The Jew will be allowed to accuse an Austrian nobleman! Will he?"

"Yes, by the God of Israel, he will," replied Eskeles Flies so loud that his voice was heard by the people around. "Yes, thanks to the Emperor, his subjects before the law are all equal, and Jew and Christian are alike amenable to its judgments. Long live Joseph the Second, the father of his people!"

"Long live the father of his people!" shouted the fickle multitude, and glad that the attention of the crowd had been diverted from himself, Count Podstadsky-Liechtenstein slunk away to ruminate over the mortifying occurrences of the morning.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAMPOON.

The Emperor, with his confidential Secretary, had been at work through the entire night. Day had dawned, and still he wrote on, nor seemed to be conscious of the hour. In his restless zeal, he felt no fatigue, no exhaustion, nor yet any excitement, and not until the last document had been read and signed, did he rise from his chair to take a few turns around the room, while Günther was sorting the papers, and placing them in a port-folio.

"Günther," said the Emperor, "what is the matter? You look pale and suffering."

Günther raised his head and smiled. "Nothing, sire, is the matter, but want of rest. A few hours sleep will restore me."

"Not so, Günther; you belie yourself when you say so, for never in my life, have I seen such an indefatigable worker as you. Ah! you look down, so that I know you are not frank with me. Come, have you no confidence in me?"

"Oh, sire, I have the most unbounded confidence in your goodness; but since you force me to speak, I am uneasy about yourself."

"How so, Günther?"

"Because, your Majesty strides forward in your projects of reform without the least apprehension of the danger that attends such changes. You rush through the flames without ever dreaming that they may some day consume you."

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders. "Always the same song—an echo of Lacy and Rosenberg. I have no time to temporise as you would advise me to do. Who knows how long I shall live to carry out my own free will?"

"Certainly, if your Majesty works as you have done of late, your chance for life is not very great. You seem to forget that mind is subordinate to matter—not matter to mind—that physical nature must have her rights, and no man can withstand her exactions. Pardon me these bold words, sire, but if I speak at all, I must speak the truth. You have begun a gigantic edifice, and if you die, it must remain forever incomplete."

"For that very reason, I must complete it myself, for, indeed, Günther, you are right. When I die, I leave no man worthy to succeed to my stupendous undertakings. I shall, therefore, live until I have accomplished them all."

"Then, your Majesty must work less," exclaimed Günther warmly. "You do not believe that in pleading for you, sire, I give one thought to myself, for nothing is too laborious for me, when I work for my Emperor."

Joseph laid his hand softly upon Günther's shoulder. "I believe you Günther. I esteem you as one of my best friends, and well you know that for you I have no political secrets."

"I would sooner die, than betray your Majesty, even unwillingly," said Günther, looking with his large, honest eyes into the Emperor's face.

"I know it, Günther, but as you enjoy my confidence without reserve, you ought to know that I have too much to do to think of rest. Oh, it would be dreadful for me to die before my structure is complete! Günther, Günther, the priests would transform my fairy palace into a gloomy church, and from its towers, in lieu of the noble clock which is to strike the hour of reformation for my people, would frown the Cross that is the symbol of the unenlightened past. Oh, let me not hear in my dying moments the crash of the temple I would rear to Truth!"

"Then recreate your mind, sire, with literature or art. It is long since the speaking tones of your violincello have been heard in the palace."

"Very true, Günther, but I cannot invite the Muses into my study. A prince has no right to associate with such frivolous ladies, for he is not on earth to pass away time. The King of Prussia heads a royal sect who devote themselves to authorship. The Empress of Russia follows after him with Voltaire in her hand. I cannot emulate their literary greatness. I read to learn, and travel to enlarge my ideas; and I flatter myself that as I encourage men of letters, I do them a greater service

than I would, were I to sit at a desk and help them to weave sonnets.* So let us eschew Apollo and his light-footed companions; I aim to be nothing but an imperial statesman. But," continued the Emperor, frowning, "I get little sympathy from my subjects. Counsellors, nobles, burghers, priests, all heap obstacle upon obstacle in my path, and the work advances slowly. The revenues, too, are inadequate to the requirements of the state. The financial affairs of the crown are disordered, and it is only by the strictest economy that I am able to sustain the army. The people call me a miser because Maria Theresa's prodigality of expenditure forces upon me measures of retrenchment, and necessitates unusual expedients for the raising of funds."

"Which unhappily were extorted from convents and shrines."

"Unhappily! *Happily*, you mean to say. The treasures which were wasted on convent-chapels and shrines, have saved us from bankruptcy; and God will look down with favor upon the sacrifice which dead superstitition has made to living love, and will bestow a blessing upon the work of my hands! True, those heroes of darkness, the monks and priests, will cry anathema! and the earth will be filled with their howls!"

"Like that which greeted Alcides, when he stormed the gates of Tartarus," said Günther, smiling.

"You are right. The work is worthy of Alcides, but with the blessing of God it shall be done. Little care I for the wail of nuns or the groans of priests; let them shriek and tear their hair, or if they like it better, let them vent their spleen in lampoons and caricatures. See Günther what a compliment I received yesterday."

And the Emperor drew from his *escritoire* a paper which he unfolded. "Look at this. It takes off one of my great crimes. You know I have deprived the court of the privilege of living in the palace, and have given them wherewith to find lodgings in the city. Here go the ladies with their bundles under their arms, and the lord high-steward has a broom sweeping after them as they go. This charming individual in the corner with a hunting whip is myself. And here is the pith of the joke. 'Rooms to let here. Inquire of the proprietor on the first floor.'† What do you think of it?"

"Abominable! Inconceivable!" ejaculated Günther. "As unjust as it is stinging."

"It does not sting me. I have a sound hide. When it itches it is cured with scratching.‡ Here is another pasquinade. It was thrown before my horse's feet as I was riding in the park."

"*Joseph premier, aimable et charmant: Joseph Second, scorpion et tyran.*"

"How can your Majesty laugh at such unparalleled insolence?" cried the indignant Secretary.

"No one can deny that I have stung priests and nuns," said Joseph laughing, "so they are welcome to roar, since their tongues are the only

* The Emperor's own words. Letters of Joseph, p. 57.
† Hubner I. P. 190. ‡ Joseph's own words.

weapons wherewith they may revenge themselves upon their tyrant. As I have proclaimed freedom of speech and press, you see they take advantage of the privilege."

"Well, if your Majesty takes so magnanimous a view of these insulting lampoons," said Günther drawing a paper from his pocket, "I must show you one which yesterday was posted on the wall of the Königskloster."

"So the Königskloster irritates the servants of the Lord, does it?" laughed Joseph. "They cannot forgive me for selling it to the banker Flies, to transfigure into a Jewish palace!"—

"Well, let us see the pasquinade!"

"Sire, my tongue refuses to pronounce the words," replied Günther, handing it to the Emperor.

"Nay, you must accustom your tongue to pronounce them, for we are apt to have many more of the same sort to read. So go on, and speak out boldly."

The Emperor threw himself into an arm-chair, and making himself comfortable, prepared to listen.

The lampoon denounced him as the persecutor of the brides of the Lord, and the enemy of the church. It accused him of having converted a holy temple into the abode of sin, that he might gratify his greed for money.

When Günther had concluded, he cried out impatiently, "This time at least your Majesty will show your enemies that forbearance has its limits, and that the liberty of the press shall not degenerate into license."

"By no means. That would look as if I were afraid. I commission you to have the lampoon re-printed and to expose it for sale in the book-stores at six kreuzers a copy, the proceeds to be given to the poor."*

"Oh that your Majesty's enemies were here to sink with shame at your feet, and beg your forgiveness," cried Günther.

"Hush," said Joseph. "Were my enemies to hear you, they would liken me to other princes, who make a parade of their good qualities so that flatterers may immortalize them in laudatory dithyrambics.—But the time for chatting and resting has expired," continued Joseph, rising from his chair. The labors of the day call me. I must go to receive my petitioners, who must be weary with waiting, for I am a quarter of an hour behind the time."

* Historical.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PETITIONERS.

THE wide corridor in which Joseph was accustomed to receive his petitioners was crowded. People of all ages and conditions were there, waiting with trembling impatience the appearance of the Emperor, who received the applications of his subjects every day from nine o'clock until twelve. Suddenly a commotion was perceptible among the crowd, and a pressure was felt towards the door which led to the cabinet of the Emperor. The ears of those who have suits to urge, are keen; and every one of that motley throng heard the footsteps of him who held their destines in his hand.

The door opened, and Joseph was before them. At once, every hand that held a paper, was eagerly stretched forward. The Emperor went from one to another, and while he collected their petitions entered into friendly converse with the applicants.

The last petitioner was an old man in the garb of a Hungarian peasant. His white hair fell in locks from beneath his wide-brimmed hat of dark brown, and the cloak which was thrown carelessly over his stalwart shoulders, was embroidered with shells and silver spangles. His sunburnt face was free from the Runic characters which the slow finger of Time is apt to trace upon the brow of the human race; and but for the color of his hair, he would have been mistaken for a man in the prime of life.

The Emperor was favorably struck with his bearing, and smiled with more than usual benignity.

"Whence come you?" said he.

"From Hungary, sire," replied the peasant with a smile that revealed two rows of regular, white teeth. "I was one week on my journey; at night, the open field my bed, and by day, a drink of water more than once my only breakfast."

"You must have had important business in Vienna."

"Yes, sire. I was sent with this petition to your Majesty."

"It must be urgent, to have induced you to travel so far."

"Urgent, indeed, sire. I promised the peasants of our district to give it into your Majesty's own hand. It has the name of every man in the district; but if I had had time to go around with it, I might have brought with me the name of every peasant in Hungary. It was arranged that I should present the petition this morning, and now, while we stand here, every man, woman and child at home is praying for my success."

"What can I do for you? Speak, and if possible, I will grant your petition."

"Then, your Majesty, read it aloud, that I may say to my brethren, that our cry of distress has reached the imperial ear."

Joseph smiled, and opening the paper, read aloud.

"Compassionate Emperor! Four days of hard labor as socmen; the fifth day at the fisheries; the sixth day following our lords in the hunt—the seventh day is the Lord's. Judge then whether we are able to pay our taxes."

"Yes, yes, murmured the man to himself, "he cannot say that if we are oppressed, he knows nothing of it."

"I will not say so, my friend," said the Emperor with emotion. "The whole history of your wrongs is written in these few touching lines. I know that you are oppressed, and that when you sink with exhaustion at your tasks, you are roused with the lash. I know that you are treated like cattle, that you have neither property nor rights, and that agriculture suffers sorely from the obstacles which your masters place in your paths.—I know all—and by the God above us, to whom your wives and children are even now at prayer, I swear to free the Hungarian serf from bondage!"

"To free the Hungarian serf!" shouted the peasant. "Do I hear aright? Does your Majesty promise freedom to the Hungarian serf?"

"As God hears me, I will free him," replied the Emperor solemnly. "Servitude shall cease, and free socage shall replace villeinage. Your tax-bills shall be revised and your rights guaranteed by the crown. If after this, you are oppressed come confidently to me and your tyrants shall be punished; for under my reign all men shall be equal before the law."

The peasant sank on his knees and looked up with glistening eyes. "Oh, my lord and emperor," said he, "I had heard of tears of joy, but until to-day, I knew not what they meant. I have been scourged for refusing to kneel to my lord, but I bend the knee to you, for I feel that you are a mighty sovereign and a merciful father to your people. God bless you for the words by which you have recognised our right to live and to be free!"

He bent down and kissed the Emperor's feet, then rising he said, "Farewell, gracious lord of Hungary. I must return home."

"Will you not remain a day or two to see the beauties of Vienna?" asked the Emperor.

"No, your Majesty. I carry too much joy with me to tarry on my way; and what could I see in Vienna to rival the snow-white mountains that mirror themselves in the blue lakes of Hungary?"

"Then, at least, take this purse to defray your expenses."

"No, your Majesty, I cannot take gold to defray the expenses of a holy pilgrimage. Farewell! And may the blessings of a grateful people be echoed for you in heaven!"

The Emperor laid his hand upon the peasant's shoulder.

"Tell me the name of my Hungarian friend!"
"My name? It is Horja, sire."
"Farewell then, Horja, let me hear from you."*

CHAPTER IX.

THE PETITIONERS.

As the door closed behind Horja, the Emperor continued his rounds, but no more petitions were presented. Here and there, however, was heard a request for an audience, which Joseph granted and then retired to his cabinet, leaving the door open.

"Have the goodness to walk in," said he to the lady, who was in advance of the others. She obeyed, and the Emperor, closing the door, took a seat at his *escritoire*.

"Now, madam, I am ready to hear you, but as there are nine persons to follow, I must request you to be brief. What is your name?"

"I am the widow of the President von Kahlbaum."

"He was a worthy man. Have you any children, madam?"

"Yes, your Majesty, I have two daughters and a son."

"Two daughters? I once had a little maiden of my own, but she is dead," said the Emperor, sadly. "How can I serve you and your children?"

"Oh, sire, the fearful ordinance by which the pensions from her late Majesty's privy-purse were withdrawn, has ruined me. I beseech of you, sire, restore to me my pension extraordinary."

"Are you not aware that the pensions extraordinary are abolished?"

"Yes, sire, but through your Majesty's liberality, I hope to retain the pension I held from the Empress. The loss of it heightens my grief for the death of my husband, and makes life unendurable. Without it I should have to part with my carriage, with a portion of my household, and live in complete retirement. I am sure that your Majesty's own sense of justice will plead for me."

"Justice is the motive power of all my actions, madam," replied the Emperor curtly, "and for that very reason you cannot retain your pension."

"Sire, I am sorely stricken. The merits of my husband—my position——"

"Your husband's merits have earned you the pension you already receive from the crown, and as for your position, that can in no way con-

*Unhappy Horja! This sentimental interview cost him his life.

cern me. I grant that your loss is great, but your special pension will maintain three poor families, and I cannot allow you to receive it longer."

"Alas!" cried the lady, "what are my daughters to do?"

"They can become good housekeepers or governesses, if they have received good educations."

"Impossible, sire; my daughters are of noble birth, and they cannot descend to the humiliation of earning a living."

"Why not? I am sure I earn my living, and earn it by hard work, too. No one is too good to work; and since the aristocracy cannot shield their children from want, it is clear that they cannot free them from the necessity of labor."

"Then, your Majesty, have mercy upon my son—the only son of a man of noble extraction."

"What profession has he chosen?"

"He wishes to be an officer in the army; but he was so severely dealt with in his examination, that he has not been able to obtain a commission. Oh, your Majesty, I beseech of you, grant him a command in the infantry!"

"Madam," cried the Emperor impatiently, "a man may be the son of a distinguished father without having the slightest claim to serve as an officer. As your son was not able to stand his examination, he must content himself with being 'the son of a man of noble extraction.' Excuse me, but my time is limited. I regret to refuse your requests, but justice compels me to do so."

The Presidentin burst into tears, and making her inclination to the Emperor, left the room. The latter following her, said, "Let the next petitioner advance."

This was an old hussar, a captain of cavalry with lofty bearing and snow-white beard. He came in, making a military salute.

"What can I do for you, my friend?" asked Joseph.

"I come to ask of your Majesty not to deprive me of the pension extraordinary which the Empress of blessed memory bestowed upon me from her privy purse," said the old soldier, bluntly.

"Oh, another pension extraordinary!" said the Emperor, with a laugh. "That cannot be, Captain. The privy purse of the Empress, which, in the goodness of her heart, was thrown indiscriminately to all who asked for alms, this purse exists no longer. It has a large hole in it, and its contents have all run out."

The old huzzar gave a grim look to the Emperor, and raised his *peruque*. Pointing with his finger to three wide, purple scars upon his head, he said,

"Sire, my head is somewhat in the condition of your privy-purse, it has several holes in it. They were made by your Majesty's enemies."

"To stop such holes as those, is my sacred duty," said Joseph smiling, "and enough remains yet in the bottom of the privy-purse to satisfy the wants of a brave officer, who has served me to his own preju-

dice. Forgive my refusal. The petition which you wear on your head is more eloquent than words, and your pension shall be returned to you."

"I thank your Majesty," said the Captain, and with another stiff salute, he marched out.

The Emperor looked after him, laughing heartily.

As he disappeared, a pale, delicate woman came forward, accompanied by several young children, two of which were hiding their heads in her skirt. The group filled up the door like a picture, and the children clung so to the pallid mother that she could not advance a step.

"As you cannot come to me, I will go to you," said the Emperor, contemplating them with a benevolent smile. "Give me your petition, madam."

These are my petitions, your Majesty," said the woman pointing to her children. "My husband served for many years in the twelfth regiment, and died of the wounds he received in the Bavarian war. He left me nothing but these orphans."

The Emperor looked kindly at the little golden heads that were peeping from among the folds of their mother's dress, and a cloud came over his face. "You grieve for your poverty, poor woman," said he, "and know not how I envy your riches. How many millions would I give if one of those children was mine. Children are a great blessing."

"Yes, sire, when they have fathers to work for them."

"I will be their father," said Joseph, and at the sound of these loving words, the children raised their bashful heads, to steal a look at the speaker. "Come, boys," continued he offering his hand, "will any of you be soldiers?"

"Yes, yes," replied the two eldest, standing erect and making the military salute.

"That is right. You are brave fellows, and if you behave well, you shall belong to my body-guard—Come to morrow," continued he to the mother, "and the lord-chancellor will attend to the maintenance and education of your four eldest. meanwhile, you shall have a pension for yourself and the youngest. In a few years, I will do as much for my little one there. Be punctual in your visit to the chancery—You will be received at ten o'clock."

"God reward your Majesty!" faltered the happy mother. "Oh, my children, my dear children, the Emperor is the father of the orphan! Reward your gracious Sovereign by being good, and pray for him, with all your hearts!"

With these words the woman curtsied and withdrew, and the audience for that day was at an end.

"And pray for him with all your hearts," whispered the Emperor. "May God hear the petitions of these innocent little ones. Perchance they may weigh against the curses of others. They are the little roses which I sometimes find beneath my crown of thorns.—But away with sentiment—I have no time to indulge in heart-reveries. My vocation is

to work.—Here is a port-folio filled with petitions. Günther must help me to examine them!"

He rang the bell, and Günther seated himself and went to work. Meanwhile, the Emperor had taken up one of the papers and was reading it. Suddenly he put it down and began to laugh.

"Listen, Günther," said he, "listen to this touching appeal. One of the discharged counsellors orders me to give him a larger pension that he may live in a manner befitting his position. Now hear the conclusion of the petition. 'Our Emperor is a poor callow mouse.'"*

"And your Majesty can laugh at such insolence!" exclaimed Günther coloring with indignation.

"Yes, I do," replied Joseph. "Nothing can be franker and more to the point."

"And I, pardon me, sire, think that the writer of this insolent letter should be severely——"

"Nay," interrupted the Emperor. "You would not have me punish him for being man enough to say to my face what thousands say of me behind my back, would you? Now, Günther, I am so disinclined to punish him that I intend to increase his pension just because he is an honest, plain-spoken fellow. You need not make such a grimace, Günther. If you feel badly, console yourself with your work."

The Emperor seated himself at the table and went on looking over his petitions, occasionally murmuring to himself, "Our Emperor is a poor, callow mouse!"

CHAPTER X.

THE LADY PATRONESS.

The days of the Countess Baillou glided away in one continued round of pleasure. She was the cynosure of all eyes at concert, ball, or festival. Even women ceased to envy the conquering beauty, and seemed to think it just that all mankind should succumb to her unparalleled attractions. The Emperor had shared the common enthusiasm, and at a ball given by Prince Esterhazy, had danced twice with the Countess. Those therefore who through their rank or station were ambitious of the Emperor's presence at their entertainments, hastened one and all to issue pressing invitations to the enchantress of whom their Sovereign had said that she was the most fascinating woman in Vienna.

*Hubner, 1, P. 199.

Count Liechtenstein Podstadsky was about to give a ball, and the Countess Baillou had consented to receive his guests. It would perhaps have been more natural that the mother of the Count should play the hostess on this occasion; but it was known that the old couple were at variance with their only son; and the more lavish he grew in his expenditure, the more penurious became his parents. The avarice of the latter was as well known as the extravagance of the former, and whenever there was a new anecdote current illustrative of the prodigality of the son, another was related to exemplify the increasing parsimony of the father.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the bewitching Countess should have been selected to preside over the ball given by her aristocratic friend. Everybody was delighted. The Emperor was to be there, and it was to be the most magnificent entertainment of the season. Long before the hour fixed for the arrival of the guests, the street before the Count's palace was thronged with people, eager to obtain a glance at anything appertaining to the fairy spectacle. While they were peering through the illuminated windows at a wilderness of flowers, mirrors, silk and velvet, a carriage drawn by four splendid horses came thundering down the street and drew up before the door of the palace. Two footmen in sky-blue velvet picked out with silver, leaped down to open the door, and in a trice, the large portals of the palace were thrown open, and a rich carpet rolled to the carriage-door, while six livered servants ranged themselves on either side.

And now from the carriage emerged the lady patroness, resplendent in silver gause and diamonds that glittered like a constellation just fallen from the heavens. The people, enraptured by the beauty of the Countess, gave vent to their admiration without stint. As she reached the top of the marble steps, she turned and smiled upon her worshippers, whereupon they shouted as an audience is apt to do at the appearance of a favorite prima donna.

In the midst of this applause, the lady entered the *Hotel*, and until the door closed and shut out the enchanted scene within, they watched her graceful form as it glided along followed by a train of lackies. Count Podstadsky came forward to meet her with ceremonious courtesy. They entered the gay saloons, but as if led by one common impulse, both traversed the long suite of apartments in silence, and approached a door which led into a small boudoir evidently not lit up for the occasion. Once within, the door was closed, and the purple velvet *portière* was dropped before it.

"Do not be afraid," said the Countess, with a bewitching smile, "we are alone. You are at liberty to congratulate me upon my appearance, for I see by your eyes that you are dying to tell me how beautiful I am."

"Neither eyes nor tongue could give expression to a hundredth part of the rapture which my heart feels at your approach, Arabella," replied Podstadsky, gazing upon her with passionate admiration. "Surely eve-

ry woman must hate you, and every man be intoxicated by your charms."

"They *are* intoxicated, Carlo," replied she. "They are such fools! To think that they are willing to commit any deed of folly for the sake of a fair face and two bright eyes!"

"And you, my angel, are cruel to all, and for me alone has the proud Countess Baillou a heart."

"A heart!" ejaculated the Countess with irony. "Do you believe in hearts, silly Carlo? My dear friend, I at least, am without such an inconvenience. If I love anything, it is gold. Its chink to my ear is sweetest harmony, its touch thrills through my whole being."

"How you have changed, Arabella! The time was when your lips murmured words of love and despair, too!"

"Aye, Carlo! But the woman who murmured of love and despair—she who believed in innocence and loyalty, is buried in the Tiber. She whom you rescued thence, has received the baptism of shame, and you, Count Podstadsky, were her sponsor. You taught me the art of lying and deceiving, and now you prate to me of a heart!"

"It is because your maddening beauty will not suffer me to forget that mine is still susceptible of love," replied Podstadsky.

The Countess laughed, but there was no mirth in her voice. "Podstadsky," said she throwing back her superb head, "you have about as much heart as the hare, who runs from a rustling leaf, taking it to be the click of the hunter's rifle."

"And yet, Arabella," replied Podstadsky with a sickly smile, "I am here, although sometimes I *do* start and fancy that I hear the hunter's step behind me."

"Hare-like fright," said Arabella, raising her shoulders. "I wonder at you, Carlo, when you look upon what we *are* and reflect upon what we have *been*. Everybody in Vienna admires and envies us. The highest nobles of the land are our willing guests, and the Emperor himself (*dit-on*) has fallen in love with the Countess Baillou. Oh, Carlo! Is it not enough to make all the gods of Olympus laugh!"

"You are right," replied Podstadsky encouraged. "The Emperor's visit here to-night will silence the clamor of my creditors."

"Creditors! What of them? Was there ever a nobleman without creditors! They are one of the appendages of rank. And then, Carlo—if your creditors annoy you, what prevents you from paying them?"

Podstadsky shuddered. "Do you mean——"

"What is the matter with the man?" asked Arabella as he paused and she saw how ghastly he looked. "Of course, I mean you to pay as you have paid before—Pay, and pay promptly. Then when everything—furniture, plate, jewels, horses and equipages are ours, we sell out, and realize our fortune in *gold*—(no bank-notes, Carlo,)—and then we take up our abode in the city of cities—Paris! Gold!—Gold!—There is——"

"A light knock was heard at the door. The Countess disappeared

and the Count put out his head. It was his steward who announced that a lady closely veiled, wished to speak with Count Podstadsky on urgent business.

"Show her into the ante-room. The Countess Baillou will do me the favor to receive her."

"My lord," said the steward, "the lady wishes to see you alone."

—"Indeed? Then show her in here."

The steward retired and the Count stepped into one of the lighted rooms. The Countess came forward smiling.

"I heard it all," said she, playfully threatening him with her finger. "I am not going to allow you to have a tête-à-tête in the dark. No no, my Jupiter, your mysterious beauty shall be received just here under the light of the chandelier, and I shall watch you both from the boudoir. That will be safer for all parties. I suspect a certain dark-eyed beauty of this stratagem, and I long to see the haughty prude."

"Do you suspect Rachel Eskeles?"

Arabella nodded affirmatively. "Doubtless she comes to implore forgiveness for her father's insolence, and to deny all complicity with the old Jewish dragon. Here she comes, Carlo, but mark me!—If I see danger ahead, I come to the rescue!"

The Countess then bounded like a graceful gazelle, into the boudoir, while the Count advanced to meet the veiled visitor.

CHAPTER XI.

MOTHER AND SON.

With the bow and smile of a veritable libertine, Count Podstadsky offered his arm to the lady whose face was completely hidden by a long black veil. The accommodating steward retired in haste, and the lady looking around with anxiety, murmured, "Are we alone?"

"Entirely alone, my charming sphinx," replied Podstadsky. "The god of Love alone shall hear the secrets which are to fall from your coral lips. But first, let me remove this envious veil, my mysterious charmer."

The lady stood perfectly still while Podstadsky, by way of exordium, embraced her affectionately. Neither did she offer any opposition to his daring hands, as first they removed her long mantilla, and then threw back the black crape veil which had so faithfully concealed her features.

When he saw her face, he started back with a cry of remorse.

"My Mother, oh, my Mother!" exclaimed he, covering his face with his hands.

Behind the portière there was the faint sound of a mocking laugh, but neither mother nor son heard it. They heard naught but the insufferable throbs of their own heart; they saw each one, naught but the death like face of the other.

"Yes, it is your unhappy mother, she who once vowed never again to cross your threshold—But maternity is merciful, Carl, and I come hither to pardon and to rescue you, while yet there is time for flight."

The young Count made no reply. At the astounding revelation made by the dropping of that black veil, he had retreated in mingled shame, and surprise. He had accosted his own mother in the language of libertinism, and he stood gazing upon her with looks of sorrow and regret. He had scarcely heard her speak, so absorbed was he in self-reproach, and now as she ceased, he murmured,

"Is that my mother! *My* mother with the wrinkled brow and the white hair!"

The Countess returned his gaze with a mournful smile. "You have not seen me for two years, Carl, and since then sorrow has transformed me into an old woman. I need not tell you why I have sorrowed. Oh, my child! Whence comes the gold with which this fearful splendor is purchased? Your father——"

"My father!" echoed the Count, recalled to self-possession by the word. "What am I to him, who cursed me and forbade me his house. Tell him," cried he fiercely, "that if I am lost, it is he who shall answer to heaven for my soul!"

"Peace!" exclaimed the mother in a tone of authority. "Nor attempt to shift your disgrace upon him who has been not the cause of your crimes, but their victim. Why did he curse you, reprobate, tell me why!"

The Count was so awed by her words and looks that he obeyed almost instinctively.

"Because I had forged," was the whispered reply.

"Yes—forged your father's name for a million, and forced him for the honor of his house to sell all that he possessed. We are so poor that we have scarcely the necessaries of life; nevertheless, we have borne in silence the contumely of the world that scorns us as misers. And now, although you have nothing to inherit, we hear of your wealth, the magnificence of your house, of your unbounded expenditure!"

"Yes, mother," replied the Count, beginning to recover from his shock, "it is plain that I have discovered a treasure—somewhere."

"Then you will have to explain the nature of your discovery, for your father is about to reveal the state of his affairs to the world."

"If he does that, I am lost," cried Podstadsky in tones of despair.

"Ah!"—gasped the unhappy mother, "Then we were right in fearing that your wealth was ill-gotten. Oh, Carl, look into the face of the

mother who bore you, and has loved you beyond all things earthly! Look into her face, and say whence comes this magnificence!"

The Count tried to raise his eyes, but he could not meet his mother's glance. Alas, he remembered how often in childhood after some trifling misconduct, he had looked into those loving eyes, and read forgiveness there!—

The mother trembled, and could scarcely support her limbs. She caught at a chair, and leaned upon it for a moment. Then, with faltering steps she approached her son, and raised his head with her own hands. It was a touching scene, and Count Podstadsky himself was not unmoved by its silent eloquence. His heart beat audibly, and his eyes filled with repentant tears.

"Tell me, child, tell me whence comes your wealth. I will not betray you, for I am your unhappy mother!"

"You can do nothing for me mother," sobbed the Count. "I am lost beyond power of redemption."

"Alas! Alas! Then you are guilty! But, Carl, I will not ask you any questions—only let me save you from public disgrace. Your father is inexorable—but I can save you, my beloved child. I will leave home—country—name—everything for your sake, even the husband of my life-long love. Come, my son—let us go together where no one shall ever hear your story, and where with the grace of God you may repent of your sins, and amend."

The strength of her love lent such eloquence to the words of the Countess, that her son was borne away by the force of her pleadings.

"Oh, my mother, if I could—if I could—" but here his voice faltered, and the tears which he had been striving to keep back gushed out in torrents. He covered his face with his hands, and sobbed aloud.

His mother smiled and made a silent thanksgiving to heaven. "God will accept your tears, my dear prodigal child; come, ere it be too late. See, I have gold. My family diamonds have yielded enough to maintain us in Switzerland. There, among its solitudes——"

A clear, musical laugh was heard, and the melodious voice of a woman spoke these scornful words.

"Count Podstadsky a peasant! a Swiss peasant! Ha, ha!" The old Countess turned and saw coming from the boudoir, a vision of such beauty as dazzled her eyes. The vision came forward smiling, and Podstadsky dashing away his tears, passed in one instant from the heights of saving repentance, to the unfathomable depths of hopeless obduracy.

The two women, meanwhile, faced each other, the one laughing, triumphant, beautiful alas! as Circe; the other pale, sorrowful as the guardian angel of the soul which has just been banished from the presence of God forever!

"Pray, Carlo, introduce me to your mother," said Arabella. "You are not yet a Swiss peasant. Pending your metamorphosis, be a little more observant of the conventions and courtesies of high life!"

"She has been eaves-dropping!" exclaimed the Countess Podstadsky, contemptuously.

"Yes," said Arabella, with perfect equanimity, "I have enjoyed the privilege of witnessing this charming scene. You, madam, have acted incomparably, but your son has not sustained you. The rôle you have given him is inappropriate. To ask of him to play the repentant sinner is simply ridiculous. Count Podstadsky is a gentleman, and has no taste for Idyls."

"Who is this woman?" asked the old Countess.

Her son had regained all his self-possession again. He approached Arabella, and taking her hand, led her directly up to his mother.

"My mother, I beg to present to you the Countess Baillou, the lady-patroness of the ball I give to-night."

The old Countess paid no attention to Arabella's deep curtsey. She was too much in earnest to heed *her*.

"Will you come, Carl?—Every moment is precious."

"My dear lady," exclaimed Arabella, "you forget that not only the aristocracy of Vienna, but the Emperor himself is to be your son's guest to-night."

"Do not listen to her, my son," cried the wretched mother. "Her voice is the voice of the evil spirit that would lure you on to destruction.—Carl—Carl!" cried she, laying her vigorous grasp upon his arm—"be not so irresolute! Come, and prove yourself to be a man!"

"Aye! interposed Arabella," "be a man Carl, and suffer no old woman to come under your own roof, and chide you as if you were her naughty boy. What business, pray, is it of this lady's, where you gather your riches? And what to the distinguished Count Podstadsky, are the clamors of two unnatural parents, who have long since lost all claim to his respect?"

"Carl, Carl!" shrieked the mother, "Do not heed her. She is an evil spirit. Come with me!"

There was a pause. Arabella raised her starry eyes, and fixed them with an expression of passionate love upon the Count. That simulated look sealed his fate.

"No, mother, no! Importune me no longer, for I will not leave Vienna. Enough of this trage-comedy—Leave me in peace."

Arabella flung him a kiss from the tips of her rosy fingers. "Spoken like a man, at last," said she.

For awhile, not a word was heard in that gorgeous room, where the chandeliers flung their full red glare upon the group below. The white-haired mother—the recusant son—the beautiful enchantress, whose black art had just sundered them forever!

At length she spoke, that broken-hearted mother, and her voice was hollow as a sound from the grave. "Thou hast chosen. God would have rescued thee, but thou hast turned away from His merciful warning! Farewell, unhappy one, farewell!"

She wrapped her dark mantle around her, and concealed her face again

in the veil. Her son dared not offer his hand, for evil eyes were upon him, and he allowed her to depart without a word. Slowly she traversed the scene of sinful splendor, her tall, dark figure reflected from mirror to mirror as she went, and before the receding vision of that crushed and despairing mother, the lights above seemed to pale, and the gilding of those rich saloons grew dim and spectral.

Farther and farther she went, Podstadsky gazing after her, while Arabella gazed upon him. She reached the last door, and he started as if to follow. His tempter drew him firmly back, and calmed his agitation with her magic smile.

"Stay, beloved," said she tenderly. "From this hour, I shall be mother, mistress, friend—all things to you."

He clasped her passionately to his heart, sobbing, "I wish for nothing on earth but your love—the love which will follow me, even to the scaffold."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Arabella, "what an ugly word to whisper to these beautiful rooms! Look here, Carlo,—the diamonds we own in common are worth half a million. We must do a good business to-night. When the Emperor has retired, the hostess will have a right to preside over the faro table, and you know that my cards never betray me."

"I know it, my enchantress," cried Carlo, kissing her. "Let us make haste and grow rich. I would go anywhere with *you*, were it even to Switzerland."

"But not as a peasant, Carlo—First, however, we must have our millions. Now, be reasonable to-night, and don't play the Italian lover. Colonel Szekuly is desperately enamored of me, and he will be sure to sit next to me at the faro-table. The place he covets shall cost him a fortune."

At that moment the steward entered the room. "A message from the Emperor, my lady."

"What can it be?"

"His Majesty regrets that he cannot keep his engagement this evening with Count Podstadsky."

"This is a disappointment. What else?" asked the Countess as the servant still stood there.

"Several other excuses, my lady. The two Princesses Lichtenstein, Countess Thun, and Princess Esterhazy also, have sent apologies."

"Very well, Duval. Go, for the guests will be coming."

The steward went, and the pair looked at each other in anxious silence. Both were pale, both were frightened.

"What can it mean? What can it mean?" faltered the Countess.

"What can it mean?" echoed the Count, and he started, for again he thought that he saw his mother's shadow darkening the splendor of those princely halls, whose lights were flickering as though they were about to be extinguished and leave the guilty accomplices in irretrievable darkness.

"Arabella, something threatens us," whispered Podstadsky.

"Nonsense! Our guests are arriving," said she rallying. "Courage, Carlo, courage! A smooth brow and bright smiles for the aristocratic world, Count Podstadsky!"

The doors opened and crowds of splendid women, accompanied by their cavaliers, floated in towards the lady-patroness, who received them all with bewitching grace and won all hearts by her affability.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWO OATHS.

"ALREADY beloved? Think that for three long weeks I have not seen you, Günther! It is so early—no one misses me in the house, for my father returns from his bank at nine only. Who knows when we shall meet again!"

