

## **The Project Gutenberg eBook of Riven Bonds. Vol. II, by E. Werner**

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

**Title:** Riven Bonds. Vol. II

**Author:** E. Werner

**Translator:** Bertha Ness

**Release Date:** February 14, 2011 [EBook #35284]

**Language:** English

**Credits:** Produced by Charles Bowen, from page scans provided by Google Books.

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RIVEN BONDS. VOL. II \*\*\*

Transcriber's Note:

1. Page scan source: <http://books.google.com/books?id=jd4BAAAAQAAJ&dq>

# **RIVEN BONDS.**

**A Novel,**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**TRANSLATED BY**

**BERTHA NESS,**

***FROM THE ORIGINAL OF E. WERNER,***

AUTHOR OF "SUCCESS AND HOW HE WON IT,"  
"UNDER A CHARM," &c.

---

VOL. II.

---

London:  
REMINGTON AND CO.,  
5, ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND, W.C.

---

1877.

[*All Rights Reserved.*]

## RIVEN BONDS.

### CHAPTER I.

"No!" said Captain Almbach. "That cannot be! I have to make a confession to you, Ella, at the risk of your showing me to the door."

"What have you to confess to me?" asked the astonished Ella.

Hugo looked down.

"That I am still the 'adventurer,' whom you once took so sternly to task. It did not improve him certainly, but he never attempted since to approach you with his follies, and cannot to-day either. To make my tale short, I had no idea you were the inhabitant of this villa, when I directed my steps here. I had myself announced to a perfectly strange gentleman, because Marchese Tortoni had spoken of a young lady, who lived here in complete seclusion, and yes--I knew before hand, that you would look at me in this way--"

Her glance had indeed met him sadly and reproachfully; then she turned silently away and looked out of the window. A pause ensued--Hugo went to her side.

"It was chance which brought me here now, Ella. I am waiting for my lecture."

"You are free, and have no duty to injure," said the young wife, coldly. "Besides, my opinion in such matters can hardly have any influence upon you, Herr Captain Almbach."

"And so Herr Captain Almbach must retire, to find the doors closed against him next time, is it not so?" Unmistakable agitation was heard in his voice. "You are very unjust towards me. That I, thinking to find perfect strangers here, did undertake an adventure--well, that is nothing new to me; but that I was guilty of the boundless folly of confessing it to you, although I had the best excuse for deception, that is very new, and I was only forced to it by your eyes, which looked at me so big and enquiringly, that I became red as a schoolboy, and could not go away with a lie. Therefore I hear Herr Captain Almbach again, who, thank God, had disappeared from our conversation for the last quarter of an hour."

Ella shook her head slightly.

"You have spoiled all my pleasure in our meeting now, certainly----"

"Did it please you? Did it really?" cried Hugo, interrupting her eagerly, with sparkling eyes.

"Of course," said she, quietly. "One is always pleased, when far away, to find greetings and remembrances from home."

"Yes," said Hugo, slowly. "I had quite forgotten that we are country people also. Then you only recognised the German in me? I must confess honestly that my feelings were not so purely patriotic when I saw you again."

"Notwithstanding the unavoidable disillusion which your discovery prepared for you?" asked Ella, somewhat sharply.

Captain Almbach looked at her unabashed for a few seconds.

"You make me suffer greatly for the imprudent confession, Ella. Be it so! I must bear it. Only one question before I go, or one petition rather. May I come again?"

She hesitated with her reply; he came a step nearer.

"May I come again? Ella, what have I done to you that you would banish me also from your threshold?"

There lay a reproach in the words, which did not fail to make an impression upon her.

"I do not do so either," replied she, gently. "If you would seek me again, our door shall not be closed to *you*."

With quick movement, Hugo caught her hand, and carried it to his lips, but those lips rested on it unusually long, much longer than is customary in kissing a hand, and Ella appeared to think so, as she drew it somewhat hastily away. Equally hastily Captain Almbach drew himself up; the slight red tint which had before lain on his forehead was there again, and he, who was at other times never at a loss for a civility or suitable reply, said now merely monosyllabically--

"Thank you. Until we meet again, then!"

"Until we meet again!" replied Ella, with a confusion that contrasted strangely with the calm and decision which she had shown throughout the whole interview. It almost seemed as if she repented the permission just given, and which still she could not withdraw.

A few minutes later, Captain Almbach found himself in the open air, and slowly he began his return to Mirando. He had again carried out his will, and fulfilled the promise made so confidently that morning. But he seemed little inclined to make much of his triumph. Looking back to the villa, he passed his hand across his forehead, like some one awaking from a dream.

"I believe that the elegiac atmosphere of Mirando has infected me," he muttered, angrily. "I begin to look upon the simplest things from the most fantastically, romantic point of view. What is there, then, in this meeting that I cannot get over it? The Erlau drawing-rooms have been a good school to be sure, and the pupil has learned unexpectedly, quickly, and easily. I suspected something of that for long, and yet--folly! What is it to me if Reinhold learn at last to repent his blindness! And she does not even know how near he is, so near that a meeting cannot be avoided much longer. I fear any attempt at approaching her would cost Reinhold much dearer than that first one. What a singularly icy expression there was in her face when I hinted at the possibility of a reconciliation! That;" here Hugo breathed more freely, perhaps, in unacknowledged but great satisfaction--"that said, No! to all eternity. And if chance or fate lead them together, now, it is too late--now *he* has lost her."

On the mirror-like blue sea a boat glided, which, coming from S---, bore in the direction of Mirando. The bark's elegant exterior showed that it was the property of some rich family, and the two rowers wore the livery of the Tortonis. Nevertheless, for the gentleman, who besides these two was the sole occupant of the boat, neither the rapid motion nor the magnificent panorama all around appeared to possess the slightest interest. He leant back in his seat, with closed eyes, as if asleep, and only looked up at last when the boat lay to at the marble steps, which led directly

down from the villa's terrace to the sea. He stepped out. A sign dismissed the two men, who, like all the Marchese's servants, were accustomed to pay to their master's celebrated guest, the same respect as to himself. A few strokes of the oars carried the boat to one side, and immediately after it was anchored in the little harbour away by the park.

Reinhold stepped on to the steps, and ascended them slowly. He came from S---, where Beatrice had, in the meantime, arrived. As usual, the actress here, also, where all foreigners and inhabitants of position assembled for their *villeggiatura*. was surrounded by acquaintances and admirers, and Reinhold no sooner found himself at her side than the same fate, and, indeed, to a greater extent, became his. In Beatrice's vicinity there was no rest and no relaxation for him; she dragged him at once into the vortex with her. The hours, which he intended to spend with her, had become days, which in excitement and distraction did not yield the palm to the last weeks in town, and after having accompanied her yester evening to a large fête, which had continued the whole night until morning's dawn, he had torn himself away at day-break, and thrown himself into the boat in order to return to Mirando.

He drew a deep breath at the quiet and loneliness around him, undisturbed even by a word of greeting or welcome. Cesario, as he knew, had early this morning undertaken an expedition to the neighbouring island, in Hugo's company, from which both were only expected back towards evening, and for strangers the villa was not yet accessible. The young Marchese did not like to be disturbed in the seclusion of his *villeggiatura*. and his steward had received orders not to allow any strange visitors to enter during his residence, an order which was carried out most strictly, to the great dissatisfaction of travellers, by whom Mirando was considered a favourite goal for excursions. The estate, with its extensive gardens, and magnificent buildings, which in the north would certainly have been called a castle, and here merely bore the modest name of a villa, was celebrated far and near, not only on account of its paradise-like situation and the boundless view over the sea, but also because of the rich art-treasures which it concealed inside, and which now merely charmed the eyes of the few who had the good fortune of being permitted to call themselves the Marchese's guests.

Short of rest, tired, and yet unable to seek repose and sleep, Reinhold threw himself on to one of the marble benches in the shade of the colonnade; he felt strained to the utmost exhaustion. Yes, these sultry Italian nights, with their intoxicating perfume of flowers, and their moonlight quiet, or the noisy clamour of a feast, these sunshiny days, with the ever-blue sky, and the glowing splendour of the earth's colours, they had given him everything of which he had ever dreamed in the cold, dreary north; but they had also cost him the best part of his life's strength. The time was long since passed when all existence appeared to be only one course of glowing intoxication and of inspiring dreams to the young composer. This had lasted for months, for years; then gradually weariness came on, and at last the awaking, when this beautiful world, sparkling with colour, lay so empty and cold before him, where the ideals collapsed, and freedom, once so fiercely longed for, became an endless desert, to which no duty, but also no desire set a limit. With the fetters which he had broken so eagerly and ruthlessly he had also lost the reins; he wandered out into the boundless, and the boundlessness had become a curse to him.

Certainly, the internal Prometheus-like spark preserved the artist from the fate which overtook so many others, from that helpless sinking into a sensation of being surfeited and indifferent to everything; but the same power which ever and ever again forced him out of it, drove him helpless hither and thither, seeking the only thing which was wanting, and ever would be wanting. Italy in all its beauty was not able to give it to him, not Beatrice's glowing love, not art, which had offered him the fullest wealth of fame--the phantom melted so soon as he stretched out his arms towards it. And even if the wondrous flora of the south had displayed itself to him in all its exhilarating glory, still he would not have found the blue flower of the fairy legends.

Reinhold started up suddenly from his dreams, something had disturbed him in them. Was it a step, a rustle?--he raised himself, and, with extreme surprise, saw a lady standing only a few paces distant on the terrace, gazing out over the sea. What could it mean? How did this stranger come here, now when Mirando was not accessible to visitors; she could only a few minutes since have passed through the open door leading into the saloon, which contained the celebrated collection of pictures, belonging to the villa, and appeared to have remarked the solitary dreamer in the colonnade as little as he had remarked her.

Reinhold had long since become indifferent to woman's beauty, but involuntarily this apparition enchained him. She stood under the shadow of one of the gigantic vases which ornamented the terrace; only the bowed head was caught by the full sunlight, and the heavy blonde plaits gleamed in the rays like spun gold. Her face was half averted. Her delicate, clear and nobly chiselled profile could hardly be seen. Her slight figure in its airy white robes leaned lightly in an undeniably graceful attitude against the marble balustrade; her left hand rested on it, while the drooping right one held her straw hat decorated with flowers. She stood immovable, quite lost in contemplation of the sea, and had evidently no idea that she was observed.

It was still early in the day. The morning had risen bright and clear out of the sea, and now lay smiling sunnily in dewy freshness over the whole country. A blue mist still encircled the mountains and the distant coasts, whose lines seemed to tremble as if blown with a breath on the horizon, and the still moist air was quivering as if with a silvery light. There was something fairy-like in this morning hour and this surrounding, above all in yonder white figure with the golden

glimmering hair, and Mirando itself, with its white marble pillars and terraces, appeared like a fairy castle, which had risen out of the liquid depths. Deep blue was the arching sky above, and deep blue the sea laving its feet. The scent of flowers was wafted hither from the gardens, but ghostly silence reigned everywhere, as if all life were banished or sunk in sleep. No sound anywhere, nothing but the gentle splashing of the sea, ever the same dream-like murmur of the waves, which kissed the marble steps, and before one nothing to be seen save the blue, heaving expanse, which extended far away into boundless distance.