"To-morrow, my Rachel, if you permit me to return, and every morning at this hour I shall be here behind the grove, waiting for my angel to unlock the gates of Paradise and admit me to the heaven of her presence."

"Oh, I will surely come! Nor storm nor rain shall deter me. Here in this pavilion we are secure from curious eyes. God who blesses our love, alone shall see into our hearts!"

"Oh, Rachel, how I honor and love your energetic soul! When I am with you, I fear nothing. But away from the influence of those angelic eyes, I tremble and grow faint."

"What do you fear, Günther?"

"The pride of riches, Rachel. Your father would laugh me to scorn were he to hear that his peerless daughter is loved by a man without rank or fortune."

"But whose heart has a patent of nobility from God," exclaimed Rachel with enthusiasm. "And besides, Günther, are you not a confidential friend of the Emperor?"

"Oh, yes," said Günther bitterly. "The Emperor calls me 'friend,' and in 'grateful acknowledgement of my services,' he has raised my salary to three thousand florins. But what is that to your father, who pays twice the amount to his book-keeper. Why are you the daughter of a man whose wealth reflects discredit upon my love!"

"No one who looks into your noble face will ever suspect the purity of your love, dear Günther. But, alas! my lover, there is an obstacle greater than wealth to part us—the obstacle of your cruel Faith which does not permit the Christian to wed with the Jew."

"If you were poor, my Rachel, I would try to win you over from the Jewish God of vengeance to the merciful God of the Christian. Would I could bring such an offering to Jesus as that of your pure young heart."

"My father would die were I to renounce my faith," said Rachel suddenly growing sad. "But before he died, he would curse me."

"How calmly you speak, and yet your words are the death-warrant of my hopes!" exclaimed Günther despairingly.

"I speak calmly because I have long since resolved never to be the wife of another man," replied Rachel. "If I must choose between father and lover, I follow you. If my father drives me from his home, then Günther, I will come and seek shelter upon your faithful heart."

"And you shall find it there, my own one!—I dare not call you beloved; but oh! I await with longing the hour of your coming—the hour when of your own free-will your little hand shall be laid in mine, to journey with me from earth to heaven! Adieu, sweetest. I go, but my soul remains behind."

"And mine goes with you," replied Rachel. He clasped her in his arms, and over and over again imprinted his passionate kisses upon her willing lips.

"To-morrow," whispered she. "Here is the key of the gate. I shall be in the pavilion."

Again he turned to kiss her, and so they parted. Rachel watched his tall, graceful figure until it was hidden by the trees, then she clasped her hands in prayer.

"Oh, God, bless and protect our love! Shelter us from evil, but if it must come, grant me strength to bear it!"

Slowly and thoughtfully she returned to the house. Her heart was so filled with thoughts of her lover that she did not see the stirring of the blind, through which her father's dark angry eyes had witnessed their meeting. It was not until she had entered her room that she awakened from her dream of bliss. Its splendor recalled her senses, and with a sob, she exclaimed,

"Why am I not a beggar, or a poor Christian child. Anything—anything that would make me free to be his wife!"——

She ceased, for she heard her father's voice. Yes—it was indeed he! How came he to be at home so soon? His hand was upon the door, and now he spoke to her.

"Are you up, my daughter? Can I come in?"

Rachel hastened to open the door, and her father entered the room with a bright smile.

"So soon dressed, Rachel! I was afraid that I might have disturbed your slumbers," said he, drawing her to him and kissing her. "Not only dressed, but dressed so charmingly that one would suppose the sun were your lover and had already visited you here. Or perhaps you expect some of your adoring Counts this morning—Hey!"

"No, father—I expect no one."

"So much the better, for I have glorious news for you. Do you re-

member what I promised when you consented to let me punish Count Podstadsky after my own fashion?"

"No, dear father, I do not remember ever to have been bribed to obey your commands."

"Then, I will tell you my news, my glorious news. I have become a *Freiherr*."

"You were always a free man my father; your millions have long ago made you a *Freiherr*."

"Bravely spoken, my Jewess," cried Eskeles Flies. "I will reward you by telling you what I have bought for you. A carriage-load of illuminated manuscripts, decorated with exquisite miniatures, so that you may now enrich your library with Christian Bibles, and Papal bulls of every size and form."

"Oh, my dear father, how I thank you for these treasures!"

"Treasures, indeed! They are part of the library of a convent. The Emperor has destroyed them as the Vandals once did the treasures of the Goths. I bought them from one of our own people—and that is not all. I have a communion-service, and an ostensorium for you whose sculptures are worthy of Benvenuto Celline. I purchased these also from a Jew, who bought them at one of the great church-auctions. Ha, ha! He was going to melt them up—the vessels that Christian priests had blessed and held sacred!"

"That was no disgrace to him, father, but it is far different with the Emperor, who has desecrated the things which are esteemed holy in his own church. The Emperor is not likely to win the affections of his people by acts like these."

"Pshaw! He wanted gold, and cared very little whence it came," cried Eskeles Flies, with a contemptuous shrug. "His munificent mother having emptied the imperial treasury, the prudent son had to replenish it. True—his method of creating a fund is not the discreetest he could have chosen; for while teaching his people new modes of financiering, he has forgotten that he is also teaching them to pilfer their own Gods. What an outcry would be raised in Christendom, if the Jew should plunder his own synagogue! But I tell you, Rachel, that when the lust of riches takes possession of a Christian's heart, it maddens his brain. Not so with the Jew—Were he starving, he would never sell the Holy of Holies—But the Jew never starves—not he! He lays ducat upon ducat until the glistening heap dazzles the Christian's eyes, and he comes to barter his wares for it. So is it with me. My gold has bought for me the merchandise of nobility."

"Are you really in earnest father? Have you thought it necessary to add to the dignity of your Jewish birthright, the bauble of a baron's title?"

"Why not, Rachel? The honor is saleable, and it gives one consideration with the Christian. I have bought the title, and the escutcheon, as I buy a set of jewels for my daughter. Both are intended to dazzle our enemies, and to excite their envy."

"But how came it to pass?" asked Rachel. "How came you to ven-

ture such an unheard-of demand? A Jewish baron is an anomoly which the world has never seen."

"For that very reason, I demanded it. I had rendered extraordinary services to the Emperor. He sent for me to repay me the millions I had lent him without interest, and I took occasion there, to speak of my thriving manufactures, and my great commercial schemes. "Ah," said he putting his hand affectionately upon my shoulder, (for the Emperor loves a rich man,) 'Ah, if I had many such merchant-princes as you, the Black Sea would soon be covered with Austrian ships.' Then, he asked what he could do in return for the favor I had done him."

"And you asked for a Baron's title?"

"I did. The Emperor opened his large eyes, and looked knowingly at me. He had guessed my thoughts. 'So,' said he, 'you would like to provoke the aristocracy a little, would you? Well—I rather like the idea. They are in need of a lesson to bring down their rebellious spirit, and I shall give it to them. You are a more useful man to me than any of them, and you shall be created a baron. I shall also elevate several other distinguished Jews to the rank of nobles, and the aristocracy shall understand that wherever I find merit, I reward it.'"

"So then it was your worth, and not your gold that earned for you the distinction!" cried Rachel, gratified.

"Nonsense! 'Merit,' means wealth, and I assure you that titles cost enormous sums. I must pay for my patent ten thousand florins, and if I should wish to be a Count, I must pay twenty thousand—But enough of all this. Suffice it that I shall prove to the nobles that my money is as good as their geneological trees, and now we shall have crowds of noble adorers at the Baroness Rachel's feet. But be she Baroness or Countess, she is forever a Jewess, and that parts her eternally from any but a wooer of her own faith. Does it not, my Rachel, my loyal Isarelitish Baroness?"

"Do you doubt me, my father?" asked Rachel in a faltering voice, while she averted her face.

"No, my child, for if I did, I would curse you on the spot."

"Dear, dear father, do not speak such fearful words," cried Rachel, trembling with fright.

"You are right, child. I am childish to indulge the supposition of my Hebrew maiden's treachery. She is pure before the Lord, loyal and true to the faith of her fathers. But we must be armed against temptation; and now, before we part for the day, we shall both swear eternal fidelity to our creed. These wily Christians may come with flattery and smiles, and some one of them might steal my Rachel's heart. I swear, therefore, by all that is sacred on earth, or in heaven, never to abandon the Jewish faith, and never to enter a Christian church. So help me God!"

Rachel was gazing upon her father with blanched cheeks, and distended eyes, her muscles stiffening with horror, until she seemed to be turning to stone.

"Did you hear my oath, Rachel?" said he.

She parted her lips, and they faltered an inaudible "yes." "Then," said he gently, "repeat the oath, for we both must take it." She raised her head with a quick, convulsive motion, and stammered, "What—what is it, father?"

"Swear as I have done, never to leave the faith of your fathers, and never to enter a Christian church."

Rachel made no reply. She stared again as though her senses were forsaking her. She thought she would go mad.

Her father's brow contracted, and his mien grew fierce, as he saw that his daughter's heart had gone irrevocably from him. There was a long, dreadful pause.

"Are you at a loss for words?" asked the Baron; and his voice was so savage, that Rachel started at the ominous sound.

"Repeat my words then," continued he, seeing that she made no answer, or I——"

"Say on, my father," replied the despairing girl.

Baron Eskeles Flies repeated his oath, and the pale victim spoke the words after him. But at the end of the ordeal, she reeled, and fell to the floor.

Her father bent over and raising her tenderly, folded her to his heart. His voice was now as loving as ever.

"My precious child, we are truly united now. Nothing can part us, and your happy father will surround you with such splendor as you have never beheld before."

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed she, "what has splendor to do with happiness?"

"Everything," replied her father with a careless laugh. "Misfortune is not near so ugly in a palace as in a cottage; and I do assure you that the tears which are shed in a softly-cushioned carriage, are not half so bitter as those that fall from the eyes of the houseless beggar. Wealth takes the edge from affliction and lends new lustre to happiness—And it shall shed its brightest halo over yours, my daughter. But I must leave you, for I expect to earn a fortune before I return, when I hope to see you bright and beautiful as ever."

He kissed her forehead and stroked her silky hair. "The Baroness Rachel will be a Jewess forever! Oh, how I thank you for that promise, my adored child! What new pleasure can I procure for my idol to-day?"

"Love me, father," murmured Rachel.

"What need you ask for love, you who are to me like the breath of life? To show how I anticipate your wishes, I have already prepared a gratification for you. I have remarked how much pleasure you take in the gardens and little pavilion yonder. Since my Rachel loves to take her morning walk there, it shall be changed into a paradise. The brightest fruits and flowers of the tropics shall bloom in its conservatories, and instead of the little pavilion, I shall raise up a temple of purest

white marble, worthy of the nymph who haunts the spot. For a few weeks your walks will be somewhat disturbed, darling, for the workmen will begin to-morrow; but they need not be much in your way, for while the walls are down, I shall set a watch at every gate to make sure that no one intrudes upon your privacy. In a few months you shall have a miniature palace wherein to rest when you are tired of roaming about the grounds. Farewell, my child. I shall send the workmen to-morrow—early to-morrow morning."

"He knows all," thought poor Rachel, as he closed the door. "The oath was to part me from Günther, the changes in the garden are to prevent us from meeting."

For a long time she sat absorbed in grief. But finally she made her resolve.

"I have sworn to love thee forever, my Günther," said she. "When the hour comes whereon my choice must be made, I go with thee!"

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW-FASHIONED OBSEQUIES.

THE Emperor's horse was saddled, and he was about to take his daily ride. But as he was leaving his cabinet, a page announced Field-marshal Lacy.

"Admit him," said Joseph, and he hastened to the ante-room to greet his favorite.

Lacy received the cordial greeting of the Emperor with a grave, troubled expression.

"Sire," said he, "may I beg for an audience?"

"Certainly, my friend," replied Joseph. "I am just about to ride, and you can accompany me. We can converse together in some of the shady alleys of the park. I will order a horse for you at once."

"Pardon me, sire, our interview must be here. I saw your Majesty's horse in readiness for your ride, but that did not prevent me from coming; for the matter which brought me hither is one of supreme importance."

"And you cannot put it off until we take our ride?"

"Sire, my first request is that your Majesty will relinquish the ride altogether. You must not be seen in the streets to-day."

"Bless me, Lacy, you speak as if I were Louis of France, who is afraid to show himself in public because of the murmurs of his discontented subjects."

"Sire, assume that you are Louis then, and give up the ride. Do it, if you love me, my Sovereign."

"If I love you!" repeated Joseph with surprise. "Well, then, it shall be done." And he rang and ordered his horse to be put up. "Now speak. What can have happened here, that *I* shall be threatened with a discontented mob?"

"Sire," began Lacy, "you remember the day on which we swore to speak the truth to your Majesty, even if it should become importunate. Do you not?"

"Yes, I do, Lacy; but neither of you have kept the promise up to this time."

"I am here to redeem my word, sire. I come to warn your Majesty that you are proceeding too rashly with your measures of reform."

"And you also, Lacy!" cried Joseph reproachfully. "You, the bravest of the brave, would have me retreat before the dissatisfaction of priests and bigots."

"The malcontents are not only priests and bigots, they are your whole people. You attempt too many reforms at once."

"But my reforms are all for the people's good. I am no tyrant to oppress and trample them under foot. I am doing my best to free them from the shackles of prejudice, and yet they harrass and oppose me. Even those who understand my aims, place obstacles in my path. Oh, Lacy, it wounds me to see that not even my best friends sustain me!"

I see that your Majesty is displeased," replied Lacy sadly, "and that you reckon me among your opponents—I who am struck with admiration at the grandeur of your conceptions. But you are so filled with the rectitude of your intentions that you have no indulgence for the weakness and ignorance of those whom you would benefit, and you make too light of the enmity of those whom your reforms have aggrieved."

"Whom have I aggrieved?" cried Joseph impatiently. "Priests and nobles, nobody besides. If I have displeased them, it is because I wish to put all men on an equality. The privileged classes may hate me—let them do it,—but the people whom I befriend, will love and honor me."

"Ah, sire, you think too well of the people," said Lacy. "And mindful of my promise, I must say that you have given cause for dissatisfaction to all classes, plebian as well as patrician."

"How so?" cried Joseph.

"You have despised their prejudices, and mocked at customs which in their superstitious ignorance they hold as sacred. They do not thank you for enlightening them. They call you an unbeliever and an apostate. Do not be displeased, sire, if I speak so plainly of things which the stupidity of your subjects regards as a crime. I come as your Majesty's accuser, because I come as the advocate of your people, imploring you to be patient with their blindness and their folly."

"What now? Is there any special complaint against me?"

"Yes, sire. Your Majesty has issued an edict which has wounded

the people in those relations which the world holds sacred—an edict which is—(forgive me if I speak plainly)—which is—so entirely—free from prejudice, that it trenches almost—upon the limits of barbarism."

"What edict can you mean?"

"That which concerns the burial of the dead, sire. I beseech you, revoke it; for the people cry out that nothing is sacred to the Emperor—not even death and the grave!—Leave them their cemeteries and their tombs, that they may go thither and pray for the souls of the departed!"

"That they may go thither and enjoy their superstitious rites!" cried Joseph indignantly. "I will not allow my subjects to seek for their dead underground. They shall not solemnize the corruption of the body; they shall turn their eyes to heaven and there seek for the immortal spirits of the departed! They shall not love the dust of their forefathers, but their souls!"

"Sire, you speak of an ideal people. To bring mankind to such a state of perfection, would require the reign of a Methusaleh! It is too soon for such edicts. The people, so far from appreciating, abhor them."

"Are you really in earnest, Lacy?" exclaimed the Emperor with flashing eyes.

"Yes, sire, they are indignant. Yesterday the first burial according to your Majesty's edict, took place, and since then the people are in a state of revolt. To-day there are of course other bodies to be interred. There is not a vagrant in the streets who does not utter threats against your Majesty. From the burgher to the beggar, every man feels that his sacred rights have been invaded. They feel that the prohibition of coffins and burying grounds does not reach the rich, who have their hereditary tombs in churches and chapels, but the people who have no such privileges."

"The people for whose sakes I would have converted the mould of the burying-ground into fertile fields, and spared them the cost of a useless coffin, which instead of rotting in the ground, would have been so much more wood to warm them in winter, and cook the food for their hungry, living bodies!"

"But, your Majesty, they are not sufficiently enlightened to comprehend your ideas. Revoke the order, sire, in mercy to their ignorance, revoke the order!"

"Revoke it!" cried Joseph furiously. "Never will I make such a concession to stupidity and malice!"

"Then," said Lacy gravely, "it is possible that the flames of a revolution may burst forth to consume this unhappy land. Oh, sire, have mercy upon the poor people whose eyes cannot endure the light of reform! Preserve yourself and your subjects from the horrors of a revolt, which, although it would be ultimately quelled, might cost bloodshed and misery! I have never seen such excitement as prevails throughout the streets of Vienna. Thousands of men and women throng the quarter where the body lies."

"When does the funeral take place?"

"At three o'clock this afternoon, sire."

"In one hour then," said the Emperor, glancing at the clock.

"Yes, sire, and it may be an hour of tribulation, unless your Majesty has the magnanimity to prevent it! To discourage idle assemblages, your Majesty has forbidden the people to follow funerals. The effect of this prohibition is, that the poor woman who is to be buried this afternoon will be followed, not by her friends, but by thousands who have never seen or known her. The police have done their best to disperse the rioters, but so far, in vain."

"Then there is already a revolt!" cried the Emperor.

"But for this I should never have presumed to deter your Majesty from enjoying your ride to-day."

"Do you suppose that I would retreat before my own subjects?"

"Sire, the wrath of the populace is like that of a tiger just escaped from its cage. In its blood-thirsty joy it tears to pieces everything that comes in its way."

"I am curious to witness its antics," replied the Emperor touching the bell.

"Sire," exclaimed Lacy, staying Joseph's hand, "what would you do?"

"Mount my horse, and go to the funeral."

"What! To exasperate the crowd! To endanger yourself, and drive these poor half-frantic creatures to desperation! Oh, by the love you bear us all, I beseech you, have mercy upon those whose only possession on earth is oftentimes the grave! You would deprive their children of the only comfort left them—that of praying over the ashes of the departed! You would deprive those who are condemned to live like brutes of the comfort of dying like men! You would have their bodies sewed in sacks and thrown into ditches where they are not even allowed to moulder, but must be destroyed by lime! No tombstone permitted over their remains, nothing to remind their weeping relatives that they were ever alive! Oh, this is cruel! It may be a great thought, sire, but it is a barbarous deed! I know how bold I am but my conscience compels me to speak, and were I to lose the Emperor's favor, I must obey its faithful monitions. Revoke the edict, sire! There is yet time. In one hour it will be too late!"

The Emperor looked despondently at Lacy's agitated countenance. Then without a word he turned to his *escritoire* and hastily began to write. His writing concluded, he handed the paper to Lacy and commanded him to read it aloud. Lacy bowed and read as follows:

"As I have learned that the living are so material in their ideas, as to set great store upon the privilege of having their bodies rot and become carrion after death, I shall concern myself in noway as to the manner of their burying. Let it be known, therefore, that having shown the wisdom of disposing of the dead after the manner prescribed in my edict, I shall force no man to be wise. Those who are not convinced of its ex-

pediency, are free to dispose of their carcasses as they see fit."*

When Lacy had read to the end, the Emperor called imperatively for Günther. He obeyed the summons at once.

"This letter to the lord high-chancellor, Prince Kaunitz," said he. "I wish this writing to be printed and posted at the corners of the streets. Then hasten to the Leopold-suburbs, where any one of the police will show you to the house whence the funeral is to take place. Go within and tell the relatives of the deceased, that I give them permission to bedizen their corpse in whatever style they may choose, and to bury it in a coffin. Take a carriage and drive fast."

Günther bowed and turned to leave. "Stop a moment," continued the Emperor. "Go to the chief of police, and tell him that the people must not be disturbed in any way. They must be allowed to disperse at their pleasure. Now, Günther, be quick."

With a look of unspeakable affection Joseph gave his hand to Lacy. "Lacy," said he, "if I have made this great sacrifice to-day, it is neither from conviction nor fear; it is to show you what influence your words have over me, and to thank you for the manliness with which you have ventured to blame my acts. Few Princes possess the jewel of a faithful friend. I thank God that this jewel is mine!"†

CHAPTER XIV

THE POPE IN VIENNA.

A report, almost incredible, was obtaining currency in Vienna. It was said that the Pope was about to visit the Emperor. Many a German Emperor, in centuries gone by, had made his pilgrimage to Rome; but never before had the vicar of Christ honored the Sovereign of Austria by coming to him.

Pius VI, confounded by the headlong innovations of Joseph, and trembling lest his reforms should end in a total subversion of religion, had resolved, in the extremity of his distress, to become a pilgrim himself, and to visit the enemy in his own stronghold.

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* Hubner, Life of Joseph 2d, Vol. 2, P. 525.

† The Burial-edict was as follows: "As the burial of the dead has for its object the speedy dissolution of the body, and as nothing hinders that dissolution more than the casing of the corpse in a coffin, it is ordained that all dead bodies shall be stripped of their clothing, and sewed up in a linen sack, laid in an open coffin, and brought to the place of interment. A hole shall be dug six feet long and four feet wide, and the corpse being taken out of the coffin, shall be put into this grave, strewed plentifully with quick-lime, and covered with earth. If more than one corpse is to be buried, the bodies can all be put in the same grave." Gross-Hoffinger: History of the life and reign of Joseph 2d, Vol 2, P. 146.

To this intent he had dispatched an autographic letter, announcing his intention; to which the Emperor had replied by another, expressive of his extreme anxiety to become personally acquainted with his Holiness, and to do him all filial reverence. Furthermore, he begged that the Pope would relinquish his intention of taking up his abode at the Nuncio, and would consent to be the guest of the imperial family.

The Pope having graciously acceded to this wish, the apartments of the late Empress were prepared for his occupation. Now Joseph was quite aware that these apartments abounded in secret doors and private stairways, by which Maria Theresa's many petitioners had been accustomed to find their way to the privy purse of the munificent Empress, and so had diminished the imperial treasury of several millions.

The Emperor dreading lest these secret avenues should be used by the friends of the Church to visit the Pope in private, caused the stairways to be demolished, and all the doors to be walled up. He allowed but one issue from the apartments of his Holiness. This one led into the grand corridor, and was guarded by two sentries, who had orders to allow nobody to enter who was unprovided with a pass signed by Joseph himself. He was quite willing to receive the Pope as a guest; but was resolved that he should hold no communication with his bishops, while on Austrian soil.*

Meanwhile, every outward honor was to be paid to the head of the Church. Not only had his rooms been superbly decorated, but the churches also, were in all their spendor. The vestments of the clergy had been renewed—new altar-clothes woven, and magnificent hangings ordered for the papal throne erected for the occasion.

Finally, the momentous day dawned, and Vienna put on its holiday-attire. The houses were wreathed with garlands, the streets were hung with arches of evergreen. A hundred thousand Viennese pressed towards the Cathedral, where the Pope was to repair for prayer, and another throng was hastening towards the palace where the Pope and the Emperor were to alight together. In their impatient curiosity the people had forsaken their work. No one was content to remain within doors. Everybody said to everybody. "The Pope has come to Vienna," and then followed the question,

"Why has his Holiness come to Vienna?"

"To bless the Emperor, and approve his great deeds," said the friends of Joseph.

"To bring him, if possible, to a sense of his sacrilegeous persecution of the Church," said his enemies.

This question was not only verbally agitated, but it formed the sub-

* It was to Joseph's manifest advantage that the Pope should not reside outside of the palace: and the Emperor showed his ingenuity in the various strategic movements by which he defeated the purpose of his visit. One of the Pope's most zealous adherents, was the bishop of Gortz. When the Pope left Rome for Vienna, he would pass through Gortz. Joseph summoned the bishop to Vienna, and so prevented a meeting between them at Gortz; and on the day of the Pope's arrival in Vienna, the bishop received peremptory orders to return to his diocese. He was not allowed to communicate with the Pope, not even to see him as he passed. Friedel's letters from Vienna, Vol. 1. P. 223.

ject of thousands of pamphlets which fluttered from many a window towards the crowds who in breathless anxiety were awaiting the advent of Pius VI.

"The Arrival of the Pope."
"Why has the Pope come to Vienna?"
"What is the Pope?"

These were the titles of the *brochures* which were converting the streets into a vast reading-room, and preparing the minds of the readers for the impressions it was desirable to create on the subject.

At last the deep bells of St. Stephens opened their brazen throats. This signified that the Pope and the Emperor were at the gates of the city. The consent of the latter having been asked in the matter of the bell-ringing, he had replied to Cardinal Megazzi: "By all means. I wonder you should ask me the question, when bells are the artillery of the Church."*

The people received the tidings with such wild joy, that in their eagerness, several persons were trampled to death. But on they rushed, seeing and hearing nothing until eight lives were sacrificed to the fierce curiosity of the mob.

And now the iron tongues of every bell in Vienna proclaimed that the Pope had entered the city. The crowd who up to this moment had laughed, sung and shouted, suddenly ceased their clamor. Nothing was heard save the musical chime of the bells, while every eye was fixed upon a small white spot which was just becoming visible. The point grew larger, and took form. First came the outriders, then the imperial equipage drawn by eight milk-white horses caparisoned with crimson and gold. Nearer and nearer came the *cortège*, until the people recognised in the noble old man whose white locks flowed from under his velvet-cap, the supreme Pontiff, Antonio Braschi, Pope Pius VI.

Never throughout his pontifical career, had the Pope beheld such a crowd before. And these hundreds of thousands had assembled to bid him welcome. A smile of gratification flitted over his handsome features, and he raised his eyes to the face of his companion.

The Emperor wore a contented expression; by some it might have been regarded as derisive.

He had seen what the Pope in the simple joy of his heart had not observed. The people who in the presence of the high dignitaries of the church had been accustomed to kneel and ask a blessing, were standing, although the prelate who stood in their midst was the Sovereign Pontiff himself; and Joseph, as he contemplated his subjects, exulted in secret.

The cortège, impeded by the throng, moved slowly towards the imperial palace. When it drew up before the gates, Joseph, springing from the carriage, assisted the Pope to alight, and accompanied him to his apartments. Occasionally Pius raised his mild eyes to the Emperor's face and smiled, while Joseph in nowise discomposed by the honor of receiving the chief pastor of Christendom, walked proudly by his side.

* Friedel's Letters; vol. 1, page 213.

They passed through the magnificent state-apartments designed for the occupation of the Pope, but not until they had reached his private sitting-room, did the Emperor invite him to rest after his fatiguing walk.

"It has not fatigued me," replied Pius. "It has interested me, on the contrary, to traverse a palace which has been the residence of so many pious Princes. I esteem it a great privilege to inhabit these rooms whose deceased occupants have each in his turn received the benediction of my honored predecessors——"

"But who never were blessed by the love of their subjects," replied Joseph, interrupting him. "To my mind, this is a blessing better worth striving for, than a papal benediction, and it is the aim of *my* life to deserve it."

"Doubtless your Majesty will reach your aim," replied the Pope with courtesy. "I have confidence in the rectitude of your Majesty's intentions; and if I have made this pilgrimage to Vienna, it is because, relying upon your honesty of purpose, I hope to convince you that it has been misapplied. The visit of the Pope to the Austrian Emperor is a concession which I cheerfully make, if by that concession I can induce him to pause in a career which has sorely wounded my heart, and has been the occasion of so much scandal to our holy mother the Church."

"I fear that your Holiness has been mistaken in your estimate of me," replied Joseph, turning his flashing eyes upon the imploring face of the Pope. "However I might be moved by the pathos of your words, a Sovereign has no right to listen to the pleadings of his heart—'tis the head that must guide and influence his conduct. I fear, therefore, that your Holiness will be disappointed in the result of your visit here. I accept your journey to Vienna as a distinguished mark of your papal good-will, and am rejoiced to have it in my power to show all possible filial reverence to your Holiness. Neither I nor my subjects will deny the consideration which is his due, to the *spiritual* head of the church; but he on his part, must refrain from touching with his consecrated hand the things of this world which concern him not."

"It is my duty to attend to all the affairs of Holy Church, whether spiritual or temporal," replied the Pope gently.

"The temporal affairs of the Church concern your Nuncio and my Minister," said Joseph with impatience. "And as your Holiness has entered at once upon a controversy with me respecting my acts towards the Church, I declare distinctly to you that I shall not recede from the least of them, and that your journey to Vienna, if its object is to influence my policy as sovereign of these realms, is already a failure. The reasons for my conduct are satisfactory to me, and no power on earth shall move me from the position I have taken."*

"I will not altogether give up the hope I have cherished of moving your Majesty's heart," replied the Pope earnestly. "I shall continue to

* The Emperor's words. Hubner I, page 119.

pray that it may be my privilege to convince you of your errors and lead you back to the path of justice and of religion."

"Which means that you expect me to retract!" cried Joseph impetuously. "Never will I retract what I have said or done, for I act from conviction; and conviction does not slip off and on like a glove!—But let us speak no more on this subject. If your Holiness will write down your canonical objections to my proceedings against the Church, I will lay them before my theologians for examination. My Chancellor shall reply to them ministerially, and the correspondence can be published for the edification of my subjects. Meanwhile I shall endeavor to deserve the good-will of your Holiness by acting towards my honored guest the part of an obliging and hospitable host. This reminds me that I have already trespassed upon your time, and have deprived you of the repose which a traveler always craves after a long journey. I hope that your Holiness will overlook this intrusion, and pardon me if my great anxiety to enjoy your society caused me to forget the consideration due to my tired guest."

With these words the Emperor retired. The Pope followed his retreating figure with a glance of profound sadness.

"I fear," thought he, "that Joseph is indeed irreclaimable." Here he raised his soft dark eyes to Heaven, and continued in a low murmur, "For a time the Lord endureth with mildness, but His might overcometh the blasphemer, and he vanisheth—while Holy Church remaineth unchangeable forever!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE FLIGHT.

"You persist in your refusal?" cried Eskeles Flies in an angry voice. "You dare to oppose the will of your father?"

"I persist in my refusal," replied Rachel firmly, lifting her dark, tearful eyes to her father's excited countenance. "I must rebel against your authority, my father, for you would compromise my earthly happiness and my salvation. Oh, dear father, do not harden your heart against me! In mercy heed my prayers!"

With these words Rachel would have thrown herself upon her father's bosom. But he thrust her from him.

"'Tis you who have hardened your heart against the law of God which bids the child obey her father," cried he.

"I cannot recognise my father's authority when he oversteps his rights

and trenches upon mine as a human being," urged Rachel. "I cannot perjure myself by accepting, as a husband, a man whom I do not love. He is a coarse illiterate creature, who honors nothing but wealth, loves nothing but gold!"

"He is the son of the richest merchant in Brussels, and the Emperor has made a nobleman of his father. He is your equal, or rather he is your superior, for he is richer, much richer than we."

"He my equal! He cannot understand me," cried Rachel.

Her father laughed. "Not your equal, because he does not go into raptures over young Mozart, and does not indulge in speculative theology, but worships God after the manner of his fathers?—a Jew in short, who hates the Christian and glories in his Jewish birth-right?"

"Yes," said Rachel shuddering, "a Jew in feature, speech and spirit. Not such a noble Israelite as you, my father, but a man possessing every repulsive peculiarity which has made the Jew the pariah of the civilized world. Oh, father, dear father, do not barter me for gold! Let me remain your child, your darling—living and dying in the home which your love has made like Eden to my girlhood!"

"I have promised your hand to Baron Von Meyer," was the curt reply.

"I will not give it!" cried Rachel frantically. "You force me to disobedience, by requiring of me that which is impossible."

"I shall force you to obedience, rebellious girl, for our laws invest the father with absolute authority over his child, and I shall use my right to rescue you from dishonor. I read your heart, Rachel, and therein I see written the history of your perfidy and shame."

"Then you have read falsely," exclaimed Rachel with indignation. "Up to this day I have kept the oath I made to remain a Jewess! And no mortal, were he ten times my father, has the right to couple my name with perfidy or shame!"

"You dare to look me in the face and deny your disgrace!" said her father trembling with anger. "You, who at early morning in my own garden have listened to the vows of a false-tongued Christian! You who have sworn to be no man's wife, if not his!"

"Ah—you know all!" cried Rachel in accents of supreme joy. "God be praised there need be no more concealment between us! Yes, father, I love Günther, and if I be not permitted to become his wife, in the might of my love I would not scorn to be his handmaid! I have loved him since you first brought him hither, and proudly presented him as the Emperor's favorite. Oh, my father, we were not rich then!"

"No—and he would have scorned to ask you to wed him. Now—he would degrade the heiress of my wealth by seeking to make her his wife."

"Degrade me!" echoed Rachel with a blush of indignation. "I should be honored by bearing his name, not because he is the Emperor's favorite, but because he is worthy of my love."

"And yet, God be praised, Rachel Eskeles can never be the wife of

a Christian," shouted the banker triumphantly, "for she has sworn by the memory of her mother to die a Jewess."

"She will keep her oath unless her father release her," replied Rachel. "But oh!" added she, falling on her knees and raising her white arms above her head, "he will have pity upon the misery of his only child—he will not condemn her to despair! Have mercy, have mercy, dear father! Be your generous self, and take me to your heart. Release me, and let me become a Christian and the wife of my lover! He cares nothing for your wealth, he asks nothing but my hand!"

Her father glared at her with a look that seemed almost like hate. "You are a Jewess," hissed he, "and a Jewess you shall die!"

"I am no Jewess at heart, father. I have been educated in a Christian country and after the manner of Christian women. And you, too, have renounced your birth-right. You have eaten and drunk with the Gentiles, you have cut your hair, and have adopted their dress. Nay, more! You have parted with your name, and have accepted a Christian title. Why then have you not the manliness to abjure the God of Revenge and Hate, and openly adore the Christian God of Love and Mercy?"

"I will live and die a Jew," cried the banker choking with rage. "I swear it again, and may I be accursed if ever I break my oath!"

"Then, father, release *me* from the lie that follows me like an evil shadow, blasting my life here and hereafter. Give me to my lover. Keep your wealth to enrich your tribe, but give me your blessing and your love!"

"You shall remain a Jewess," thundered her father.

"Is this your last word?" cried Rachel, springing to her feet. "Is this your last word?"

"It is," replied he, eyeing her with cold cruelty.

"Then hear my determination. I have sworn fidelity to Günther, and if I must choose between you, I give myself to him. I will not become a Christian, for such was my oath, but I will abjure Judaism."

"And become a Deist?"

"Call it what you will. I shall adore the God of Love and Mercy."

"A Deist! Then you have never heard what punishment awaits the Deist here. You do not know that the Emperor who affects toleration, has his vulnerable heel, and will not tolerate Deism. The gentle punishment which his Majesty awards to Deism is—that of the lash.* So that I scarcely think you would dare me to accuse you of *that!*—But pshaw! I go too far in my fears. My daughter will recognize her folly, and yield her will to mine. She will be as she has ever been; my adored child—for whose happiness I can never do too much—whose every wish it shall be my joy to gratify."

"I have but one wish—that of becoming the wife of Günther."

Her father affected not to hear her. "Yes," continued he, "she will verify my promise, and take the husband I have chosen. This marriage

* Gross Hoffinger 2, page 160.

will be a fine thing for both parties, for I give my daughter one-half million of florins, and Baron Von Meyer gives his son a million cash down. Then the father-in-law gives three hundred florins a month for pin money, and I seven hundred; so that Rachel has a thousand florins a month for her little caprices, and of this, she is to render no account. That is a pretty dower for a bride! I give my daughter a trousseau equal in magnificence to that of a princess. Upon her equipage the arms of our two houses are already emblazoned, and to-morrow four of the finest horses in Vienna will conduct the Baroness Von Meyer to her husband's palace. I congratulate you, Baroness. No Christian woman in Vienna shall have an establishment like yours!"

"I shall never be the Baroness Von Meyer," said Rachel calmly, but an icy chill ran through her veins, for she loved her father, and felt that they must shortly part forever.