Reinhold remained motionless in his position, he would not disturb the charm of this moment by any movement. It was as if a breath of the old legendary poems of his home were wafted to him, long forgotten but rising now suddenly before him with all their melancholy charms. Suddenly this deep calm was interrupted by the clear joyfulness of a child's voice. A boy of about seven or eight rushed up the steps of the terrace, a large shining mussel shell in his hand, which he had picked up somewhere on the shore. The child was evidently most delighted with his discovery, his whole little face beamed, as, with glowing cheeks and streaming locks, he hastened towards the lady, who turned her head round at his cry.

With a half suppressed exclamation, Reinhold sprang up and remained as if rooted to the ground. The moment she had turned her face completely towards him, he recognised the stranger, who bore Ella's features and yet could not be Ella. Bewildered, deadly pale, he stared at the lady, whose poetical appearance he had just been admiring, and who yet, in every feature, resembled his so despised, and at last forsaken wife. She, too, had recognised him; the intense pallor which also overspread her face, betrayed it, as did her sudden start backwards. She grasped the marble balustrade as if seeking for support, but now the boy had reached her and, holding the mussel aloft with both hands, cried triumphantly--

"Mamma! dear mamma, see what I have found!"

This roused Reinhold from his stupor. Bewilderment, fright, astonishment, all disappeared as he heard his child's voice. Following the impulse of the moment, he rushed forward, and stretched out his arms, to draw the boy eagerly to his breast.

"Reinhold!"

Almbach stopped as if struck; but the name was not for him, only for the boy, who, immediately obeying her call, hastened to his mother. With a rapid movement she placed both arms around him, as if to protect and conceal her child, and then drew herself up. The pallor had not left her face yet, her lips still trembled, but her voice sounded firm and energetic.

"You must not trouble strangers, Reinhold. Come, my child! We will go."

Almbach started, and stepped back a pace; the tone was as new to him as the whole person of her, whom he once called his wife. Had he not recognised her voice, he would have believed more than ever in a delusion. The little one, on the contrary, looked up in surprise at the rebuke. He had not even gone near to the strange gentleman, and certainly had not troubled him, but he saw in his mother's colourlessness and excitement that something unusual had occurred, and the child's large blue eyes fixed themselves defiantly, almost antagonistically upon the stranger, who, he guessed instinctively, was the cause of his mother's alarm.

Ella had already recovered herself. She turned to go, her arm still held firmly round her boy's shoulder, but Reinhold now stepped hastily in her way--she was obliged to stop.

"Will you be so good as to allow us to pass?" said she, coldly and distantly. "I beg you to do so."

"What does this mean, Ella?" exclaimed Reinhold, now in passionate excitement. "You have recognised me, as well as I have you. Why this tone between us?"

She looked at him; in that glance lay the whole reply; icy-cold, annihilating scorn; he had indeed never deemed it possible that Ella's eyes could look thus, but he turned his to the ground beneath them.

"Will you be so good as to leave us the road free, Signor?" she repeated in perfectly pure Italian, as if she imagined that he did not understand German. There lay a positive tone of command in the words, and Reinhold--obeyed. His self-possession quite lost, he moved aside and let her pass. He saw how she descended the steps with the child, how a servant below, in strange livery, who seemed to have waited, joined them, and how all three hurried through the gardens; but he himself still stood above on the terrace and tried to remember whether he had been dreaming and the whole had not been merely a picture of his imagination.

The noisy locking of the door which led to the picture gallery, brought him back to his senses. A few steps took him there, and throwing the door open roughly he entered the saloon, where the steward of Mirando was just engaged in letting the blinds down again, which he had drawn up to give a better light.

"Who was the lady with the child, who was just now on the terrace?" With this hasty question, Reinhold rushed in upon the man, who seemed shocked when he saw his master's guest before

him, having believed him still to be in S----; he hesitated with his reply in evident confusion.

"Pardon me, Signor, I had no idea that you had returned already, and as Eccellenza and the Signor Capitano are only expected this evening, I ventured----"

"Who was the lady?" persisted Reinhold, in feverish impatience, without paying attention to the answer. "Where did she come from?--quick, I must know it!"

"From the villa Fiorina," said the steward half-wonderingly, half-frightened at the questioner's eagerness. "The strange lady wished to see Mirando, and let her servant apply for her. Eccellenza has certainly ordered that no visitors are to be admitted during his residence here, but this morning no one was at home, so I thought I might make an exception;" he paused, and then added, in a tone of entreaty, "It would be sure to cause me great trouble with Eccellenza, if Signor Rinaldo were to tell him."

"I? no," said Reinhold, absently, "what was the lady's name?"

"Erlau, if I understood rightly."

"Erlau?--oh!" Almbach passed his hand over his forehead; "That is all, Mariano, thank you," said he, and left the saloon.

---

The day had become burningly hot, nor did the evening bring coolness or refreshment. Air and sea did not appear to be stirred by any breath, and the sun went down in hot clouds of mist. In the villa Fiorina also they seemed to suffer from the oppression. The inhabitants confined themselves probably to the cooler rooms, as the jalousies had not been opened the whole day, and the glass doors which led to the terrace remained closed. The German family hardly occupied half of the capacious dwelling which it had engaged entirely for itself. A few rooms to the right of the garden saloon were arranged for the Consul--those on the opposite side were inhabited by his adopted daughter, with her child; the servants were located in the back apartments, and the rest remained empty.

The evening was already far advanced when Ella entered the garden saloon, which was illuminated by a lamp. The Consul had retired to rest, and she came from her boy, whom, after he had fallen asleep, she had left to his attendant's care. Perhaps it was the dim light which made her face still appear pale; the colour had not returned to it since the morning, even although her features seemed perfectly calm.

She opened the glass door and stepped out on to the terrace. Outside, perfect darkness reigned already; no moon's rays pierced the clouds which still enveloped the sky, no breath of wind from the sea moved the blooming shrubs; sultry and heavy, the air seemed regularly to weigh upon the earth, and the sea lay in idle repose, almost motionless. It was alarming in this dense stillness and darkness, yet Ella appeared to prefer this to remaining in the lighted garden saloon. She stood leaning against the stone balustrade, as in the morning, partially still in the pale circle of light which fell through the open door on to the terrace, and, although indistinctly, displayed the slight form.

A few moments may have passed thus, when she was startled by a noise near her. With a low cry, she tried to take refuge in the house, as close by her there stood a tall, dark man's figure; at the same moment, however, a hand was laid upon her arm, and a suppressed voice said--

"Be composed, Ella, it is neither a robber nor a thief who stands before you, although you have forced me to choose the path of such an one."

The young wife had recognised Reinhold's voice at the first word, but she only drew back nearer to the threshold of the glass door.

"What do you desire, Signor?" said she coldly, in Italian. "And what does this intrusion at such an hour mean?"

Reinhold had followed her, but he did not again attempt to touch her arm, or even go near her.

"Above all, I wish you to have the goodness to speak German to me," retorted he, with difficulty restraining his excitement. "I have not quite forgotten our own language, as you seem to suppose. Whence do I come? From yonder boat! The terrace, at least is not so inaccessible as the doors of your house, which remained closed to me."

He pointed towards the sea. It was a risk to ascend the high stone terrace from a tossing boat, but Reinhold did not seem to be in a mood to think of the possibility of danger. He had apparently been there already when she came out, and now continued more excitedly--

"It is probably not unknown to you that I have been here once already this morning. But you refused me, or rather Erlau did, because as a matter of course I was not so wanting in tact as to enquire for you. He neither received me nor the note, which contained my petition, yet you must both have known what brought me here, so nothing but self-help remained. You see I have gained admittance after all."

He spoke with keenest bitterness. The proud composer felt the double rejection which he had experienced to-day to be a deadly insult. One could hear how he struggled with his pride, even now, for every word, and it must have been a powerful motive which brought him here, notwithstanding all, and by such a path! His wife had clearly no share in it, as he stood opposite her in gloomy, unbending defiance. As a boy, Reinhold Almbach could never bear to humble himself, not even when he knew himself to be wrong, and during the latter years he had too often gained the dangerous experience that any error he committed was covered by the right of genius, which may permit itself to do almost anything.

While these last words were being spoken, they had entered the garden below. In the middle of it Ella stopped.

"Signor Rinaldo appears to have mistaken his way, this time," said she, certainly in German, but in the same tone as before. "Yonder in S----, lies the villa where Signora Biancona resides, and it can only be a mistake which landed his boat at our terrace."

The reproach hit him; Almbach's defiant look sank, and for a few moments he was at a loss for a reply.

"I do not seek Signora Biancona this time," replied he at last, "and that I am not permitted to seek Eleonore Almbach, she showed me sufficiently this morning. It was not my intention to offend you again by sight of me; it would have been spared you, had you acceded to my written request. I came to see my child alone."

With a rapid step the young wife reached the bedroom door, and placed herself before it. She did not speak a word, but in the evident internal emotion there lay such an energetic protest, that Reinhold immediately understood her intention.

"Will you not allow me to embrace my son?" asked he, angrily.

"No," was the firm reply, given with the most positive determination.

Reinhold was about to fly into a passion; she saw how he clenched his fist, but he forced himself to be calm.

"I see that I did your late father injustice," said he, bitterly; "I took it to be his work that all news of my boy was withheld from me. Did you read my first letter yourself, and leave it unanswered?"

"Yes."

"And returned the second unopened?"

"Yes."

Reinhold's face changed from red to white; mutely he gazed at his wife, from whose lips he had never heard an expression of her own will, much less any opposition--whom he only knew as humbly and silently obedient, and who now dared to refuse with such decision to grant him what he considered his own right.

"Take care, Ella," said he, firmly, "whatever may have taken place between us, whatever you may have to reproach me with, this tone of scorn I will not endure; and above all, I will not tolerate being refused the sight of my boy. I will see my child."

The demand sounded almost threatening. The young wife's pale cheeks began to colour slightly, but she did not move from her place.

"Your child?" asked she, slowly; "the boy belongs to me, me only; you lost every right to him when you left him with me."

"That may still be questioned," cried Almbach, beginning to wax furious. "Are we judicially separated? Has the law given Reinhold to you? He remains my son, whatever there may be between you and me; and if you refuse me my rights as a father any longer, I shall know how to enforce them."

The threat was not without effect, but it quite failed in its purpose. Ella drew herself up, and exclaimed with quivering lips, but with great energy--

"You will not do that; you have not the conscience to do it, and if you had, there is, thank God, another power to which I can appeal, and which is, perhaps, not quite so indifferent to you as the family bonds and duties which you broke so lightly. The world would learn that Signor Rinaldo, after he had forsaken his wife and child for years, and had not enquired after them, now dares to threaten his wife with the same laws which he scorned and spurned with his feet, because she does not choose that her boy should call him father; and all your fame, and all the adoration yonder, would not protect you from the merited contempt."

"Eleonore!"

It was a cry of rage which escaped his lips as she uttered the last word, and his eyes flashed in terrific wildness down upon the delicate form standing before him. Once Reinhold's passion was excited to its utmost, it knew no limits, and all around him were wont to tremble. Even Beatrice, although so little his inferior in violence, dared not at such moments irritate him farther; she knew where the line was drawn, and once this was reached she always yielded. Here it was different; the first time for years he was stranded by another's will; before the eyes which met his own, so clear and large, his defiance succumbed altogether--he was silent.

"You see yourself that it would be worse than mockery were you to resort to law," said his wife, more calmly.

Reinhold leaned heavily against the seat near which he stood. Was it shame or anger made the hand tremble which buried itself in the cushion?

"I see that I laboured under a serious mistake when I believed I knew the woman who was called my wife for two years," replied he, in a singularly compressed tone. "Had you only once shown yourself to be the same Eleonore whom I meet now, much would have remained undone. Who taught you this language?"

"The hour in which you forsook me," replied she, with annihilating coldness, as she turned away.

"That hour seems to have given you much more that was once foreign to you--the pleasure of revenge, for example."

"And the pride, which I never knew, towards you," completed Ella. "I had first to be crushed to the ground, but it awoke and showed me what I owed to myself and my child, the only thing you had left to me, the only thing that kept me up; for his sake I began again to learn, to work, when the time for learning lay far behind me; for his sake I roused myself above the prejudices and trammels of my education, and gave my life a new direction when my parents' death made me free. I must be everything now to the child, as it was everything to me, and I had sworn that my child should never be ashamed of its mother, as his father was ashamed of her, because externally she was inferior to other women."

Almbach's brow was dyed a deeper red at the last words--

"It was not my intention to dispute Reinhold with you," said he hastily. "I only wished to see him in your presence if it must be. You know only too well what a weapon the child is in your hands, and you use it mercilessly against me, Ella." He came nearer to her and for the first time there was something like a tone of entreaty in his voice. "Ella, it is our child. This link at least extends out of the past into the present, the only one between us which is not broken. Will you break it now? Shall the chance which brought us together really remain merely chance? It lies in your hands to make it a turning point of fate which may perhaps be for the good of us both."

The hint was plain enough, but the young wife drew back, and on her countenance again that expression, full of meaning--that "No!" spoke to all eternity.

"For us both?" repeated she. "Then you really believe I could find happiness by your side, after all you have done to me? Truly Reinhold, you must be much impressed with your own value, or my worthlessness, that you venture to offer it to me. Certainly, when could you have learned respect for me? It was not possible in my parents' house. I was brought up in obedience and submission, and I brought both to my husband. What was my reward for it? I was the last in his house, and the last in his heart. He never thought it worth while to ask if the woman, to whom he had bound himself, was really so contracted in mind, so incapable of appreciating anything higher, or if she were only rendered timid by the oppression of her mode of bringing up, from which we both suffered. He rejected my shy attempt to approach him, scornfully, woundingly, and let me feel hourly and daily that only the merit of being his child's mother gave me any claim upon his endurance. And when art and life were opened to him, he cast me aside as a burden, which he had borne long enough with dislike; he gave me up to be the talk of the world, to scorn, to dishonouring pity; he left me for the sake of another, and at this other's side never asked if his wife's heart were broken at the death-stroke he had dealt her--and now, you think that only one word is needed to undo all this! You think you only require to stretch out your hand to draw to yourself again that which once you rejected! Do you think it? No; one cannot play so with what is holiest upon earth; and if you thought the despised, repulsed Ella would obey the first sign by which you signify that you would take her back into favour, I tell you now she would rather die with her child, than follow you once more. You have set yourself free from your duties as husband and father, and we have learnt to do without the husband and father. You have shown it, plainly enough, that we are the 'bonds' which fettered the wings of your genius--well, now they are broken, broken by you, and I give you my word for it, they shall never oppress you again. You have your laurels and your--muse; what do you want with wife and child also?"

She ceased, overcome with excitement, and pressed both hands against her stormily heaving bosom. Reinhold had become deadly pale, and yet his eyes hung on her as if enchained. The lamp-light fell full upon her face and the fair plaits as on that evening when he announced the separation so mercilessly. But what had become of that Ella who then hung timidly and shyly on his looks, and obediently followed every sign, every mood? No one trait of her was to be



discovered in the being who stood drawn up opposite him, so haughty and proud, and who hurled back so energetically upon him the humiliations she had once received. They could burn, these blue fairy-tale eyes, burn in glowing indignation; he saw this now, but he saw also, for the first time, how wondrously beautiful they were, how ravishing the whole appearance of the young wife--in the excitement, and amid the anger and rage of the highly irritated husband, something flashed out which almost resembled admiration.

"Is that your final word?" asked he at last, after a pause of some seconds.

"My final one!"

With a rapid movement, Reinhold drew himself up. All his antagonism and pride broke forth again at this mode of refusal. He went towards the door, while Ella remained immovable at her post, but at the threshold he stopped once more and turned back.

"I did not ask if my wife's heart were broken by the death-stroke which I dealt her," repeated he in a smothered voice; "Did you feel it at all, Ella?"

She was silent.

"I certainly did not believe it then," continued Reinhold bitterly, "and to-day's meeting makes me doubt more than ever that your heart suffered from a separation which certainly wounded your pride more deeply than I had ever deemed possible. You need not guard the door so anxiously; I see, indeed, that I must first dash you aside in order to reach the child, and that courage I possess not. You have conquered this time; I renounce my purpose of seeing him again. Farewell!"

He went. She heard his steps outside on the terrace, then the rustle of the shrubs as he pushed his way through them, and at last the stroke of the oars, which bore the boat away from the shore. The wife breathed more freely, and left the place she had defended so energetically. She went to the glass door; perhaps a slight anxiety arose in her as to whether the venturesome leap from the terrace would be as successful as the ascent to it had been, but in the darkness nothing could be distinguished. As before, the sea lay in idle calm. Far above, the still, sultry night spread its wings, and flowers bloomed all around, but every trace of Reinhold had disappeared.

## CHAPTER II.

The clear balmy spring days were followed by summer's burning glow. The gulf and its environs lay day after day illuminated by the sun in all their beauty, but also in the almost tropical heat of the south; only the sea breeze brought any coolness, so that the sea was the object of most excursions which were now undertaken.

This repose of nature, which had continued for some weeks, was followed at last by an outbreak; a thunderstorm raged in the air, and stirred up the ocean to its innermost depths. The storm had come up so quickly, broken loose so suddenly, that no one had been prepared for it, and it had lasted for more than an hour already, with undiminished fury.

A boat shot through the foaming waves, and, apparently overtaken by the storm, found itself struggling with the billows. For some time it had been in danger of being seized without hope of rescue, and dashed out into the open sea, but now with full sails set it flew towards the coast, and after a few futile attempts succeeded at last in being landed.

"That is really racing with the storm for a wager," cried Hugo Almbach, as he, wet through with rain and spray, was the first to spring on shore. "For this once we have fortunately escaped the wet embrace of the goddess of the sea. We were near enough to her."

"It was lucky having such a true sailor with us," said Marchese Tortoni, following him in a not less wet condition. "It was a master-work, Signor Capitano, bringing us safely on shore in such a storm. We should have been lost without you." Reinhold lifted the half unconscious Signora Biancona, who clung to him, trembling and deadly pale, out of the boat. "For heaven's sake, calm yourself, Beatrice! The danger is over," said he impatiently, as the last occupant of the boat, the English gentleman, who had been present at Hugo's former *incognito* discussion with Maestro Gianelli, also gained *terra firma*.

In the meanwhile, Jonas poured forth all his contempt upon the two sailors to whom the guidance had originally been entrusted, and who fortunately did not understand the terms of praise addressed to them in German.

"They call themselves sailors, they want to manage a ship, and when a paltry storm comes on, they lose their heads and cry to their saints. If my Herr Captain had not seized the rudder out of your hands, and I taken the sails upon myself, we should now be lying below with the sharks. I should like you to experience such a storm as our 'Ellida' underwent before we ran in here, then you would know what a little blowing on your gulf means."

The little blowing would have been looked upon by any one else than the sailor as a regular stiff storm. At all events it had endangered the lives of the party, and they owed their safety only to the energetic guidance of Captain Almbach, who now turned aside from the Marchese's and the Englishman's expression of thanks.

"Do not mention it, Signor! Such a trip is nothing new or unusual to me. I only pitied you, on account of the disagreeable circumstances in which you had been placed by the temper of a pretty woman."

"Yes, women are to blame for everything," muttered Jonas furiously, while Hugo continued in an undertone--

"I knew two hours ago what the sky and sea prophesied to us, notwithstanding their bright appearance. You know how earnestly I opposed the trip; however, Signora Biancona insisted positively upon it, and condescended to scoff at the 'timid sailor,' who could not even 'venture upon his own element.' I think surely my courage will be rather less doubtful in her eyes; hers on the contrary"--he broke off suddenly, and made a few steps to the other side. "May I enquire how you feel, Signora?"

Beatrice still trembled; but the sight of her opponent, who stood before her like the perfection of politeness, and perfection of malice, restored her consciousness to some extent. That he opposed the expedition had been sufficient to make her insist upon it with intense obstinacy, and render the other gentlemen deaf to all warning by her mocking remarks. The deadly fear of the last hour had given her a bitter lesson, certainly, and it was still more bitter to be obliged to owe her life to Captain Almbach, who had become the hero of the day, while she during the danger had shown herself anything but heroic.

"Thank you--I am better," answered she, still struggling between anger and confusion.

"I am delighted to hear that," assured Hugo, as in the midst of the rain he made her an unexceptionable drawing-room bow, "and now I shall put myself at the head of an expedition of discovery into the interior. Go on Jonas, reconnoitre the territory! Reinhold, you are no stranger here in the neighbourhood; do you not know where we are?"

"No," replied Reinhold, after a short and rapid glance around.

"And you, Marchese Tortoni?"

Cesario shrugged his shoulders--

"I regret that I also am unable to give you any information. I seldom leave the immediate environs of Mirando; besides, in such weather it is almost impossible to know one's bearings."

This certainly was true; earth, sky and sea seemed to flow into one another in rolling mist. He could see barely a hundred yards over the raging sea, and not much farther over the land. No hills, no landmarks were visible; a dense grey veil of fog imprisoned everything, and yet Captain Almbach did not allow that to be any excuse.

"Unpractical, artist natures!" muttered he, annoyed. "They sit there for months in their Mirando and go into ecstasies day after day about the incomparable beauty of their gulf, but do not know the coast, and if once they are a mile away from the great tourist highway, they have no idea where they are. Lord Elton, will you be so good as come to my side? I think we are both best suited to being pioneers."

Lord Elton, who at the first meeting had been much pleased with Hugo's mischievous nature, and who had been highly impressed by him to-day, acceded immediately to the request. With the same imperturbable calm which he had shown before in danger, he placed himself at the sailor's side and went forward, while the other gentlemen followed with Beatrice.

"It appears to me that chance has thrown us on a rather benighted coast," said Hugo, scoffingly, upon whose temper the weather did not exercise the slightest influence. "According to my calculations, we must be quite ten or twelve miles distant from S---, and on our left some hills are faintly visible through the fog, with very suspicious looking ravines. Gennaro's band is said to frequent these mountains. What should you say, my Lord, if we were to taste some of the regular Italian romance of horror?"

Lord Elton turned with sudden liveliness to the ravines pointed out, which certainly looked unpleasant enough in the thick fog, and scanned them attentively.

"Indeed, that would be very interesting."

"Provided there were a pretty 'brigandess' amongst them, not otherwise," added Hugo.

"Gennaro's band has no woman with it. I have learned all particulars," said the former, seriously.

"What a pity! The band seems to be very uncivilised still, that it has so little consideration for the natural wishes of its honoured guests. However, that would be something for my Jonas--a life without women! If he were to hear us he would desert and take his oath of allegiance to Gennaro's flag; I must take care of him."

"Do not joke so thoughtlessly," interposed the Marchese. "Remember, Signor, we have a lady with us, and are all unarmed."

"Excepting my Lord, who always carries a six chamber revolver with him as a pocket match-box," said Hugo, laughing. "We others did not think it necessary to load ourselves with weapons when we undertook this harmless expedition. Besides, we have more efficacious protection to-day than two dozen carabineers would give us. In this rain no brigand would venture forth."