"Yes, you will be the Baroness Von Meyer to-morrow. I have anticipated all your objections. The Rabbi that is to marry you is a Pole. He will not understand your reply, and the young Baron has magnanimously consented to overlook any little informality of which your folly may be the cause; for he likes money, and is too good a Jew not to aid me in rescuing my heiress from disgrace. You see that your poor little struggles will all be vain. Resign yourself then, and accept the brilliant destiny which awaits you."

"I will sooner die than consign myself to misery and disgrace!"

"Be easy on that subject. God will shield you from misery, and your father's watchful eye will see that you do not consign yourself to disgrace," replied the banker coldly. But enough of words. Night sets in and I have yet a few preparations to make for to-morrow. It is proper that you pass the last evening of your maiden life in solitude, and that you may not spend it in weariness, I have ordered your drawing-rooms to be lighted, and your trousseau to be laid out, for your inspection. Go and gladden your heart with its magnificence. Good night."

So saying, Baron Eskeles Flies left the room. Rachel heard him turn the key in the lock and withdraw it. She then remembered that the drawing-rooms were lighted. Perhaps her father had neglected to fasten some of the doors leading thence into the hall. Rachel sprang to the door of communication, and flung it open. The rooms were brilliantly lit up, and the sparkling chandeliers of crystal looked down upon a wilderness of velvet, satin, flowers, lace and jewels, truly a trousseau for a princess!

But what cared Rachel for this? Indeed she saw nothing, save the distant doors towards which she sped like a frightened doe. Alas, they too were locked, and the only answers to her frantic calls were the mocking echoes of her own voice.

For a few moments she leaned against the wall for support; then her glance took in the long perspective of magnificence which was to gild the hideous sacrifice of a whole human life, and she murmured softly, "I must be free. I cannot perjure myself. I shall keep my vow to

Günther or die! My father is no father—he is my jailor, and I owe him no longer the obedience of a child."

She went slowly back, revolving in her mind what she should do.—Unconsciously she paused before a table resplendent with trinkets, whose surpassing beauty seemed to woo the young girl to her fate. But Rachel was no longer a maiden to be allured by dress. The exigencies of the hour had transformed her into a brave woman, who was donning her armor and preparing for the fight.

"Günther awaits me!" said she musing. "But why, where? That she could not say. But she felt that she must free herself from prison, and that her fate now lay in her own hands. At that moment she stood before a large round table which was just under the principal chandelier of her superb reception-room. Here lay dainty boxes containing laces, and caskets enclosing jewels. Not for one moment did she think of their contents. She saw but the gilt letters which were engraved upon the red morocco cases.

"Rachel Von Meyer" was on every box and case. In her father's mind, she already bore another name!

"Rachel Von Meyer!" said she with a shudder. "My father denies me his name—who then am I?"

A flush of modest shame overspread her face, as scarcely daring to articulate the words, she knelt and murmured, "I am Rachel Günther."

"And if such be my name," continued she, after a pause of rapture, "I have no right to be here amid the treasures of the Baroness Von Meyer. I must away from this house, which is no longer a home for me—Away—away—for Günther awaits me."

And now she looked with despair at the locked doors and the lofty windows so far, far from the ground. "Oh, if I had but wings! I who am here a prisoner, while my heart is away with him!"

Suddenly she gave a start, for deliverance was possible. She looked from the window as if to measure its height, and then she darted through the rooms until she saw a table covered with silks. She took thence a bolt of wide, heavy ribbon, and throwing it before her, exclaimed joyfully, "It is long, oh it is quite long enough! And strong enough to support me. Thank heaven, it is dark, and I shall not be seen. A gold ducat will bribe the guard at the postern, and then—I am free!"

She returned to her sitting-room and with trembling haste threw a dark mantle around her. Then looking up at her father's portrait, her eyes filled with bitter tears. "Farewell, my father, farewell!"

Scarcely knowing what she did, she fled from her room, and returned to the only object which possessed any more interest for her there, the long, long ribbon which like a gigantic serpent lay glistening on the floor where she had enrolled it. She stooped to pick it up, and trailing it after her, she flew from room to room, until she came to the last one of the suite which overlooked the park. She opened a window and listened.

Nothing was heard there save the "warbling wind," that wooed the

young branches, and here and there a little bird that ventured its note upon the night. Rachel secured the ribbon to the cross-work of the window, and then let it fall below. Once more she listened; she could almost hear the beatings of her own heart, but nothing else broke the silence of the house. She gave one quick glance around her beautiful home, where lay all the splendor that might have been hers, and grasping the ribbon firmly in her hands, she dropped from the window to the ground.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MARRIAGE BEFORE GOD.

GÜNTHER had returned from the palace to his own lodgings in the city. Here, the labors of the day over, he sat dreaming of his love, wondering whether she thought of him during these dreary weeks of their forced parting. He had stretched himself upon a divan, and with his head thrown back upon the cushion, he gave himself up to thoughts of that love which was at once the greatest grief and the greatest joy of his life.

"Will it ever end?" thought he. "Will she ever consent to leave that princely home for me?"

Sometimes a cloud came over his handsome, noble features, sometimes the sunlight of happiness broke over them, and then he smiled. And on he dreamed, happy or unhappy, as he fancied that Rachel was his, or was parted from him forever.

The door-bell rang with a clang that startled him; but what to him was the impatience of those who sought admittance to his house? He had almost begun to fancy that Rachel was before him, and he was vexed at the intrusion. Meanwhile, the door of his room had been softly opened, but Günther had not heard it. He heard—saw—nothing but his peerless Rachel. She was there with her lustrous eyes, her silky hair, her pale and beautiful features.—She was there——what!—Did he dream?—She *was* before him, but paler than her wont, her dark eyes fixed upon him with a pleading look, her lithe figure swaying from side to side, as with uncertain footsteps, she seemed to be approaching his couch! Good God! Was it an apparition! What has happened!

Günther started to his feet, and cried out, "Oh, my Rachel, my beloved!"

"It is I," said she in a faltering voice. "Before you take me to your heart, hear me, Günther. I have fled from my father's house forever; for he would have sold me to a man whom I abhor, and whom I could

never have married had my heart been free. I bring neither gold nc jewels; I come to you a beggar, my inheritance a father's curse, m dowry naught but my love and faith. So dowered and so portione will you take me, Günther?"

Günther looked upon his love with eyes wherein she must have rea consolation for all her trials, for her sweet lips parted with a happ smile.

"My treasure!" was his reply, as he took her little trembling han and pressed it fondly within his own. "Come, my Rachel, come and se how I have longed for this day. He drew her forward and opened door opposite to the one by which she had entered.

"Come, your home is ready, my own."

They entered together, and Rachel found herself in a drawing-roo where taste and elegance amply atoned for the absence of splendo

"Now see your sitting-room." Nothing could be more cheerful c home-like than the appointments of this cosy apartment, lit up like th drawing-room by a tasteful chandelier.

"There," said Günther, pointing to a door, "is your dressing-roon and within, your chamber, my Rachel. For six months this dwellin has awaited its mistress, and that she might never enter it unawares, has been nightly lit-up for her coming. I was almost tempted to despai beloved; you have saved me from a discouragement that was underm ning my health. Now you are here, and all is well. When shall th priest bless our nuptials? This very night—shall he not, my bride?"

"He can never bless them," replied Rachel solemnly.

Günther turned pale. "Never!—You have not then come to l my wife!"

"I cannot be your wife according to human rites, Günther, for we you know that I have sworn never to become a Christian. But I a yours for time and eternity, and knowing my own heart, I accept th world's scorn for your dear sake. Earth refuses to bless our nuptial but God will hear our vows. Günther, will you reject me because I a a Jewess?"

Günther imprinted a kiss upon her forehead, and sank on his knee before her.

"Rachel," said he, raising his right hand to heaven, "I swear to lov you for better or for worse, devoting my life to your happiness. O my knees I swear before God to honor you as my wife, and to be faith ful and true to you until death does us part."

Rachel then knelt at his side, and laying her hand in his, she repeate her vows. Then they kissed each other, and Günther taking her in hi arms, pressed her to his throbbing heart.

"We are husband and wife," said he. "God has received our vows and now, Rachel, you are mine, for He has blessed and sanctioned you entrance into my house!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PARK.

The first days of a smiling spring had filled the park with hundreds of splendid equipages, and prancing horsemen. There was the carriage of the Princess Esterhazy with twenty outriders in the livery of the Prince—that of the new Prince Palm, whose four black horses wore their harness of pure gold—there was the gilded, fairy-like *vis-à-vis* of the beautiful Countess Thun, its panels decorated with paintings from the hands of one of the first artists of the day—the coach of the Countess Dietrichstein, drawn by four milk-white horses, whose delicate pasterns were encircled by jewelled bracelets worthy of glittering upon the arm of a beauty. In short the aristocracy of Austria, Hungary, and Lombardy were there, in all the splendor of their wealth and rank. It seemed as though Spring were holding a levée, and the nobles of the Empire had thronged her flowery courts.

Not only they, but the people, too, had come to greet young Spring. They crowded the foot-paths, eager to scent the balmy air, to refresh their eyes with the sight of the velvet turf, and to enjoy the pageant presented to their wondering eyes by the magnificent turn-outs of the aristocracy. Thousands and thousands filled the alleys and outlets of the park, all directing their steps towards the centre, for there, the Emperor and his court were to be seen. There the people might gaze in close proximity at the dainty beauties whom they knew as the denizens of another earthly sphere; there they might elbow greatness, and there, above all, they might feast their eyes upon the Emperor, who, simply dressed, rode to and fro, as often stopping his horse to chat with a peasant as with a peer.

The Emperor dismounted and this was the signal for all other cavaliers to dismount and accompany him. The ladies also were compelled to rise from their velvet cushions and to tread the ground with their silken-slippered feet. Their equipages were crowded together on one side of the square, and around them the horses now held by their liveried jockies, were champing their bits and pawing the ground with restless hoofs.

The crowd was so dense that patrician and plebian stood side by side. The people in their innocent enjoyment of the scene, broke several times through the ranks of titled promenaders who were moving towards the centre of the garden, vainly hoping to find some spot unprofaned by the vicinity of the vulgar herd.

The Emperor saw the lowering brows of his courtiers, and knew that their angry glances were direeted towards the people.

"What is the matter with you, my lords?" asked he. "You are the picture of discontent. Pray, Count Fürstenberg, speak for the court. What has happened to diseompose your equanimity?"

"I do not know, your Majesty," stammered the Count.

"And yet you frown terribly," laughed Joseph. "Come—no concealment. What has vexed you all?"

"Your Majesty commands——"

"I do."

"If so, sire, we are annoyed by the vulgar curiosity of the populace who gape in our faces as if we were South Sea Islanders or specimens of fossil-life."

"True—the curiosity of the Viennese is somewhat troublesome," replied the Emperor smiling; "but let us call this eagerness to be with us, love, and then it will cease to be irksome."

"Pardon me, your Majesty, if I venture to say that under any aspect it would be most irksome to us. If your Majesty will excuse my freedom, I think that in opening all the gardens to the people, you have made too great a concession to their convenience."

"You really think so?"

"Yes, sire, and I beg you to hear the request I have to prefer."

"Speak on, Count."

"Then, your Majesty, in the name of every nobleman in Vienna, and above all, in the name of our noble ladies, I beseech of you grant us the exclusive privilege of *one* garden where we may meet unmolested by the rabble. Give us the use of the Prater that we may have some spot in Vienna where we can breathe the fresh air in the company of our equals alone."

The Emperor had listened with a supercilious smile. "You desire to see none but your equals, say you? If I were to indulge in a similar whim, I should have to seek companionship in the crypts of the Capuchins.* But for my part I hold all men as my equals, and my noble subjects will be obliged to follow my example. I shall certainly not close any of the gardens against the people, for I esteem and love them."†

The Emperor, as he concluded, bowed and turned to greet the Countess Pergen.

"Welcome, Countess, to Vienna," said he bowing. "You have been away for some time. May I enquire how you are?"

Très-bien, votre Majesté," replied the Countess with a profound curtsey.

The Emperor frowned. "Why do you not speak German?" said he curtly. "We are certainly in Germany."

And without vouchsafing another word to the discomfitted lady, he turned his back upon her. Suddenly his face brightened and he pressed

* The Emperor's own words. Ramshorn's Life of Joseph II.

† When the Emperor opened the Park to the people, he caused the following inscription to be placed over the principal entrance, 'Dedicated to all men by one who esteems them."

eagerly through the crowd, towards a pale young man who met his smiling gaze with one of reciprocal friendliness.

Joseph extended his hand, and his courtiers saw with surprise that this person whose brown coat was without a single order, instead of raising the Emperor's hands to his lips, as was customary at court, shook it as if they had been equals.

"See," cried Joseph, "here is our young *maestro*, Mozart. Did you come to the park to-day to teach the nightingales to sing?"

"Heaven forbid, your Majesty; rather would I learn from the tuneful songsters whom God has taught. Perhaps some of these days I may try to imitate their notes myself."

The Emperor laid his hand upon Mozart's shoulder, and looked with enthusiasm upon his pale, inspired countenance. "Mozart has no need to learn from the nightingale," said he, "for God has filled his heart with melody, and he has only to transfer it to paper to ravish the world with its strains. Now for your 'Abduction from the *Auge Gottes*'——nay, do not blush; I am a child of Vienna and must have my jest with the Viennese—Tell me—which gave you most trouble, that or your opera '*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*'?"*

"Truly," replied Mozart, still somewhat embarrassed, "the abduction from the *Auge Gottes*, sire. I had to sigh and sue until I was nigh unto despair before I was successful."

"But you concluded both works on the same day."

"Yes, sire. First that which lay in my head, and then that which was nearest my heart."

"I congratulate you upon the success of both. '*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*' is a charming opera! Charming, but it contains too many notes."

"Only as many as were necessary, sire," said Mozart, looking full in the Emperor's face.

Joseph smiled. "Perhaps so, for you must be a better judge of the necessity than I. For that very reason," added he, lowering his voice to a whisper, "I have sent you my Sonata for revision. Like all inexperienced composers, I am anxious to know my fate. Tell me, what do you think of my Sonata, *Herr Kapellmeister?*"

Mozart was silent, while the Emperor waited anxiously for his reply. "Why do you not speak?" said he impatiently. "Tell me, what do you think of my Sonata?"

"The Sonata, sire, is—good," returned Mozart with some hesitation, "but he who composed it," added he smiling, "is much better. Your Majesty must not take it ill, if you find some of your passages stricken out."

The Emperor laughed. Ah!—too many notes, as I just now remark-

* On the day of the representation of the Opera "*Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail*," in Vienna, Mozart ran away with his Constance. He conducted her to the house of a common friend, where they were married. This same friend brought about a reconciliation with the mother of Constance. The house in which the widow and her daughter lived, was called "*das Auge Gottes*," and the Viennese who knew the history of Mozart's marriage, had called it "*Die Entfuhrung aus dem Auge Gottes*."—Liesen's Life of Mozart.

ed of your opera—only that from your judgment there can be no appeal. Well—give us a new opera, and let it be comic. Music should rejoice, not grieve us. *Addio.*"*

He then returned to the group which he had left, none of whom seemed to have been much comforted by the familiarity of the Emperor with a poor little *Kapellmeister.*

"My hour of recreation is over," said Joseph, "but as you know that I am no lover of etiquette, let no one retire on my account. I know where to find my equerry, and prefer to find him alone." With these words he turned away.

Suddenly he was seen to stop and frown visibly. With a quick motion of the hand, he signed to Count Podstadsky Liechtenstein to approach.

As Podstadsky was about to make a profound inclination, the Emperor interrupted him roughly. "No ceremony—we have no time to be complimentary. What are you doing in Vienna?"

The Count saw that his Sovereign was angry. "Sire," replied he, "I spend my time just as it happens——"

"That is, you ride, walk, gamble and carouse, when you are doing nothing worse. I thought you had left Vienna. You had better go upon your estates, and attend to the welfare of your vassals. Idleness is the parent of crime, and I fear that *if you remain another day in Vienna*, you will bring disgrace upon your father's name. Go at once."†

Count Podstadsky looked in wonder after the Emperor. "Is this accident or design? Does he suspect something, or is he only trying to induce me to work, as he does every nobleman? Ah, bah!—I must see Arabella, and hear what she thinks of it!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PARTING.

They sat together in the little boudoir which had so often rung with their laughter, and where they had so often sneered at their titled dupes in Vienna.

There was no laughter to-day: the beautiful features of the Countess Baillou were contracted with alarm, and the frivolous Podstadsky was thoughtful and serious.

The Countess was superbly dressed. A rich robe of velvet embroidered with gold, fell in heavy glistening folds around her graceful figure;

* This interview is strictly historical. Nissen's Life of Mozart.

† The Emperor's own words to Podstadsky. Anecdotes, &c., of the Emperor Joseph II.

a diadem of brilliants sparkled like a constellation upon the blackness of her luxuriant hair, and her exquisite neck and arms, were covered with costly gems. She had just completed her toilet for a dinner given by the Princess Karl Liechtenstein, when Podstadsky had met her with the alarming intelligence which had obliged her to send an excuse.

For one whole hour they had been considering their situation! Considering those words of the Emperor; now planning one method of escape, now another.

"Then you do not believe that the danger is imminent," said Podstadsky, after a long, anxious pause.

"I do not," replied the Countess. "The Emperor has always been fond of advising other people and of humbling the Austrian aristocracy; above all when the people are by to hear him, and he can make capital out of it to increase his popularity. I suppose his rudeness to you was all assumed to make an impression upon the foolish populace. That is all."

Podstadsky shook his head. "The tone of the Emperor was so pointed. It seemed as though some special meaning lay in his words."

"That, my dear Carlo, simply means that fear caused you to interpret them significantly."

"The words themselves were significant enough, and his look!—— Oh, Arabella, we are in danger! Dearest, let us fly, fly at once!"——

He had risen and in his anguish had tried to draw her to himself. She put him quietly away, and contemplated him with a sneer. "No folly!" said she. "Even if the Emperor had meant to warn you, his warning came too late to save you from the watchful police of Vienna."

"No, no, Arabella. I tell you that the Emperor will facilitate my escape for my parents' sake.—Oh, why did I not obey, and mount my horse at once, and fly to some sequestered vale where I might have found refuge from dishonor!"

"And where you might realize your mother's touching dream of becoming a boor, and repenting your sins in sackcloth and ashes! That maternal idyl still troubles your poor, shallow brain, does it?—For my part I think no spectacle on earth is so ridiculous as that of the repentant sinner. It is the most humiliating character in which a man can appear before the world, and it is unworthy of you, Carlo. Hold up your head and look this phantom of danger in the face. It is but a phantom—the bright, beautiful reality of our luxurious life is substantially before us. Away with cowardice!—He who treads the path which we have trodden, must cast all fear behind him. Had we been scrupulous, or faint-hearted, you would have been to-day a ruined nobleman, dependent upon the pittance doled out to you from parental hands, or upon some little office pompously bestowed by the Emperor, and I—Ha! ha!—I should have been a psalm-chaunting nun, with other drowsy nuns for my companions through life, and a chance of dying in the odor of sanctity!—We were too wise for that; and now the structure of our fortunes is complete. Its gilded dome reaches into the heaven of the most exclusive circles;

princes, dukes, and sovereigns are our guests—in the name of all for which we have striven, Carlo, what would you have more!"

"I am afraid that the structure will fall and bury us under its ruins," said Carlo shivering.

"Better that than inglorious flight. Stay where you are; show a bold front, and that will disarm suspicion.—Why do you gaze at me so strangely?"

"I gaze at you because you are so beautiful," replied he with a faint smile, "as beautiful as was that fallen angel who compassed the ruin of man!"

"I *am* a fallen angel," returned she proudly, "and you know it. Together we fell, together we have risen. So long as we smile, we shall compass the ruin of many men; but if once we frown, we shall be known as evil spirits, and our power is at an end. Smiles are the talismans that ensure victory; so smile, Carlo, smile and be gay."

"I cannot, I cannot. My veins are chilled with vague terror, and ever before my eyes, comes the pale and anguish-stricken face of my mother!—Arabella, if you will not leave this accursed spot, let us die. Better is death than the dungeon and disgrace!"

He threw his arms around her, and pressed his hot, parched lips to hers. Again she disengaged herself, and her musical laugh rang out upon the stillness, clear, merry, silvery as ever. "Die!—Are you tired of pleasure? I am not. I shall yet have many an intoxicating draught from its golden beaker. Die!—As if we knew what came after death!—But come—I pity your state of mind, and since you can no longer be happy in Vienna, we shall travel—mark you! I say *travel;* but there shall be no flight."

Count Podstadsky uttered a cry of wild joy, and pressed the hand she gave him to his lips. "When shall we travel? Now?"

She shook her head. "That were flight. We start to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" cried he exultingly, "to-morrow, at dawn of day!"

"By no means. To-morrow at noon, in the sight of the whole world."

"Be it so then," sighed the Count. "We go by different roads and meet at Neustadt."

"Yes, at Neustadt. And now go, Carlo. We both have important arrangements to make before we leave."

"*I* have very little to do," laughed Podstadsky, who had already recovered his spirits. My valuables all belong to the usurers. For some time past they have stationed an agent of theirs in my house as steward. He watches over their property; I have no interest in it."

"Why don't you pay them with your nice new bank-notes, hey Carlo?"

Carlo grew troubled again. "I did try to do so, but they refused. They had given me gold, and must have gold in return."

"So much the better. Your bank-notes will meet with a better reception elsewhere," said Arabella hurriedly. "But come, let us go to work. Burn all indiscreet papers, and take everything that you can se-

crete. And now away with you; I must be alone, for I have enough to do to keep me up this livelong night. Clear your brows, my Carlo, and sleep free from anxiety. To-morrow we leave Vienna, and your trials will be at an end. *Addio, caro amico mio, addio!*"

He kissed her hand, and she accompanied him to the door. He closed it behind him, while she stood breathless, listening to his retreating footsteps. Now he was on the stair-case. The heavy street-door closed—a moment's delay, and his carriage rolled away. Yes—he was off at last. Thank heaven, he was off!

CHAPTER XIX.

COLONEL SZEKULY.

ARABELLA listened—listened until the sound of the wheels had died away, then she laughed. "He thinks I am fool enough to share his disgrace! As if I had not long ago foreseen that this was to be the end of that hair-brained fool! In expectation of *his* fate I have been countermining with old Szekuly, and his foolish old hands have flung up shovels of gold as we went along. Bright, shining ducats which shall go with me to Paris! Now I am free, free from my dangerous accomplice, free from my tiresome old adorer, whose love for me so nearly approaches insanity that it may lead him to compromise himself in more ways than one. But he must not compromise *me!* For the world as yet, I am the modest, virtuous Countess Baillou, chaste as I am beautiful!"

While she soliloquised thus, the Countess walked hurriedly through the room with folded arms, fiery eyes, and on her lips a smile—but what a smile! Alone in that gorgeous apartment, with her sinister beauty, and her angry, flashing jewels, she might have been mistaken for a malign spirit who had just left her kingdom of darkness to visit the earth with ruin!

"It is evident," said she, musing, "that the Emperor meant to warn him; and it follows that as he has not fled to-day he is lost! And he *shall* be lost, for I must be free. I cannot afford to share my hardly-earned winnings with him. He must away to prison; it is my only chance for freedom."

"But if after all the Emperor should connive at his escape! Or if he should be seized with a fit of suspicion and return! Good heavens, now that fortune favors me, I must snatch security while it lies within my grasp!"

Here she rang so violently that the valet who was in the ante-room almost precipitated himself into her presence.

"If Count Liechtenstein Podstadsky calls, say that I am not at home. Apprize the other servants, and add that he is never to find admittance into this house again. Whosoever, after this, admits him, even to the vestibule, shall leave my service. Away with you!"

"And now," continued she, as the valet closed the door, "now to work." She went towards a mirror and there unfastened her diadem, then her necklace, brooch and bracelets. With her hands full of jewels she flew to her dressing-room and deposited them in their respective cases. Then she opened a large, brass-bound casket, and counted her treasures.

The first thing that came to light was a necklace of diamond solitaires. "These three stars of the first magnitude," said she, contemplating the centre stones, "are the involuntary contribution of the Princess Garampi. I borrowed her bracelet for a model, giving my word that it should not pass from my hands. Nor has it done so, for I have kept her brilliants and returned her——mine. She is never the wiser, and I am the richer thereby. For this string of pearls, with the superb ruby clasp, I am indebted to her Highness, the Princess Palm. One evening as I welcomed her with an embrace, I made out to unfasten it while I related to her a piquant anecdote of her husband's mistress. Of course she was too much absorbed in my narrative to feel that her necklace was slipping, for I was not only entertaining, but very caressing on the occasion. There was music in the room so that no one heard the treasure fall. The necklace—a perfect fortune, lay at my feet; I moved my train to cover it, and signed to Carlo, who, I must say, was always within call. He invited the Princess to dance, and——the pearls found their way to my pocket. What a talk that loss made in Vienna! What offers of reward that poor woman made to recover her necklace! —All in vain, and nobody condoled more affectionately with her than the charming, kind-hearted Countess Baillou. This arrow——But pshaw! what a child I am to be gloating over my precious toys while time passes away, and I must be off to-night!"

She closed her boxes, replaced them in her strong, well-secured casket, and having locked it, hung the key around her neck. "Here lies the price of a princely estate," said she, "and now I must attend to my ducats."

She stood upon a chair, and took from the wall a picture. Then pressing a spring behind it, a little door flew open, revealing a casket similar to the one containing her jewels. She took it down and placing it on the table, contemplated the two boxes with profound satisfaction.

"Twenty thousand lovers' eyes look out from this casket," said she with a laugh, "all promising a future of triumphant joy! Twenty thousand ducats! The fruits of my savings! And dear old Szekuly has made economy very easy for some months past, for one half of these ducats once belonged to him. To be sure I gave him in return the deeds

of an entail which I own in Italy, and which he can easily re-convert into money. At least he thinks so. Well—I owe him nothing. We made an exchange, and that is all!"

After this edifying monologue, the Countess exchanged her elegant costume for a simple traveling-dress, and as she completed her toilet, the clock struck eight. Everything being ready, she returned to her boudoir and rang once. This signified that her confidential valet was wanted. In a few moments the door opened, and an old man, whose dark hair and eyes marked his Italian birth, entered noiselessly. The Countess bade him close the door and approach. He obeyed without the least manifestation of surprise, muttering as he went, "walls have ears."

"Giuseppe," said his mistress, "are you still willing to follow me?"

"Did I not swear to your mother, my beloved benefactress, never to abandon you, Signora?"

"Thanks *amico;* then we leave Vienna to-night."

"I heard the order forbidding Count Podstadsky the house, Signora, and I made ready to depart."

"Good and faithful Giuseppe! Since you are ready, nothing need detain us. Go at once and order post-horses, and come with the traveling-carriage to the corner of the street above this."

"*Si Signora;* I shall leave the carriage there, come for the two caskets; you will then go out by the postern, and having joined us, we are off. Is that your will?"

"Yes, Giuseppe, yes. Go for your life."

"Be ready to leave the house in one hour, Signora, for you know that I am a swift messenger."

The old man bowed and retreated as silently as he came. His mistress looked after him saying, "There goes a jewel which I have neither borrowed nor stolen; it comes to me by the inalienable right of inheritance. Now I can rest until he returns."

With a deep sigh of relief, she threw herself upon the divan, and closing her eyes, gave herself up to rosy dreams. She had not lain long before the door opened and a valet announced "Colonel Szekuly."

"I cannot receive him," exclaimed she without rising.

"You must receive him, Countess," said a voice behind her, and starting from the divan, she beheld the tall form of her "tiresome old adorer," enveloped in a military cloak, with his plumed hat drawn far over his brow. Before she had time to speak, he had dismissed the valet and closed the door.

"You presume strangely upon your influence," cried Arabella, half-amused, half-angry. "Because you reign over my heart, you aspire to reign over my domestics, I perceive."

"Peace!" cried the Colonel imperatively. "I have not come hither to suck poison from your honied lips. I have already had enough to cause my death. Though you have cruelly deceived me, I come to give you a last proof of my love. Do not interrupt me."

"I will not breathe," said she with a smile so bewitching that Szekuly averted his eyes, for it maddened him.

"You know," said he, and the old man's voice faltered as he spoke, "that the Director of Police is my friend. I had invited him to dine with me. He came but half an hour ago to excuse himself because of an arrest of some importance. Do you guess whose arrest?"

"How should I guess?" said she, still with that enchanting smile. "I have no acquaintance with the police."

"God grant that you may never make their acquaintance!" ejaculated he hoarsely. "They have just now arrested Count Podstadsky." Not a feature of her face changed, as she replied. "Ah! Count Podstadsky arrested? I am sorry to hear it. Can you tell me why?"

"For forging bank-notes to the amount of a million of florins."

"I suspected as much; I have several times been the victim of his thousand-florin notes."

"The victim, Countess? Is that an appropriate expression?"

"I think it is," replied she, quietly. "Is that all the news?"

"No, Countess. The Count is taken, but his accomplice——"

She breathed quickly and her mouth quivered, but she rallied and made answer. "He had accomplices?"

"He had an accomplice, and——hush! we have no time for falsehood. Every moment is precious to you. Perhaps the Director of the Police came to me because knowing how—I have loved you, he would rescue you from shame. Let us hope that he did—for he told me that he had orders to arrest the Countess Baillou."

"When?" asked she almost inaudibly; and now her face was pale as death.

"At dusk, that you might be spared the curiosity of a crowd."

Arabella sprang from her couch. "It is already night," cried she, her voice rising almost to a scream.

"Yes," replied her lover, "but I hope we have time. I have prepared everything for your flight. My carriage and postillions await you in the next street. Be quick and you may escape."

"Yes, yes," exclaimed she. "Give me but one moment." She flew to her dressing-room, and tried to carry her two boxes. But the ducats were too heavy.

"I must leave the jewels," said she, and climbing up again with her casket, she concealed it in the wall, and replaced the picture. "It is at all events perfectly safe, and Giuseppe will come for it."

"Come," cried Szekuly from the drawing-room.

"I come," answered she, while she wrapped a cloak about her and with trembling hands tied on her traveling-hat.

"Give me your box," said Szekuly, "it will impede your movements."

But she held it fast, and said, "No—they are my jewels, now my only riches."

"And you are afraid to trust them with me?" asked he with a bitter smile. "To me, who will die of your treachery!"

"People do not die so easily," said she, trying to smile; but her teeth chattered, as in wild haste, she flew, rather than ran down the grand staircase, and arrived breathless before the door. The porter opened it in wonder. The night-air blew into her face, and revived her courage. Now she might breathe freely, for she was——

But no! From the dark recesses of the stone portico emerged three muffled figures, and one of them laid his rough grasp upon the delicate arm of the Countess and dragged her back into the vestibule.

"Too late, too late," murmured the Colonel, passively following, while his heart bled for the treacherous woman whom he would have died to save.

"Countess Arabella Baillou," said one of the figures, "I arrest you in the name of the Emperor."

She looked defiance at him. "Who are you that dare arrest me?" He took off his hat and bowed derisively. "I am the Director of Police, Countess, very much at your service. Here is my authority for your arrest."

He would have shown her the Emperor's signature, but she dashed away the paper, and fastening her angry eyes upon Szekuly, who was leaning against a marble pillar, she said,

"That is your dear friend, is it? You have been playing the detective, have you? Inducing me to fly, that my flight might expose me to suspicion!"

The Colonel cried out as though he had been wounded. "By all that is sacred in heaven, I would have saved you," sobbed he.

"And for your attempt I am obliged to detain you also, my poor, unhappy friend," said the Director of the Police. "But you will soon be able to prove *your* innocence. Let one of these men accompany you home, and there, remain under arrest until you hear from me. Now, madam, follow me if you please."

"Allow me first to speak a word of consolation to my generous protector," said the Countess.

"Certainly, madam."

Arabella bowed her beautiful head and approached Szekuly, who was scarcely able to stand, so great was his emotion.

"Colonel Szekuly," said she, in a whisper, "you lent me fifty thousand florins upon some Italian securities of mine. They are all forgeries. I forged them myself, as well as all the fine letters of introduction with which I befooled the aristocracy of Vienna."

Szekuly stared for one moment at his tormentor, then hastily pressing his hand to his heart, he sank with a low sigh upon the marble floor.

The Countess laughed out aloud. "He has fainted!" exclaimed she. "Contemptible world, wherein men act like women, and women like men! Come, gentlemen, I am ready to follow you, but my innocence will speedily be re-established, and the Emperor then will owe me an apology for his want of courtesy."

CHAPTER XX.

THE POPE'S DEPARTURE.

THE people of Vienna were enraptured to the last with the visit of the Pope. Whenever he appeared they sank upon their knees, as with his bewitching smile, he gave them his benediction. But these accidental meetings did not satisfy the zeal of the Viennese; they longed to receive a formal and solemn blessing, pronounced in the Cathedral from the Papal throne.

High upon this throne sat the Holy Father in his pontifical robes, his triple-crown upon his head, and the diamond cross of his order upon his breast. His canopy was of velvet, richly embroidered with gold, and around him were grouped the Princes of the Church. But the Pope, his large expressive eyes, fixed upon the altar, seemed isolated from all ecclesiastical pomp, mindful alone of the God, whose representative on earth he was. And when he rose to give the papal benediction, the handsome face of Pius Sixth beamed with holy inspiration, while the people filled with love and joy knelt to receive the blessing which had been transmitted to them in uninterrupted succession from the Holy Apostles themselves.

But however the loving heart of the Pope might rejoice at his reception by the people, there were two men in Vienna who resisted him with all the pride of individuality and all the consciousness of their own worth and consequence.

The first of these was the Emperor. He had sought continually to remind the Pope that he was lord of his own domains, even although the head of all Christendom might be his guest. He had ordered that all ecclesiastic ordinances, before being printed, should receive the imperial *exequatur*. The Pope had desired during his stay to issue a bull in relation to the newly erected church of St. Michael. The Bull had been returned for the signature of the Emperor.

Other humiliations besides this had been endured by the head of the Church. Perhaps in the two solemn benedictions which he had given—the first in the palace-court, the second in the Cathedral, Pius had hoped to appear in public with the Emperor as his spiritual vassal, but Joseph was careful not to allow him this gratification. He had no sooner learned that the throne of the Pope in the Cathedral was being erected higher than his own, than he ordered the imperial throne to be removed, and excused himself from attendance at high mass upon the pretext that he was suffering from severe pain in the eyes, and dared not encounter the blaze of light. It was an obstinate case of ocular malady, for it had

already prevented him from appearing in the palace-court, when decorum would have exacted of him to walk behind the Pope.

The other man who had completely ignored the Pope's presence in Vienna, was Kaunitz. In vain had his visit been expected; he never came, and finally the day of the departure of his Holiness arrived. He had received the adieus of the nobles and had taken leave of the clergy. At two o'clock he expected the Emperor, who was to accompany him as far as Mariabrunn. It was now eleven, and he had, therefore, three hours of leisure.

He rang for his valet and bade him send a messenger to Prince Kaunitz, apprising him that in half an hour the Pope would visit him. A few moments after this, the door re-opened and the papal master of ceremonies entered the room. Pius received him with a friendly smile. "I know why you are here," said he. "You have heard from Brambilla that I contemplate a visit to Prince Kaunitz, and you come to remonstrate with me."

"Yes, I entreat of your Holiness not to take this step which——"

"Which is beneath the dignity of the Head of the Church," interrupted Pius. "You can well imagine that I have already said as much to myself. I know that in going to visit this proud man, I humble myself. But if humility becomes any one of the servants of God, it becomes the successor of Peter, and I have no right to shrink from personal humiliation when perchance it may win something from haughtiness in favor of the Church of God. Perhaps the advances I make to Kaunitz may move his cold heart and teach him to do unto others as others have done unto him."

"But if your Holiness intends to bestow such an unheard-of honor upon the Prince, you should at least have given him a day wherein to make suitable preparations for your coming."

The Pope smiled. "Dear friend, I see further into this man's heart than you. I have taken him unawares precisely because he would gladly have added to my humiliation by neglecting the hint which such an announcement would have conveyed. It was, therefore, better to forestall the slight by making it impossible for him to offer it as a matter of choice."