"Do you think so?" asked Lord Elton in unmistakable disappointment.

"Certainly, my Lord! and for my part I think it will be better to forego the pleasure party in the mountains this time. Is it not also remarkable that we two, the only non-artists in the party, are the only two who appear to have any sense of the romance of the situation? My brother," here Hugo lowered his voice, "walks by Signora Biancona like an irritated lion; besides he is now in his lion's mood, and it is wisest to approach him as little as possible. Signora never brought tragic despair to such perfection of expression on the stage as at this moment, and Marchese Cesario stares illogically into the mist instead of admiring our highly effective expedition in the rain. Ah, there something peeps out like a building, and Jonas returns from his *reconnaissance*. Well, what is it?"

"A *locanda*!" reported Jonas, who had gone on in front and was returning hastily. "Now we are sheltered," added he triumphantly.

"Heaven has mercy," cried Hugo, pathetically, as he turned round to impart the welcome news to the others. The prospect of shelter being near did indeed revive the sinking courage of the party; they redoubled their steps, and soon found themselves in the covered entrance of the house indicated.

"The rough sailor's cloak has been made enviably happy to-day," said Captain Almbach, as he removed his garment from Signora Biancona's shoulders in the most polite manner. "I knew we should require it to-day, therefore I ventured to bring it with me. The cloak quite protected you, Signora."

Beatrice pressed her lips hastily together, as with forced thanks she returned the shielding wrap. It had been hard enough to accept it from Captain Almbach's hand; however, he was the only person in possession of such a thing, and no choice remained to her, if she did not wish to be quite wet through. But like all passionate natures, she could not endure mockery, and this detested courtesy of her opponent never gave her the opportunity of decided antagonism towards him, and kept her mercilessly fast within the limits of social requirements.

The *locanda*, which lay rather lonely by the shore away from the great tourist highways, was not one of those which are frequented by more distinguished guests, and left much to be wished for as regards cleanliness and comfort, but the weather and their thoroughly damp state did not allow the guests to be particular. At any rate there were some apartments which were called guest chambers, and really at times served young painters and wandering tourists as a night's quarters. Beatrice was horrified on entering, and the Marchese looked with mute resignation at these rooms, which were certainly very unlike those of his Mirando; Lord Elton on the contrary reconciled himself better to the inevitable, and so far as the two brothers were concerned, Reinhold appeared quite indifferent to the style of the reception, and Hugo much amused by it. They now learned also that they were quite twelve miles distant from S---, and that another travelling party had already sought refuge here from the storm. But fortunately it had arrived at the beginning of the same, and in a carriage, therefore had not suffered from the rain like the lady and gentlemen just reaching it, at whose disposal all which the place contained was readily placed.

A quarter of an hour later, Hugo entered the general public and reception-room, and with his foot softly pushed aside a black, bristly object, which had laid itself just before the door with admirable coolness, and now left its place grunting crossly.

"These dear little animals appear to be considered quite fit for a drawing-room here; with us they are merely so in a roasted state," said he, quietly. "I wanted to see where you were, Reinhold. My God, you are still in your wet clothes. Why have you not changed?"

Reinhold, who stood at the window and gazed out at the sea, turned and cast an abstracted look at his brother, who already, like the other gentlemen, had made use of the padrone's and his son's Sunday clothes brought hastily to them.

"Changed my clothes? Oh to be sure, I had forgotten."

"Then do it now!" urged Hugo. "Do you wish to ruin your health entirely?"

Reinhold made an impatient deprecating gesture. "Leave me alone! What a fuss about a storm of rain."

"Well, the rain storm was within a hair's breadth of being fatal to us," said Captain Almbach, "and I can bear testimony, as pilot, that my ship's crew behaved bravely, with the single exception of Donna Beatrice. She made rather extensive use of her rights as a lady, first by bringing us into danger, and then increasing its difficulties tenfold."

"For which you have the triumph that she owes her life to you, as do we all," suggested Reinhold, indifferently.

Hugo looked sharply at his brother. "Which in your case you seem to value very slightly."

"I, why?"

He did not wait for the reply, and turned again to the window; but Hugo was already at his side and put an arm round his shoulder.

"What is the matter, Reinhold?" asked he again in the tone of former tenderness with which he once surrounded the younger brother--whom he knew to be oppressed and miserable in their relations' house--and which had now become so rare between them. Reinhold was silent.

"I hoped you would at last find the rest here which you sought for so passionately," continued Captain Almbach, more seriously, "instead of which you rush about worse than ever during the last week. We are barely, even nominally, the Marchese's guests any more. You drag him and us all into this constant change of distractions and excursions. From ship to carriage, from carriage to mules, as if every moment of repose or solitude were a torture to you, and once we are in the midst of the excitement you are often enough like a marble guest amongst us. What has happened?"

Reinhold turned, not violently but decidedly, away from Hugo's arms.

"That, I cannot tell you."

"Reinhold--"

"Leave me--I beg you."

Captain Almbach stepped back; he saw the repulse did not proceed from temper; the faint, constrained tone, betrayed suppressed pain only too well, but he knew of old that nothing could be gained from his brother in such a state of mind.

"The storm seems to be at an end," said he, after a short pause, "but at present it will be useless thinking of our return. We cannot under any circumstances venture on the boisterous sea again to-day, and the road will be in a bad enough state, too. I have promised the gentlemen to obtain some information respecting it for them, as to whether our return would be possible to-day, and if we may not expect a second outbreak from the clouds. The verandah up there seems to offer a tolerably free view; I will try it."

He left the room, and ascended the stairs. The verandah lay on the other side of the house; it was a large stone adjunct, which probably dated from a former more brilliant period of the building, now, like the latter, neglected, half decayed, but extremely picturesque in its ruins and with its creeping vines, which climbed around the pillars and balustrade. A long open gallery led into it, and Hugo was just going to pass along it, when he was arrested. A pigeon fluttered immediately before him, chased by a boy in distinguished, fashionable-looking dress. The tame bird, accustomed to mankind, did not think seriously of flight; it flitted, as if playfully, along the floor, and only when the little arms were stretched out to catch it, did it soar easily up to the roof of the house, while the eager little follower rushed forward in wild career, and so ran up against Captain Almbach.

"See there, Signorino, that was nearly becoming a collision," said Hugo, as he caught the little one; but the latter, still full of eagerness for the chase, stretched both hands up above, and cried vivaciously in German--

"I do so want the bird. Can you not catch him for me?"

"No, my little sportsman, I cannot, unless I could put on wings," said Hugo, playfully, as he examined the boy closer, astonished to hear his own language. He started, looked intently into his eyes a few seconds, and then lifted him up suddenly, to fold him with increasing tenderness in his arms.

The little one permitted the caress to take place calmly, but somewhat astonished. "You speak just like mamma and uncle Erlau," said he confidently. "I do not understand any one else, and at home I understood all."

"Is your mamma here also?" enquired Hugo, hastily.

The child nodded, and pointed to the other side. Captain Almbach put him down quickly, and stepped on to the verandah with him, where Ella was coming towards them, and stood still in speechless surprise when she saw her boy holding his uncle's hand.

"Must we meet here?" cried the latter, greeting her eagerly. "I thought you never left Villa Fiorina, especially in such weather."

"It is the first excursion, too, that we have attempted," replied Ella. "My uncle's continued improved health led us to undertake a visit to the temple ruins in the mountains, but on our return journey the storm overtook us, and as the horses threatened to become unmanageable, we were glad to find shelter and refuge here."

"We are in the same plight," reported Hugo, "only it was worse for us, as we came by water."

A momentary pallor spread over Ella's countenance.

"How? You are accompanied by your brother? I imagined it when I saw you."

Hugo made a gesture of assent. "You told me you wished to avoid a meeting at any price," began he again.

"I wished it; yes!" interrupted she, firmly, "but it was impossible. We have seen each other already."

"I thought so!" muttered Captain Almbach. "Thence his incomprehensible reserve."

"Why did you not tell me you were guests of the owner of Mirando?" asked Ella, reproachfully. "I believed you to be in S----, and went unsuspectingly to see the villa. Only when too late did I learn who was staying in our immediate neighbourhood."

Hugo scanned her face with a rapid glance, as if he wished to assure himself of her self-possession.

"You spoke to Reinhold?" said he, in extreme anxiety, without noticing her reproach. "Well, then?"

"Well, then?" replied she, with an almost harsh expression, "Do not be afraid! Signor Rinaldo knows now that he must remain at a distance from me and my son. He will acknowledge us at any possible meeting as little as I shall acknowledge him."

"To-day it would certainly be impossible," replied Hugo seriously, "as he is not alone. I fear, Ella, even that will not be spared you."

"You mean a meeting with Signora Biancona?" Ella could not preserve her lips from trembling as she uttered the name, however much she forced herself to appear calm, "Well, if it cannot be avoided, I shall know how to endure it."

During this conversation they had drawn near the balustrade. The storm was really over, and the sluices of heaven seemed to have exhausted themselves at last, but the air still hung damp and laden with rain. The wet vines, torn and disordered by the storm, still fluttered about, and drops of rain ran down from the saint's picture in the badly sheltered niche in the wall. Below rolled the sea, still wildly disturbed; the usually so quiet sapphire blue mirror was only a wild chaos of iron-grey currents and white foaming crests of waves, which broke hissing and surging on the shore. But the mist, which until now had enveloped the whole country in an impenetrable veil, commenced to melt at last, and land-marks came out distinctly already; only around the higher points did it still cling and hang, while in the west a clearer gleam of light began to struggle with the disappearing clouds.

"How did you recognise my little Reinhold?" asked Ella suddenly, in quite an altered tone. "You did not see him at your last visit, and when you left H---- he had barely passed his first year of life."

Hugo leant down to the child, and lifted up its little head.

"How I recognised him?" replied he smiling; "by his eyes. He has yours, Ella, and they are not so easily mistaken, even if they look out of another's face. I should know them amongst hundreds."

His tone had almost a passionate warmth. The young wife drew slightly aside.

"Since when have you begun to pay me compliments, Hugo?"

"Are compliments so unusual to you, Ella?"

"From your lips, certainly."

"Yes, certainly. I dare not venture upon what you allow to every one else," said Captain Almbach, with a slight accent of bitterness. "The attempt has once already obtained me the name of 'adventurer.'"

"It seems as if you could never forget that word," said Ella, half smiling.

He threw his head back defiantly. "No, I cannot, as it pained me, and therefore I cannot get over it, even until this moment."

"Pained you?" repeated Ella. "Can, indeed, anything pain you, Hugo?"

"That is to say, in other words--'have you then indeed a heart, Hugo?' Oh, no, I do *not* possess such an article at all; I came off badly at the distribution of the same; you must surely have discovered that."

"I do not mean that," interposed Ella, "I give you all credit for the warmest feelings."

"But no earnestness, no depth?"

"No."

Captain Almbach looked at her silently for a few seconds; at last he said softly--

"Was it necessary, Ella, to give me such a harsh lesson, because I ventured lately to kiss your hand, which perhaps displeased you? I know what this 'No' means. You see I understand hints, and shall take note of to-day's. You need not be afraid."

A slight blush passed over Ella's features, as she saw that he understood her. "I did not wish to wound you, indeed not," she answered, and put her hand out heartily, but Hugo stood obstinately averted, and appeared not to notice it.