"But why does your Holiness confer upon this disdainful Austrian an honor which he is unworthy to receive?"

"Why? Because I feel it my duty to leave nothing undone which can be conducive to the interests and glory of our Holy Mother, the Church. Who knows but that the Lord may have sent me to convert an erring sinner from his ways. Go, my friend, go and send my messenger; I must see this man who from his youth to his old age has defied the Lord of heaven and earth!"

A half an hour later an imperial state-carriage was before the palace of Prince Kaunitz, and the Pope followed by his chaplain, entered its lofty vestibule. The Prince had been diligent; for there in their richest liveries of state, were his whole household, and at the foot of the staircase

over which a rich Turkey carpet had been spread for the occasion, stood the young Countess Clary in full dress, who knelt, and in soft, trembling accents begged of his Holiness a blessing.

He laid his hand upon her head, and then extended it, that she might press to her lips the ring of St. Peter. He then raised her, and begged her to accompany him to the presence of her uncle, the Prince.

As they walked together from one magnificent apartment to another, the Countess was apologising for her uncle, who not having left his room for some weeks, was unable to come out to receive his Holiness from dread of encountering the cold air of the halls.

The Pope bowed, and followed the Countess until she stopped before a closed door and said, "In this room, my uncle awaits the gracious visit of your Holiness."

The Pope entered, but he was not met on the threshold as he had anticipated. No indeed. Far from the door, with the entire length of the room between them, Kaunitz stood close to the chimney, where a huge fire was burning. He was in an undress coat, with his hat upon his head,* and so absorbed in thought that he was quite unaware of the entrance of his guest until the Countess Clary, in a loud voice, said:

"His Holiness the Pope."

Kaunitz now moved, and measuring his advance by that of Pius, he managed to meet him just half-way, and as he bowed, he at last condescended to take off his hat.

Pius returned the bow, and as is customary with all independent princes, extended his hand to be kissed. Kaunitz, with an assurance almost inconceivable, took it within his own, and giving it a hard shake after the English fashion, exclaimed, "*De tout mon coeur! De tout mon coeur!*"†

An expression of pain flitted over the handsome, noble features of the Pope, and the smile died upon his lips. But he had expected humiliation, and had armed himself to endure it.

"I have come to visit your Highness," said he mildly, "because, although you have not asked it, I would fain leave with you the blessing of the Church."

"I thank your Holiness for the consideration you are pleased to show me," replied Kaunitz. "But before all things let me request your permission to resume my hat. The cold air is injurious to my weak head."‡

And whether to ward off the cold air or the blessing of the Church, the old sinner replaced his hat without waiting to hear the Pope's reply. Pius could only affect not to perceive the rudeness, while he seated himself and invited the Prince to be seated also.

There was a pause. Kaunitz took the chair, and then looking full into the eyes of his guest, awaited with perfect indifference the opening of the conversation. The expression of pain deepened upon the face of the

* Gross-Hoffinger III, p. 88.

† Historical. See Gross-Hoffinger, III, p. 39.

‡ The Prince's own words. See Bourgoing. Pius VI and his Pontificate. P 225.

Pope; but again he recovered himself and made a second effort at conciliation.

"I have come to give to your Highness a proof of my esteem and consideration," said he.

Kaunitz bowed stiffly. "I am so much the more surprised at this mark of consideration, that I have never been able to see in your Holiness's state-papers the least recognition of my claims to statesmanship."

"Perhaps, we may have misjudged one another. I have desired, in visiting Vienna, to heal all misunderstandings, and to afford to my son in Christ, the Emperor, every facility for his reconciliation to the holy Church. I have also prayed to Almighty God, to touch the heart of your Highness, that you also might turn your steps towards the 'one fold'."

"I hope that I have never strayed from the path of right. The object of my life has been to make Austria great and independent, and to aid my Emperor in freeing his subjects from foreign dominion. To-day no earthly potentate has a voice in Austria, save Joseph; he is absolute master here, and as all his acts have been for Austria's good, she has entered at last upon a career of indisputable prosperity. But there is nothing wonderful in this, when he had me as a coadjutor."

Pius looked with profound sadness at this haughty statesman who had not a thought beyond the present world.

"You speak of things that are of the earth, earthy. And yet your hair is white as snow, and *you* an old man hastening to the grave! At your advanced age it would become your Highness, who has done so much for your Sovereign, to do something now to reconcile yourself to your Maker."*

Kaunitz grew deathly pale; not all the paint that besmeared his wrinkles, could conceal his pallor. His forehead contracted and hung in heavy folds, while his breath came fast and gasping. The Pope had spoken of THE GRAVE, and the vulnerable heel had received a wound!

It was some time before he could recover his self-possession—some time again before he could force down his fury, and so remain master of the situation. At last the victory was won and he spoke calmly.

"I hope," said he, "that having done nothing to offend my Maker, it is unnecessary for me to seek reconciliation with Him. I have done all that I could for *religion;* it is not my fault if her interests are not identical with those of the Church. But pardon me that I should have strayed to themes so unbecoming to my character as host, and yours as my guest. Let us speak of science, art, life and its multitudinous enjoyments. Your Holiness, I know, is a distinguished patron of the fine arts. And as you are fond of painting, allow me to offer you a sight of my pictures. You will find them quite worth your inspection."

With these words Kaunitz rose, and without waiting for the Pope's consent, stepped as hastily forward as his infirmities would permit, and opened the door which led to his picture-gallery. The Pope followed

* The Pope's own words to Kaunitz. See Pius, VI, and his Pontificate, p. 226.

him leisurely, and after him came the chaplain, the Countess Clary, and Baron Binder.

Kaunitz did the honors, passing with visible haste from one painting to another. "Here," said he, "is a master-piece of Murillo, which the Vatican might envy me. Murillo who was equally successful whether he tried his hand at Virgins or beggar-boys. Just look at this! Did ever the earth bestow upon longing man a more voluptuously-beautiful woman than this dark-eyed Madonna!"

"It is a beautiful picture," murmured Pius, approaching with the hope of being spared any more such comments on art.

"But your Holiness has not the proper light," cried Kaunitz familiarly. "Come a little more to the left."

And in the excitement of his enthusiasm, the Prince was so forgetful of the rank of his visitor as to catch him by the arm, and drag him to the spot he advised. Pius started, and for one moment his eyes darted fire, for he felt the indignity to the very depths of his soul; but he remembered his resolve to "bear all things," and stood quietly contemplating the picture until his tormentor spoke again.

He on his part had affected not to perceive that he had done anything amiss; and with an appearance of great *empressment*, he followed the Pope from picture to picture, dragging him first to one point, then to another, as he pretended to think that the best light for seeing his paintings was to the right, or to the left.*

The Pope made no resistance, perhaps because he was astounded at the insolence of the proceeding, perhaps because he judged it best to affect unconsciousness of the insults which were being heaped upon his head. But he was wounded to the heart; and raised his eyes to his chaplain, who indignant at the contumely offered to his beloved Pontiff, at once came forward to his relief, by reminding him that the Emperor would shortly visit his rooms.

"You are right, my friend," said Pius. Then turning to Kaunitz he continued, "I must go, and cannot have the pleasure of completing my survey of your paintings. Had I known that you possessed so many treasures, I would have come earlier that I might have been allowed to visit them, a little more at my leisure. I am under many obligations to you for your politeness, and for the very unusual courtesies which I have received at your hands."

He took the arm of his chaplain, and left the room. At the door he was met by the Countess Clary, and as she knelt a second time before him, he laid his hand upon her head with a gesture full of nobleness and grace.

"I leave you my blessing, my child, and I leave it to all who inhabit this house. May those whose hearts have been hardened by sin, return in humility to the Lord, for humility is the crown of Christian graces, and he who hath it not, can never aspire to life eternal."

He went on without ever turning his head, or seeming to know that

* Bourgoing, Pius VI, and his Pontificate, P. 227.

Kaunitz was behind, excusing himself from going further with his Holiness by reason of the danger to which he would be exposed, &c., &c.

The Pope was received at the portal of the palace by his master of ceremonies who accompanied him to his cabinet. One glance at his pale countenance had revealed to him the inutility of the condescension of the Supreme Pontiff, who with a weary sigh sank back into the depths of an arm-chair.

"You were quite right," said he after a pause, "and I was wrong. I ought never to have gone to this man. God has punished me for my vanity, and has used him as an instrument to remind me that I am but a poor miserable creature, full of projects but empty of results! Ah, Battista, with what bright hopes of touching the Emperor's heart, I started upon this pilgrimage to Vienna, priding myself upon my humility and building thereupon my trust! Nothing has come of my efforts, nothing! I have learned one thing, however, of the Emperor. He is no Christian, but he is not a bad man. I really believe that he acts from a sense of mistaken duty."

The master of ceremonies shook his head, and was about to reply when there was a knock at the door, and the Emperor asked admittance. The master of ceremonies retired to the ante-room where the suites of the Pope and the Emperor were awaiting the signal for departure. Joseph approached his Holiness, and gave into his hand a case which he begged him to accept as a souvenir of his visit to Austria.

Pius, bewildered by all that he had endured on that day, opened it in silence. But he was astonished when he saw the magnificence of the gift. It was a large cross of pure, white brilliants, upon a bed of dark crimson velvet.*

"I beg of your Holiness," said Joseph, "to wear this in remembrance of me."

Pius raised his head, and looked anxiously into the smiling face of the Emperor. "Oh, my son," said he, "would this were the only cross I was forced to take back with me to Rome."

"Your Holiness must be content to take with you my love and regard," replied Joseph evasively, "and I would gladly give you another pledge of them before we part. Will you allow me to bestow upon your nephew, Luigi Braschi, the title and diploma of a Prince?"

Pius shook his head. I thank your Majesty, but my nephew cannot accept the honor you would confer upon him. It was not to advance the interests of my family, but the glory of the Church that I came to Vienna.† Your Majesty would make a prince of my nephew, and yet you seek to humble his uncle, who is the vicar of Christ on earth."

"What have I done, your Holiness?"

"You have suppressed the order of the Mendicant friars, and you have called Cardinal Megazzi to account, because he printed one of my bulls without submitting it to you for approbation."

* This cross was valued at 200,000 florins. See Hubner I, P. 128.
† Pius's own words. See Gross Hoffinger 3, page 46.

"I consider that the Mendicants lead a contemptible life, and we have no use for them in Austria. As to the bull, no law is permitted to go forth in my dominions unless it is approved by me, for the laws of my land must be subject to no power but my own."

The Pope heaved a sigh, for it was useless to argue with Joseph. "Is it also true that your Majesty has confiscated and sold all the property of the convents and churches, and that it is your intention to give salaries to the clergy?"

"Yes, that is my plan; I may as well be frank with you, and avow it. But I am very far from its accomplishment; I have taken nothing but the property of the convents as yet."

"And wo to your sacrilegious hand that you have done so!" cried Pius, rising to his feet and confronting the Emperor. "I cannot conceal from your Majesty that your conduct has inflicted a serious wound upon the Church, and has scandalized all good Christians. The robbing of the Church is an error condemned by ecclesiastic councils, and execrated by the Fathers of the Church. Shall I remind you of the words which John the Patriarch of Alexandria spoke to a Sovereign who would have robbed the clergy of their temporal goods? 'How canst thou a perishable mortal, give unto another that which is not thine own? And when thou givest that which belongs to God, thou rebellest against God himself. What man endowed with reason will not pronounce thine act a transgression, a signal and sinful injustice? How can a man presume to call himself a Christian who desecrates the objects consecrated to Christ!'—Thus has God spoken through the mouth of his servant, and His words are appropriate to the acts of your Majesty!"*

The voice of the Pope was choked by tears, and in the excess of his grief he sank back upon the chair and leaned his head upon his hand.

The Emperor had listened with profound indifference. It was not the first time he had seen the Pope thus moved, and he was perfectly aware that it was better to make no reply until the violence of his emotion had exhausted itself.

"Your Holiness goes too far in your Apostolic zeal," said he after a pause of some length. "I shall neither quote the Scriptures nor the Fathers in my defence; for you and I would not be apt to interpret them in the same sense. I shall content myself with observing that in spite of all your anger, I shall hearken to the voice of my own conscience which tells me that my acts are those of a wise law-giver and of a faithful defender of religion. With this voice, my own reason, and help from above, I am not afraid of being in error.† At the same time, I assure your Holiness of my sincerest regard. You may not have attained the object of your visit, but I hope that you carry away at least the conviction of my honesty and integrity of purpose. The interests of State and Church may be at variance, but we need not be personal enemies; and

* This harangue of the Pope is historical. Hubner 1, page 285.
† Joseph's own words. Hubner 1, page 287.

over the gulf which separates us as princes, we may join hands as friends, may we not?"

With these words, the Emperor extended his hand and the Pope did not refuse to take it.

"It is time for me to be going," replied he. "This cross, which in the prodigality of your friendship, you have bestowed upon me, I shall wear for your sake, and it shall remind me to pray daily that God may enlighten you and lead you back to the Way—the Truth—and the Life. For in the Church alone is true peace to be found. He who strives against her, strives against Christ. Farewell, and may He mercifully bring you to a sense of your errors!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REPULSE.

THE aristocracy of Vienna were in a state of extreme excitement. It was whispered from one noble to another, that the Aulic Council had condemned Count Podstadsky Liechtenstein to the house of correction for life, and he was to sweep the streets in the garb of a common criminal.* This was not all. Another fearful announcement had fallen like a bolt upon the heads of the most illustrious families in Vienna. For some weeks past, Colonel Szekuly had been missing. His servants had given out that he had gone to visit his relatives in Hungary, but they seemed so embarrassed and uneasy, that no one believed them. Colonel Szekuly had many powerful friends. He was an intimate associate of all the Hungarian noblemen in Vienna, and had long been a welcome guest wherever the fashionable world were assembled. Moreover he was the adorer of the most admired woman in Vienna, the lovely Countess Baillou.

She too had disappeared. Where could they be? Was it accident, or had she responded to his love, and left a world of worshippers to live for him alone?

Finally the mystery was solved. A few days after the arrest of Podstadsky, Szekuly also had been arrested. It was now well known that Podstadsky had forged notes; but it was impossible to suspect a man of Szekuly's unimpeachable character of any connection with a crime of that nature.

Unhappily, however, though less in degree, the accusation against Szekuly was similar in kind. He was a defaulter, and from the coffers of

* This was in accordance with the new Josephine code.

his regiment (which were confided to his care) sixty thousand florins had disappeared.

The Countess Baillou was his accuser. She had been charged with being a party to Podstadsky's fraud, but he as well as Szekuly, had loudly declared her innocence. Both had avowed themselves to be her lovers, and it was ascertained that her household had been maintained at Podstadsky's cost. As his mistress, she had received many of his bank-notes, but he protested that she knew nothing of his forgeries. He confessed his own guilt, but firmly upheld her innocence. So far from being his accomplice, Podstadsky declared that she had been his victim.

But a coffer containing twenty-thousand ducats had been found upon the person of the Countess. This money had not been given her by Podstadsky, since he had nothing but forged notes to give. The Countess, when questioned, answered unhesitatingly, that one-half the sum she had won at play, and the other half she had received as a present from Colonel Szekuly. It was well known that Szekuly had not the means of bestowing such princely gifts; yet, when informed of the Countess's charge, he had grown pale certainly, but replied that the Countess had spoken nothing but truth.

Suspicion was aroused; the strong-box of the regiment was examined and found empty! Von Szekuly acknowledged that he had taken the money, believing in good faith that by the sale of certain deeds in his possession, he would be able to replace it at short notice. But where were these papers? They could not be found, and Szekuly refused to give any account of them. He was guilty, he said, and must submit to his fate. Colonel Von Szekuly, a Hungarian Baron, under sentence for theft! This was a blot upon the escutcheon of more than one illustrious family. But the Emperor, in framing his severe code, had reserved to himself the right to pardon; and this right it was hoped that he would exercise in favor of the high-born criminals. It was not possible that he intended to humiliate the nobility of Austria so cruelly, as to condemn two of them to the pillory, to the sweeping of the streets, to be chained to two common felons for life!*

No!—this was an outrage which the Emperor would never dare to perpetrate, for it would arouse the bitter animosity of the whole aristocracy. But it would be better to petition him at once and warn him of his peril.

He was petitioned, but his invariable reply was that the law must decide. It was known, however, that the sentence was not signed, and there was still hope. But how to reach the Emperor? Since the Council had pronounced judgment on the criminals, Joseph had granted audience to no one; he had avoided all proximity to the nobles, and to secure himself from importunity, had ceased to ride in the park, contenting himself with a daily drive in his *cabriolet*. Finally the petitioners remembered the "*Controlorgang*," and thither they repaired early in the morning. Ladies as well as lords, came on foot, that the Emperor

* Hubner 2, page 383.

might not be warned, by the sound of their rolling equipages, to deny himself again—They were the first to enter the palace on that day, and were so numerous that no other petitioners could obtain entrance. On that occasion then, they were among their peers, and the *canaille* would never know how Count and Countess, Baron and Baroness had humbled themselves for the sake of their caste.

As soon as Günther opened the door, they rushed into the small room which was called the *Controlorgang*, and there with beating hearts, awaited the entrance of the all-powerful Emperor.

He came, and when he saw who were the petitioners of the day, his countenance expressed astonishment; but he did not depart from his usual habit, and walked slowly down the middle of the room, extending his hand to receive the petitions.

"How?" said he when he had reached the last person, "Count Lampredo, you have nothing to present! You all desire to speak with me? I fear that my time is too short to gratify you."

"Sire, we have but one petition to make," said the Count, speaking for the others. "One common misfortune threatens us all——"

"What can it be?"

"Oh, your Majesty," cried he fervently, "have mercy upon Count Podstadsky and Baron Von Szekuly!"

"Mercy, sire, mercy for Podstadsky and Szekuly," cried the noble petitioners with one accord, while all knelt before the astounded Emperor.

He surveyed them with an angry frown. "Rise, all of you," said he. "Have you forgotten that kneeling has been abolished here? The Spanish customs which were once so popular in the palace are unbecoming in this room, where all who enter it are nothing but petitioners seeking justice at my hands."

"And mercy, sire," added Count Lampredo imploringly.

"And mercy, which can be conceded, only so far as it is perfectly compatible with justice."

"Mercy, gracious Emperor, mercy for Podstadsky and Szekuly," reiterated the petitioners.

"You ask for mercy, which wounds justice, and I repeat that I cannot grant the one without the other. Count Podstadsky through his frauds has ruined thousands of my subjects; Baron Von Szekuly has stolen sixty thousand florins, and both these men have disgraced their births and titles."

"Allow Szekuly to be tried by a military court, sire. They at least would shield him from dishonor, for they would sentence him to death."

"He has committed a vulgar crime, and he shall be punished according to the burgher's code—That code ignores capital punishment."

"But its punishments are more fearful than death, sire. A man is thrice dead who has lost liberty, honor, and name. The man who in manacles, sweeps the public streets, or tugs at the car, is a thousand times more to be pitied than he who lays his head upon the block. Oh,

sire, it cannot be that you would consign a nobleman to such contumely!"

"No, I honor the nobleman too much to brand him with such infamy," replied the Emperor hastily. "But if a Cavalier commits a crime, I disfranchise him at once, and stripped of name, title, and privileges, I hand him over to the law which regards him exactly as it does any other base-born villain.* Be comforted then. These criminals are no longer noblemen, and have nothing in common with you."

"Oh, sire, do not say so; for their shame is reflected upon us all!"

"How?" exclaimed Joseph with affected surprise, "are you all thieves and forgerers?"

"No, sire, but our honor suffers through their dishonor. O your Majesty, in the name of the illustrious families who for centuries have been the loyal subjects of your house, save our escutcheons from this foul blot!"

"Save us, sire, save us from infamy!" echoed the others.

"No!" exclaimed the Emperor. "He who is not ashamed of the crime, will not be ashamed of the disgrace. If, for the sake of his rank, a man is to have the privilege of being a villain, where then is justice?† Not another word of this—My forbearance is exhausted; for I have sought by every means to convince you that as a Sovereign, I shall show partiality to no order of men. Podstadsky and Szekuly shall suffer to the full extent of the law, for the worth of their ancestors cannot wipe out their own unworthiness."

The Emperor withdrew, and when the door closed behind him, many an eye there flashed with hatred, and many a compressed lip told of meditated vengeance for the indignity suffered by a powerful order at his hands, that day.

"Our humiliation then has been of no avail!" muttered Count Lampredo, "and the nobles of Austria must suffer disgrace because of the obstinate cruelty of the man who should uphold them."

"But we will be revenged!" whispered Count Hojada, a near relative of Szekuly's. "The Sovereign, who like Joseph, heaps obloquy upon a nobility, some of whom are his equals in descent, is lost! The Emperor shall remember this hour, and rue it also!"

"Yes," said another, "he shall repent this day. We are all of one mind, are we not, friends?"

"Aye," muttered they with gnashing teeth! "He shall pay dearly for this!"

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* Joseph's own words. See Hubner II, P. 432.
† Joseph's own words.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE COUNT IN THE PILLORY.

Crowds of people gathered around the street-corners to read the large hand-bills posted there. The bills announced that Count Podstadsky Liechtenstein had been condemned to three days of pillory, to public sweeping of the streets, and ten years' detention in the house of correction. Colonel Von Szekuly to three days of pillory, and four years detention.

The guilt of the Countess Baillou not having been fully established, she was pardoned by the Emperor. But she was ordered to be present at Podstadsky's exposition in the pillory, and then to leave Vienna forever.

The people read these fearful tidings in dumb amazement, and vague apprehension of evil to themselves. Never had they so completely realized the new order of things, as at this moment. One of the privileged, whom they had hitherto beheld at a distance in splendid equipages, on elegant horses, in brilliant uniforms around the person of the Emperor, one of these demi-gods was to be trailed in the dust like a criminal from the dregs of the populace. A Count, in the gray smock of the felon, was to sweep the streets which perchance his aristocratic foot had never trodden before. A proud Hungarian nobleman, a Colonel of the Guard, was to be exposed in the pillory for three days. Yes—these things were terrible, and startling. Not a trace of exultation was upon the gloomy faces of the multitude: this abasement of two men of illustrious birth, to an equality with boors, seemed an invasion of the conservative principles of society. It was an ugly dream—the people could not realize it.

They must go to the spot where the sentence was to be executed, to see if indeed Olympus had been levelled to the earth. Hurried along by one common impulse, the silent multitude wound in a long stream through the streets, until they reached the market-place where the sentence was to be carried out. Neither idle curiosity nor malice led the people thither; it was a pilgrimage to the new era which at last was dawning upon the world.

There in the centre of the great open square, was the throne of infamy upon which an Austrian nobleman was about to bid adieu to name, honor, family, and the associations which had surrounded his boyhood, and to be thrust in the revolting companionship of robbers and murderers!

Not a smile was seen upon those appalled faces; men whispered to one another that the Count was the only son of one of the proudest families in Hungary, and that the Countess, his mother, had died of her son's

shame. The eyes of the women filled with tears, and for the sake of the martyred mother, they forgave the guilty son. The weeping of the women deepened the sympathies of the men, and they began to murmur against the heartless Emperor who degraded an illustrious subject, and sent a noble Countess broken hearted to the grave!

And now appeared the criminal. Culprit though he was, his beauty and air of distinction were indisputable.

"Poor young man!" murmured the women sobbing.

"He will not long survive his disgrace," said the men sorrowfully. "He looks like a ghost, and the Emperor will soon have to bury him by the side of his mother."

No one remembered that this man had committed an infamous crime, no one thanked the Emperor for having bestowed upon the Austrian people the inestimable gift of equality before the law. The commoner himself, felt aggrieved at the monarch who had treated a nobleman no better than he would have done a serf.

Count Podstadsky was still in the elegant costume of the day. Graceful and distinguished in his bearing, he leaned his weary body against the stake that supported the scaffold on which he was to suffer the last degree of public infamy. But now the executioner approached holding a pair of large glistening shears. He gathered the soft brown curls of the Count in his rough grasp, and very soon the glossy locks fell, and there remained nothing but the shorn head of the felon. This done, the executioner drew off the gold embroidered coat which became the young nobleman so well, and threw over his shoulders the coarse smock which was to designate him hence forward as a miscreant.

How changed alas! was the high-born Carlo! How little this chattering creature, disguised in serge, resembled the cavalier who had enlisted the sympathy of the multitude! He was no longer a man, and name, he had none—his number, in scarlet list upon the left sleeve of his smock, was the only mark that distinguished him from his brethren, the other malefactors. But the fearful toilet was not yet at an end. The feet and hands were yet to be manacled. As the hand-cuffs clicked around those delicate wrists, the executioner looked up in amazement. Heretofore he had been accustomed to hear the the jeers and loud mockery of the multitude, as they applauded the completion of the felon's toilet, but to-day there was not a sound! Nothing to be seen but pale, sorrowful faces—nothing to be heard but sobs, and murmurs of sympathy.

Still one more torture! The executioner gave him the broom, the *bâton* of his disgrace, and he grasped its handle for support. He could scarcely stand now!

At this moment, in fiendish contrast with the behavior of the people, a loud, mocking laugh was heard. Shuddering they looked around, wondering who it was that could add the weight of a sneer to the supreme misery which was rending *their* hearts. It came from above, and every face, even that of the wretched Podstadsky, was uplifted in horror. He caught at the stake, and his vacant eyes rested upon the house whence

the cruel laugh had issued. There on a balcony, guarded by several men in black, stood a beautiful young woman. She it was, who had dealt the blow. In the hour of his agony her rosy lips had mocked him!

"Arabella!" shrieked the despairing man. And with this cry, he sank insensible to the earth.*

While all this was transpiring at the market-place an imperial state-carriage had been hurrying through the streets until it stopped before a gloomy house of which the doors and window-shutters were all closed. A footman in the imperial livery was seen to ring, and then an old man in faded black livery opened the door. A few whispered words passed between them; then a cavalier in an elegant uniform sprang from the carriage and entered the house. The old butler went before and showed him up the creaking stair-case and through a suite of mouldy rooms until they reached one with closed doors.

"So please your Majesty," said the old man, "Count Podstadsky-Liechtenstein is in there."

The Emperor nodded. "Do not announce me," said he, and he knocked at the door. A feeble voice from within responded to the knock and the Emperor entered without further ceremony. A tall, venerable man in deep mourning came forward and looked at him with hollow, staring eyes. "The Emperor," exclaimed he, recognising his unexpected guest.

"Yes, Count Podstadsky, it is I," said the Emperor, bowing, as he would have done before a mighty monarch. "I come to express my profound regret for the great misfortune which has lately befallen you. No man knows better than myself what grief it is to lose a beloved wife. And yours was such a noble, such a devoted wife!"

"Devoted!" echoed the old Count, sadly. "Alas, sire, there was something on earth which was nearer to her heart than I, else she had not died and left me alone. I loved nothing but her, and in losing her I lose all that made life endurable. I would wish to die now; but I have still a principle to defend—the honor of my family."

"We both have a principle to defend," replied the Emperor, deeply moved at the excessive grief of which he was a witness. "The principle of honor and justice—Let us both teach the world that justice attacks the individual criminal and not his family; and that the honor of a family requires that justice should be satisfied. The name of Podstadsky Liechtenstein has ever been an illustrious one, and I desire to prove to you my regard for your race. Give me your hand, Count, and let us be friends."

He extended his hand and with quiet solemnity the old Count took it and looked up into his Sovereign's face.

"I thank your Majesty," said he, after a pause. "Your conduct towards me is noble and magnanimous, and I shall be grateful for it to

* Count Podstadsdy did not long survive his disgrace. His delicate body soon sank under the hardships of his terrible existence. One day while sweeping the streets he ruptured a blood-vessel, and died there, with no mourners save his fellow-criminals. See Hubner II, p. 583, 591. Characteristics and Historical Anecdotes of Joseph 2d. Friebel's Letters from Vienna. Vol. 1, p. 68.

my latest breath. You have acted as became a Sovereign who has no right to set at defiance the laws he has made. Had I been his judge, I should myself have condemned the criminal who was once my son, and to-day is the murderer of his mother. Years ago I sat in judgment over this transgressor, and when I did so, I lost my only child. As for the man who to-day has suffered the penalty of his crimes, I know him no longer.

"And *your* honor is unspotted," said the Emperor. "Give me your arm, Count, and let me conduct you to my carriage. It is a lovely day. We will take a drive together, and then dine at Schönbrunn. Come—I am resolved that you shall spend this whole day with me. Give me your arm."

"Sire," whispered the old man hesitating and looking gloomily towards the window, "the day is so bright and the sun shines so fiercely, I fear that my eyes cannot bear the glare. I beg of you, allow me to remain at home.

The Emperor shook his head. "Nay your eyes are not weak. You can bear the fullest light of day, you have no need to hide your honored head from the gaze of the world. Take courage, dear friend, and think of what we have both said. Have we not our principles to defend? And must we not both assert them courageously?"

"Your Majesty is right," cried the old Count. "I am ready to follow you."*

And while Carl Podstadsky awaking from his swoon, looked up into the face of the malefactor, who from henceforth was to be the companion of his sleeping and waking and the witness of his despair—while one of a long train of outlawed felons, he dragged his misery through the hot, dusty streets, his father drove with the Emperor to Schönbrunn, and among all the brilliant guests who dined with him on that day, to none was the Emperor so deferential in his courtesy as to the old Count Podstadsky-Liechtenstein.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE NEMESIS.

MEANWHILE, where was the Syren who had lured Szekuly to destruction? Where was she for whose sake Carl Podstadsky had precipitated himself into the waters of obloquy? When the waves had engulphed him, she had disappeared, and the last sounds that had rung in his ears, were the sounds of her cruel mirth!

* Hubner 2, page 391.

Was there no punishment in reserve for such atrocity? No punishment for this woman without heart, without pity, without remorse? Would no hand unmask this beautiful fiend?

The hand is ready, but it is invisible; and Arabella in her new-found security, is dazzled at the magnitude of her own good fortune. "Whom the Gods wish to destroy they first blind."—True, she had lost her gold, the price of Szakuly's good fame; but she was not poor; her jewels were worth many such a coffer of ducats. Once in possession of her casket, she was again rich, happy and courted. Not a creature save Giuseppe knew the whereabout of this precious casket, and with it they must away to Paris!——

It was dusk, and Giuseppe, with a traveling-carriage, once more awaited his mistress at the corner of the street. There remained nothing to do now but to remove the coffer from its hiding place, and that was the work of half an hour. Arabella had the key of the little postern and there was no danger of spies, for the house was empty. Having avowed herself to be the pensioned mistress of Podstadsky, the law had placed its seal upon her effects, and they were all to be sold for the benefit of the Count's creditors.

The night was dark, and the street-lanterns were propitiously dim. Here and there was heard the step of a solitary foot-passenger, and from time to time, the monotonous tramp of the patrol. One of these patrols had just passed the garden-wall of the *hôtel* of which the Countess Baillou had been the presiding goddess. He looked up at the darkened windows as he went, wondered whither the goddess had flown, and walked on. When the echo of his step had died away from the pavement, and the last beams of the lantern were flickering out, a dark, slender form emerged from one of the pillars of the wall, and glided towards the little side-door which opened on that narrow street. The key was in the door, it clicked in the lock, and the figure disappeared within. All was quiet.

"I am safe," thought she; "not a sound is within hearing. Now for my treasures, and away! away! from this hateful city forever."

"Whom the Gods would destroy, they first blind."

Arabella never suspected that under cover of darkness, others beside herself were lurking in that garden; and now as she advanced towards the house, two tall figures approached the postern, and stationed themselves on either side of it.

"She is caught," whispered one.

"Yes," replied another, "the bird has come of its own accord into the net. We must wait now until we receive further orders."

Arabella meanwhile looked exultingly at the dark clouds which overhung the sky, and almost laughed. "Thank you, fair moon," said she, "for withdrawing your splendor at my behest. To-morrow you shall shed your soft beams upon my flight, for then I shall need your friendly light. Far away from Vienna, I shall be rich, happy, and free!"

Now she was at the servant's entrance—O, how the hinges creaked, as

she opened the door! But what of it? No one was there to hear the sound. How foolishly her heart was beating!—Now she was inside, and with spasmodic haste, she bolted herself within. The darkness was intense. She could not see her hand before her, and in spite of herself, a cold chill ran through her frame, and her knees trembled with vague terror. What if through this black expanse, a hand should suddenly touch hers, and—"O, how dreadful is this darkness!" thought she. "I might die here and no one could come to my help! I feel as I did once before, on that night of horror in Italy!"

She shuddered, and almost swooning with fright, cowered under the shelter of the marble balustrade to which she had by this time groped her way. And now before her terrified soul, swept phantom after phantom, all from the miserable spirit-land of the past. Once more she lived through a night dark as this, when a wretched, betrayed, dishonored, girl, she had slunk through the streets of Rome in search of death—death and annihilation in the black waves of the Tiber. She felt the waters engulph her, she heard her own death-cry, the last protest of youth against self-destruction; and then she felt the grasp of Podstadsky—Podstadsky, who in restoring her to the world, had laid a new curse upon her life. Until then she had been luxurious, frivolous, pleasure-loving, but in the Tiber she had found a new and terrible baptism—the baptism of crime. Without love she had consented to become Podstadsky's mistress, and so became the partner of his guilt. Together they had planned their bold schemes of fraud, and O how successful they had been until this last misfortune! At all events her connection with Podstadsky was at an end. The pillory had liberated her, and now——

Now she would lead a blameless life—No more fraud—no more theft—crime was too dangerous, she saw that it must inexorably lead to shame. She would be satisfied with what she had, and become a virtuous woman. She was quite rich enough to be good, and it would be such bliss to live without a guilty secret!

She laughed, and then shivered at the sound of her own voice, and a supernatural terror took such violent hold on her imagination that she could no longer bear the darkness. She *must* see, or she would die of fear. Giuseppe had provided her with a dark lantern, a vial of phosphorous and some matches.

"How delightful it is to have this new invention!" thought she, as touching the phosphorous, she struck a light—With this light, she felt a little re-assured, but could she have seen her blanched terror-stricken face, she would have screamed, and fancied it a spectre!

Hush!—Was there a muffled sound behind her! She paused and listened, her eyes glaring as though they would start from their sockets.—Pshaw!—it was only the rustling of her own silk mantle as it went trailing up the marble stair-case. Nothing in human shape was there, save two pale statues which stood like dead sentinels at the head of the stairs. As she passed them she shuddered, and almost fancied that they had stepped from their pedestals to follow her—Giving one quick glance behind,

she sped like a hunted doe through those halls of which so lately she had been the pride, and arrived breathless to the door of her boudoir. She darted in, and there, safe in its place was the picture.

This gave her courage. But she must have rest after her fearful pilgrimage through that dark, empty house. She sank upon her satin lounge, and abandoned herself to the joy and security of the hour. She had just come to the end of a perilous journey—Night and danger were behind, the rosy morning of safety was about to dawn. She was so full of joyous emotion, that scarcely knowing what she did, her lips began to move in unconscious prayer!

Prayer!—She had no right to such a privilege as that, and starting from her seat, lest she should falter in the purpose of her visit, she quickly removed the picture, touched the spring, and the precious coffer stood revealed.

No, no, she could never give it up!—She stretched out her arms, and pressed it to her heart, as a mother does her only child. Trembling with eager joy, she placed it on the table, and opening it, contemplated her treasures on their beds of crimson velvet.

"How they sparkled! How they seemed to burn with splendor as the rays of the little lantern coquetted with their beauty! She was repaid for all her terrors, she was happy and secure!"

"Whom the Gods destroy, they first blind."

She was so absorbed in the magnificence of her diamond necklace, for which she had been indebted to the Princess Garampi, that she did not hear the foot-fall of the men who were close behind her. They smiled, and pantomined one to another as they watched her toying with her flashing jewels.