"Are you angry with me?" she asked. It was a touchingly-beseeking tone, and it did not fail in its intention. Captain Almbach turned round suddenly, and caught her offered hand, but in his answer excitement and the old love of teasing struggled again, and were suppressed with difficulty, as he replied--

"If my late uncle and aunt could see us now, they would observe with intense satisfaction how their daughter holds the incorrigible Hugo by the head--he who will usually obey no other reins--how she will not permit him to go even one step beyond those limits which she finds it good to draw. No, I am not angry with you, Ella--cannot be so--only you must not make obedience too hard for me."

Both were still engaged in lively conversation, when Marchese Tortoni and Lord Elton also entered the verandah from the gallery.

"Look there," said the former, astonished, to his companion, "that is the reason why our Capitano's observations are so endlessly prolonged that we are obliged to look him up at last. It is indeed an extraordinary nature. An hour ago he forced our boat through storm and waves, and now he plays the agreeable to a young signora."

"Yes, an extraordinary man," agreed Lord Elton, who had taken such a blind fancy to Hugo, that he thought everything perfect in him.

The unbearable sultry air in the close rooms appeared to have driven the whole party out on to the verandah, as immediately after the two gentlemen Reinhold and Beatrice appeared also. If his wife were prepared for this encounter, he certainly was not, as he became pale as death, and made a movement as if to turn back; but at the same moment the boy's fair, curly head appeared from behind the young wife, and, as if transfixed, the father stood still. His glance directed openly to the child, he appeared to have forgotten all else around him.

"What a lovely child!" cried Beatrice, admiringly, as she stretched her arms out with perfect assurance; but now Ella started up! with a single movement she had withdrawn the boy from the intended caress, and pressed him firmly to herself.

"Excuse me, Signora," said she, coldly, "the child is shy with strangers, and not accustomed to *such* caresses."

Beatrice seemed somewhat offended at this repulse; however she saw nothing more in it than a mother's over-due anxiety. She shrugged her shoulders imperceptibly, and a scoffing side-glance fell upon the stranger, but it soon remained enchained by the latter's appearance, although recognition only took place on one side.

Before Ella's recollection, that evening stood forth in perfect distinctness when she, alone, without knowledge of her people, her veil drawn closely over her face, hastened to the theatre, in order to see the one who had so completely alienated her husband. She had seen Beatrice in all the brilliancy of her beauty and talent, intoxicated by the cheers and homage of the public, and she bore the impression ineffaceably away with her.

Beatrice, also, had only once seen Reinhold's wife, at the time when she first began to be interested in the young composer, and Ella did not then suspect anything of her evil influence. A short meeting of a few minutes sufficed for the Italian to perceive that this quiet, pale being, with downcast eyes, and that ridiculously matronly costume, could not possibly bind such a man to her, and this knowledge was extensive enough for her not to take any further notice of the young wife. At all events it was impossible for her to associate the colourless, half ridiculous, and half pitiful picture, which she carried in her recollection, in the remotest degree with this apparition, which stood so unapproachably proudly there, which held its fair head so high and erect, and whose large blue eyes looked at her with an expression which Beatrice was unable to explain to herself. She only saw that the stranger was very haughty, but also very beautiful.

The two gentlemen seemed to think the latter also, as they came nearer, bowing politely; Lord Elton gazed at Ella with open admiration, and the Marchese, whom Hugo had often reproached for blamable indifference to ladies' acquaintance, said with unusual eagerness to him--

"You appear to know the Signora. May we not also count upon the pleasure of being introduced to her?"

Captain Almbach, as if to protect her, had placed himself by the young wife's side. Between his eyebrows lay a frown which seldom appeared on his cheerful brow, and it became still deeper at this request, which could not possibly be refused. He therefore introduced the two gentlemen, and named his countrywoman to them as Frau Erlau. He knew that Ella, in order to anticipate unpleasant enquiries, to which the name of Almbach might easily give rise, bore that of her adopted father, so long as she remained in Italy.

Beatrice's eyes flashed with offended pride. She was not accustomed to herself and Reinhold being mentioned last in such cases, and here she was not even named at all. Captain Almbach ignored her altogether, and appeared actually to do so on purpose, as the angry look which she cast towards him was received with aggravating coldness; but even Cesario was struck by the want of tact that his usually charming friend displayed. While he uttered a few civilities to the strange lady, he waited in vain for the continuation of the presentation, and as this did not ensue, he undertook it, in order to atone for the Captain's supposed impoliteness.

"You have forgotten the most important part, Signor," said he, turning the affair quickly into a joke. "Signora Erlau would hardly be grateful to you were you not to mention the very two names which, doubtless, interest her most, and which are certainly not unknown to her. Signora Biancona--Signor Rinaldo."

Beatrice, still enraged at the insult offered to her, only vouchsafed a slight inclination of her head, which was similarly returned; but suddenly she became observant. She felt how Reinhold's arm quivered, how he let hers fall, and moved a step away from her as he bowed. She knew him too well not to perceive that at this moment, notwithstanding his apparent calm, he was terribly agitated. This intense pallor, this nervous quivering of his lips, were the sure sign that he was forcibly suppressing some passionate emotion. And what meant this glance, which certainly only met that of the stranger for a few seconds, but it flashed with unmistakable defiance, and melted again into perfect tenderness when it fell on the child at her side. She herself, indeed, stood quite impassive opposite him; not a feature moved in the countenance cold as marble. But this face was also remarkably pale, and her arms encircled her boy with convulsive firmness, as if he were to be torn away from them. Yet she replied in a perfectly controlled voice--

"I am much obliged to you, Signor. I had indeed not yet the pleasure of knowing Italy's principal singer and Italy's celebrated composer."

Reinhold's blood surged through his veins, as again, and this time before strangers, the endless breach was shown him which separated him from his former wife. Now it was she who assigned him the place which he had to occupy towards her; and that she could do it with such calm and ease roused him to the uttermost.

"Italy's?" replied he, with sharp accentuation. "You forget, Signora, that by birth I am a German."

"Really," replied Ella, in the same tone as before. "Indeed I did not know that until now."

"One seems to be soon forgotten in one's home," said Reinhold, with savage bitterness.

"But surely only when people estrange themselves. In this case it is quite comprehensible. You, Signor, have found a second fatherland, and he to whom Italy has given so much can easily forego home and its recollections."

She turned to the other gentlemen, exchanged a few passing indifferent words with them, and then gave her hand quietly and openly to Hugo in farewell.

"You will excuse me, I must go to my uncle. Reinhold bid Captain Almbach adieu."

It was only too true. Ella possessed a terrible weapon in the child, and understood how to use it mercilessly. Reinhold experienced it at this moment. To him she relentlessly denied the sight and presence of his boy, although she knew with what passion he longed for him; and now she let

him see how this boy stretched out his little arms to his uncle, and offered his mouth for a kiss; let him see it in the presence of the woman for whom he had forsaken them both, and whose presence forbade him to insist upon any of his rights as a father--the revenge penetrated to the innermost depths of his heart.

Beatrice, quite contrary to her usual custom, had not taken part, even by a single syllable, in the conversation; but her darkly burning glance did not move from either of the two, between whom she suspected some secret connection, although her thoughts were immeasurably far from the truth itself. For the present, however, Ella now put an end to any further conversation. She took little Reinhold by the hand, and after a slight, haughty bow, which included the whole party, she left the verandah with the child.

"You appear to have introduced some incognita to us, Signor Capitano," said Beatrice, with cutting scorn. "Perhaps you will be so good as to explain to us exactly who the princess is who has just now condescended to leave us."

"Yes, by heaven, very proud, but also very beautiful!" cried the Marchese, his admiration breaking forth, while Hugo replied coolly--

"You are mistaken, Signora. I told you the name of the German lady."

The young Italian went up to his friend and laid his hand on the latter's shoulder.

"Signora's mistake is easily understood. Do not you think so also, Rinaldo?--Good God, what is the matter--what ails you?"

### CHAPTER III.

"Nothing," said Reinhold, recovering himself with a great effort. "I am not well; the stormy voyage has upset me. It is nothing, Cesario."

"I believe the best we can do is to think of our return," interrupted Hugo, who deemed it necessary to distract attention from his brother, as he saw that the latter could no longer control his agitation. "A repetition of the storm need not be feared, and as the padrone has promised to procure us a carriage, we can reach S--- this evening if we start soon."

It was the first time that Beatrice cordially agreed to any proposition made by Captain Almbach. Marchese Tortoni, on the contrary, considered any great haste very unnecessary, and raised several objections. All at once the lonely *locanda* seemed to have gained remarkable attractions for him. But as he could not succeed in his wishes--for Reinhold also insisted upon an immediate return--he joined Captain Almbach, who went to see about the carriage.

"I fear you made up some tale for your brother and me, when you declared that a certain villa was inaccessible," said he, teasingly. "It was suspicious at the time when you confessed your failure so openly, and let our jokes fall so quietly upon you. I could swear that I had seen this charming figure and those glorious fair plaits once before, when I rode past the villa. I understand, of course, that you would not make us the confidants of your adventure, still----"

"You are mistaken," interrupted Hugo, with a decision which made it impossible to doubt his words. "There is no talk of an adventure here, Signor Marchese. I give you my word upon it."

"Ah, then pardon me," said Cesario, seriously; "I believe your apparently intimate acquaintance with the lady----"

"Arises from a former acquaintance in Germany," completed Captain Almbach. "I certainly had no suspicion of this meeting, when I believed I was seeking a perfect stranger in the Villa Fiorina; but I repeat it, that the word 'adventure' must not be connected in the remotest degree with that lady, and that I claim the most perfect and unqualified respect for her from all."

The very positive tone of this explanation might, perhaps, have irritated another listener, but the young Marchese, on the contrary, seemed to find unmistakable satisfaction in it.

"I do not in the least doubt that you are quite justified in your demand," replied he, very warmly. "The whole bearing of the beautiful lady answers for it. What imposing dignity, and what a perfectly charming appearance! I never saw any woman unite the two so thoroughly."

"Really?" Hugo's voice betrayed by no means pleasant surprise, as he looked at his companion, whose cheeks were deeply suffused with colour, and whose eyes sparkled. Captain Almbach did not utter another word, but his countenance told plainly enough what he thought. "I believe this



ideal-man also begins to care about other things besides airs and recitatives--however, it is quite unnecessary."

Beatrice stood alone up in the verandah. She had not followed Reinhold and Lord Elton, who also descended. Her hand buried itself unconsciously in the wet vine-leaves, while her dark eyes were fixed steadily on the sea. Lost in gloomy meditation, she only clung to the one thought, which her lips now uttered, as half threateningly, half frightened, she whispered----"What was it between them?"

Autumn had come, and brought strangers and inhabitants back from the seaside and mountains to the large ever stirring and bustling central point of Italy. It was indeed not such an autumn as leads nature to its grave in the North, with gloomy, rainy days, raw stormy nights, rolling mists, hoar and night frosts. Here it lay mildly in golden clearness and indescribable beauty over the wide plains, from which at last the summer's heat had subsided; over the mountains, which, at other times were day after day enveloped in hot vapour, encircled with white clouds, now again showed their blue outlines undisguised; and over the town, where the great wave of life which for several moons had rolled slowly, now flowed forth with renewed power.

Signora Biancona had also returned. Her stay in S---- had been as unexpectedly and quickly terminated as was Reinhold's in Mirando. He seemed as if, all at once, he could not endure his usually favourite place any longer. Almost immediately after their stormy sea excursion, he insisted positively that the original plan should be adhered to, and the *villeggiatura* in the mountains, long since decided upon, be carried out. The Marchese's objections, even his openly-displayed annoyance--having counted upon a lengthy visit from his guests--were in vain, as Beatrice also agreed somewhat eagerly to Reinhold's plan, and thus Cesario remained alone in Mirando, while the others went to the mountains, from which they had now just returned.