Then suddenly springing forward, as if they feared she might escape through the secret opening in the wall, they grasped her with their powerful hands, and she was once more a prisoner!—

"The Emperor can no longer defend his beautiful Countess," said the one who seemed to direct the others. We have caught her in the act of robbing Count Podstadsky's creditors. And unless I am mistaken, we shall find among her booty, all the jewels that were missing at last winter's entertainments; for as I had the honor of reminding his Majesty, the Countess Baillou was at every ball, when jewels were lost. I told the Emperor that if he would give you freedom, I engaged to find something more than a mare's nest, when I tracked you hither—I was sure you would come, and my spies have been within, waiting for you since this morning."

"What reward was promised by the Emperor for my detection?" said Arabella, already self-possessed.

"Five hundred ducats," was the reply.

"Five hundred ducats," repeated she, tossing back her beauiiful head. "A beggardly reward for the person of a lady of rank like me. Take this necklace, and divide it between you. Each one will then have more than the frugal Emperor has promised to all. Take it and give

me my freedom. Your generous act will never be known."

"How, lady? You would bribe us, as you have bribed so many noble cavaliers? No, no.—Your game is at an end, and if ever you appear in public again, it will be as a criminal. You must come with me. You men take up this coffer."

She strove no longer. Without another word she took the arm of the police officer, and went firmly forward.

Her lips moved, and she murmured: "Alas, he is right. My career is at an end!"*

CHAPTER XXIV

HORJA AND THE REBELLION IN HUNGARY.

FOUR years had gone by since Joseph had reigned sole monarch of Austria. For four years he had devoted himself to the Austrians, having but one object, that of making them a free, enlightened and happy people, emancipating them from the influence of the church, and breaking the fetters of serfdom; granting them equality before the law, and enriching them by his encouragement of manufactures, and the privileges he accorded to merchants.

What was his reward? Dissatisfaction, and opposition from every class of society; ingratitude and ill-will from all parties.

The nobles disliked him because he had sought every opportunity of humbling them before the people; the clergy opposed him, because of his sequestration of church property, and his assumption of spiritual authority. But his bitterest enemies were the *bureaucratie*. He had invaded all their customs, discharging every man who had not studied at the university, and requiring constant labor from the first as well as the last of the employees. He was the terror of all aspirants for civil office, and the whole body hated him, embarrassed his steps, and ruined his plans by voluntary misconception of all his orders.

As yet, there was no outburst of dissatisfaction. The discontent was latent, and Joseph still indulged the hope of outliving opposition, and proving to his subjects that all the innovations which they had so ungratefully endured, were for the ultimate good of the Austrian nation.

He was therefore ill-prepared for the news which reached him from

* This beautiful woman, "the ornament of the most elegant circles in Vienna," as she is called by the chroniclers of the times, was condemned to three days of pillory, the same punishment as that suffered by the victim of her wickedness and coquetry. She was then sent guarded to the confines of Austria, from whence she was banished for life. See Hubner II, 392. Gross-Hoffinger III.

Hungary. He had freed the people from slavery and taxation, and had exacted that the nobles should pay their share of the imperial taxes. He had instituted a general conscription, and the most powerful Magyar in Hungary was bound to serve, side by side, with the lowest peasant. Finally he had forbidden the use of any other language in Hungary save the German.

A cry of indignation was heard from every turretted castle in the land. They were wounded in the rights hitherto guaranteed to them by every Emperor of Austria. And above all other oppression, they were to be robbed of their mother tongue, that they might lose their nationality, and become a poor Austrian dependency.*

But Joseph's enactments, were not only detested by the nobles, they were equally unwelcome to the people. The latter were horror-stricken by the general conscription, and fled by thousands to take refuge among the mountains, from the conscribing officers.

One of their own class, however, succeeded in drawing them from their hiding-places. The loud voice of Horja rang throughout every valley, and ascended to every mountain-summit—he called them to Liberty, and Equality. He asserted that nobility was to be destroyed in Hungary; there were to be no more castles, no more magnates of the land. The Emperor had promised as much in Vienna; he had sworn to free the Hungarian peasantry, and to bring the proud noble down to an equality with his serf. The hour for fulfilment had arrived. All the new laws regarded the nobles alone, they had no reference to the peasantry, whom the Emperor had promised to make free, happy, and rich. He needed the help of his Hungarians; they must complete what he had begun.

The peasant was to be free, happy, rich! This was the magic song which attracted the boor from his thatch under the hill, and the goat-herd from his hut amid the mountain-peaks.

Horja was the Arion who sang, and now to his standard flocked thousands of deluded beings, all eager to complete the work which the Emperor had begun. Joseph had made them free, it remained for themselves to plunder the nobles, and appropriate their long-hoarded wealth. It was the Emperor's will; he hated the Magyars, and loved the peasantry. If ever any of those poor, ignorant wretches held back, Horja showed them a massive gold chain to which the Emperor's portrait was attached. This had been sent to him by Joseph himself, and in proof thereof, he had a parchment full of gilt letters with a great seal attached to it, which made him Captain-General of Hungary. They could all come and read the Emperor's own writing, if they chose.

Poor fellows! None of them knew how to read; so that Krischan, a friend of Horja and a priest of the Greek Church, read it for all who doubted. This brought conviction to the most sceptical. That a Greek priest could read a lie, never once entered the heads of these simple children of nature.

* That was precisely Joseph's object. And yet he wondered that this people did not love him.

Now commenced the carnage. The nobles were imprisoned and murdered, their castles burned, and their fields laid waste. The aristocracy of the borders, whose territorial domains the insurgents had not yet reached, armed themselves, and having captured some of the rebels, put them to death under circumstances of exaggerated cruelty, executing them by the power which the Magyar possessed of administering justice as an independent Prince.

These executions, unsanctioned by the Emperor, raised the indignation of the people to ungovernable fury, and they now demanded the entire extinction of the nobles. They were summoned to resign their titles, and until the coronation of Joseph, the rightful king of Hungary, they were to obey their lawful ruler, Horja.

The nobles not having condescended to take any notice of Horja's summons, the people began to pillage and murder with redoubled fury. They spared everything, however, belonging to the Emperor; the only nobleman who would ever be suffered to own land in Hungary.

Joseph could no longer turn a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the Magyars. He had hoped to be able to quell the rebellion by lenity; offering a general amnesty to all offenders with the exception of Horja, for whose capture, a reward of three hundred ducats was offered. But the poor, deluded peasantry, having faith in no one but Horja, thought that the offer of pardon was nothing but an artifice of the enemy. The Emperor, then, was obliged to march the imperial troops against the people, and to bring about with musket and cannon what he had hoped to accomplish through moral suasion.

Horja, finding that he had nothing more to hope from the clemency of the Emperor, tried to induce the disaffected nobles to accept his peasantry and rebel against Joseph. But they rejected the offer with disdain, and gave their support to the imperial troops. Thousands delivered themselves up, imploring mercy which was granted them. Thousands fled to the mountains, and thousands were taken prisoners. Among these latter were Horja and Krischan. Both were condemned to death. Horja pleaded hard to be allowed to see the Emperor, alleging that he had something of importance to communicate to him. But his prayer was not granted. Perhaps Joseph suspected that Horja would prove to him what he already dreaded to know, namely, that the nobles had connived at this insurrection of the peasantry, to frighten him with the consequences of his own acts.

Horja was not permitted then to see his Sovereign. He was broken on a wheel on the market-place at Carlsburg, and two thousand of the captured insurgents were forced to witness the cruel spectacle.*

Thus ended this fearful outbreak, by which four thousand men perished, sixty-two villages and thirty-two castles were consumed, and the deluded peasantry, instead of freedom, happiness and wealth, found threefold oppression at the hands of their masters.

The magnates and nobles, meanwhile, stood upon the ruins of their

* On the 8d of January, 1785.

castles and cried out, "This is the work of Joseph! These are the fruits of his insensate reforms!"*

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE JEW'S REVENGE.

THE Emperor paced his cabinet in unusual agitation. Contrary to his daily habits, the *Controlorgang* was closed, and his Secretaries had been ordered to remain in the chancery, and do their writing there. He must be alone; no human being should witness his sorrow-stricken face and his burning eyes—for the Emperor had been weeping.

A great sorrow had befallen him. Günther, his indefatigable co-laborer, the trustiest of counsellors, the man whom next to Lacy and Rosenberg, he loved best on earth, Günther had betrayed him! He had sold a secret of state for gold!——

There before him on the table lay the reports of the secret police, whose duty it was to open all letters passing through the post, and to present such as looked suspicious.† Among these letters was one which strongly inculpated Günther. It was written by Baron Eskeles Flies to a commercial friend in Amsterdam. It stated that he (Eskeles Flies) had just received a communication of such vital importance that it was worth much more to him than the thousand ducats he had paid to his informer. The Emperor, tired of his contention with Holland regarding the navigation of the Scheldt, had agreed to accept the ten millions offered by Holland in return for his guarantee that she should still preserve her right to demand toll of all ships passing through that portion of the river which was within the Dutch boundaries.‡

Eskeles Flies besought his Amsterdam correspondent to procure him this loan, which he was ready to advance to the Republic in four instalments. He bound his friend to strict secresy, for the information he imparted was not to be made public for twenty-four hours, and the possession of this secret gave them signal advantage over all other bankers.

Now Günther alone had been entrusted by the Emperor with this se-

* Hubner 1, page 273.—Gross Hoffinger 3, page 135.—Ramshorn, page 138.

† The Emperor Franz and Metternich. A fragment. (From Hormayr, page 79.)

‡ Joseph had claimed from Holland the right to navigate the Scheldt, and the canals dug by the Dutch, free of toll. These latter refused, and the Emperor forthwith marched his troops into Holland. He had expected to be sustained by the other maritime powers of Europe, but they, protecting the Dutch, Joseph was obliged to withdraw his troops. But he claimed an indemnity for the expenses incurred by putting his regiments upon a war-footing, and demanded twenty millions. He then agreed to take fifteen, but was finally obliged to be content with ten, which was all that the Dutch would allow him. Whereupon Frederic the Great said that Joseph had cried out for a great sum, but had been obliged to come down to a "pour boire."

cret of state. With the exception of Prince Kaunitz, not another man in Austria knew that Joseph intended to accept the proffered indemnity. It was clear then that Günther was the traitor, and yet his imperial master would not believe. He clung to the hope that something might yet occur to exculpate his favorite, though how or whence exoneration was to come, he could not conceive.

The banker had been summoned, and the Emperor awaited his coming. In the impatience of his heart he had sent a courier, and after the courier, his own carriage, for he could not endure his suspense one moment longer than was unavoidable. Often as he paced the room, his heart throbbing violently, he paused to listen, and then glanced again and again at the clock to see if the banker could be nigh.

"If it be true," thought he, resuming his agitated walk, "I shall never trust man again. I believed that Günther's heart was as noble as his face—Is it possible that such a countenance should lie; Günther, the generous, disinterested Günther—can it be that he has sold my secrets? —I cannot—will not believe it. I must see himself, and hear his defence from his own lips."

Hurried along by this magnanimous impulse, the Emperor approached the door. But he paused, and shook his head. "No, no; conviction must come from testimony, not from assertion. Men are all actors, and often have I seen how skilfully they wear the mask of innocence. I have been too often deceived——Ah! There at last is the banker."

Yes—it was he. The page flung open the door, and announced "Baron Von Eskeles Flies."

The Baron entered the room. He had grown old since Rachel's flight. Scarcely a year had elapsed since then; but in that year her father's raven locks had grown white as snow, and the stalwart man of fifty had grown old and feeble.

The Emperor came forward, and extended his hand. "Look at me, Eskeles," said he in his quick, eager way, "do not bow so ceremoniously, we have no time to waste on formalities. Look at me, and let me see whether you are an honest man, scorning falsehood even though it might shield a fellow-creature from harm!"

The banker looked the Emperor full in the face, and bore the scrutiny of his searching eyes without wincing.

"I see that you can look me in the face," said Joseph. "You will speak the truth."

"The Jew is forbidden by his religious code to lie," was the reply. Joseph crossed the room quickly, and taking a letter from his *escritoire*, gave it to the banker. "Is this your writing?"

Eskeles lifted his eyes slowly to the paper, and seemed surprised. "Yes, that is my writing. I posted this letter yesterday. How then do I find it here? Its detention is a serious inconvenience to me."

He said this with the demeanor of a merchant whose mind is upon his business, and who has no idea that it can concern any other person.

"The letter was sent to me by the secret police," said the Emperor.

The banker looked up in astonishment. "Ah!" exclaimed he, "Then the tales which are told of the opening of all our letters by detectives, are not fables!"

"No—they are not fables, and I am justified in the scrutiny. Men are so corrupt, that our only defence against treachery is *espionage*. It is a pity that it should be so, but as long as the people are base, their Sovereigns must stop short of no means to foil them."

"But I have never sinned against your Majesty. Why then is my letter open to suspicion?"

"Every man is suspected by the secret police," replied Joseph with a shrug. "For that reason I gave orders to stop every letter addressed to Holland. The precaution had been made imperative by our misunderstandings with that country. And you see yourself that your letter betrays a secret of state."

"Betrays!" repeated the banker. "We betray that which we are expected to bury within the recesses of our own heart. But this news was to go out into the world and was a subject for percentage. I should have made at least half a million, had my letter not been unluckily detained by your Majesty."

"I shall not prevent you from earning your percentage," replied Joseph scornfully. "Your letter shall go to-day, and my dispatches shall be detained until to-morrow. In that way you can still make your half million."

The banker bowed. "I thank your Majesty for your exceeding condescension," said he.

"I will do you this favor, but you must do me a service in return."

"It is not necessary for your Majesty to concede me the right to earn half a million to buy my services," said Eskeles with a slight shade of reproach. "I hope that I have always been ready to serve your Majesty, even when no percentage was to be gained thereby."

"And I have recognized it *Baron* Eskeles Flies. But I do not speak of pecuniary services to-day. I ask a favor of another nature. Tell me then, without reserve, who is the man that receives a thousand ducats for revealing a secret of state to you."

The banker started, as if he had received a shot, and glanced inquiringly at the Emperor. "Was that in the letter?" asked he.

Joseph gave it into his hands. Eskeles perused it eagerly, and then, murmured in a voice of exceeding contrition, "Aye, it is there. I was indiscreet." Then as if overcome by his fault, his head sank upon his breast.

"I await your answer," said the Emperor. "Who betrayed me to you for a thousaed ducats?"

The banker raised his head as if making a difficult resolve. "Your Majesty, that was an idle boast of mine to enhance the value of my news."

"Mere evasion, Baron," replied Joseph angrily. "Even if you had not written the words in that letter, I should still ask of you, who it is that betrays my secrets?"

"No one, sire," replied Eskeles uneasily. "I guessed it. Yes, yes," —continued he as though a happy idea had just struck him—"that is it —I guessed it. Every one knows of your Majesty's difficulty with Holland, and I might well guess that you would be glad to end this strife by accepting the ten millions, and so save your subjects from the horrors of war."

"You are not the truthful man I had supposed. There is no logic in your lies, Baron Eskeles. You might guess that I would accept the ten millions, but as you are not omniscient, you could not say positively that I had written my dispatches yesterday, and would sign them to-day. Your inventions are clumsy, Baron, and I must say that they do you honor, for they prove that you have little experience in the art of lying. But the truth I must have, and as your lord and Emperor, I command you to speak. For the third time, who betrayed my secrets to you?"

"Oh, sire, I swore not to betray him," said Eskeles in a faltering voice.

"I absolve you from the oath."

"But the God of Israel cannot absolve me. I cannot speak the name of the man, but——your Majesty can guess it."

He was silent for a few moments, then raising his head, the Emperor saw that his face had become deadly pale. In a low unsteady voice, he continued: "Your Majesty knows that I once had a daughter."

"HAD? You *have* a daughter, Baron."

"She is dead to me," murmured Eskeles so inaudibly that the Emperor scarcely heard him. "She left me a year ago for a man whom she loved better than her father."

"But she left because you would have married her to a man whom she hated. Günther told me so."

"Yes, sire. I had no idea that my unhappy child would go to such extremity. Had she entreated me as she should have done, I would have yielded; but her lover had hardened her heart against me, and she abandoned me—not to become the honorable wife of any man, but to lead a life of shame and reproach. Rachel is not married, she is the mistress of that man."

"This, too, is your fault, Baron. You made her swear never to become a Christian, and by our laws she could not marry him. But he considers her as his wife. You see that I know all. Günther, to justify himself, confided to me the whole history of his love."

"He did not tell the truth, sire. My daughter herself is unwilling to become a Christian."

"Then she is a conscientious Jewess?"

"No, sire, she does not attend the Synagogue."

"What is she, then?" asked the Emperor astonished.

"She is a Deist, and precisely because I required of her to profess either Judaism or Christianity, she fled to that man whom she cannot be made to believe is the suitor of her wealth and not of herself."

"Do you think, then, that Günther is interested?"

"I know it, sire. He offered for a hundred thousand florins to renounce Rachel and deliver her up to me. Here is his letter; your Majesty can see it."

The Emperor took the letter, and read it. "It is his writing," murmured he sorrowfully, "it is too true."

"I refused," continued Eskeles. "I would not buy my daughter back. I therefore waited to see what would follow."

"What followed?"

The banker was silent for a moment, then sighing, he said in low trembling tones. "Not long after, I received another letter. He said he was straitened in means, that Rachel was pampered, and required so many luxuries that she had exhausted his purse. As I would not listen to his first proposition, he had another to make. I would give him a certain sum, and he would do me a substantial service."

"He offered a thousand ducats, did he not?"

"I do not remember. The sum is stated in the letter. Here it is, your Majesty." And with these words Eskeles drew a paper from his bosom.

"It is, it is," said the Emperor in a voice of anguish, "I can no longer doubt his treachery."

Eskeles Flies returned the paper to his bosom. "I keep this on my person," said he, "because when Rachel returns to me, it will cure her of her love for such a villain."

"Günther, then received the money?" said Joseph.

"He did, sire."

"Then you no longer deny that *he* was the Judas."

"Your Majesty can remember which of your Secretaries was charged with the copying of your dispatches."

The Emperor sighed—"I know, I know," murmured he, "and yet it pains me so to believe it, for I have loved him sincerely."

"And I have loved my daughter," returned Eskeles. "This man stole her from me, and has converted my child into a Deist."

"She shall be returned to you, and Günther shall receive the punishment of his crimes," cried Joseph in a loud and angry voice. "No mercy for *him!* I shall know how to act as becomes a wronged, and outraged Sovereign."

"But that will not restore my child," said Eskeles disconsolately. "What good is it to me that this wretch is to suffer? It will not bring back Rachel. And even if she should be forced to seek my protection, what comfort can I derive from one who is a Deist—a creature who mocks at religion?"

"She will be obliged to become one thing, or the other, if she would shield herself from the fearful consequences of her scepticism."

"That is it," cried Eskeles joyfully. "Your Majesty has found the remedy. Rachel must be threatened with the disgrace of legal punishment, and then she will repent, and return to her father. Sire, I accuse her of Deism. I exact that she be brought to judgment."

"To judgment!" exclaimed the Emperor. "Do you know the punishment for her offence?"

"Fifty lashes on the offender's back! But fear will save her. My Rachel will never dare to avow herself a Deist."

"Perhaps not—but I, as a Christian, cannot allow you to force her back to Judaism."

"Then try to make a Christian of her, sire. O, I beseech of you, lend yourself to my paternal stratagem for her restoration to honor! Act upon my accusation; have her imprisoned in her home; and for four weeks, let a priest visit her daily to instruct her in your Majesty's faith. Then let her decide whether she will become a Christian or remain a Jewess."

"Bethink you that if she should prove contumacious, I cannot rescue her from punishment. If you persist in your accusation, remember that the law must take its course."

"I persist, and demand investigation."

"It shall be granted you. And now here is your letter. Post it to-day, and it will still be twenty-four hours in advance of mine. We must both perform our duty, you as a merchant, I as a Sovereign, and believe me, you shall have revenge for the wrongs inflicted upon you by the double traitor, who has betrayed his Emperor, and his mistress!"

"I care nothing for his punishment," repeated Eskeles wearily, "all that I ask, is my daughter."

The Emperor gave his hand, and the banker pressing it to his lips, backed out of the cabinet. Joseph looked after him with sympathising eyes. "Poor man! Grief has made him old. Sorrow lengthens days to years, and wrinkles many a brow which time has never touched."

But without, Baron Eskeles Flies had changed his mien. No longer bowed down with grief, he stood triumphantly reviewing the success of his strategy.

"I am revenged!" thought he. "Short-sighted Emperor, you do not dream that you are the tool wherewith the Jew has wreaked his vengeance upon the Christian! Go on, and ruin your faithful friend! Go on, hot-headed judge, punish the man who loves you without giving him a hearing; and imagine yourself to be administering justice, while you inflict the grossest injustice!—It is so Christian-like? Follow the instincts of your love and hate, your passion, or your pleasures, ye children of the moment, while the calculating Jew plays upon your credulity!—And now, God of my fathers, let the Christian priest but irritate my child with his importunities, and she will seek refuge from his persecutions in the Synagogue!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FAVOR OF PRINCES.

THE Emperor thrust open the door which led from his cabinet to the chancery. There at the long, green table, immersed in their business, sat the four imperial Secretaries, and next to the arm-chair, which was surmounted by the Austrian crown, sat the unconscious Günther. Had Günther seen the look with which Joseph regarded him as he sat quietly writing, his heart would have grown chill with apprehension. But not an eye there was raised. One of the Emperor's most stringent orders forbade the Secretaries, when in the Chancery, to raise their heads on any account. They were to take no note of the entrance of Joseph himself, they were co-workers, and no time was to be wasted in ceremonial.

Joseph seated himself in silence, and taking up a pen, wrote a few hasty lines upon a sheet of paper. He then rang, and delivered the paper to a page.

"Take this to the Colonel commanding the recruits," said he, and his voice trembled as he spoke these few words. There was a long silence; the Secretaries continued to write, and Günther, always obedient to orders, had not once raised his head. His countenance was as tranquil as it had ever been.

"Günther," said the Emperor, in an imperious tone, "begin a new sheet, and write what I shall dictate."

Günther bowed, and prepared to obey. The others went on with their work. Had Joseph not been so blinded by indignation against his private Secretary, he might have seen how one of the others raised his head and glanced furtively around; how his face was pale, and his lips were twitching; and how his hand was so tremulous that he was scarcely able to hold his pen. No one observed it. The other Secretaries were writing—the Emperor, in his wrath, saw nothing but Günther.

And now with flashing eyes, he called upon Günther to write.

"To his Eminence, Cardinal Megazzi:

It has come to my knowledge that the absurd sect, which originated in Bohemia, is spreading its pernicious tenets even to our capital. A heart-broken father has this day come before me to accuse his daughter of Deism. To what extremes the Deists go in their imbecility, is shown by the fact that this girl, who has defied Heaven, the laws of her country, and the authority of her father, has left the paternal roof and is now living a life of shame with her paramour. She must either profess some

faith, or be punished as the law directs. To this end, your Eminence will commission an intelligent priest to visit, and instruct her in the tenets of Christianity. From this day she is a prisoner in her own house; but as she is of Jewish birth, (and I do not wish to have it said that we have forced her into Christianity,) a Jewish Rabbi can also have daily access to this unhappy infidel. I give to both priests four weeks to convert her. If at the end of that time, she continues contumacious, she must be punished, as the Josephine Code directs, with fifty lashes."*

The Emperor had dictated this letter in sharp biting tones, while Günther, nothing apprehending, had written it. Once only, when the accused had been designated as a Jewess, his pen faltered, and his handsome noble face was contracted for a moment by pain. But the pang had been sympathetic and momentary.

"Have you written?" asked the Emperor, striking the table with his clenched hand.

"I have written, sire," replied Günther, in his fine, sonorous voice, whose familiar tones, in spite of himself, stirred the innermost depths of his misguided Sovereign's heart.

"Now, answer me one question," continued Joseph, hoarsely. "Have you ever received a thousand ducats from Eskeles Flies?"

Again the head of one of the Secretaries was furtively raised, the hands shook like aspen leaves, and the eyes gave one rapid glance towards the side of the table where Günther sat.

The Emperor, as before, was too blinded by passion to see anything save the innocent object of his wrath. Günther was surprised at the tone in which the question had been asked, and seemed at last to be aware that it was one full of significance. But his reply was prompt and calm.

"Yes, sire, I received that sum yesterday. Not for me, but for a lady whose name is well known to your Majesty. It was a legacy, left by her mother."

Joseph laughed scornfully. "Give me the note to the Cardinal," cried he. Günther presented it, and having signed it, the Emperor gave it into the hands of the Secretary opposite. "Fold and address the letter," said he, "But stop—Write first the address of the person who presumes to avow herself a Deist in the face of my laws. Her name is Rachel Eskeles Flies."

A cry of anguish burst from Günther's lips, and, in his madness, he would have snatched the horrid missive from the Secretary's hands. But he recollected himself; and turning his blanched face towards the Emperor, he exclaimed,

"Mercy, gracious Sovereign, mercy for my Rachel! You have been wickedly deceived."

"Aye!" cried Joseph, "I have been wickedly deceived, but he who has dared to betray me, shall be made to suffer for his crime. Rise

*Gross-Hoffinger III, p. 116.

from this table and leave this room. You are dismissed from my service as a false traitor!"

"What, your Majesty!" cried Günther in tones that were proud and defiant. "You defame me without so much as telling me of what I am accused! Without allowing me the right of justification! Tell me—what have I done?"

"Ask your own conscience, if you have one, and find an answer there," cried Joseph, furious at the lofty bearing of his victim.

"If your Majesty refuses me that poor boon," continued Günther, "I appeal to the laws. My legal judges will be bound to hear me publicly accused, and to listen to my defence!"

"I am your accuser and your judge—your only judge," replied Joseph with concentrated passion. "I have already found you guilty and have already sentenced you."

"But why, why?" cried Günther. "If you would not drive me mad, tell me why!"

"I shall do nothing but carry out your sentence," said Joseph, ringing a bell. "Are the men without?" said he to the page who answered his summons.

"Yes, your Majesty. A subaltern of the Third Regiment is without, with four soldiers."

"Show them in!"—The page opened the door, and the men entered.

"You march to Hungary to your new garrison to-day, do you not?" said the Emperor.

"Yes, sire—we march in one hour," was the reply.

"Take this man with you as a recruit."

Günther started forward, and with an exclamation of horror, fell at the Emperor's feet. "Mercy! Mercy!" gasped he.

"No mercy, but justice for all men!" cried Joseph stamping his foot. Then motioning to the soldiers, he said: "Take him away and watch him closely, lest he escape. Equip him, and put him in the ranks. Away with you!"

The men advanced, and Günther, seeing that any farther appeal was vain, suffered himself to be led away in silence. The door closed behind them, and the Emperor was alone with his three Secretaries. There was a long, fearful pause through which the retreating steps of the soldiers and their victim were heard. When the echoes had died away, the Emperor spoke in hard, cold tones.

"Günther was a traitor, who betrayed the secrets of the state for gold. I discovered his treachery and have punished him accordingly. Take warning by his fate!"

So saying, he passed into his cabinet, and once alone, he gave full vent to his bitter grief.

"I could not do otherwise," thought he. "I who would not spare Podstadsky and Szekuly, could not spare this traitor, though he has been very dear to me indeed. He must suffer—but I shall suffer with him. Mercy is so much more natural to man than justice. Still, mer-

ey is the prerogative of Heaven alone. I am here to be equitable to all."

An hour later, the third regiment left Vienna for Szegedin, their new garrison. A few wagons followed with the luggage, and the sick men who were unable to encounter the hardships of that formidable march to Hungary. In one of these wagons lay the new recruit. His eyes glared with delirium, and his lips were parched with raging fever. For a moment he seemed to awake from his dream of madness, for he raised himself a little, and murmured, "Where am I?" No one answered him, but a flash of memory revealed to him the horrors of his situation, and falling back with a shudder, he cried out, "Rachel, my Rachel!"—and then relapsed into delirium.

The same evening, Baron Eskeles Flies left his *hôtel* on foot, and hastily traversing the streets, stopped before a house where, ascending to the second story, he rang the bell. A richly-liveried servant opened the door at the head of the stair-case.

"Is the imperial Secretary Warkenhold within?" asked the Baron.

The servant did not know—he would see;—but the banker saved him the trouble by putting him aside and entering the little vestibule.

"Show me the way," said he, "you need not announce me. A rich man is welcome everywhere."

The servant obeyed, and conducted the banker through a suite of apartments whose splendor he contemplated with a sneer.

"Now go," said he, as the servant pointed to a portière. "I shall announce myself."

He drew the *portière* and knocked. Then, without waiting for an answer, he entered the room.

"Eskeles Flies!" cried the occupant, who was lounging on a sofa, and was no other than the Secretary that had been so disturbed by the Emperor's words in the morning. "Eskeles Flies!" repeated he, springing from the sofa, and hastening forward.

"Yes, Baron Eskeles Flies," replied the banker, proudly.

"But what brings you to me?" cried Warkenhold terrified. "Your visit exposes me to danger."

"Nobody knows of my visit, for I came on foot, and let me tell you Herr Warkenhold, that my presence in your house is an honor which is not apt to endanger you."

"Only to-day, only at this time," murmured Warkenhold apologetically.

"Then you should have come to me for your money. You said you were in great want, having lost everything at cards, and so I hasten to acquit myself of my debt. Here is a draft for one thousand ducats."

"Hush, for the love of heaven!" whispered Warkenhold. "What can I do with a draft? I should never dare present it for payment, for you know that the Emperor keeps spies with a hundred eyes, to track his employees. And suppose I go to your office, I expose myself to discovery."

"Not at all," interrupted the banker laughing. "Who should betray

you? Not I. And no one but us two are in the secret. Who, then, should tell the Emperor that you were hidden behind the door while he dictated his dispatches, and that you are such a skilful imitator? I swear that Günther himself would have been staggered had he seen those letters! They are capital, and I congratulate you. You are a genius."

"Great God! must you annoy me with repetition of all that I did?" cried the Secretary with asperity. "Is it not enough that I am already wretched, as I look back to the terrible scenes of the morning? I cannot banish the image of that unhappy Günther from my mind. I felt at one time as if I must confess and save him."

"Ha ha, did you? Then it was terrible, was it? He thundered like another Rhadamanthus, did he, that sapient Emperor? And forced poor, innocent Günther to drink of the chalice we had prepared for him? Oh, rare, far-seeing judge!—Tell me all about it, Warkenhold."

Warkenhold shuddering, repeated what had taken place. When he spoke of the question relating to the thousand ducats, Eskeles Flies interrupted him.

"And of course he had to say yes. Günther is of knightly veracity, and I invented the story of the legacy, in anticipation of that question. Oh, how admirably my calculations have been made! Let me hear the rest."

Warkenhold went on, and when he had concluded his woeful narrative, the banker nodded and said:

"You are a genius. You relate as well as you eves-drop and forge! Upon my word, you have entertained as well as you have served me! My success in this affair is entirely owing to you. You are as skilful as your great Christian ancestor Judas; but as I hope you are not such a fool as to go out and hang yourself, here are fifty ducats above our bargain. They are for your mistress."

He drew out his purse and counted the gold.

"I thank you," said Warkenhold almost inaudibly. "I must take the money, for I am sorely pressed, but I would give my right hand not to have been forced to do this thing!"

"Pray say the left—your right haud is a treasure not lightly to be parted with," said the banker laughing. "But a truce to sentiment. It is useless for you to drape yourself in the toga of honor or benevolence. Our business is at an end. You have nothing more to claim, I believe?"

"Nothing whatever, I am——"

"Then," said the banker, taking up his hat, "we have nothing further to say to one another. You have been the instrument of my righteous vengeance, but as I have an antipathy to villains, let me never see so much as a glance of recognition from you again. From this hour we are strangers! Adieu!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE DEPUTATION FROM HUNGARY.

In the great reception-room of the imperial palace, a deputation of the most illustrious magnates of Hungary awaited an interview with the Emperor. For one whole year the Hungarian nobles had withdrawn from court; but now, in the interest of their fatherland, they stood once more within the walls of the palace; and in their magnificent state-uniforms, as the representatives of all Hungary, they were assembled to demand redress for their national grievances.

When the Emperor entered the reception-room, he came alone, in a plain uniform. He greeted the deputies with a smile, which they returned by profound and silent inclinations of their aristocratic heads. Joseph looked slowly around at the brilliant assemblage of magnates before him.

"A stately deputation of my loyal Hungarians," observed he. "I see all the proudest families of the kingdom represented here to-day. Count Palfy, for example, the son of him whom the Empress was accustomed to call her champion and father—Count Batthiany, the heir of my favorite tutor. I rejoice to see you, and hope that you are here to-day to greet me as ever, in the character of loyal subjects."

There was a short pause, after which, Count Palfy, stepping a little in advance of the others, addressed the Emperor.

"Sire, we are sent by the kingdom of Hungary to lay our wrongs before your Majesty, and request redress."

"Does the Count represent your sentiments?" asked the Emperor, addressing the delegates. A unanimous affirmative was the reply, and Joseph then continued: "Speak on. I will hear your complaints and reply to them."

Count Palfy bowed and resumed: "We have come to remind your Majesty that when, in November 1780, you ascended the throne of Austria, we received a written declaration from your imperial hand, guaranteeing our rights under the National Constitution of Hungary. Nevertheless, these rights have been invaded, and we come before your Majesty's throne in the hope that our just remonstrances may not appear offensive in the eyes of our King."*

"But what if they do appear offensive?" cried the Emperor, chafed. "What if I should refuse to hear those complaints which are nothing but the fermentation of your own pride and arrogance?"

"If your Majesty refuse to hear us to-day," said Count Palfy, with

* These are the words of the Hungarian protest. See Hubner 2, p. 265.

firmness, "we shall return to-morrow, and every day, for we have sworn to present the grievances of the States to your notice and must keep our oath."

"I am quite as well acquainted with the grievances as you, and to prove it to you, I will state them myself. First, you are aggrieved because I have not gone to Hungary to be crowned and to take the constitutional oath."

"Yes, sire, we are; and this grievance leads us to the second one.—We venture to ask if, secretly and without the consent of the States, the crown of St. Stephen has been removed to Vienna."

"Yes, it has been removed," cried Joseph with increasing irritation. "It has been brought to me to whom it belongs; but I shall return it to Ofen, when the structure which is to receive it is completed."

"That is an unconstitutional act," said Count Palfy. "Is it not, my friends?"

"It is," cried a chorus of Magyars.

"I have never taken the oath to the constitution," was Joseph's reply. "Hungary would have to undergo signal changes before I ever go there to be crowned as your king. You are not content with reigning over your vassals; you desire in your ambitious presumption to reign over me also. But I tell you that I am no royal puppet in the hands of a Republic of aristocrats—I am lord and king of all my provinces. Hungary has no claim to a separate nationality, and once for all, I shall no more take the coronation-oath there than I shall do it in Tyrol, Bohemia, Galicia, or Lombardy. All your crowns are fused into the imperial crown of Austria, and it is proper that I, who own them all, should preserve them with my regalia at Vienna. All strife and jealousy between the provinces composing my empire must cease.* Provincial interests must disappear before national exigencies. This is all that I have to say to the States; but I will say to yourselves that when I find myself absolute Lord of Hungary, as well as of Austria, I will go thither to be crowned. And now, Lord Chancellor of Hungary, what other grievance have to you present?"

"Our second grievance, sire, is, that to the great humiliation of all Hungary, our native tongue, and the Latin language have been superceded by the German. This, too, is unconstitutional, for it has shut out all Hungarians, in a measure, from public office, and has placed the administration of our laws in the hands of Austrians, perfectly ignorant of our constitution."†

"To this I have to say that German shall be the language of all my subjects. Why should *you* enjoy the privilege of a national language? *I* am Emperor of Germany, and *my* tongue shall be that of my provinces. If Hungary were the most important portion of the Empire, its language doubtless would be Hungarian; but it is not, and therefore shall you speak German.‡ I will now pass on to your third grievance,

* The Emperor's own words (Letters of Joseph Second.
† The words of the Hungarian protest. Hubner 2, P. 266.
‡ The Emperor own words. See Letter of Joseph 2d, pages 76.

for you see that I am well posted on the subject of your sufferings. I have numbered, and taxed your property, and that, too, in spite of your constitution which exempts you from taxation. In my opinion, the privileges of an aristocracy do not consist in evading their share of the national burthens; on the contrary, they should assume it voluntarily, and for the weal of the nation, place themselves on an equality with the people—each class striving with the other as to who shall best promote the prosperity of the government.* I cannot therefore exempt you from paying taxes."