It was during the forenoon. Signora Biancona was sitting in her boudoir, her head resting on her arm, and her hand buried in her dark hair, in an attitude of eager attention. The conductor, Gianelli, had taken up his position opposite to her. Whatever his real feelings towards the envied Rinaldo might be, he was much too clever not to show outwardly all necessary respect and consideration to him, who, in the world of art, as in society, was all-powerful; and towards the beautiful *prima donna* he was now all attention and devotion, which he showed in voice and manner, as, continuing the conversation already begun, he said--

"You had commanded, Signora, and that was sufficient for me at once to set all machinery in motion. I am fortunate in being able to fulfil your wish, and impart the fullest information upon a certain subject."

Beatrice lifted up her head with liveliest eagerness. "Well?"

"This Signor Erlau is, as you supposed, a merchant from H----. He must, indeed, belong to the richest of his class, as everywhere he appears like a millionaire. He has rented the entire Villa Fiorina, near S----, for himself and his family, and here, also, he inhabits one of the most expensive houses. His household is arranged in great style; part of the servants brought from Germany. He bears important introductions to his embassy, of which, however, he has not made any use as yet, because his state of health necessitates retirement. His move here, in fact, was only made in order to put himself under the treatment of one of our most celebrated doctors----"

"I know all that already," interrupted Beatrice, impatiently. "When I heard the name, I did not doubt that it was the same Consul at whose house I visited during my stay in H----. But the lady who accompanies them--the young Signora?"

"Is his niece," explained Gianelli, who made an intentional pause after the first words.

The singer appeared to consider. "She certainly was presented to me as Signora Erlau. A relation, therefore. I did not see her in those days. I surely should have remarked her; one does not so easily overlook such a figure."

The maestro smiled with a malicious expression. "She is *said* to bear the same name, certainly, as her adopted father; she is *said* to be a widow--*said* to have lost her husband many years since. At least, they wish such to be believed in Italy, and the servants have strict orders to answer all enquiries in this manner."

Beatrice listened attentively to this explanation with its double meaning, "'*Said* to be;' but is it not so? I suspected that some secret lay hidden there. You have discovered it?"

"Servants are never silent, if one understands to apply in the right manner," remarked Gianelli, scornfully. "I only fear it is an extremely delicate point, and as it concerns Signor Rinaldo----"

"Rinaldo!" exclaimed Beatrice, "how so? What has Rinaldo to do with it? Did you not say that it concerns Rinaldo?"

The maestro bent his head, and said in his softest tone, "I was then, indeed mistaken, Signora, when I premised that the cause of your wish to learn more particulars about the Erlau family

originated with Signor Rinaldo."

The singer bit her lips. She certainly might have foreseen that the motive which dictated the commission she had given him could not escape the observing eyes of a Gianelli.

"Let us leave Rinaldo out of the question!" said she, with an effort to appear calm. "You were about to speak of Signora Erlau."

"It would be somewhat difficult to separate one from the other," suggested Gianelli. "I only fear Signor Rinaldo is unfortunately not favourably disposed towards me already, certainly from no fault of mine. I fear I might arouse his extreme ill-will if he discovered it was I who made such a communication, and especially to you"--he paused, and drew figures on the floor with his walking stick, in well-feigned confusion.

"To me, especially!" repeated Beatrice, violently, "then this communication is not intended for me? You must speak, Signor Gianelli! You shall not withhold one word, not one syllable either! I require, I demand it of you."

"Well then----" he seemed really about to come to the explanation, but the game was too interesting to give it up so soon, and the maestro himself had too often suffered from the temper of the beautiful *prima donna* to be able to deny himself the satisfaction of keeping her still longer on the rack of eagerness.

"Well then, you surely are aware of Signor Rinaldo's former bonds; but in, Italy few or none know that he was already married. I myself was only informed of it on this occasion. You, of course, were acquainted with the fact."

"I know it," replied Beatrice, suppressedly, "but how does that concern this?"

"Indeed it does to some extent. You do not know Rinaldo's wife, Signora?"

"No. Though yes; I saw her once momentarily. A very insignificant person."

"They do not seem to think so, here," remarked Gianelli, again in the same soft tone. "Notwithstanding her seclusion, the beautiful fair German begins to create a sensation."

"Who?" Beatrice rose so suddenly and wildly, that the maestro thought it wiser to retire a few steps. "Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of Signora Eleonore Almbach, who certainly bears her adopted father's name here, probably to avoid inquisitive inquiries."

"That is impossible," exclaimed the singer, now with extreme violence. "That cannot be. You deceive me, or have been yourself deceived."

"Excuse me," said Gianelli, defending himself, "my source is the most authentic. I will answer for its correctness, and Signor Rinaldo will be obliged to confirm it."

"Impossible!" repeated Beatrice, still quite without her self-possession. "*This* apparition his wife! I saw her formerly, of course, although only for a few minutes. Was I then blind?"

"Or was he so?" completed Gianelli to himself; but he said aloud, "I am inconsolable to have excited you so, Signora; you will give me credit for not wishing to speak, but you regularly forced this information from me. I regret this exceedingly."

His words restored Beatrice somewhat to consciousness. She felt what she had to expect from the pity of the man who had played the spy on her behalf.

"Certainly not!" replied she in a hasty but vain attempt to recover her self-control. "I--I thank you, Signor. I am merely surprised, nothing more."

The maestro saw that he could not do better than retire, but as he prepared to leave, he laid his hand assuringly upon his heart--

"You know, Signora, that I am quite at your commands, and if you deem it necessary to insist upon my unconditional silence in this affair, no assurance is needed that this also is at your service. Quite at your commands."

He left the room with a low bow; he was in earnest with the last words. Gianelli was too good a reckoner not to consider as a valuable secret, something which sooner or later might be employed against the hated Rinaldo. If he were to make the piquant story public in society, nothing more could be done with it; in his sole possession, on the contrary, it might be very useful. At present it ensured him influence over Beatrice, and, indirectly, even over Rinaldo, to whom it could, at the very least, not be agreeable that his family affairs should become generally known.

In the best of humours the maestro passed through the saloon, and entered the antechamber, where at that moment the sailor Jonas was alone. Captain Almbach had sent him to his brother

with some message; he supposed the latter to be with Signora Biancona. Reinhold, however, was at the manager's, but was expected every moment. Jonas learned this from some servant who had gone into Beatrice's service from that of the same manager who had taken the Italian Opera Company to Germany, and as a trophy of his northern journey was able to maltreat a few words of German. As the sailor had received orders to give his master's note to the latter's brother himself, nothing else remained for him than to wait; he therefore took up his position in the ante-room, through which Reinhold was sure to pass. He had certainly remarked that the door of one of the back rooms stood open, and that some one was in there, apparently one of the Signora's lady's maids, who was occupied with a dress of her mistress. However, as this somebody was a woman, she naturally did not exist for Jonas, who, dissatisfied and silent as usual, withdrew into one of the window recesses, and remained there above a quarter of an hour without taking the slightest notice of his neighbour.

Signor Gianelli, as regards women, seemed to entertain the most opposite views; he had barely discovered the open door and the young girl, before he immediately altered his course, and steered in that direction. Jonas naturally did not understand any of the conversation, conducted in Italian, which now took place between the two, but so much was clear to him, that the maestro endeavoured to play the agreeable, apparently without particular success, as he only received short, and rather defiant-sounding replies, and at the same time the heavy silken folds were so adroitly draped that he could not come nearer without crumpling the light satin. This lasted a few minutes, then Signor Gianelli appeared to try and make some serious attempt, as a cry of annoyance was heard, followed by the angry stamping of a little foot. The dress flew aside, and the young girl fled into the ante-room, where she stood still with arms folded defiantly and eyes sparkling with rage. But the maestro had followed her, and without being intimidated in the least by the opposition, gave signs of trying to enforce the kiss which evidently had been refused him before, when he stumbled upon a most unexpected obstacle. A powerful hand caught him suddenly by the collar, and a strange voice said impressively--

"That is to be left alone."

At the first moment the Italian appeared staggered at this interruption from a stranger whom he had not perceived at all; but on looking more closely at the latter, and discovering that he had only a common sailor to deal with, he drew himself up with great self-importance and evinced great annoyance. He immediately reversed the order of affairs, and pretended to be the one insulted. How could any one dare to attack a man in his position, especially in Signora Biancona's apartments; he should lay a complaint to the Signora; what sort of a person was it who took such a liberty? and thereupon a flood of not exactly flattering names swept over poor Jonas.

The latter endured the insults heaped upon him with immovable placidity, as he did not understand even one word of them; but when the Italian, deceived by this quiescence, took it into his head to make a threatening gesticulation with his stick, there was an end of the sailor's calm, as he understood this pantomime very well. With a sudden movement he had caught the stick from the maestro, the next moment had seized him and regularly thrust him out of the room, thrown his stick after him, and locked the door, all without speaking a single word, and returned quietly to his window recess as if nothing had happened. But here the young girl came at once towards him, stretching out both hands to him, with southern vivacity and overflowing with gratitude.

"It is not necessary! Was done willingly," said Jonas, dryly, but as he put out his arm as if to refuse her thanks, a little hand was placed upon it, and a clear voice said something in the softest tones, which was undoubtedly intended to express her acknowledgments.

Jonas looked most indignantly, first at his arm, then at the hand, which still lay upon it, and after having gazed at both for some time, he condescended at last to cast a glance also at the person to whom the hand belonged.

Before him stood a young girl of at most sixteen years, so lythe, so intensely slight and graceful a figure, that she presented the greatest contrast imaginable to the broad form of the sailor. A wreath of splendid blue-black plaits surrounded the little face, which, with its dark brown complexion and burning black eyes, certainly sprang from the South of Italy. The little one was pretty, without doubt very pretty, that could not be denied, and the liveliness with which she endeavoured to show her protector how very grateful she was rendered her still more charming.

"Yes, if I only understood the cursed language!" muttered Jonas, in whom, for the first time, something like regret arose that he had thrown away, with such obstinate determination, the rare opportunity offered him during the summer of learning Italian. He shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and in this way made pantomimic signs that he did not understand Italian, which the young girl seemed to think quite unheard of and also very disagreeable.

"I was to find Mr. Reinhold," growled Jonas, who, strange to say, seemed to long to impart some information, which was not usually his case with women. He made the discovery, however, that even this name was not understood, as now it became his companion's turn to shake her head and shrug her shoulders.

"Yes, indeed," said the sailor angrily, "he could not even retain his honest German name! Rinaldo he lets himself be called here--God have pity on him! Robbers and rogues are called by

such names with us at home. Signor Rinaldo," exclaimed he, as he drew out his master's note, which bore the same name. This address was of course well enough known in Signora Biancona's house; any farther understanding was now, however, unnecessary, as just at the moment when the two were bending their heads eagerly over the letter, the door of the ante-room was opened and Reinhold himself entered.

The young girl remarked him first. In one moment she was away from the sailor's side and in the middle of the room, where she made a graceful curtsy and then disappeared in the direction of the saloon, probably to announce the long-expected one to her mistress; while Jonas, who could not conceive how any person could fly away thus lightly and rapidly, and disappear tracelessly in a few seconds, stared after her so steadily that Reinhold was obliged to go up to him and ask what brought him there. Ashamed, and somewhat confused, he delivered his errand and gave up the note, which Almbach opened and read rapidly. The contents seemed to be very indifferent to him--

"Tell my brother I am engaged already for to-day, and therefore beg him to accept the Marchese's invitation merely for himself. If possible at all, I shall appear towards evening."

He put the note in his pocket, dismissed the messenger by a gesture, and passed into the saloon. Jonas now had his orders and ought to have returned home; instead, however, he sought the servant who had given him the required information before, and the latter made the discovery that the inaccessible sailor, so chary of words, had all at once become very inquisitive, as he enquired very particularly about Signora Biancona's household and its *personnel*. and tolerated the Italian's horrible German--who was so proud of his knowledge of the language--with exemplary patience.

Reinhold, meanwhile, had entered the boudoir. He no longer required any announcement to its mistress, and she came towards him at once; but had he not been so entirely absorbed in other thoughts he must have seen at the first glance that something had happened to her. The Italian's dark warm colouring could appear pale at times; this was evident now, when the glowing blood which usually throbbed in her cheeks had disappeared to the very last drop; but it was an unnatural pallor, and her eyes burned all the more scorchingly. Beatrice was actress enough to be able, for a few moments at least, to control her temper when it was required to gain some object, and she wished to obtain one to-day. A trait of dark determination lay in her face; she wished to see clearly at any price.

"I met Gianelli below in the street," began Reinhold, after the first greeting. "He appeared to come from your house; was he with you?"

"Certainly! I know you are prejudiced against him, but I cannot possibly decline to see the conductor of the opera, when he comes on purpose to discuss something as to its performance with me."

Reinhold shrugged his shoulders. "That could be done at the rehearsals. Are you a young beginner, who requires protection, and must fear offending any one? I should have thought that you, in your position, could behave with as little consideration as I do. However, I will give you no directions about it. Receive whom you will, even Gianelli! I am far from wishing to place any control upon you."

The tone sounded icy, and Beatrice's voice trembled slightly as she replied, "That is new to me. You used to watch over my visitors most despotically; formerly no one could cross my threshold who was not agreeable to you."

Reinhold had thrown himself into a seat. "You see I have become more tolerant."

"More tolerant!--more indifferent."

"You have often enough complained of my despotism," remarked he, with a slight tinge of sarcasm.

"And yet I bore it because I knew it sprang from love. It is only natural that with the one the other should also cease."

Reinhold made an impatient movement. "Beatrice you demand what is impossible, when you require that a human heart should ever and for ever glow with those volcanic feelings which alone you call love."

She had approached his seat, and placed her hand on its back, while she looked down at him with a strange expression.

"I see certainly that it is impossible to require from the cold heart of a Northerner such love as I give and demand."

"You should have left him in his north," said Reinhold, gloomily; "perhaps the cold there would have been better for him than the everlasting glow of the south."

"Is that intended for a reproach? Was it I who tore you from your home?"

"No! I went voluntarily, but--be just, Beatrice!--you were the moving power. Who urged me constantly to the resolution? Who held my artist's course again and again before my eyes? Who dubbed me a coward as I started back at the responsibility, and at last placed the fatal choice before me of flight or our separation? Excuse me--you knew how the decision must fall."

The Italian's dark eyes flashed threateningly, but she forced herself to be calm.

"Our love depended on it," declared she, proudly; "our love depended on it, and your artist's career. I rescued a genius for the world when I rescued you for myself."

He was silent. The defence appeared to find no echo in his heart. She bent lower to him, and her voice sounded sweet and fascinating again, but the unnatural expression did not leave her features.

"You are dreaming, Rinaldo. This is one of your moods again, which I have so often had to fight against. Is it the first time then, that an unhappy, unsuitable marriage has been dissolved in order to form a happier union?"

Reinhold leaned his head on his hand. "No, certainly not; but that does not affect this case; my marriage has not been dissolved, and we--have never thought of marriage."

Beatrice started, and her hand slid from the back of the chair.

"You were not free?" she murmured.

"It would only have cost me one word to be so. I knew I should not be prevented, and means enough were open to you to obtain dispensation, which would have permitted a Catholic to make this marriage. But we both dreaded the indissoluble bond; we wished to be free and unfettered, without limits in our love as in our life--well, we are so still at this moment."

"What do you mean by this?" Beatrice pressed her hand upon her heart as if breathless. "Do you still consider your marriage to exist?"

"Oh, no, certainly not; and if I did, the daring of such an idea would soon be made plain to me. You do not know what an offended wife and mother is in the pride of her virtue. If the sinner were to devote his whole remaining life to penance and repentance, he would still not be restored to favour."

The words were intended to sound scoffingly; he did not suspect the boundless bitterness they betrayed as he hurled them forth; but Beatrice understood it only too well, and with this recognition, her self-control, so far preserved with such difficulty, broke down irretrievably.

"You have, perhaps, tried it already with the offended wife," cried she furiously. "She is in your neighbourhood; I myself was witness of your meeting. That is why your eyes encountered each other in so mysterious a manner; that is why you could not tear your gaze away from the child; that is why she drew back from me, as if from something unholy. Have you attempted the penitent scene already, Rinaldo?"

Reinhold had sprung up; anger and astonishment struggled in his countenance. "So you know already who Signora Erlau is? But why do I ask! The spy, this Gianelli, has just left you; he has traced it out and communicated it to you."

A dark look passed over the singer's features for a moment, as she remembered the distinct commission she had given to the spy, but in her inward excitement shame found no place.

"You knew it in Mirando," continued she violently, "and she occupies the Villa Fiorina close by. Will you try to make me believe you had not seen each other before, not spoken?"

"I do not wish to try and make you believe anything," said Reinhold coldly. "How I stand to Eleonore, our utterly estranged meeting must have shown you sufficiently. Calm yourself. You have nothing to dread from that side. What else has taken place between me and my *wife* I shall not confess to *you*."

A slight, but yet perceptible tone of contempt lay on the two words, and it seemed to be understood.

"It appears you place me *below* your wife," said Beatrice weeping. "Below the woman whose only merit was and is that of being the mother of your child; who never----"

"Pray, leave that alone!" interrupted he, with decision. "You know I never permit you to touch upon that point, and now I shall endure it less than ever. If you must get up a scene for me, do it, but leave my wife and child out of the drama."

It was as if his words had let a storm loose, so raging, so unmeasured did the Italian's passion now break forth, dragging every trace of self-control along with it.

"Your wife and your child!" repeated she, beside herself. "Oh, I know what these words signify to me; I must experience it often enough. Have they not forced themselves between us from the

first moment of our meeting until to-day? To them I owe every bitter hour, every strange emotion in your heart. They have lain upon you like a shadow, amidst the growth of your artist's renown, amidst all your conquests and triumphs; as if they had cursed you there in the north, with the recollection of them, you could not tear your self away from them; and yet there was a time when they were the oppressive fetters which separated you from life and future--which you must break at last!"

"To exchange them for others," completed Reinhold, whose violence now burst forth, "and the question is, are these others lighter? There, it was only the outward circumstances which confined me; my thoughts, feelings and actions were at all events free. You would fain see these, also like myself, without a will, at your feet, and that you could not attain this, or at least not always, I have had to atone for by hours of endless excitement and bitterness. Your love would have made any other man into your slave. Me it forced to stand in constant opposition to your love of ruling, which tried to take possession of every innermost thought and feeling. But I should have thought, Beatrice, that you had hitherto found in me your master, who knew how to preserve his own independence, and would not allow his whole being and nature to be clasped in chains."

The storm had now been called up. Henceforth there was no restraint, no more moderation; at least not for Beatrice, whose passion foamed out ever wilder.

"I must hear that, too, from the lips of the man who so often called me his muse? Have you forgotten who it was who first awoke you to the knowledge of your talents and of yourself; who alone led you up to the sun's height of fame? Without me, the admired Rinaldo would have succumbed under the fetters which he did not dare to break."

She did not realise how deeply her reproach must wound his pride as a man. Reinhold was roused, but not with that haughtiness which, until now, too often darkened his character; this time it was a proud, energetic self-consciousness with which he drew himself up.

"That he *never* would. Do you think so little of my talent, that you believe it could only force open its path with you, and through you? Do you think I should not have found my way alone, not alone have swung myself up to the present height? Ask my works about it! They will give you the reply. I should have gone sooner or later. That I went with you, became my doom, as that broke every bond between me and home, and also drew me upon paths which the man as well as the composer had better have avoided. For years you kept me in the intoxication of a life which never offered me even one hour's real contentment or true happiness, because you knew that when once I awoke your power would be all at an end. You might postpone it, hinder it never--the awaking came late, too late, perhaps; but still it came at last."

Beatrice leaned upon the marble chimney-piece by which she stood; her whole body trembled as with fever; this hour showed her indeed what she had long felt, without wishing to acknowledge to herself--that her power was in truth at an end.

"And who do you think shall be the sacrifice to this 'awaking?'" said she in a hollow voice. "Take care, Rinaldo! You forsook your wife, and she bore it patiently--I shall not bear it. Beatrice Biancona does not allow herself to be sacrificed."

"No, she would rather sacrifice." Reinhold stepped before her and looked her firmly in the face. "You would plant the dagger--is it not true, Beatrice?--in yourself or me, all alike, if only your revenge were cooled? And if I seized the weapon from your hand, and returned repentant to you, you would open your arms to me again. You are right, Eleonore bore it more patiently; not a word, not a reproach restrained me, the cry of anguish was smothered in her heart. I did not hear even one sound of it; but at the moment in which I left her, I was the one rejected--my return was shut out for ever. And if I came to her now, in all the brilliancy of my fame and success--if I laid laurels, gold, honour, everything at her feet, and myself also--it would be in vain; she would not forgive me."

He broke off, as if he had said too much already. Beatrice did not reply one word; not a sound came from her lips; only her eyes spoke a gloomy, unnatural language; but Reinhold did not understand it this time, or would not understand it.

"You see this separation is irretrievable," said he, more quietly. "I repeat it, you have nothing to fear from that side. It was you, not I, who provoked this scene. It is not well to awaken the ghosts of the past--at least not between us. Let them rest."

He left her and went into the adjoining room, where he busied himself with the music lying on the piano, or seemed to busy himself with it, to escape further conversation.

"Let them rest!" that was said so gloomily, so quietly, and yet it sounded like scorn from his lips. Could he not even banish the ghosts of the past? And he demanded it of the woman who saw menaced by them what she deemed to be her highest good, her love for him, which, notwithstanding all that had passed between Rinaldo and herself in the course of years, still clung to him with all the strength of her inward being; whose glowing, passionate nature had in love as in hate never known any bounds. Whoever saw Beatrice now, as she raised herself slowly, and gazed after him, must have known that she would not let them rest, nor would she rest

herself; and Reinhold should have considered, when he opposed her so defiantly, that he did not stand alone against her revenge any longer, and that in this hour he had betrayed, only too well, by which means she could strike a deadly blow. The glances of evil token which flashed there did not menace him, but something else which he was unable to protect, because the right to do so was denied him--his wife and child!

## CHAPTER IV.

"I wish, Eleonore, we had stayed in the Villa Fiorina, and not undertaken our migration here," said Consul Erlau, as he stood still before his adopted daughter, whom he had surprised in tears on his unlooked-for entrance into her room. "I see I have made you suffer far too much by it."

Ella had soon effaced the traces of weeping, and now smiled with a calmness which might well have deceived a stranger.