"But, sire, this tax violates our rights, and our constitution," replied Count Palfy.

"Has Hungary a constitution? A tumultuous States-diet, privileged aristocracy—the subjection of three-fifths of the nation to the remainder—is this a constitution?"

"It is the Constitution of Hungary, and we have your Majesty's written promise that you would respect it. But even had we received no solemn declaration of the sort, upon the security of our national freedom depends the Austrian right of succession to the throne of Hungary."†

"You dare to threaten me?" cried Joseph furiously.

"No, sire, we do not threaten; we are in presence of a truth-loving monarch, and we are compelled to speak the unvarnished truth. We have already borne much from your Majesty's ancestors. But until the death of Maria Theresa, our fundamental laws remained inviolate. True, in the last years of her life, she refused to allow the States-diet to assemble; but she never laid her hand upon our constitution. She was crowned Queen of Hungary, and took the coronation-oath. Charles the Sixth, and Joseph the First did likewise. Each one guaranteed us the right of inheritance, and our national freedom.

"There is no such thing as national freedom in Hungary. It contains nothing but lords and vassals, and it is vassalage that I intend to abolish."

"Does your Majesty think that the general freedom of the State is promoted by your conscription-laws?"

"Ah! Here, we have grievance the fourth," exclaimed Joseph. "Yes, the conscription is a thorn in your sensitive sides, because it claims you as the children and servants of your country, and forces you to draw your swords in her defence."

"We have never refused our blood to the country," replied Count Palfy, proudly throwing back his head, "and if her rights are intact today, it is because *we* have defended and protected them. We have fought for our Fatherland, however, not as conscripts, but as freemen. Our people are unanimous in their abhorence of the conscription act. When we weigh the motives and consequences of this act we can draw but one inference from either: that we, who were born freemen, are to be reduced to slavery, and to be trampled under foot by every other province of Austria."

* The Emperor's own words. See Letters of Joseph 2d, page 95.
† The words of the Hungarian protest. Hubner 2. P. 262.

"Rather than submit to such indignity we will lay down our lives, for we are of one mind, and would sooner die than lose our liberty!"

"And I," cried Joseph, his eyes flashing and his face scarlet with passion, "I say to you all that you shall live, for I, your king and master, command you to do so."

An angry murmur was heard, and every eye looked defiance at the Emperor. "Ah," said he, scornfully, "you would ape the Polish diet, and dispute the will of your King! You remember how the King of Poland succumbed to dictation! I am another and a different man, and I care neither for your approbation nor for your blame. It is my purpose to make Hungary prosperous, and therefore I have abolished the feudal system which is unfavorable to the development of the resources of the country. You Magyars would interfere with me. You have a constitution at variance with my laws, and for the sake of a piece of rotten parchment three hundred years old, Hungary must be suffered to remain uncivilized forever! Away with your mediaval privileges and rusty escutcheons! A new century has dawned, and not only the nobly born shall see its light, but the people who until now have been thrust aside by your arrogance! If enlightenment violates your ancient privileges, they shall be swept away to give place to the victorious rights of man! And this is my answer to all your grievances. Go home, ye Magyars, assemble your peers, and tell them that my decision is unalterable, and that what I have done with deliberation, I shall never revoke. Go home and tell them that the Emperor has spoken, and they have nothing to do but to submit!"

With a slight inclination, Joseph turned his back; and before the magnates had time to recover themselves and to reply to this haughty, harangue, the Emperor had disappeared and closed the door.

They glanced at one another in speechless indignation. They had expected difficulty; but such insulting rejection of their petition they could never have anticipated. They remembered the day when with this same Joseph in her arms, Maria Theresa had appealed to their fathers for succor; they remembered, too, how in the enthusiasm of their loyalty they had sworn to die for Maria Theresa, their KING!

"He never revokes!" muttered Palfy after a long silence. "You heard him, Magyars, he never revokes!—Shall we suffer him to oppress us?"

"No, no!" was the unanimous reply.

"So be it," said Palfy solemnly. "He has thrown down the gauntlet; we raise it, and strip for the fight.—But for Hungary, this man had been ruined. To-day he would ruin us, and we cast him off. Henceforth our cry is,

"*Moriamur pro rege nostro Constitutione!*"

"*Moriamur pro rege nostro Constitutione!*" echoed the Magyars, every man with his right hand raised to heaven.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RECOMPENSE.

For four weeks, Rachel had been a prisoner in her own house, all persons, with the exception of a Catholic Priest and a Jewish Rabbi, having been refused access to her. But at the expiration of this time a deputy from the imperial chancery was admitted, who had a long interview with the poor girl, and at dusk another visitor presented himself at the door of that gloomy abode. This last one was Baron Eskéles Flies.

The Sentinels had allowed him to pass, and the guards in Rachel's ante-room gave way also, for the Baron's permit to visit his daughter was from the Emperor. With a respectful inclination, they presented the key of the prisoner's room and awaited her father's orders.

"Go below, and wait until I call you," said he.

"Of course, as we are commanded in the permit to obey you, we follow the Emperor's order."

Herr Eskeles thanked them, and putting a ducat in the hand of each, the men departed in a state of supreme satisfaction. They had scarcely left, when the banker bolted the door from the inside, and crossed the room towards the opposite door. His hand trembled so that he could not introduce the key to open it, and he was obliged to retreat to the sofa and there recover himself.

"How will she receive me?" thought he. "They say that she is sadly changed, and that her father would scarcely know his beautiful child again." Oh, my child, will I be able to bear the sight of your grief without falling at your feet, and acknowledging my guilt? But pshaw!—She is safe now I shall take her home, and for every tear that she has shed I will give her a diamond bright as a star. She shall have gold, pearls, riches—and be once more the envy of all the women in Vienna. Yes, my Rachel, yes—Gold, diamonds and happiness!

He turned the key, and the door opened. Not a sound greeted his entrance into that dismal room, wherein four funereal-looking wax-lights were burning at each corner of a square table. Even so had the lights burned in the room where Rachel's mother once lay dead. The banker thought of this as between those flaring lights he saw the pale wan figure, on the sofa that seemed as rigid, as motionless, and as white as a corpse.

Was it indeed Rachel! Those pinched features, those hollow eyes, that figure so bowed with sorrow, could that be his peerless daughter! What had diamonds and pearls in common with that pale spectre?

The banker could scarcely suppress a cry of anguish as he gazed upon the wreck of so much beauty. But he gathered courage to cross the room, and stood before her.

"Rachel," said he in a soft, imploring voice, "do you know me?"

"I know you," replied she without moving, "do you know *me*?"

"My beloved child, my heart recognizes you, and calls you to itself. Come, darling come, and rest within your father's protecting arms. See, they are open to receive you—I have forgiven all, and am ready to devote my whole life to your happiness!"

He opened his arms, but Rachel did not stir. She looked at him, and when he saw the look, his hands dropped nerveless to his side.

"Where is Günther?" asked she. "What have you done with him?"

"I, my child?" exclaimed Eskeles. "The Emperor has detected him in some dishonorable act, (I know not what,) and has sent him as a recruit to Hungary."

"I have heard this fable before," said Rachel, with a glance of scorn. "The priest who was sent to convert, has tried to console me for my loss by dinning in my ears that Günther was a traitor; but I know better. He is the victim of a Jew's revenge. It is you who have accused him with false witnesses, false letters, with all that vengeance can inspire, and wicked gold can buy. You are the accuser of my noble Günther!" By this time she had arisen, and now she stood confronting him, with her wasted finger pointing towards him, and her sunken eyes glowing like lights from a dark, deep cave.

"Who says so? Who has dared to accuse me?" said her father.

"Your face accuses you! Your eyes, that dare not encounter mine! Nay—do not raise your hand in sacrilegious protest, but answer me. By the faith of your ancestors are you not the man who denounced him?"

He could not meet her scrutinizing glance. He averted his face, murmuring. "He who accused him is no better than himself. But it is the Emperor who condemned him."

"The Emperor is miserably befooled," cried Rachel. "He knows not the subtlety of Jewish revenge. But I am of the Jewish race, and I know it. I know my father, and I know my lover!"

"In this hour of reunion we will not discuss the innocence, or guilt of the Emperor's Secretary," said the banker gently. "I am thankful that the dark cloud which has hidden you so long from my sight is lifted, and that all is well with us again."

"All is not well—for between us lies the grave of my happiness, and that grave has sundered us forever. I cannot come to you, my father—the memory of my lover is between us, and that memory—Oh, do not call it a cloud!—'Tis the golden beam of that sun which has set, but whose rays are still warm within my breaking heart. I say nothing to you of all that I have endured during these four weeks of anguish; but this I can tell you, my father, that I have never repented my choice.—I am Günther's for life, and for death which is the birth of immortality!"

"He is a dishonored man!" said Eskeles frowning.

"And I, too, will be dishonored to-morrow," replied Rachel.

Her father started. He had forgotten the disgrace which threatened her.

"Rachel," said he with exceeding tenderness, "I come to rescue you from shame, and suffering."

"To rescue me?" echoed she. "Whither would you have me fly?"

"To the house of your father, my child."

"I have no father," replied she, with a weary sigh. "My father would have forced my heart, as the priest and the rabbi would have forced my belief. But I am free in my faith, my love and my hate; and this freedom will sustain me to-morrow throughout the torture and shame of a disgraceful punishment."

"You surely will not brave the lash!" cried her father, his cheeks blanched with horror at the thought. "You will be womanly, my child, and recant."

"I must speak the truth," said she, interrupting him. "The doors of the Synagogue as well as those of the Church are closed against me. I am no Jewess, and *you* forced me to swear that I would never become a Christian. But what matters it?" continued she, kindling with enthusiasm, "I believe in God—the God of love and mercy, and to-morrow I shall see His face!"

"You would destroy yourself?" cried her father, his senses almost forsaking him.

"No—but do you suppose that I shall survive the severity and the humiliation of the lash which it is the pleasure of the Emperor to inflict upon me? No, my father, I shall die before the executioner has time to strike his second blow!"

"Rachel, my Rachel, do not speak such dreadful words," cried Eskeles, wringing his hands in despair. "You cannot be a Christian, I know it, for their belief is unworthy of a pure soul. How could you ever give the hand of fellowship to a race who have outlawed you because you scorn to utter a falsehood! But confess yourself a Jewess, and all will be well with us once more."

"I shall never return to the Jewish God of wrath and revenge! *My* God is all love. I must acknowledge Him before the world, and die for his sake!"

There was a pause. Rachel was calm and resolute, her father, almost distracted. After a time he spoke again.

"So be it then," cried he, raising his hand to heaven. "Be a Christian—I absolve you from your oath; and O my Rachel! if I sought the world for a proof of my over weening love, it could offer nothing to compare with this sacrifice. Go, my child, and become a Christian."

She shook her head. "The Christian's cruelty has cured me of my love for Christianity. I can never be one of a race who have persecuted my innocent lover. As for you, the cause of his martyrdom, hear my determination, and know that it is inflexible—I am resolved to endure the punishment; and when the blood streams from my back, and

my frantic cries pierce the air until they reach your palace-walls; when in the midst of the gaping populace, my body lies stretched upon the marketplace, dishonored by the hand of the executioner—then shall your revenge have returned to you; for the whole world will point at you as you pass and say, 'He is the father of the woman who was whipped to death by the hangman!'"

"Alas," sobbed the father, "I see that you hate me, and yet I must rescue you, even against your own will. The Emperor has given me a pass to Paris. It is himself who allows me to escape with my poor, misguided child. Come, dear Rachel, come, ere it be too late, and in Paris we can forget our sorrows and begin life anew!"

"No—he has made the law, and he must bear the consequences of his own cruelty. He need not think to rescue himself from the odium of his acts by conniving at my escape! I hate that Emperor, the oppressor of my beloved; and as he dishonored Günther, so shall he dishonor me. Our woes will cry to heaven for vengeance and——"

But Rachel suddenly ceased, and fell back upon a chair. She had no longer the strength to repulse her father, as he raised her in his arms and laid her upon the sofa. He looked into her marble face, and put his lips to hers.

"She has swooned," cried he in despair. "We must fly at once. Rachel, Rachel, awake! The time is almost up—come, we must away!"

She opened her eyes, and looked around. "Come, my daughter," said her father, kissing her wasted hands.

She said nothing, but stared and smiled a vacant smile. Again he took her hands, and saw that they were hot and dry. Her breath, too, was hot, and yet her pulse was feeble and fitful.

Her father, in his agony, dropped on his knees beside the unconscious girl. But this was no time for waiting. He rose to his feet again, and darting from the room, offered a handful of gold to the sentry if he would but seek a physician. Then he returned to Rachel. She lay still with her eyes wide, wide open, while she murmured inaudible words, which he vainly strove to understand.

At length came the physician. He bent over the patient, examined her pulse, felt her forehead, and then turning to the banker, who stood by with his heart throbbing as if it would burst,

"Are you a relative of the lady?" asked he.

"I am her father," replied Eskeles, and even in this terrible hour, he felt a thrill of joy as he spoke the words.

"I regret then to say to you that she is very ill. Her malady is typhoid fever, in its most dangerous form. I fear that she will not recover; she must have been ill for some weeks, and have concealed her illness. Has she suffered mentally of late?"

"Yes, I believe that she has," faltered the banker. "Will she die?"

"I am afraid to give you any hope,—the disease has gone so far. It is strange.—Was there no relative near her, to see how ill she has been for so long a time?"

Gracious heaven! What torture he inflicted upon the guilty father! At that moment he would have recalled Günther and welcomed him as a son, could his presence have saved the child whom himself had murdered!

"Doctor," said he in husky trembling tones, "Doctor, you must save my child. Ask what you will—I am rich, and if you restore her to me, you shall have a million!"

"Unhappily, life cannot be bought with gold," replied the physician. "God alone can restore her. We can do naught but assist nature, and alleviate her sufferings."

"How can we alleviate her suffering?" asked Eskeles humbly, for his spirit was broken.

"By cool drinks, and cold compressions upon her head," said the physician. "Are there no women here to serve her?"

"No," murmured the banker. "My daughter is a prisoner. She is Rachel Eskeles Flies."

"Ah! The Deist who was to have suffered to morrow? Poor, poor child, neither Church nor Synagogue can avail her now, for God will take her to himself."

"But there is a possibility of saving her, is there not?" asked the father imploringly. "We must try everything, for——she *must* be saved!"

"*Must?*" repeated the physician. "Think you because you are rich that you can bribe Heaven? See, rather, how impotent your wealth has been to make your beautiful child happy, (for I know her story,) and now in spite of all the gold for which you have sacrificed her, she will die of a broken heart!"

Just then Rachel uttered a loud shriek, and clasping both her hands around her head, cried out that her brain was on fire.

"Cold compressions—quick"—exclaimed the physician imperatively; and the banker staggered into Rachel's dressing-room—the room which Günther had so daintily fitted up—and brought water, and a soft fine towel, which his trembling hands could scarcely bind upon his poor child's head. Then as her moaning ceased, and her arms dropped, he passed into an ecstacy of joy, for now he began to hope that she would be spared to him.

"We must have female attendance here," said the physician. "She must be put to bed and tenderly watched. Go, Baron, and bring your servants. I will see the Emperor and take upon myself the responsibility of having infringed his orders. Before such imminent peril, all imprisonment is at an end."

"I cannot leave her," returned the Baron. "You say she has but few days to live; if so, I cannot spare one second of her life. I entreat of you, take my carriage and, in mercy, bring the servants for me. O, listen! she screams again—Doctor, go, I entreat! Here—fresh compressions—water! O, be quick!"

And again the wretched man bent over his child, and laid the cloths

upon her head. The physician had gone, and he was alone with his treasure. He felt it a relief to be able to kiss her hands, to weep aloud, to throw himself upon his knees and pray to the God of Israel to spare his idol!

The night went by, the servants came, and the physician, examining his patient again, promised to return in a few hours. Rachel was carried to her bed, and hour after hour, the banker sat patient and watchful, listening to every moan, echoing every sigh; afraid to trust his precious charge to any one, lest the vigilance of another might fail.

A day and another night went by, and still no sleep had come over those glaring eyes. But she wept bitter tears, and when he heard her broken-murmured words of anguish, he thought he would go mad!

But sometimes in her fever-madness she smiled and was happy. Then she laughed aloud, and spoke to her beloved, who was always at her side. She had not once pronounced the name of her father; she seemed to have forgotten him, remembering nothing in all her past life save her love for Günther.

Often her father knelt beside her, and with tears streaming from his eyes, implored a look, a word—one single word of forgiveness. But Rachel laughed and sang, heedless of the despairing wretch who lay stricken to the earth at her side; while the lover whom she caressed was far away unconscious of the blessing.

Suddenly she uttered a wild cry, and starting up, threw her arms convulsively about. Now she invoked the vengeance of heaven upon Günther's murderers, and at last—at last, was heard the name of her father *She cursed him!*

With a cry as piercing as that of the poor maniac, Eskeles Flies sank upon his knees and wept aloud.

Rachel gradually grew more tranquil; and now she lay back on her pillow with a happy smile once more upon her lips. But she spoke not a word. Once more she sighed "Günther," and then relapsed into silence.

Into a silence that seemed so breathless and so long that her father arose, frightened, from his knees. He bent over his smiling child, and her face seemed transfigured. Not a sigh stirred her bosom, not a moan fluttered from her lips. But that smile remained so long unchanged, and her eyes——surely they were glazed!

Yes!——Rachel was dead.*

* The sad fate of Gunther and of his beautiful Rachel is mentioned by Hormayr in his work: The Emperor Francis and Metternich. A fragment. P. 78.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE REBELLION IN NETHERLANDS.

The Emperor Joseph was in the Crimea on a visit to the Empress of Russia. Here he witnessed a great triumph prepared for Catharine by Potemkin. It was her first greeting at Sebastapol, from that navy which was to confer upon Russia, the dominion of the Black Sea.

Potemkin invited Catharine and Joseph to a dinner served in a pavilion erected for the occasion. The festivities were interrupted by the clash of military music; and as the Russian Empress and the Austrian Emperor stepped out of the pavilion, the fleet arranged in line of battle, was before them, and greeted them with a salute of a hundred guns. As they ceased, Potemkin turned to Catharine, and cried out in tones of joyful enthusiasm:

"The voice of the cannon proclaims that the Black Sea has found its mistress, and that ere long the flag of Russia shall wave triumphant over the towers of Constantinople.*

On another occasion, Joseph was sailing around the bay of Sebastopol, in company with the Empress, Potemkin, and the French Ambassador. As they neared the fleet, Potemkin pointing out the five and twenty vessels of war, exclaimed,

"These ships await my Sovereign's word to spread their sails to the wind, and steer for Constantinople."*

As Potemkin spoke, Catharine's eyes were turned to the south where Stamboul still defied her rule, and ambitious aspirations filled her heart. Joseph, however, looked down upon the foaming waters, and no one saw the curl of his lip, as Catharine and Potemkin continued the subject, and spoke of the future Greek Empire.

For Joseph had lost all faith in the brilliant schemes with which Catharine had dazzled his imagination at St. Petersburg.

The enthusiasm with which he had followed her ambitious vagaries, had long since died out, and he had awakened from his dreams of greatness.

All the pomp and splendor which Potemkin had conjured from the ashes of a conquered country, could not deceive Joseph.

Behind the stately edifices which had sprung up like the palaces of Aladdin, he saw the ruins of a desolated land; in the midst of the cheering multitudes, whom Potemkin had assembled together to do homage to Catharine, he saw the grim-visaged Tartars, whose eyes were glowing

*See Conflict for the possession of the Black Sea. Theodore Mundt, pages 253 and 255.

with deadly hatred of her who had either murdered, or driven into exile fifty thousand of their race.

Nevertheless, he entered with his usual grace and affability into all Catharine's schemes, for the improvement of her new domains. Not far from Sebastopol, she proposed to lay the foundations of a new city, and the Emperor was invited to take a part in the ceremonies.

Amid the booming of cannon, the loud strains of martial music, and the cheers of her followers, the Empress laid the first stone of the city of Caterinoslaw, and after her, the Emperor took up the mortar and trowel, and laid the second one. He performed his part of the drama with becoming solemnity; but about an hour later, as he was taking his customary afternoon walk with the French Ambassador Mr. de Sigur, he laughed and said,

"The Empress and I have been working magic to-day; for in the course of a few minutes we have built up an entire city. She laid the first stone of the place, and I the last."*

But in the very midst of these festivities, a courier arrived with letters for the Emperor from Prince Kaunitz—The Prince besought him to return at once; for the discontent which had existed from the commencement of his reign in Netherlands, had kindled into open rebellion, which threatened the imperial throne itself. Joseph took hasty leave of Catharine, but renewed his promise to sustain and assist her, whenever she put into execution her designs against Turkey.

On the Emperor's arrival at Vienna, he found new couriers were awaiting him, with still more alarming intelligence. The people were frantic, and with the clergy at their head, demanded the restoration of the "*Joyeuse Entrée.*"

"And all this," cried the Emperor, "because I have summoned a soap-boiler to Vienna for trial."

"Yes, your Majesty, but the *Joyeuse Entrée* exacts that the people of Brabant shall be tried in their own country," said Prince Kaunitz, with a shrug. "The Brabantians know every line of their constitution by heart."

"Well, they shall learn to know me also by heart," returned Joseph with irritation. "Brabant is mine; it is but a province of my Empire, and the Brabantians, like the Hungarians, are nothing but Austrians. The bishop of Frankenberg is not lord of Brabant, and I am resolved to enlighten this priest-ridden people in spite of their writhings."

"But unhappily the priests in Begium and Brabant, are mightier than your Majesty," returned Kaunitz. "The bishop of Frankenberg is the veritable Lord of Brabant, for he controls the minds and hearts of the people there, while your Majesty can do nothing but command their ungracious obedience. It is the bishop of Frankenberg who prejudiced the people against the imperial seminaries."

"I can well believe that they are distasteful to a bigot," cried Joseph, "for the theological course of the priests who are to be educated there

*Masson. Memoires secretes sur la Russie, Vol. 1.

is prescribed by me. I do not intend that the children of Levi shall monopolize the minds and hearts of my people any longer.* This haughty Prelate shall learn to know that I am his Emperor, and that the arm of the Pope is powerless to shield where I have resolved to strike."

"If your Majesty goes to work in this fashion, instead of crushing the influence of the Bishop, you may irretrievably lose your own. Belgium is a dangerous country. The people cherish their abuses as constitutional rights, and each man regards the whole as his individual property."

"And because I desire to make them happy and free, they cry out against me as an innovator who violates these absurd rights. O, my friend, I feel sometimes so exhausted by my struggles with ignorance and selfishness, that I often think it would be better to leave the stupid masses to their fate!"

"They deserve nothing better," replied Kaunitz, with his usual phlegm. "They are thankless children, whom he can win, who feeds them with sugar. Your Majesty perhaps has not sufficiently conciliated their weakness. You have been too honest in your opposition to their rotten privileges. Had you undermined the *Joyeuse Entrée* by degrees, it would have fallen of itself. But you have attempted to blow it up, and the result is that these Belgian children cry out that the temple of liberty is on fire, and your Majesty is the incendiary. Now had you allowed the Soap-boiler to be tried by the laws of his own land, the first to condemn and punish him, would have been his own countrymen: but your course of action has transformed him into a martyr, and now the Belgians are mourning for him as a jewel above all price!"

"I cannot make use of artifice, or stratagem; with the banner of Truth in my hand, I march forward to the battle of life."

"But with your eyes fixed upon that banner, you may fall into the precipices which your enemies have dug for you. I have often told your Majesty that politics can never be successful without stratagem. Let your standard be that of Truth if you will, but when the day looks unpropitious, fold it up, that fools may rally around it unawares."

"Perhaps you are right," sighed the Emperor; "but all this is very sad. I have meant well by my subjects, but they misinterpret my actions, and accuse me of tyranny. I go to them with a heart full of love, and they turn upon me as though I were an enemy. But I will not relent! I must be free to act as seems best to myself. The *Joyeuse Entrée* is in my way. 'Tis a Gordian knot which must be unloosed before Belgium can be truly mine—I have no time to untie it, it must be cut in twain!"

Just then the door of the Chancery opened, and one of the Secretaries came forward.

"Sire," said he, "a courier has arrived from Brussels, with dispatches from Count Belgiojoso, to his Highness."

"I had ordered my dispatches to be sent after me, your Majesty," said

* The "*Joyeuse Entrée*" was the old Constitution which Philip the Good, on his entrance into Brussels, had granted to the Belgians.

Kaunitz, taking the papers, and motioning the Secretary to withdraw. "Does your Majesty allow me to read them?"

"By all means. Let us hope that they bring us good news. I gave stringent orders to Belgiojoso to see that my will was carried out in Belgium. I bade him inform the people that they should not have their precious Soap-boiler back. That he was my subject, and I intended to have him tried here. I told him moreover that like all my other subjects, the Belgians must pay new taxes without expecting to be consulted as to the expediency of the measure."

"Belgiojoso has obeyed your Majesty's commands," remarked Kaunitz who had just finished the first dispatch. "And the consequence is that the good people of Brussels broke his windows for him."

"They shall pay dear for those windows," cried Joseph.

"He told them, furthermore, that in spite of the eighth article of their constitution, they should pay extraordinary taxes, whereupon they answered him with the fifty-ninth article."

"What says the fifty-ninth article?"

"It says that when the sovereign violates, in any serious way, the rights guaranteed by the *Joyeuse Entrée*, the people are released from all obligations towards him."

"That is the language of treason!" cried Joseph.

"And treason it is," returned Kaunitz, folding the second dispatch. "The people collected in the streets, and the burghers, arming themselves, marched to the palace of the Governor-general and demanded admittance."

"And he, what did he do?"

"He received them, sire," said Kaunitz despondingly.

"And what said he to the insolent demands of the rebels?—You are silent, Kaunitz, and I see in your countenance that you have bad news for me. I know my brother-in-law, Albert of Saxony, or rather, I know my sister Christine. From her youth she has been my enemy, forever crossing me in every purpose of my life! Christine was sure to prompt him to something in opposition to my wishes."

"It would appear that you are right, sire," replied Kaunitz. "The burghers exacted of the Govenor-general that they should be reinstated in all the rights of the *Joyeuse Entrée*, without exception whatsoever."

Their *Joyeuse Entrée* is nothing but a mass of impertinent privileges, which Christine herself could not desire to concede," cried Joseph. "I am curious then to know how my brother-in-law crept out of the difficulty. What was his answer?"

"He asked time for reflection, sire—twelve hours. It was eleven o'clock in the morning when the burghers came to him."

"Did they go quietly home then?"

"No, sire. They surrounded the palace, their numbers continually increasing until the place was filled with armed men supported by thousands of insurgents, who rent the air with cries of 'Give us the *Joyeuse Entrée*! The *Joyeuse Entrée* forever!'"

"Kaunitz, the answer of the Elector of Saxony must have been a disgraceful one, or you would not be at such pains to describe the clamors of the rebellious multitude. Tell me at once what occurred."

"Sire, when the twelve hours had expired, the burghers forced the palace-doors, and two hundred armed men rushed unannounced into the presence of the Duke."

"Well—well," cried Joseph breathing heavily.

"The Govenor was obliged to yield, and to promise them that their constitution should be reinstated!"

The Emperor uttered a cry of fury, and grew pale with rage. "He reinstated the *Joyeuse Entrée!* He presumed to do it! Did I not tell you that Christine was my enemy! She it is who has brought this humiliation upon me! She has dared revoke what I had commanded!—Oh, how those vulgar rebels must have laughed, to see that with their pestiferous breath they had power to blow away my edicts like so many card-houses!"

"Not at all, sire," said Kaunitz with composure. "There was no jesting among the people, although they were very happy, and passed the nights in shouts of joy. Brussels was illuminated, and six hundred young men drew the carriage of the Elector and Electress to the theatre amid cries of 'Long live the Emperor! Long live the *Joyeuse Entrée!*'"

"Long live the Emperor!" cried Joseph contemptuously. "They treat me as savages do their wooden idols. When they are unpropitious, they beat them; when otherwise, they set them up and adore them again. Those over whom I reign, however, shall see that I am no wooden idol, but a man and a monarch, who draws his sword to avenge an affront from whomsoever received. Blood alone will extinguish the fire of this rebellion, and it shall be quenched in the blood of the rebels."

"Many a throne has been overturned by the wild waves of human blood," said Kaunitz thoughtfully, "and many a well-meaning prince has been branded by history as a tyrant, because he would have forced reform upon nations unprepared to receive it. The insurgent states have some show of justice on their side; and if your Majesty adopts severe measures towards them, they will parade themselves before the world as martyrs."

"And yet I alone am the martyr," cried Joseph bitterly. "The martyr of liberty and enlightenment. O, Kaunitz how hard it is to be forever misunderstood! To see those whom we love led astray by the wickedness of others! I must crush this rebellion by force, and yet the real criminals are the clergy."

"If you think so," said Kaunitz shrewdly, "then be lenient towards the misguided people. Perhaps mildness may prevail. Belgium is united to a man, and if you enforce your will, you must crush the entire nation. Such extreme measures must be resorted to, only, when all other means shall have been exhausted."

"What other means do you counsel?" asked Joseph, irritated. "Would you have me treat with the rabble?"

"No, sire, but treat with the people. When an entire nation are united, they rise to equality with their rulers, and it is no condescension then on the part of the sovereign if he listen to their grievances and temporise with the aggrieved. You have not yet tried personal negotiations with your Netherlanders, sire. Call a deputation of them to Vienna. We shall thereby gain time, the insurgents will grow more dispassionate, and perhaps we may reason them into acquiescence. Once get as far as an armistice with your rebels, and the game is yours; for insurgents are poor diplomatists. Let me advise your Majesty to dissimulate your anger, and send conciliatory messages."

"Well, well," said the Emperor with a deep sigh, "be it so. I will do as you like, but I must forever and ever yield my will to that of others. Call a deputation of the provinces and cite the Governor-general and his wife also to Vienna. I will investigate as a father, before I condemn as a judge. But if this last proof of my goodness should be of no avail, then I shall strike—and if blood flow in torrents—upon *their* heads and not mine be the sin!"*

CHAPTER XXX.

THE IMPERIAL SUITOR.

A half year had passed away. The deputation from Netherlands had visited Vienna, and had been deeply impressed with the affability of the Emperor. They returned home, taking with them his assurance that their time-honored usages should be respected, and that Joseph himself would be the guardian of their ancient rights. He merely desired to free them from "certain abuses which in the lapse of time had crept into their constitution." To this end he promised that an imperial delegation should visit Brussels to consult with the States.

The two Envoys publicly sent by the Emperor were Count Von Trautmannsdorf and General d'Alton. But to these he added a secret envoy in the person of Count Dietrichstein, the former Marshal of Maria Theresa's household.

"I know that my two ambassadors will find a wise mentor in you, Count," said Joseph as Dietrichstein was taking leave of him. "I thank you for sacrificing your pleasant home with its associations, to my interest; for no man, so well as you, can enlighten public opinion as to my character and intentions."

"Your Majesty knows that not only my comfort, but my life are at

* Joseph's own words. See Hubner II. P. 454.

the disposal of my Emperor," replied the Count. "I deserve no credit for this; it comes to me as a proud inheritance from an ancestry who have ever been the loyal subjects of the House of Hapsburg."

"I wish that I knew how to testify my sense of your loyalty, and to prove to you that the Hapsburgers have grateful hearts," exclaimed the Emperor.

"Sire," said Count Dietrichstein solemnly, "it is in your power to do so. If your Majesty really thinks that my family are deserving of it, you can confer upon us a very great favor."

"Speak, then," replied Joseph eagerly. "Speak, for your wish is already granted. I well know that Count Dietrichstein can ask nothing that I would not accord!"

"I accept your Majesty's kindness," said Dietrichstein, in the same solemn tone. "My request is easy of fulfillment; and will give but little trouble to my beloved Sovereign. It concerns my daughter Therèse, whom I shall leave behind in Vienna."

"You leave Therese?" said Joseph coloring.

"Yes, your Majesty. My daughter remains under the protection of her aunt."

"Ah, Therèse is to be left!" cried the Emperor, and an expression of happiness flitted over his features.

Count Dietrichstein saw it, and a cloud passed over his face. "I leave her here," continued he, "because the mission with which your Majesty has entrused me, might possibly become dangerous. Unhappily, however, for young girls, there is danger everywhere; and for this reason, I scarcely deem the protection of her aunt sufficient."

While Count Dietrichstein had been speaking, Joseph had seemed uneasy; and finally he had walked to the window, where he was now looking out in to the square. The Count was annoyed by this proceeding; he frowned and crossing the room, came directly behind the Emperor.

"Sire," said he, in a distinct voice, "I wish to marry Therèse."

"With whom?" asked Joseph without turning.

"With your Majesty's lord of the bed-chamber, Count Kinsky."

"And Therèse?" asked Joseph, without turning around. "Does she love the Count."

"No, sire, she has never encouraged him. She affects to have a repugnance to marriage, and has continually urged me to allow her to enter a convent. But I will not give my consent to such a ridiculous whim. Count Kinsky is a man of honor; he loves Therèse, and will make her happy. Therèse is the true daughter of my house, sire; a wish of your Majesty to her would be a law. I therefore beg of you as the greatest favor you could bestow, to urge her to accept Count Kinsky."

The Emperor turned hastily around, and his face was scarlet. "How?" said he in a faltering voice. "You exact of me that I should woo your daughter for Count Kinsky?"

"It is this favor, sire, which you have so graciously promised to grant."

The Emperor made no reply. He gazed at the Count with gloomy,

searching eyes. The latter met his glance with quiet firmness. A long pause ensued, and the Emperor's face changed gradually until it became very pale. He sighed and seemed to awake from a reverie.

"Count Dietrichstein," said he in a trembling voice, "you have pointed out to me the means of serving you. I will do your behest, and urge your daughter to be the wife of Count Kinsky."

"There spoke my noble Emperor!" cried the Count, deeply moved, while he pressed the hand which had been extended by Joseph, to his lips. "In the name of my ancestors, I thank you, sire."

"Do not thank me, my friend," said Joseph sadly. "You have understood me, and I, you,—that is all. When shall I see your daughter?"

"Sire, I leave Vienna this evening, and I would gladly leave Therèse an affianced bride. The marriage can take place on my return."

"Very well," said Joseph with a smothered sigh, "I will go at once. Is the Countess in the city?"

"No, sire, she is at the villa near Schönbrunn. But I will send for her, and when she arrives, she shall have the honor of an interview with your Majesty."

"No, no," said Joseph hastily; "let her remain at the villa, and enjoy one more day of maiden freedom. I myself will drive there to see her. I shall be obliged to renounce the pleasure of your company thither, for I know that you have important business to-day to transact with Prince Kaunitz."

A distrustful look was the reply to this proposition. The Emperor divined the cause and went on, "But if you *cannot* accompany, you can follow me with Count Kinsky, that is if you really think that I can persuade the Countess to accept him."

"I know it, sire. Therèse will be as docile to the wishes of your Majesty as her father. As I am ready, at your desire, to renounce the happiness of accompanying you to my villa, so she, if you speak the word, will renounce her foolish fancies, and consent to be Kinsky's wife."

"We can try," said the Emperor moodily. But he smiled as he gave his hand to Count Dietrichstein, who perfectly reassured, went off to his affairs of State.

When the Count had left the room, the expression of Joseph's face changed at once. With a deep sigh he threw himself into an arm-chair, and for some time sat there motionless; but when the little French clock on the mantle-piece struck the hour, he started up exclaiming, "eleven o'clock! Time flies, and my word has been given—alas, it must be redeemed!—An Emperor has no right to grieve; but O, how hard it is, sometimes, to perform one's duty!—Well—it must be:—I am pledged to fulfill the motto of my escutcheon: "*Virtute et exemplo.*"

A quarter of an hour later, the Emperor was on his way to the villa, which was situated in the midst of a fine park not far from the palace of Schönbrunn. Joseph drove himself, accompanied by a jockey, who stood behind. The people on the road greeted their Sovereign as he passed. He returned the greeting, and no one saw how pale, and wretched he

looked, for he, like his mother, was fond of fast driving, and to-day his horse sped like the wind.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE LAST DREAM OF LOVE.

THERESE Von Dietrichstein was alone in the little pavilion which her father had built expressly for her. It consisted of a parlor and a boudoir. The parlor was fitted up without magnificence, but with great elegance. Herein Therèse was accustomed to receive her intimate associates. But no one ever entered the boudoir without an express invitation, for it was her sanctuary and studio. Here the Countess was transformed into an artist; there she studied music and painting, in both of which she excelled. Her father, and her very dear friends, knew of her great proficiency in art, but her reputation went no further, for Therèse was as shy as a gazelle, and as anxious to conceal her talents as many women are to parade them.

At her father's hotel, Therèse received the distinguished guests who visited there, with the stately courtesy befitting a high-born Countess; but in her little pavilion she was the simple, and enthusiastic child of Art. Her boudoir contained little besides a harp, a harpsichord and an easel which stood by the arched window opening into a flower-garden. Near the easel was a small marble table covered with palettes, brushes, and crayons. When Therèse retired to this boudoir, her maid was accustomed to keep watch lest she should be surprised by visitors. If any were announced, Therèse came out of her boudoir, and carefully closing the door, awaited her friends in the parlor.

To-day she sat in this boudoir, feeling so secure from visitors that she had raised the *portière* leading to her parlor, and had flung wide the casement which opened upon the park. The sweet summer air was fanning her brow as she sat at the harp, singing a song of her own composition. She had just concluded; her little white hands had glided from the strings to her lap, and her head rested against the harp, above the pillar of which a golden eagle with outstretched wings seemed to be keeping watch over the young girl, as though to shield her from approaching misfortune.

With her head bent over her harp, she sat musing until two tears which had long been gathering in her eyes, fell upon her hands. As she felt them, she raised her head. Her dark blue eyes were full of sorrow, and her cheeks were glowing with blushes.

"What right have I to weep over a treasure which is as far from me as heaven is from earth?" said she. "I will not repine, so long as I am free to dream of him without crime. But what if I should lose that freedom? What if my father should wish to force me into marriage? O, then, I should take refuge behind the friendly portals of a convent!"

"Why take refuge in a convent?" said a soft voice behind her.

Therèse sprang up with such wild agitation, that the harp with a clang, fell back against the wall. Too well she knew this musical voice—it was the voice which spoke to her in dreams; and as its tones fell so suddenly upon her ear, she felt as if a bolt from heaven had struck her heart, and knew not whether she would die of ecstacy or fright.

"Joseph!" exclaimed she, all unconscious of the word, and she sank back into her chair, not daring to raise her eyes. With one bound, the Emperor was at her side, taking her hands, and pressing them within his own.

"Pardon me, Countess," said he tenderly, "I have startled you. It was wrong of me to send away your maid, and to present myself unannounced. In my selfishness, I would not wait for form, and forgot that my visit was totally unexpected. Say that you forgive me, let me read my pardon in your heavenly eyes."

Therèse slowly raised her head, and tried to speak. She longed to say that she had nothing to forgive, but had not the courage to meet the glances of those eyes which were fixed upon her with an expression of passionate entreaty, and seemed to be gazing into her heart, reading its most cherished, most consecrated secrets.

Did he understand the language of her agitation? "Look at me, Therèse," whispered he. "It is an eternity since we met, and now—once more look at your angel-face, for I come to bid adieu to it forever."

She started, repeating his words, "bid adieu—adieu!"

"Yes, sweet one, adieu. Some wiseacre has guessed the secret which I had fondly imagined was known to God, and to myself only. And yet, Therèse, I have never even told yourself how passionately I love you! My eyes must have betrayed me to others, for since that happy day at Schönbrunn when I kissed the rose which had dropped from your hair, you have not been seen at court. I should never have told you this, my best beloved, but the anguish of this hour has wrung the confession from me. It will die away from your memory like the tones of a strange melody, and be lost in the jubilant harmony of your happy married life."

He turned away that she might not see the tears which had gathered in his eyes and were ready to fall. As for Therèse, she rose to her feet. For one moment, her heart stood still—the next, her blood was coursing so wildly through her veins that she thought he must surely hear its mad throbbings in the stillness of that little room. The Emperor turned again, and his face was grave, but calm. He had mastered his emotion, and ashamed of the weakness of the avowal he had made, he determined to atone for it. He took the hand of the Countess and led her to a divan, where he gently drew her down, while she obeyed, as though

her will had suddenly been merged into his. She was conscious of one thing only. He was there! He whose name was written upon her heart, though she had never uttered it until that day!

He stood before her with folded arms and contemplated her as an enthusiast might look upon the statue of a saint.

"Therèse," said he after a long silence, "why did you say that you would go into a convent?"

Therèse grew pale and shivered, but said nothing. Joseph, bending down and looking into her eyes, repeated his question.

"Because my father wishes me to marry a man whom I do not love," replied Therèse, with a candor which yielded to the magic of his glance, as the rose gives her heart's sweet perfume to the wooing of the summer breeze.

"But, Therèse," said the Emperor, mindful of his promise, "you must obey your father. It is your duty."

"No—I shall never marry," returned Therèse eagerly.

"Marriage is the only vocation fit for a woman," replied Joseph. "The wife is commanded to follow her husband."

"Yes, to follow the husband of her love," interrupted she with enthusiasm. "And O! it must be heaven on earth to follow the beloved one through joy and sorrow, to feel with his heart, to see with his eyes, to live for his love, or, if God grant such supreme happiness, to die for his sake!"

"Therèse!" exclaimed Joseph passionately, as gazing upon her inspired countenance, he forgot everything except his love!

She blushed, and her eyes sought the floor. "No," said she as if communing with herself, "this blessing, I shall never know."

"And why not?" cried he. "Why should one so young, so beautiful, so gifted as you, cast away the ties of social life and pass beyond the joyless portals of a convent?"

Therèse said nothing. She sat ashamed, bewildered, entranced; and in her confusion, her beauty grew tenfold greater. The Emperor's resolutions were fast melting away.

Again he besought her in tender tones. "Tell me, my Therèse, confide in me, for I swear that your happiness is dearer to me than my life." He bent closer, and seized her hands. His touch was electric, for a tremor took possession of them both, and they dared not look at one another. Joseph recovered himself and began in low, pleading tones. "Look at me, beloved, and let me read my answer in your truthful eyes. Look at me, for those eyes are my light, my life, my heaven!"

Therèse could not obey. Her head sank lower and lower, and deep, convulsive sighs rent her heart. The Emperor, scarcely knowing what he did, knelt before her, and once more taking her willing hands, she met his glance of intoxicated love, and unable to resist it, murmured,

"Because I love—thee."

Had he heard aright! Was it not the trees whispering to the summer air? Or the birds cooing beneath the eaves? Or had an angel

orne the message from that heaven which to-day was so radiant and so ilver-bright!

He still knelt, and pressed her trembling hands to his lips, while his ce was lit up with a joy which Therèse had never seen there before.

"O have I found the last star of my dark and solitary life!" said he last. "Are you mine at last, shy gazelle, that so long have escaped e, bounding higher and higher up the icy steeps of this cheerless world! , Therèse, why did I not find you in the early years of life? And yet hank heaven that you are mine for these few fleeting moments, for ey have taken me back to the days of my youth and its beautiful illuions! Ah, Therèse, from the first hour when I beheld you advancing n your father's arm to greet me, proud as an Empress, calm as a vestal, beautiful as Aprodite, my heart acknowledged you as its mistress! Since then I have been your slave, kissing your shadow as it went before me, and yet not conscious of my insane passion until your father saw me with that rose—and then I knew that I loved you forever! Yes, Therèse, you are the last love of an unfortunate man, whom the world calls an Emperor, but who lies at your feet, as the beggar before his ideal of the glorious Madonna! Bend to me, Madonna, and let me drink my last draught of love! I shall soon have quaffed it, and then —your father will be here to remind me that you are a high-born Countess, the priceless treasure of whose love I may not possess! Kiss me, my Therèse, and consecrate my lips to holy resignation!"

And Therèse, too bewildered to resist, bent forward. Their lips met, his arms were around her, and time, place, station, honor—everything vanished before the might of their love.

Suddenly they heard an exclamation—and there, at the *portière*, stood the father and the suitor of Therèse, their pale and angry faces turned towards the lovers.

The Emperor, burning with shame and fury, sprang to his feet. Therèse, with a faint cry, hid her face in her hands, and trembling with fear awaited her sentence.

There was a deep silence. Each one seemed afraid to speak, for the first word uttered in that room might be treason. With dark and sullen faces, the two noblemen looked at the imperial culprit, who leaning against the window, with head upturned to heaven, seemed scarcely able to sustain the weight of his own anguish. The stillness was insupportable, and it was his duty to break it. He glanced at the two men who, immovable and frowning, awaited his explanation.

Joseph turned to Therèse, who had not yet withdrawn her hands. She felt as if she could never face the world again.

"Rise, Therèse, and give me your hand," said he authoritatively.

She obeyed at once, and the Emperor, pressing that trembling hand within his own, led her to her father.

"Count Dietrichstein," said he, "you reminded me to-day of the long-tried loyalty of your house, and asked me, as your reward, to advise your daughter's acceptance of the husband you have chosen for her. I

have fulfilled my promise and Therèse has consented to obey your commands. She promises to renounce her dream of entering a convent, and to become the wife of Count Kinsky. Is it not so, Therèse? Have I not your approval in promising these things to your father?"

"It is so," murmured Therèse, turning pale as death.

"And now, Count Dietrichstein," continued Joseph, "I will allow you to postpone your mission to Brussels, so that before you leave Vienna, you may witness the nuptials of your daughter. In one week the marriage will be solemnized in the imperial chapel. Count Kinsky, I deliver your bride into your hands. Farewell! I shall meet you in the chapel."

He bowed and hurried away. He heard the cry which broke from the lips of Therèse, although he did not turn his head when her father's voice called loudly for help. But seeing that the Countess's maid was walking in the park, he overtook her, saying hastily, "Go quickly to the pavilion; the Countess Therèse has fainted."

Then he hastened away, not keeping the walks, but tramping heedlessly over the flowers, and dashing past the lilacs and laburnums, thinking of that fearful day when Adam was driven from Paradise, and wondering whether the agony of the first man who sinned had been greater than his to day, when the sun was setting upon the last dream of love, which he would ever have in this world!

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE TURKISH WAR.

The bolt had fallen. Russia had declared war against Turkey. On the return of the Emperor from his unfortunate pilgrimage to Count Dietrichstein's villa, three couriers awaited him, from Petersburg, Constantinople and Berlin. Besides various dispatches from Count Cobenzl, the courier from Petersburg brought an autographic letter from the Empress. Catharine reminded the Emperor of the promise which he had made in St. Petersburg and renewed at Cherson, and announced that the hour had arrived for its fulfillment. The enmity so long smothered under the ashes of a simulated peace, had kindled and broken out into the flames of open war.

The Porte himself had broken the peace. On account of some arbitrary act of the Russian Ambassador, he had seized and confined him in the Seven Towers. Russia had demanded his release and satisfaction for the insult. The Sultan had replied by demanding the restoration of

the Crimea and the withdrawal of the Russian fleet from the Black Sea.

The disputants had called in the Austrian Internuncio, but all diplomacy was vain. Indeed neither Russia, Turkey, nor Austria, had placed any reliance upon the negotiations for peace, for while they were pending, the three powers were all assiduously preparing for war. In the spring of 1788, the Austrian Internuncio declined any further attempt at mediation, and hostilities between Russia and Turkey were renewed.

Joseph received the tidings with an outburst of joy. They lifted a load of grief from his heart, for war, to him, was balsam for every sorrow.

"Now I shall be cured of this last wound!" exclaimed he, as he paced his cabinet, the dispatches in his hand. "God is merciful—He has sent the remedy, and I shall feel once more like a sovereign and a man! How I long to hear the bullets hiss and the battle rage! There are no myrtles for me on earth; perchance I may yet be permitted to gather its laurels. Welcome, O, war! Welcome the march, the camp, and the battle-field!"

He rang and commanded the presence of Field-marshal Lacy. Then he read his dispatches again, from time to time glancing impatiently at the door. Finally it opened and a page announced the Field-marshal. Joseph came hurriedly forward and grasped the hands of his long-tried friend.

"Lacy," cried he, "from this day you shall be better pleased than you have been with me of late. I have seen your reproving looks—nay do not deny it—for they have been as significant as words; and if I made no answer, it was perhaps because I was guilty, and had nothing to say. You have sighed over my dejection for months past, dear friend, but it has vanished with the tidings I have just received. I am ready to rush out into the storm, bold and defiant as Ajax!"

"O how it rejoices my heart to hear such words," replied Lacy, pressing Joseph's hand. "I recognise my hero, my Emperor again, and victory is throned upon his noble brow! With those flashing eyes and that triumphant bearing, you will inspire your Austrians with such enthusiasm, that every man of them will follow whithersoever his commander leads!"

"Ah," cried Joseph joyfully, "you have guessed then why I requested your presence here! Yes, Lacy, War is not only welcome to you and to me, but I know that it will also rejoice the hearts of the Austrian army. And now, I invite you to accompany me on my campaign against the Turks, and I give you chief command of my armies; for your valor and patriotism entitle you to the distinction."

"Your Majesty knows that my life is consecrated to your service," replied Lacy with strong emotion. "You know with what pride I would fight at your side, secure that victory must always perch upon the banners of my gallant Emperor."

"And you rejoice, do you not, Lacy, that our foe is to be the Moslem?"

Lacy was silent for awhile. "I should rejoice from my soul," replied he with some hesitation, "if Austria were fighting her own battles."

"Our ally is distasteful to you?" asked Joseph laughing. "You have not yet learned to love Russia?"

"I have no right to pass judgment upon those whom your Majesty has deemed worthy of your alliance, sire."

"No evasions, Lacy. You are pledged to truth when you enter these palace-walls."

"Well, sire, if we are in the Palace of Truth, I must confess to a prejudice against Russia and Russia's Empress. Catharine calls for your Majesty's assistance, not to further the cause of justice or of right, but to aid her in making new conquests."

"I shall not permit her to make any new conquests," cried Joseph. "She may fight out her quarrel with Turkey, and so far, I shall keep my promise and sustain her. But I shall lend my sanction to none of her ambitious schemes. I suffered the Porte to cede Tauris to Catharine, because this cession was of inestimable advantage to me. It protected my boundaries from the Turk himself, and then it produced dissension between the Courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin, and so deprived the latter of her powerful ally.* But having permitted Russia to take possession of the Crimea, the aspect of affairs is changed. I never shall suffer the Russians to establish themselves in Constantinople. The Turban, I conceive to be a safer neighbor for Austria than the hat.* At this present time, Russia offers me the opportunity of retaking Belgrade and avenging the humiliation sustained by my father at the hands of the Porte. For two hundred years these barbarians of the east have been guilty of bad faith towards my ancestors, and the time has arrived when, as the avenger of all mankind, I shall deliver Europe from the Infidel, and the world from a race who for centuries has been the scourge of every Christian nation."†

"And in this glorious struggle of Christianity and civilization against Islamism and barbarism, I shall be at my Emperor's side and witness his triumph! This is a privilege which the last drop of my blood would be inadequate to buy!"

The Emperor again gave his hand. "I knew that you would be as glad to follow me as a war-horse to follow the trumpet's call. This time we shall have no child's play;—it shall be war, grim, bloody war! —And now to work. In one hour, the courier must depart, who bears my manifesto to the Porte. No, Lacy," continued the Emperor, as Lacy prepared to leave, "do not go. As commander-in-chief, you should be thoroughly acquainted with the premises of our affair with Turkey and you must hear both the manifestoes which I am about to dictate. The first of course declares war against the Porte. The second is perhaps nothing more than a letter to the successor of the great Frederic. His Majesty of Prussia, foreseeing in his extreme wisdom,

*The Emperor's own words. See Gross-Hoffinger III, p. 428-9.
†The Emperor own words. See Letters of Joseph 2d. page 135.

that I am likely to declare war against Turkey, is so condescending as to offer himself as mediator between us! You shall hear my answer and tell me what you think of it."

Lacy bowed, and the Emperor opening the door leading to the chancery, beckoned to his private Secretary. He entered, took his seat and held his pen ready to indite what Joseph should dictate. Lacy retired to the embrasure of a window, and with his arms crossed stood partly hidden by the heavy crimson velvet curtains, his eyes fixed upon his idolized Sovereign.

Joseph went restlessly to and fro, and dictated his manifesto to the Porte. Referring to his alliance with Russia and the failure of his attempts at intervention, he went on to say that as the sincere friend and ally of the Empress, he was compelled to fulfill his obligations, and reluctantly to take part in the war which Catharine had declared against Turkey.*

"Now," said the Emperor, "take another sheet and write 'To His Majesty the King of Prussia.'"

"My royal brother —

"It is with feelings of profound regret that I find myself forced to decline your Majesty's most friendly offers of mediation with Turkey. I am obliged to unsheathe my sword, and I shall not return it to its scabbard until it shall have won full reparation for all the wrongs sustained by my forefathers at the hands of the Porte. Your Majesty is a monarch, and as such, you are acquainted with the rights of kings. And is this undertaking of mine against Turkey anything more than an attempt to resume the rights of which my throne has been dispossessed?

"The Turks (and perhaps not they alone) have a maxim that whatever they lose in adverse times, they must win back when opportunity is favorable. It is by such means that the House of Hohenzollern attained its present state of prosperity. Albert of Brandenburg wrested the duchy of Prussia from its Order, and his successors at the peace of Oliva maintained their right to the sovereignty of that country.

"Your Majesty's deceased uncle, in like manner, wrested Silesia from my mother at a time when, surrounded by enemies, her only defences were her own true greatness and the loyalty of her subjects.

"What equivalent for her lost possessions has Austria received at the hands of those European Courts who have blown so many blasts on the balance of power?

"My forefathers were forced at different times to yield up Spain, Naples, Sicily, Belgrade, the Principality of Silesia, Parma, Piacenza, Guastalla, Tortona and a portion of Lombardy. What has Austria taken in return for these heavy losses?

"A portion of the Kingdom of Poland! And one of less value than that assigned to Russia.

"I hope that you will not dispute the justice of my resolve to make

* Hubner 2, page 468.

war upon the Porte, and that you will not hold me less a friend because I may do some injury to the Ottoman. Your Majesty may rest assured that under similar circumstances, I should apply the same principles to myself, were I possessed of any of *your* territory.

"I must also announce to you, that for some years to come, diplomacy must give place to war.

"Hoping for a continuation of your Majesty's friendship, I am with highest esteem, your friend and brother. JOSEPH."*

This letter concluded, the Emperor dismissed his Secretary and threw himself into an arm-chair.

"Well, Lacy," said he, "are you pleased with my letter? Have I convinced the King that it is my duty to declare war against the Moslem?"

"Sire," said Lacy, approaching, "I thank you from my heart for the privilege of hearing that letter. I know not which to admire most, your Majesty's admirable knowledge of the history of your House, or the quiet sharpness with which you have made your statements. But this I know, that had you forbidden me to accompany you, I should have been for the first time in my life, rebellious; for if I had not been allowed to fight as an officer, I should have done so as a private."

"There spoke my Lacy, my own gallant Austrian!" exclaimed Joseph. "To work, then, to work! Promulgate your orders and set your men in motion. In two days we must have two hundred thousand men on our frontiers. We must draw a gigantic cordon from the Dniester to the Adriatic. The main body, however, must go forward to Semlin and Futak. We two follow the main army, and day after to-morrow we must set out, and——no," said the Emperor interrupting himself, while all the light died out from his countenance. "No—I cannot set out for a week yet. I must first bid adieu to the last tie that binds my heart (as a man) to this life! That tie riven, I live as an Emperor and a warrior. Once in camp, I shall, Heaven be praised! forget all things else, and be myself again!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MARRIAGE AND SEPARATION.

THE eight long, weary days had gone by, the preparations for war were complete, and the Emperor was ready to join his army. He had

* Letters of Joseph II, page 121, and the following.

worked day and night, refusing to rest, and answering all remonstrances with a sad smile.

"I was not born a Sovereign to devote my life to my own comfort," said he, "but to consecrate it to my empire. Whenever I become too feeble to do my duty, I will ask for a pension, and retire to a convent like Charles the Fifth. I have no taste, however, for the vocation, sincerely hoping to die as I have lived—an Emperor."

"But, sire," said the imperial physician Von Quarin, "your first duty is to preserve your life for Austria's sake. You have a hot fever, and your eyes and cheeks are hollow."

"Give me a cool drink, doctor, perchance it may refresh my burning heart," said Joseph, with sad irony.

"Cool drinks will do no good unless your Majesty consents to take some rest. Sleep is the sovereign remedy of which you are in need, sire."

"I do not wish to sleep." replied Joseph, gloomily. "Sleep brings happy dreams, and I hate them because of their falsehood! Who would dream of bliss to wake and find it all a lie!"

"Your valet told me that you did not lie down last night."

"My valet is a chatterbox and knows not what he says."

"But, your Majesty, I know that you have not been to bed!"

"Then I slept in an arm-chair! But no, I will not deny it. I sat up all night, Quarin, for I had an important duty to perform before leaving Vienna. I was making my will."

"Your will!" repeated Von Quarin. "Surely your Majesty does not fear——"

"No, I fear nothing—certainly not death," returned the Emperor. "It must be sweet to die and part from the disappointments of life; for man either goes to eternal sleep, or wakes forever to eternal happiness! I am not afraid of death, but I must put my house in order, for bullets respect no man, and they have never yet been taught that an Emperor is not to be approached without ceremony. One might strike me on the head and send me to my eternal rest. Why what a doleful face you wear, Quarin! *L'Empereur est mort! Vive l'Empereur!* I shall bequeath to you a noble young Emperor and a beautiful and charming Empress. Is that not better than a surly old fellow like myself? Francis is my pride, and his sweet Elizabeth is like a daughter to me. I must then make my will, and provide for my children. Now Doctor, have you forgiven me for sitting up all night?"

"I have nothing to forgive, sire, but I implore you grant me one request."

"You wish to dose me with medicine? I see it in your face; you carry an apothecary's shop in your eyes just now."

"No, sire, I wish to ask permission to follow you as your Surgeon, that if anything should happen, I may be there."

"No, Quarin, you must not follow me. I cannot be guilty of the egotism which would monopolise your valuable services. A soldier in

the field has no right to be sick, lest he be suspected of cowardice; and as for casualities—why if a ball should strike me, there are plenty of army surgeons, who will dress my wounds as they dress those of my men. Remain at home then, my friend, and do better service by far than you could render me on the battle-field. Farewell, now. In two hours I leave, but before that time, I have some important business on hand. First, I must go with my will to Prince Kaunitz."

"Did your Majesty hear that he had almost struck the Countess Clary, and had banished her from his presence for a week, because she had pronounced the word 'testament' in his hearing?"

"Yes, I was told of it, and I shall take good care not to bring down the vials of his wrath upon my head," said Joseph laughing. "I shall not pronounce the word 'testament,' I shall speak of my treaty of peace with life, and use every precaution to save his Highness's feelings. Strange mystery of life!" continued the Emperor musing, "forever changing, shape, and hue, like the nimble figures of a Kaleidoscope!—Well—I must use stratagem in this matter of the 'testament,' for Kaunitz must assume the Regency of the empire, and then—then—I must attend a wedding. After that the battle-field! Adieu, Quarin, if we meet no more on earth, I hope that we shall meet above."

One hour later, the Emperor returned from the hotel of his prime Minister, and entered the imperial chapel. He was in full dress, decked with all his orders. It was only on state occasions that Joseph appeared in his magnificent uniforms: he had not worn it since the marriage of his nephew to the Princess Elizabeth of Würtemburg. But his face wore another, and a sadder expression than it had done on that day of rejoicing. He was very pale, and when he perceived the bride, he leaned for one moment against a friendly pillar that saved him from reeling. This weakness, however, lasted but a moment, and he walked firmly up to the altar, where the bridal party stood awaiting the imperial entrance.

The Emperor approached Count Dietrichstein, and greeted him cordially; then turning to Count Kinsky he extended his hand. The bridegroom did not appear to see this, for he cast down his eyes, and made a deep inclination, while Joseph with a sad smile withdrew his hand.

He had not dared to look upon the trembling bride, who seated on a chair, and surrounded by her attendants, had just recovered from a swoon. Her aunt, the Countess Dietrichstein, explained that from Thérèse's childhood, she had never been able to overcome her terror of lightning, and certainly, if this was so, she had every reason for terror now. The whole sky was darkened by one dense pall of heavy clouds; the stained windows of the chapel were fiery with flash after flash of angry lightning, while fierce above their heads the rolling thunder boomed along the heavens, and then died away in low mutterings that made the earth tremble.

There was no time to await the passing away of the storm, for the guests at that hurried bridal were impatient to depart. The carriages of the Emperor and of Count Dietrichstein were without, and neither

could tarry long in Vienna. At the altar stood Therèse's uncle, Count Leopold Von Thun, bishop of Passau, and around him was grouped a stately array of prelates and priests. Count Dietrichstein whispered in his daughter's ear. She rose from her seat, but her light figure swayed to and fro, like a slender tree before the advancing storm, and her lovely face was pale as that of a statue just leaving the hand of the sculptor. Therèse's fear of lightning was no fiction, and she almost sank to the floor as a livid flash glanced across the form of the Emperor, and enveloped him in a sheet of living flame. Unheeding it, he moved on towards the unhappy girl, and without a word or a look extended his hand. Therèse trembling, gave him hers, and started when she felt the burning clasp that closed upon her icy fingers. The Emperor led her to the altar; behind, came the aunt, and father of the bride, and between them, Count Kinsky, whose jealous eyes watched every movement of those hands which joined together for the space of a moment, were about to be sundered forever.

Nothing, however, was to be seen. The Emperor's eyes were fixed upon the altar, those of Therèse were cast down. Neither saw the other. Only the burning pressure of one hand, and the clammy coldness of the other, revealed to both the extent of the sacrifice they were making to the Moloch of the world's opinion.

Now they stood before the altar. The Emperor gave the bride into the hands of the bridegroom, and stepped aside to take his place.

The ceremony over, the bishop pronounced the blessing, and all present knelt to receive it. Joseph and Therèse were side by side. With a sigh, they raised their eyes to heaven, each praying for the other—The Emperor's eyes were dim with tears, but he dashed them away, and rising from his knees prepared to congratulate the bride.

A peal of thunder drowned the few words which he murmured. But her heart caught their meaning, and she whispered in return.

"Yes, in heaven."

Then he dropped her hand, and addressed himself to the bridegroom. "Count Kinsky," said he authoritatively, "I wish to speak with you in private." The Count, with a scowl, followed his Sovereign to the nave of the chapel, where, at a distance from the bridal party, they were in no danger of being overheard.

"Count," said the Emperor gravely, "you love the Countess Therèse?" Count Kinsky was silent for a while; then suddenly he replied in sharp, cutting accents, "I *have* loved her."

The Emperor repeated his words. "You *have* loved her! Do you then love her no longer?"

"No—I love her no longer."

"When did you cease to love her?"

"On this day week, your Majesty," said the Count defiantly.

Joseph would not seem to observe the look which accompanied these words. His voice was unchanged as he replied, "Count, although you feel resentful towards me, you believe me to be a man of honor, do you not?"

"I do, sire!"

"Then I swear to you by all that is sacred to me as man, and Sovereign, that Therèse is as pure in the sight of heaven as its brightest angle. I swear to you that she is as worthy as ever she was to be loved and esteemed by her husband, as his wife, and the future mother of his children.

"Your Majesty must have formed an intimate acquaintance with the Countess, to be able to answer for her purity of heart," returned Kinsky coldly.

Joseph looked up, pained. "Ah!" said he, "you are implacable! But you believe me, do you not?"

The Count inclined his head. "I dare not doubt my Sovereign's word."

"Then you will love Therèse as she deserves to be loved?"

"Love is not to be controlled—not even by an Emperor. My love and hate are not to be drawn off and on, like a glove!"

"Hate!" cried the Emperor, shocked. "Great God, it cannot be possible that you hate the woman whom you have voluntarily chosen, and whom even now, before yonder altar, you have sworn to love! Why then did you marry her?"

"Sire, you commanded me to do so, just one week ago, and as a loyal subject I was compelled to obey. You gave me no alternative, and I married her."

"She will make you happy," replied Joseph, in a faltering voice. "I beseech of you be gentle with her. Her heart is not at ease, and she needs all your tenderness to restore her to happiness."

Count Kinsky bowed frigidly. "Will your Majesty allow me to ask a favor of you?" said he.

"It will gratify me to do anything for you," replied Joseph, his eyes lighting up with pleasure.

"Then I ask of your Majesty, on your honor, to answer the question I am about to ask."

"On my honor, Count, I will answer it," said Joseph smiling.

"What did your Majesty say to the Countess just now, and what was her reply?"

The Emperor was thunderstruck. He could not articulate a word.

"Your Majesty was so obliging as to promise an answer."

"Yes, Count—yes," faltered the Emperor. "You shall be satisfied. I said, 'Farewell, Therèse, I shall claim thee in heaven.'"

"Your Majesty was so condescending as to address my wife in this familiar strain! And her reply was——"

"Only these words? Yes, in heaven?"

"I thank your Majesty."

They both returned to the company. Joseph cast one last look at Therèse, who pale and rigid was receiving the congratulations of his unsuspecting friends, and then he addressed her father.

"Well, Count, I believe that our furlough has expired, and we must

return to our commands. Farewell, and may we both return victorious to Vienna."

A half an hour later, an imperial calèche conveyed him to the army, and to Field-marshal Lacy, who had preceded him there by several days.

At the same moment, the travelling-carriage of Count Kinsky drove up to his hotel. Count Dietrichstein, before setting out, had accompanied his daughter to her husband's residence, and had bidden her adieu. Therèse was now alone. She shuddered as she heard Count Kinsky's step, and wished from her soul that death would release her from the hateful tie which bound them together.

The door opened, and he appeared. She uttered a faint cry, and pressed her hands to her throbbing heart. Count Kinsky answered the cry with a laugh of scorn.

"Are you afraid?" said he, striding towards her, and contemplating her with a face indicative of smothered passion.

Therèse raised her eyes and looked fearlessly into his eyes. "No, Count Kinsky, I am not afraid, nor would I fear if you had come to kill me."

The Count laughed aloud. "Ah!" cried he in a harsh, grating voice, "you think that I might do like Prince Bragation and the Duke of Orleans who strangled their young wives because they suspected them of infidelity! My dear madam, these romantic horrors belong to a bygone century. In this sober and prosaic age, a nobleman avenges his wounded honor not by murder but by contempt. I have only intruded myself to ask if you are ready to start."

"I am ready," replied Therèse, wearily.

"Then allow me to accompany you to the carriage."

"My father having given you my hand, I have no right to refuse your escort."

"Before we go, be so condescending as to say which one of my estates you prefer for a residence."

"Select my residence yourself, Count; you know that I have never visited your estates."

"Then I choose for you my castle in Hungary close by the Turkish frontier, for there you will have the latest news from the army and its commanders."

Therèse made no reply to this sarcasm. She bent her head and said, "I am ready to submit myself to your decision in all things."

"I hope that the Countess Therèse will not long have to live in subjection to her husband," continued he, "and that the journey which I am about to undertake will result happily for us both. You go to Hungary —I to Rome. I go to implore of the Pope a divorce."

"You are going to sue for a divorce?" asked Therèse. "Perhaps you can spare yourself the trouble of a journey to Rome, Count, for I have already anticipated your wishes. My petition to his Holiness went several days ago, and——"

"His Majesty, the Emperor, was so obliging as to send it by an imperial courier—is that what you were about to say?"

Therèse continued as though she had not heard the interruption. "My application went through Monsignore Garampi, the papal nuncio, who promised to use his influence in my behalf."

"What an edifying couple!" exclaimed Kinsky, with another scornful laugh. "How congenial!—The same wishes, and unconsciously the very same deeds!—What a pity we must part so soon, for I leave you to-day; nor shall I have the pleasure of seeing you again, until I bring you a decree of divorce."

"You will be most welcome," returned Therèse, calmly. "Now be so good as to escort me to my carriage."

"Pray give me your arm. I have but one more observation to make. I hope that you will now be able to prove substantially to the Emperor that it was quite useless for him to shelter himself behind the words, 'I shall claim thee in heaven!' But if I may presume so far, I request that you will defer these demonstrations until I return from Rome with my letters of divorce."

Therèse had no strength to retort. She hung down her head, and large scalding tears fell from her eyes. Count Kinsky placed her in the carriage, closed the door, and then returned to his own travelling-chariot which was a few paces behind. The two equipages thundered down the streets together, but at the gates they parted, the one taking the road for Hungary, the other for Rome.*

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LAST DREAM OF GLORY.

DESTINY was testing the fortitude of the Emperor with unrelenting harshness. It would seem that inflexible Fate was standing by, while one by one, this man's hopes of fame, honor, and love were wrested away, that the world might see and know how much of bitterness and disappointment it is in the power of one human heart to endure.

* This whole story is historical. The "heavenly Therese," as she is called by Hormayr, was really married and thus abandoned by her husband, who persisted in believing that the connection between herself and the Emperor was not guiltless. But the Count met with no success in the matter of the divorce. The Pope refused it, perhaps because he wished to prove to rebellious Austria the power of the Church. Years passed by before the decree was obtained. Finally Therese deposed that she was married under compulsion, and that the storm had so terrified her that she had been almost insensible during the ceremony. So much so that Bishop Leopold Von Thun also deposed that he had not heard her assent. These declarations proving the marriage to have been invalid, the divorce was granted. After the death of Joseph, Therese married Count Max Meervaldt, the same who in 1797 concluded the peace of Campo Formeo with Napoleon.—See Hormayr The Emperor Franz and Metternich. A fragment. Page 180.

in Netherlands and in Hungary he was threatened with rebellion. The Magyars especially resented the violation of their constitutional rights; in Tyrol, too, the people were disaffected; and Rome had not yet pardoned him the many indignities she had endured at his hands. This very war, which he had welcomed as a cure for his domestic sorrows, was yielding him naught but annoyance and misery.

Yes, Destiny had decreed that nothing which he undertook should prosper. His army which was encamped in the damp marshes that lie between the Danube and Save, was attacked by a malarious fever more destructive by far than the bloodiest struggle that ever reddened the field of battle. The hospitals were crowded with the sick and dying, and the enfeebled soldiers, who dragged themselves about their camps, wore sullen and discontented faces; a spirit of insubordination was beginning to manifest itself among the troops, and the very men who would have rushed to the cannon's mouth, grew cowardly at the approach of the invisible foe who stole away their lives, by the gradual and insidious poison of disease. The songs and jests of the bivouac were hushed, the white tents were mournful as sepulchres, and the men lost all confidence in their leaders. They now accused the Emperor and Lacy of incapacity, and declared that they must either be disbanded or led against the enemy.

This was precisely what Joseph had been longing to do, but he was compelled to await the advance of the Russians, with whom it had been arranged that the Austrians were to make a junction before they marched into Turkey. The Russians, however, had never joined the Emperor; for some misunderstanding with Sweden had compelled the Czarina to defend her northern frontier, and so she had as yet been unable to assemble an army of sufficient strength to march against Turkey. Joseph then was condemned to the very same inaction which had so chafed his spirit in Bavaria, for his own army of itself was not numerous enough to attack the enemy. He could not make a move without Russia. Russia tarried, and the fever in his camp grew every day more fatal.

Instead of advancing, the heart-sick Emperor was forced to retreat. His artillery was withdrawn to Peterwardein, and the siege of Belgrade entirely relinquished. Disease and death followed the Austrians to their new encampment, and louder grew the mutterings of the men, and more bitter their denunciations of the Emperor.

They little knew that while they were assailed by physical infirmities, their hapless chieftain was sick both in body and mind. He shared all their hardships, and watched them with most unremitting solicitude. He erected camp hospitals, and furnished the sick with wine and delicacies which he ordered from Vienna for their use. All military etiquette was suspended; even the approach of the Emperor for the time being was to be ignored. Those who were lying down were to remain lying, those who were sitting were to keep their seats.

Meanwhile Joseph walked daily through the hospitals, bestowing care

and kindness upon all, and no man there remarked that the deadly malaria had affected him in an equal degree with his troops. Heat, hardships and disappointment had done their work as effectually upon the commander-in-chief as upon the common soldier; but no one suspected that fever was consuming his life, for by day, Joseph was the Providence of his army, and by night, while his men were sleeping, he was attending to the affairs of his vast empire. He worked as assiduously in camp as he had ever done at home in his palace. Every important measure of the Regency was submitted to him for approval; the heads of the several departments of state were required to send him their reports; and many a night, surrounded by heaps of dispatches, he sat at his little table, in the swampy woods, whose noxious atmosphere was fitter for the snakes that infested them than for human beings of whatever condition in life.*

One little ray of light relieved the darkness of this gloomy period. This was the taking of the fortress of Sabacz where Joseph led the assault in person. Three cannoniers were shot by his side, and their blood bespattered his face and dress. But in the midst of danger he remained perfectly composed, and for many a day, his countenance had not beamed with an expression of such animated delight. This success, however, was no more than a lightening flash relieving the darkness of a tempestuous night. The fortress won, the Austrians went back to their miserable encampment in the sickly morasses of Siebenbürgen.

Suddenly the stagnant quiet was broken by the announcement that the Turks had crossed the Danube. This aroused the army from their sullen stupor, and Joseph, as if freed from an incubus, joyfully prepared himself for action. The trumpet's shrill call was heard in the camp, and the army commenced their march. They had advanced but a few miles when they were met by several panic-stricken regiments, who announced that the Austrian lines had been broken in two places, that General Papilla had been forced to retreat, and that the victorious Turks were pouring their vast hordes into Hungary.

Like wildfire the tidings spread through the army, and they, too, began their retreat, farther and yet farther back; for ever as they moved they were lighted on their way by the burning villages and towns that were the tokens of a barbarous enemy's approach. The homeless fugitives, too, rent the air with their cries, and clamored for protection against the cruel Infidel.—No protection could they find, for the Austrians were too few in number to confront the devastating hosts of the invading army. They were still compelled to retreat as far as the town of Lugos, where at last they might rest from the dreadful fatigues of this humiliating flight. With inexpressible relief, the soldiers sought repose. They were ordered to sleep on their arms nevertheless, so that the artilleryman was by his cannon, the mounted soldier near his horse, and the infantry, clasping their muskets, lay in long rows together, all forgetting

* In the archives of Vienna is preserved a dispatch of Joseph's written in the open woods on the night before the taking of Sabacz.—Gross-Hoffinger 3, page 464.

everything save the inestimable blessing of stretching their limbs and wooing sleep. The mild summer moon looked down upon their rest, and the Emperor, as he made a last tour of inspection to satisfy himself that all lights were extinguished, rejoiced to think that the Turks were far away, and his tired Austrians could sleep secure.

Joseph returned to his tent, that is, his *calèche*. He, too, was exhausted, and closed his eyes with a sense of delicious languor. The night-air blowing about his temples, refreshed his fevered brow, and he gave himself up to dreams such as are inspired by the silvered atmosphere, when the moon, in her pearly splendor, looks down upon the troubled earth, and hushes it to repose.

The Emperor, however, did not sleep. For a while, he lay with closed eyes, and then raising himself, looked up towards the heavens. Gradually the sky darkened; cloud met cloud and obscured the moon's disk, until at last the firmament was clothed in impenetrable blackness. The Emperor, with a sad smile, thought how like the scene had been to the panorama of his life, wherein every star had set, and whence every ray of light had fled forever!

He dreamed on while his tired men slept. Not all, however, for far towards the left wing of the army a band of huzzars were encamped around a wagon laden with brandy, and having much more confidence in the restorative powers of liquor than of sleep, they had been invigorating themselves with deep potations. Another company of soldiers in their neighborhood, awakened by the noisy mirth of the huzzars, came forward to claim their share of the brandy. It was refused and a brawl ensued, in which the assailants were repulsed.

The huzzars, having driven them from the field, proceeded to celebrate their victory by renewed libations, until finally, in a state of complete inebriation, they fell to the ground, and there slept the sleep of the intoxicated.

The men who had been prevented from participating in these drunken revels resolved to revenge themselves by a trick. They crept stealthily up to the spot where the huzzars were lying, and firing off their muskets, cried out, "The Turks! The Turks!"

Stupefied by liquor, the sleepers sprang up, repeating the cry. It was caught and echoed from man to man, while the huzzars with unsheathed sabres ran wildly about, until hundreds and hundreds were awakened, each one echoing the fearful words,

"The Turks! The Turks!"

"Halt! Halt!" cried a voice to the terrified soldiers. "Halt, men, halt!"

The bewildered ears mistook the command for the battle-cry of the Turks, "Allah! Allah!" and the panic increased tenfold. "We are surrounded!" shrieked the terror-stricken Austrians, and every sabre was drawn, every musket cocked. The struggle began; and the screams of the combattants, the groans of the wounded, the sighs of the dying filled the air, while comrade against comrade, brother against brother, stood

in mortal strife and slew each other for the unbelieving Turk.

The calamity was irretrievable. The darkness of the night deceived every man in that army, not one of whom doubted that the enemy was there. Some of the terrified soldiers fled back to their camps, and even there, mistaken for Turks, they were assaulted with sabre and musket, and frightful was the carnage that ensued!

In vain the officers attempted to restore discipline. There was no more reason in those maddened human beings than in the raging waves of the ocean. The Emperor, at the first alarm, had driven in his calèche to the place whence the sound seemed to come.

But what to a panic-stricken multitude was the voice of their Emperor? Ball after ball whistled past his ears, while he vainly strove to make them understand that they were each one slaying his brother! And the night was so hideous, so relentless in its darkness! Not one star glimmered upon the face of the frightful pall above—the stars could not look upon that fratricidal struggle!

The fugitives and their infuriated pursuers pressed towards a little bridge which spanned a stream near the encampment. The Emperor drove rapidly around, and reached the banks of the river before them, hoping from thence to be heard by his men, and to convince them that no Turks were by.

But they heeded the sound of his voice no more than the sea heeded that of the royal Canute. They precipitated themselves towards the bridge, driving the carriage of the Emperor before them to the very edge of the steep river-bank. It wavered; they pushed against it with the butt-ends of their muskets. They saw nothing—they knew nothing save that the carriage impeded their flight!

It fell rumbling down the precipice into the deep waters, which bubbled and hissed and then closed over it forever. No man heeded its fall. Not one of all that crowd which oft had grown hoarse with shouts at his coming, paused to save the Emperor from destruction. But he, calm and courageous, although at that moment he could have parted with life without a sigh, had made a desperate spring backward, and had alighted on the ground.

When he recovered from the violence of the fall, he found himself unhurt, but alone. Not one of his suite was to be seen; in the mad rush of the men for the crossing, they had been parted from him. The little rustic bridge had fallen in, and those who remained behind, had rushed with frantic yells in search of some other crossing. The Emperor could hear their cries in the distance, and they filled his heart with anguish inexpressible.

With desponding eyes he gazed upwards, and murmured, "O, that I could die before the sun rises upon the horrors of this night! My soul is weary—my every hope dead. Why did I turn back when death was smiling from the crystal depths of that placid stream! Even now, I may still find rest. Who will ever know how the Emperor met his death?——He paused, and looked around to see if anything was nigh.

Nothing—He made one step forward, then shuddering, recoiled with an exclamation of horror at his miserable cowardice.

"No!" cried he resolutely, "no I will not die—I must not—dare not die. I cannot go to the grave misjudged, and calumniated by my own subjects! I must live that they may sooner or later learn how faithfully I have striven to make them happy! I must live to convince them that the promotion of their welfare has been the end and aim of my whole life!*

At that moment there was a rent in the blackened firmament, and the moon emerged, gradually lighting up the dark waters, and the lonely woods, until its beams shone full upon the pale, agitated features of that broken hearted monarch!

"The Emperor!" cried a loud voice, not far away. "The Emperor!" —and a rider galloping forward threw himself from his horse.

"Here, your Majesty, here is my horse. Mount him. He is a sure and fleet animal."

"You know me, then?" asked Joseph.

"Yes, sire, I am one of your Majesty's grooms. Will you do me the honor to accept my horse?"

The Emperor replied by swinging himself into the saddle. "But you, my good fellow, what will you do?"

"I shall accompany your Majesty," replied the groom, cheerfully. "There is many a horse seeking its master to-night, and it will not be long before I capture one. This done, if it please your Majesty, I will conduct you to Karansebes. The moon has come out beautifully, and I can easily find the way"

"I have found *my* way," murmured the Emperor to himself. "God has pointed it out to me, by sending help in this dark, lonely hour.—Well—Life has called me back, and I must bear its burthens until Heaven releases me."

Just then a horse came by at full speed. The groom, who was walking by the Emperor's side, darted forward, seized the reins, and swung himself triumphantly into the saddle.

"Now, sire," said he, "we can travel lustily ahead. We are on the right road, and in one hour will reach Karansebes."

"Karansebes!" mused the Emperor. "'*Cara mihi sedes!*' Thus sung Ovid, and from his ode, a city took her name;—the city where the poet found his grave. A stately monument to Ovid is Karansebes; and now a lonely, heart-sick monarch is coming to make a pilgrimage thither, craving of Ovid's tomb the boon of a resting-place for his weary head. O, *Cara mihi sedes*, where art thou?"

In the gray of the morning they reached Karansebes. Here they found some few of the regiments, the Emperor's suite, and his beloved nephew, Franz, who like his uncle, had been almost hurried to destruction by the hapless army, but had been rescued by his bold and faithful followers. They had shielded the Archduke with their own bodies,

*The Emperor's own words. Hubner II, p. 488.

forming a square around his person, and escorting him so guarded until they had penetrated the dangerous ranks of the demented fugitives.*

All danger was past, but the events of that night were too much for the exhausted frame of the Emperor. The fever with which he had wrestled so long, now mastered his body with such violence that he was no longer able to mount his horse. Added to this came a blow to his heart. The army refused to follow him any longer. They called loudly for Loudon, the old hero, who in spite of his years, was the only man in Austria who would lead them to victory.

The Emperor stung to the soul by the mistrust of his men, gave up his last hope of military glory. He sent for Loudon, and Loudon, despite his infirmities, came at the summons.

The old hero was received with shouts of welcome. The huzzahs reached the poor, mean room, where Joseph lay sick with a burning fever. He listened with a sad smile, but his courage gave way, and scalding tears of disappointed ambition moistened his pillow.

"Loudon has come," thought he, "and the Emperor is forgotten! No one cares for him more!——Well—I must return to Vienna, and pray that the victory and fame which have been denied to me, may be vouchsafed to Loudon!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE HUNGARIANS AGAIN.

Destiny had broken the Emperor's heart. He returned from the army seriously ill, and although he had apparently recuperated during the winter, the close of the year found him beyond all hope of recovery.

Even the joyful intelligence of Loudon's victories were powerless to restore him to health. Loudon had won several battles, and had accomplished that for which Joseph had undertaken the war with Turkey. He had once more raised the Austrian flag over the towers of Belgrade.†

Vienna received these tidings with every demonstration of joy. The city was illuminated for three days, and the Emperor shared the enthusiasm of the people. He took from his state-uniform the magnificent cross of Maria Theresa—the cross which none but an Emperor had ever

* Hubner 2, page 477

† The conquest of Belgrade was accompanied by singular coincidences The Emperor Francis, (the husband of Maria Theresa,) had been in command when, in 1789, the Turks took it from Austria. His grandson, Francis, with his own hand fired the first gun, when it was re-taken by Loudon. In 1739 General Wallace surrendered the fortress to Osman Pacha. In 1789 Osman Pacha, the son of the latter, surrendered it to General, afterwards Field-marshal Wallace, son of the former.—Hubner 2, page 492.

worn, and sent it to London with the title and patent of Generalissimo.* He attended the *Te Deum*, and to all appearances, was as elated as his subjects. But once alone with Lacy, the mask fell, and the smile faded from his colorless lips.

"Lacy," said he, "I would have bought these last superfluous laurels of London with my life. But for me no laurels have ever grown; the cypress is my emblem—the emblem of grief."

He was right. Discontent reigned in Hungary, in Netherlands, and latterly, in Tyrol. On every side were murmurs and threats of rebellion against him who would have devoted every hour of his life to the enlightment of his subjects. All Belgium had taken up arms. The imperial troops had joined the insurgents, and now a formidable army threatened the Emperor. Van der Noot, the leader of the revolt, published a manifest declaring Belgium independent of the Austrian empire. The insurgents numbered ten thousand. They were headed by the nobles and sustained by the clergy. Masses were said for the success of the rebels, and requiems were sung for those who fell in battle or otherwise.† The cities of Brussels, Antwerp, Louvain, Mechlin and Namur opened their doors to the patriots. The Austrian General D'Alton fled with his troops to Luxembourg, and three millions of florins, belonging to the military coffers, fell into the hands of the insurgents.‡

Such was the condition of the Austrian empire, towards the close of the year 1789. The Emperor resolved to make one more attempt to bring the Belgians to reason, and to this end he sent Count Cobenzl to Brussels, and after him, Prince de Ligne.

The Prince came to take leave of the Emperor. "I send you as mediator between myself and your countrymen," said Joseph with a languid smile. "Prove to those so-called patriots that you, who endeavor to reconcile them to their Sovereign, are the only Belgian of them all, who possesses true patriotism."

"Sire, I shall say to my misguided countrymen that I have seen your Majesty weep over their disloyalty I shall tell them that it is not anger which they have provoked in your Majesty's heart, but sorrow."

"Yes," replied Joseph, "I sorrow for their infatuation, and they are fast sending me to the grave. The taking of Ghent was my death-struggle, the evacuation of Brussels my last expiring sigh. Oh!" continued he, in tones of extreme anguish, "Oh, what humiliation! I shall surely die of it! I were of stone to survive so many blows from the hand of fate!—Go, de Ligne, and do your best to induce your countrymen to return to their allegiance. Should you fail, dear friend, remain there. Do not sacrifice your future to me, for you have children."§

"Yes, sire," replied de Ligne, with emotion, "I have children, but they are not dearer to me than my Sovereign. And now, with your

* This cross was worth 24,000 ducats—Gross-Hoffinger 3, page 500.
† Gross-Hoffinger 3, page 289.
‡ D'Alton was cited before the Emperor, but on his way to Vienna he took poison, and died four days before Joseph.
§ The Emperor's own words Oeuvres du Prince de Ligne.

Majesty's permission, I will withdraw, for the hour of my departure is at hand. I do not despair of success. Farewell, sire, for awhile."

"Farewell forever," murmured Joseph, as the door closed behind the Prince. "Death is not far off, and I have so much to do!"

He rose hastily from his arm-chair, and opening the door that led into the chancery, called his three Secretaries.

"Let us to work," said he, as they entered.

"Sire," replied one of them in faltering tones, "Herr Von Quarin desired us in his name to implore of your Majesty to rest for a few days."

"I cannot do it," said Joseph impatiently. "If I postpone this writing another day, it may never be accomplished at all. Give in your reports. What dispatches have we from Hungary?"

"They are most unsatisfactory, sire. The landed proprietors have refused to contribute their share of the imposts, and the people rebel against the conscription-act, and threaten the officers of the crown with death."

"Revolt, revolt everywhere!" exclaimed the Emperor shuddering. "But I will not yield; they shall all submit!"

The door of the cabinet opened and the Marshal of the Household entered, announcing a deputation of Magyars.

"A deputation! From whom?" asked Joseph eagerly.

"I do not know, sire, but Count Palfy is one of the deputies."

"Count Palfy again!" cried the Emperor scornfully. "When the Hungarians have a sinister message to send, they are sure to select Count Palfy as their ambassador. Show them to the reception-room which opens into my cabinet, Count. I will see them there."

He dismissed the Secretaries and rang for his valet. He could scarcely stand, while Günther was assisting him to change his dressing-gown for his uniform. His toilet over, he was obliged to lean upon the valet for support, for his limbs were almost failing him.

"O!" cried he bitterly, "how it will rejoice them to see me so weak and sick. They will go home and tell their Hungarians that there is no strength left in me to fight with traitors! But they shall not know it, I *will* be the Emperor if my life pay the forfeit of the exertion. Lead me to the door, Günther. I will lean against one of the pillars and stand while I give audience to the Magyars."

Günther supported him tenderly to the door, and then threw it wide open. In the reception-room stood the twelve deputies, not in court-dress but in the resplendent costume of their own nation. They were the same men who several years before had appeared before the Emperor, and Count Palfy, the Chancellor of Hungary, was the first one to advance.

The Emperor bent his head, and eyed his visitors.

"If I am not mistaken," said he, "these are the same gentlemen who appeared here as Hungarian deputies several years ago."

"Yes, sire, we are the same men," replied Count Palfy.

"Why are you here again?"

"To repeat our remonstrances, sire. The kingdom of Hungary has chosen the same representatives that your Majesty may see how unalterable is our determination to defend our rights with our lives. Hungary has not changed her attitude, sire, and she will never change it."

"Nor shall I ever change mine," cried Joseph passionately. "My will to-day is the same as it was six years ago."

"Then, sire, you must expect an uprising of the whole Hungarian nation," returned Count Palfy, gravely. "For the last time we implore your Majesty to restore us our rights."

"What do you call your rights?" asked Joseph sarcastically.

"All that for centuries past has been guaranteed to us by our constitution; all that each king of Hungary, as he came to the throne, has sworn to preserve inviolate. Sire, we will not become an Austrian province: we are Hungarians, and are resolved to retain our nationality. The integrity of Hungary is sorely threatened, and if your Majesty refuse to rescue it, we must ourselves hasten to the rescue. Not only our liberties are menaced, but our monied interests too. Hungary is on the road to ruin, if your Majesty does not consent to revoke your arbitrary laws, or——"

"Or?"——asked Joseph, as Palfy hesitated.

"On the road to revolution," replied the deputy firmly.

"You presume to threaten me!" cried Joseph in a loud voice.

"I dare deliver the message entrusted to me, and, had *I* been too weak to speak it, entrusted to those who accompany me. Is it not so, Magyars?"

"It is, it is," cried all, unanimously.

"Sire, I repeat to you that Hungary is advancing either towards ruin or revolution. Like the Netherlanders, we will defend our constitution or die with it. O, your Majesty, all can yet be remedied! Call a convention of the States—return the crown of St. Stephens, and come to Hungary to take the coronation-oath—Then you will see how gladly we shall swear allegiance to our King, and how cheerfully we will die for him, as our fathers did before us, in defence of the Empress-queen, his mother."

"Give us our constitution and we will die for our King!" cried the Magyars in chorus.

"Yes!—humble myself before you," exclaimed Joseph furiously. "You would have the Sovereign to bow before the will of his vassals!"

"No, sire," returned Count Palfy, with feeling. We would have your Majesty adopt the only means by which Hungary can be retained to the Austrian Empire. If you refuse to hear us, we rise to defend our country, as one man. We swear it in the name of the Hungarian nation."

"We swear it in the name of the Hungarian nation!" echoed the Magyars.

"And I," replied Joseph pale and trembling with passion, "I swear it in the name of my dignity as your Sovereign, that I will never yield to men who defy me, nor will I ever forgive those who by treasonable importunity have sought to wring from me what I have not thought it ex-

"Sire, if you would give this proof of love to your subjects, if for their sakes you would condescend to forget your imperial station, you cannot conceive what enthusiasm of loyalty would be your return for this concession. We await your final answer in mortal anxiety, and await it until to-morrow at this hour."

"Ah!—You are so magnanimous as to grant me a short reprieve!" shouted the infuriated Emperor, losing all command of himself, "You ——"

Suddenly he ceased, and became very pale. He was sensible that he had burst a blood-vessel, and he felt the warm stream of his life welling upwards, until it moistened his pallid lips. With a hasty movement he drew out his handkerchief, held it for a moment before his mouth, and then replaced it quickly in his bosom. Large drops of cold sweat stood out from his brow, and the light faded from his eyes. But these haughty Magyars should not see him fall! They should not enjoy the sight of his sufferings!

With one last desperate effort he collected his expiring energies, and stood erect. "Go," said he in firm, distinct tones, "you have stated your grievances, you shall have my answer to-morrow."

"We await your Majesty until to-morrow at noon," returned Count Palfy. "Then we go, never to return."

"Go," cried the Emperor, in a piercing voice, and the exasperated Magyars mistook this last cry of agony for the culmination of his wrath.

They bowed in sullen silence, and left the room.

The Emperor reeled back to his cabinet, and fell into a chair. He reached the bell, and rang it feebly.

"Günther," said he to his valet, and now his voice was hardly audible, "send a carriage for Quarin. I must see him at once."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE REVOCATION.

When Quarin entered the Emperor's cabinet, he found him quietly seated before his escritoire, half buried in documents. The physician remained standing at the door, waiting until he should be ordered to approach.

Suddenly Joseph was interrupted in his writing by a spell of coughing. He dropped his pen and leaned back exhausted. Quarin hastened to his side.

"Your Majesty must not write," said he gravely. "You must lay aside all work for a time."

"I believe that I shall have to lay it aside forever," replied Joseph languidly. "I sent for you to say that I have a lawsuit with my lungs, and you must tell me which of us is to gain it."*

* [illegible] Characteristics of Joseph II. page 14

"What am I to tell your Majesty?" asked the physician disturbed.

The Emperor looked up with eyes which glowed with the flaming light of fever. "Quarin, you understand me perfectly. You must tell me, in regard to this lawsuit with my lungs, which is to gain it, myself or death? Here is my evidence."

With these words he drew out his handkerchief and held it open between his wan, transparent hands. It was died in blood.

"Blood!" exclaimed Quarin, in a tone of alarm. "Your Majesty has received a wound?"

"Yes, an interior wound. The Hungarians have dealt me my death-blow. This blood is welling up from a wounded heart. Do not look so mournful, doctor. Let us speak of death as man to man. Look at me now, and say whether my malady is incurable."

"Why should it be incurable?" asked the physician faltering. "You are young, sire, and have a sound constitution."

"No commonplaces, Quarin, no equivocation," cried Joseph impatiently. "I must have the truth, do you hear me? The truth. I cannot afford to be surprised by death, for I must provide for a nation, and my house must be set in order. I am not afraid of death, my friend, it comes to me in the smiling guise of a liberator. Therefore, be frank, and tell me at once whether my malady is dangerous."

Again he raised his large, brilliant eyes to the face of the physician. Quarin's features were convulsed with distress, and tears stood in his eyes. His voice was very tremulous as he replied,

"Yes, sire, it is dangerous."

The Emperor's countenance remained perfectly calm. "Can you tell me, with any degree of precision, how long I have to live?"

"No, sire, you may live yet for several weeks, or some excitement may put an end to your existence in a few days. In this malady, the patient must be prepared at any moment for death."

"Then it is incurable?"

"Yes, sire," faltered Quarin, his tears bursting forth afresh.

The Emperor looked thoughtfully before him, and for some time kept silence. Then extending his hand with a smile he said, "From my soul I thank you for the manly frankness with which you have treated me, Quarin, and I desire now to give you a testimony of my gratitude. You have children, have you not?"

"Yes, sire—two daughters."

"And you are not rich, I believe?"

"The salary which I receive from your Majesty, united to my practice, affords us a comfortable independence."

The Emperor nodded. "You must do a little commission for me," said he, turning to the *escritoire* and writing a few lines, which he presented to Quarin.

"Take this paper to the Court Chancery and present it to the Bureau of Finances. You will there receive ten thousand florins wherewith to portion your daughters."

"O, sire!" exclaimed Quarin, deeply moved. "I thank you with all the strength of my paternal heart."

"No," replied Joseph gently, "it is my duty to reward merit.* In addition to this I would wish to leave you a personal souvenir of my friendship. I bestow upon you, as a last token of my affection, the title of *Freiherr*, and I will take out the patent for you myself. Not a word, dear friend, not a word! Leave me now, for I must work diligently. Since my hours are numbered, I must make the most of them. Farewell! Who knows how soon I may have to recall you here?"

The physician kissed the Emperor's hand with fervor, and turned hastily away. Joseph sank back in the chair. His large eyes were raised to heaven, and his wan face beamed with something brighter than resignation.

At that moment, the door of the chancery was opened and the first privy-counsellor came hastily forward.

"What is it?" said Joseph, with a slight start.

"Sire, two couriers have just arrived. The first is from Count Cobenzl. He announces that all Belgium, with the exception of Luxemburg, is in the hands of the patriots; that Van der Noot has called a convention of the United Provinces, which has declared Belgium a republic, her independence is to be guaranteed by England, Prussia and Holland. Count Cobenzl is urgent in his request for instructions. He is totally at a loss what to do."

The Emperor had listened with mournful tranquility. "And the second courier?" said he.

"The second courier, sire, comes from the imperial Stadtholder of Tyrol."

"What says he?"

"He brings evil tidings, sire. The people have rebelled, and cry out against the conscription, and the church-reforms. Unless these laws are repealed, there is danger of revolution."

The Emperor uttered a piercing cry and pressed his hands to his breast. "It is nothing," said he in reply to the anxious, and alarmed looks of the privy-counsellor. "A momentary pang, which has already passed away—nothing more. Continue your report."

"This is all, your Majesty. The Stadtholder entreats you to quiet this rebellion and——"

"And to revoke my decrees, is it not so? The same croaking which for eight years has been dinned into my ears. Well—I must have time to reflect, and as soon as I shall have determined upon my course of action, you shall learn my decision——"

"Rebellion in Tyrol, in Hungary, in the Netherlands!" murmured the Emperor when he found himself alone. "From every side I hear my death-knell! My people would bury me ere I have drawn my last sigh. My great ancestor, Charles, stood beside his open grave, and voluntarily contemplated his last resting-place; but I! unhappy monarch, am forced into mine by the ingratitude of a people for whom alone I have lived!—Is it indeed so? Must I die with the mournful conviction that I have lived in vain? O, my God, what excess of humiliation thou hast forced upon me! And what have I done to deserve such a fate!

* These are the Emperor's words. This scene is historical. Hubner II, p. 496.

Wherein have I sinned that my imperial crown should have been lined with so many cruel thorns? Is there no remedy—must I drink this last bitter chalice? Must I revoke that which I have published to the world as my sovereign will!"——

He ceased, and folding his arms, faced his difficult position. For one hour he sat motionless, his face growing gradually paler, his brow darker, his lips more rigidly compressed together.

At length he heaved one long, convulsive sigh. "No—there is no other remedy. I have toiled in vain—My beautiful structure has fallen, and my grave is under its ruins! O my God, why may I not have a few months more of life, wherewith to crush these aspiring rebels?—But no!—I must die now, and leave them to triumph over my defeat; for I dare not leave to my successor the accursed inheritance of civil war. To the last hour of my life I must humble my will before the decrees of that cruel destiny which has persecuted me from boyhood! Be it so!—I must clutch at the remedy—the fearful remedy—I must revoke!"

He shuddered, and covered his face with his hands. There had been one struggle with his will, there was now another with his despair. He moaned aloud—scalding tears trickled through his poor, wasted fingers, and his whole being bowed before the supremacy of this last, great sorrow. Once—only once, he uttered a sharp cry, and for a moment his convulsed countenance was raised to heaven. Then his head fell upon the table, and his wretchedness found vent in low, heart-rendering sobs.

And thus he spent another long hour. Finally he looked up to heaven and tried to murmur a few words of resignation. But the spectre of his useless strivings still haunted his mind. "All my plans to be buried in the grave—not one trace of my reign left to posterity!" sighed the unhappy monarch. "But enough of repining, I have resolved to make the sacrifice—it is time to act!"

He clutched his bell, and ordered a page to summon the privy-counsellor from the adjoining room.

"Now," said the Emperor, "let us work. My hand is too tremulous to hold a pen, you must write for me—First in regard to Hungary. Draw up a manifest in which I restore their constitution in all its integrity."

He paused for a few moments, and wiped the large drops of cold sweat which were gathering over his forehead. "Do you hear?" continued he, "I revoke all my laws except one, and that is, the edict of religious toleration. I promise to convoke the imperial diet, and to replace the administration of justice upon its old footing. I repeal the laws relating to taxes and conscription. I order the Hungarian crown to be returned to Ofen, and as soon as I shall have recovered from my illness, I promise to take the coronation-oath.* Write this out and bring it to me for signature. Then deliver it into the hands of Count Palfy. He will publish it to the Hungarians."——

"So much for Hungary!—Now for Tyrol. Draw up a second man-

* This is the revocation-edict, which promulgated a few weeks before the death of Joseph, caused such astonishment throughout Europe. Gross-Hoffinger 3, page 290.

ifest. I repeal the conscription-act, as well as all my reforms with respect to the Church. When this is ready, bring it to me for signature; and dispatch a courier with it to the imperial Stadtholder. Having satisfied the exactions of Hungary and Tyrol, it remains to restore order in the Netherlands. But there, matters are more complicated, and I fear that no concession on my part will avail at this late hour. I must trample my personal pride in the dust then, and humble myself before the Pope! Yes!—*before the Pope.* I will write requesting him to act as mediator, and beg his Holiness to admonish the clergy to make peace with me.* Why do you look so sad, my friend? I am making my peace with the world; I am drawing a pen across the events of my life, and blotting out my reforms with ink—Make out these documents at once, and send me a courier for Rome. Meanwhile I will write to the Pope. Appearing before him as a petitioner, it is incumbent upon me to send an autographic letter. Return to me in an hour."

When one hour later, the private-counsellor re-entered the cabinet, the letter to the Pope lay folded and addressed on the table. But this last humiliation had been too much for the proud spirit of the Emperor to brook.

He lay insensible in his chair, a stream of blood oozing slowly from his ghastly lips.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DEATH OF THE MARTYR.

He had made his peace with the world and with God! He had taken leave of his family, his friends, and his attendants. He had made his last confession, and had received the sacraments of the Church.

His struggles were at an end. All sorrows overcome, he lay happy and tranquil on his death-bed, no more words of complaint passing the lips which had been consecrated to the Lord. He comforted his weeping relatives, and had a word of affectionate greeting for every one who approached him. With his own feeble hand he wrote farewell letters to all his absent sisters, to Prince Kaunitz, and to several ladies for whom he had an especial regard, and on the seventeenth of February he signed his name eighty times.

He felt that his end was very near; and when Lacy and Rosenberg, who were to pass the night with him, entered his bed-chamber, he signed them to approach.

"It will soon be over," whispered he. "The lamp will shortly be extinguished. Hush, do not weep—you grieve me. Let us part from each other with fortitude."

"Alas, how can we part with fortitude, when our parting is for life!" said Lacy.

* Gross-Hoffinger 3, page 279.

The Emperor raised his eyes, and looked thoughtfully up to heaven. "We shall meet again," said he after a pause. "I believe in another, and a better world, where I shall find compensation for all that I have endured here below."

"And where punishment awaits those who have been the cause of your sorrows," returned Rosenberg.

"I have forgiven them all," said the dying monarch.

"There is no room in my heart for resentment, dear friends. I have honestly striven to make my subjects happy, and feel no animosity towards them for refusing the boon I proffered. I should like to have inscribed upon my tomb, 'Here lies a Prince whose intentions were pure, but who was so unfortunate as to fail in every honest undertaking of his life.'—O, how mistaken was the poet who wrote,

Et du trone au cercueil le passage est terrible!'

I do not deplore the loss of my throne, but I feel some lingering regret that I should have made so few of my fellow-beings happy—so many of them ungrateful. That, however, is the usual lot of Princes!"*

"It is the lot of all those who are too enlightened for their times! It is the lot of all great men who would elevate, and ennoble the masses!" cried Lacy. "It is the fate of greatness, to be the martyr of stupidity, bigotry, and malice!"

"Yes—that is the word," said Joseph smiling." I am a martyr, but nobody will honor my relics."

"Yes, beloved Sovereign," cried Rosenberg weeping, "your Majesty's love, we shall bear about our hearts, as the devotee wears the relic of a martyred saint."

"Do not weep so," said Joseph. "We have spent so many happy days together that we must pass the few fleeting hours remaining to us in rational intercourse. Show me a cheerful countenance, Rosenberg, you from whose hands I received my last cup of earthly comfort. What blessed tidings you brought me! My sweet Elizabeth is a mother, and I shall carry the consciousness of her happiness to the grave. I shall die with *one* joy at my heart—a beautiful hope shall blossom as I fall!—Elizabeth is your future Empress; love her for my sake—you know how unspeakably dear she is to me—And now that I think of it, I have not heard from her since this morning. How is she?"

The two friends were silent, and cast down their eyes.

"Lacy!" cried the Emperor, and over his inspired features there passed a shade of human sorrow. "Lacy, speak—You are silent—O God, what has happened?—Rosenberg, tell me, O tell me, how is my Elizabeth, my darling daughter?"

So great were his anxiety and distress that he half rose in his bed. They would not meet his glance, but Rosenberg in a low voice replied.

"The Archduchess is very sick. The labor was long and painful."

"Ah, she is dead!" exclaimed Joseph, "she is dead, is she not?"

Neither of his weeping friends spoke a word, but the Emperor comprehended their silence.

Falling back upon his pillow he raised his wasted arms to heaven.

* The Emperor's own words.—Characteristics of Joseph 2d.

"O God, Thy will be done! but my sufferings are beyond expression! I thought that I had outlived sorrow, but the stroke which has come to embitter my last moments, exceeds all that I have endured throughout a life of unchecquered misery!"*

For a long time he lay cold and rigid. Then raising himself upon his arm, he signed to Rosenberg to approach. His eye beamed as of erst, and his whole demeanor was that of the Sovereign who has learned above all things to control himself.

"She must be buried with all the tenderness and honor of which she was deserving," said he. "Rosenberg, will you attend to this for me? Let her body be exposed in the court-chapel to-morrow. After that, lay her to rest in the imperial vaults and let the chapel be in readiness to receive my own remains."†

This was the last command given by the Emperor. From that hour he was nothing more than a poor, dying mortal, whose last thoughts are devoted to his Maker. He sent for his confessor and asked him to read something appropriate and consolatory. With folded hands, his large, violet eyes reverently raised to heaven, he listened to the holy scriptural words. Suddenly his countenance brightened and his lips moved.

"Now there remaineth Faith, Hope, and Love," read the priest.

The Emperor repeated the three last words. "Faith—Hope,"—and when he pronounced the word, "Love!" his face was illumined with a joy which had its source far, far away from earth!

Then all was silent. The prayer was over, and the dying Emperor lay motionless with his hands folded upon his breast.

Presently his feeble voice was heard in prayer. "Father thou knowest my heart—Thou art my witness that I meant—to do—well. Thy will be done!"‡

Then all was still. Weeping around the bed, stood Lacy, Rosenberg, and the Archduke Francis. The Emperor looked at them with staring eyes, but he recognized them no longer. Those beautiful eyes were dimmed forever!

Suddenly the silence was broken by a long, long sigh.

It was the death-sigh of JOSEPH THE SECOND!

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*The Emperor's own words.
†Joseph's own words See Hubner II. P. 491.
‡Ramshorn, page 449.

Joseph died on the 20th of February, 1790. But his spirit outlived him, and survives to the present day. His subjects, who had so misjudged him, deplored his loss, and felt how dear he had been to them. Now that he was dead—now that they had broken his heart, they grieved and wept for him. Poets sang his praises in elegies, and wrote epitaphs laudatory of him who may be considered as the great martyr of political and social enlightenment.

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