"Pray, uncle, do not be anxious on my account! We are here for your sake, and we will thank God if your recovery, which has begun so promisingly in the south, is completed here."

"Still I wish that Dr. Conti were at any other place in the world," replied the Consul, annoyed, "only not just in the town which we would avoid at all cost, and where I am obliged to put myself under his treatment. Poor child, I knew you were making a sacrifice for me in this journey; how great it is I only now am learning to see."

"It is no sacrifice, at least no longer now," said Ella, firmly. "I only dreaded the possibility of a first meeting. Now this is overcome, and all the rest with it."

Erlau examined her features enquiringly, and somewhat suspiciously. "Indeed! then why have you wept?"

"Uncle, one cannot always control one's mood. I was cast down just now."

"Eleonore!" The Consul seated himself beside her, and took her hand in his. "You know I have never been able to overcome the thought that this unhappy connection commenced in my house, and my only satisfaction was that this house could afford you a home afterwards. I hoped that now, when years lie between, when everything in and around you has so completely changed, the injury you once received would pain you no longer; and instead I must see that it continues to burn undiminished and unforgotten--that the old wounds are torn open afresh, that you--"

"You are mistaken," interrupted Ella, hastily, "you are quite mistaken, I--have long made an end of the past."

Erlau shook his head incredulously. "As if you would ever show that you suffered! I know best what reticence and self-control are hidden under these fair plaits. You have often displayed more of it than you could answer for to your second father, but his sight is keener and goes deeper than that of others; and I tell you, Eleonore, you cannot be recognised since the day when that Rinaldo, regardless of all refusals, at last forced an interview upon you. What exactly passed between you I do not know to this day; it was trouble enough even to obtain the confession from you that he was with you. You are utterly inaccessible in such matters, but deny it as you may, you have become quite another person since that hour."

"Nothing took place at all," persisted Ella, "nothing of importance. He demanded to see the child, and I refused him."

"And who answers for it that he will not repeat the attempt?"

"Reinhold. You do not know him! I have dismissed him from my door; he will never pass it a second time. He understood everything, only not how to humble himself."

"At any rate he had tact enough to leave Mirando as soon as possible," said Erlau. "This vicinity would have been unbearable for any length of time. But his withdrawal was not of much use, as then Marchese Tortoni sprang up, who raved so uninterruptedly to you about his friend that I felt obliged at last to give him a hint that this subject did not receive the slightest sympathy from us."

"Perhaps you did it too plainly," suggested Ella, softly. "He had no conception of the wounds he touched, and your harsh repulse of it must have seemed remarkable to him."

"I do not care! Then he can obtain the commentary upon it from his much-admired friend. Were I to allow you to endure Signor Rinaldo's glorification for hours, certainly we were not much better off here. One cannot take up a newspaper, receive a visit, hold a conversation, without stumbling upon his name; every third word is Rinaldo. He seems to have infected the whole town with his tones and his new opera, which seems to be considered here as a sort of event of the world. Poor child! and you must be quiet under it all, must witness how this man regularly revels in victories and triumphs, how he has attained the zenith of success, and maintains it undisputed."

The young wife rested her head on her hand so that the latter shaded her face.

"Perhaps you deceive yourself after all. He may be celebrated and worshipped like no other--happy he is not."

"I am glad of it," said the Consul, violently, "I am extremely glad of it. There would be no more justice or right in the world if he were. And that he has seen you, as you allow yourself to be seen now, does not conduce much to his happiness, I hope."

He had risen at the last words, and walked up and down the room with his old vivacity. A short silence followed, which Ella at last interrupted--

"I want to beg something of you, dear uncle. Will you grant it me?"

Erlau stopped. "Gladly, my child. You know I cannot easily refuse you anything. What do you wish?"

Ella had fixed her eyes on the ground, and did not look up while she spoke.

"It is that Rein--that Reinhold's latest work is to be performed the day after to-morrow."

"Yes, to be sure, and then the adoration will become unendurable," growled Erlau. "You wish to escape from the first commotion about it--I understand that, perfectly; we will drive into the mountains for a week or a fortnight. Dr. Conti must give me leave of absence for so long."

"On the contrary. I wanted to beg you--to go to the opera with me."

The Consul looked at her with a countenance full of the most intense astonishment.

"What, Eleonore! I cannot have heard aright? You wish to go on that day to the theatre, which hitherto you have so decidedly avoided as soon as Rinaldo's name was connected with it?"

Notwithstanding the shielding hand, one could see plainly how the deep red which coloured her cheeks rose to her temples, as she replied almost inaudibly--

"I never ventured to enter the opera house at home, when *his* music reigned there. I always felt as if every one's eyes would be directed to me and seek me, even in the darkest background of our box. In your drawing-rooms and in those of our acquaintances I seldom or never heard his compositions. People avoided them whenever I was present; people knew what had taken place, and tried to spare me in every way. I never attempted to break through this fence of shielding consideration which you all drew around me. Perhaps I was too great a coward to do so, perhaps also, too much embittered. Now," she raised herself suddenly, with a violent motion, and her voice gained perfect firmness, "now I have seen Reinhold again, now I will learn to know him in his works--him and her."

Erlau's astonishment continued; apparently this affair surprised him in the highest degree, but it was very evident that he was not accustomed to refuse his favourite anything, even if it seemed to him to be a point requiring consideration. For the present, however, he was relieved from an immediate consent, as the servant entered with the announcement that Dr. Conti had just driven up, and that Captain Almbach also was in the drawing-room.

"Certainly, Herr Captain Almbach is most enviable in his want of diffidence," said the Consul. "Notwithstanding all that has passed between you and his brother, he asserts his right as a relation just the same as if nothing had occurred. Hugo Almbach is the only person in the world who could do this."

"Do you not like his visits?" asked Ella.

"I!" Erlau smiled. "Child, you know that he has won me as completely as every one else whom he chooses to win, perhaps only excepting my Eleonore, for whom he seems to entertain quite incredible respect."

He then took his adopted daughter's arm, and led her to the drawing-room. The medical visit did not last long, and Hugo in about half-an-hour also quitted the Erlau's house, which he was wont to visit frequently. Whether Reinhold knew of it could not be decided, certainly he suspected it; but there appeared to be a tacit agreement between the brothers not to touch upon this subject. It was not Captain Almbach's way to force himself into a confidence which was determinedly and continuedly withheld from him, and therefore he followed Reinhold's example, who observed utter silence about the meeting in the *locanda*. and never mentioned his wife's or



child's names again, since he knew they were in his neighbourhood. What might be really hidden beneath the impenetrable reticence, Hugo could not discover, but he was convinced that it did not arise from indifference.

Captain Almbach had reached his brother's dwelling, and entered his own room, where he found Jonas, who seemed to be waiting for him. In the sailor's appearance to-day there was decidedly something unusual; his wonted phlegm had given way to a certain restlessness, with which he waited until his master had taken off hat and gloves and sat down. Hardly was this done, than he came forward and planted himself close beside the Captain's chair.

"What is it then, Jonas?" asked the latter, becoming attentive. "You look as if you meant to make a speech."

"That is what I wish to do," said Jonas, as he placed himself in an attitude half solemn, half confused.

"Indeed? That is something new. I was always under the impression hitherto that you would prove a most valuable acquisition to a Trappist monastery. If, however, by means of all the classical recollections here, the spirit of oratory has come to you also, I rejoice at it. Begin then, I will listen."

"Herr Captain Almbach"--the sailor's spirit of oratory did not seem to be sufficiently developed, as for the present he could not get beyond those three words, and instead of continuing, he gazed persistently and fixedly on the floor as if he wished to count the Mosaic stones.

"Listen, Jonas, I am suspicious about you," said Hugo, impressively. "I have been suspicious about you for more than a week, you do not growl any more; you cast no more furious looks at the padrona and her maids; you sometimes lay your face in folds, such as any one with power of imagination might consider the first feeble attempt at a smile. I repeat it, these are highly serious symptoms, and I am prepared for the worst."

Jonas seemed to discover that he must express himself somewhat more clearly. He made an energetic start, and actually completed half a sentence.

"Herr Captain Almbach, there are men--"

"A most indisputable fact, which I do not in the remotest degree intend to attack. So there are men--well, go on."

"Who may like women," continued Jonas.

"And others who may not like them," added the Captain, as a second pause ensued; "an equally undeniable fact, of which Herr Captain Hugo Almbach's seaman, William Jonas, of the 'Ellida,' is offered as an example."

"I did not wish to say that exactly," responded the sailor, whom this arbitrary continuation of his evidently studied speech quite disconcerted. "I only meant to say that there are men who appear to be, no one knows how unkind towards women, and yet at heart are not so at all, because they think nothing about them."

"I believe that is a very flattering illustration of my character," remarked Hugo. "But now tell me, for Heaven's sake, what do you purpose with all these prologues?"

Jonas drew several long breaths; the next words appeared to be too hard for him. At last he said, stammeringly--

"Herr Captain Almbach, I know, of course, best what you really are--and--and--I know a young woman."

A smile, which he suppressed with difficulty, quivered about Captain Almbach's lips, but he compelled himself to remain serious.

"Really!" said he, coolly, "that is, indeed, a remarkable event for you."

"And I will bring her to you," continued Jonas.

Now Captain Almbach began to laugh aloud. "Jonas, I believe you are not sane. What in the world am I to do with this young woman. Shall I marry her?"

"You shall do nothing with her," explained the sailor, with an injured countenance. "You are only to look at her."

"A very modest pleasure," scoffed Hugo. "Who then is the lady concerned, and what necessity requires me to look at her?"

"It is the little Annunziata, Signora Biancona's lady's maid," replied Jonas, who now became more fluent of speech. "A poor, quiet young thing, without father or mother. She has only been a

couple of months with the Signora, and at first all went well with her; but there is a man," the sailor clenched his fist with intense rage, "called Gianelli, and he is the conductor; he follows the poor thing at every step, and never leaves her in peace. She has repulsed him once very roughly, and on that account he maligned her to the Signora, and since then the Signora is so unkind and violent to her, that she can stand it no longer. In *that* house, indeed, she does not see much good, and therefore she shall leave, and must leave, and I shall not allow her to remain any longer."

"You appear to be very fully informed about that little Annunziata," remarked Hugo, dryly. "She is an Italian; have you learned all these details by pantomimic means?"

"The Signora's servant helped us now and then, when we could not get on," confessed Jonas, quite openly. "But he speaks horrible German, and I do not like him putting his finger into everything. Without reference to this, though, she shall get away from the whole crew; she must absolutely go into a German house."

"On account of the morals," added Hugo.

"Yes, and besides on account of learning German. She cannot speak a single word of it, and it is really sad when people cannot understand one another. So I thought--you often go to Herr Consul Erlau, Herr Captain Almbach--perhaps young Frau Erlau may want a maid, and in such a rich household it cannot matter one person more or less, if you were to put in a good word for Annunziata." He stopped and looked beseechingly at his master.

"I will speak to the lady," said Captain Almbach, "and at all events it will be better for you only to introduce your *protégée* after I have had a decided answer; I will also look at her then. But one thing more, Jonas"--he put on a grave expression--"I presume that nothing influences you in the whole matter, excepting pity for the poor persecuted child?"

"Only pure pity, Herr Captain," assured the sailor, with such honest frankness that Hugo was obliged to bite his lips, so as not to give way to renewed laughter.

"I really believe he is capable of imagining that," murmured he, and then added aloud, "I am glad to hear it. I was convinced of it from the first; as you know, Jonas, *we* shall never marry!"

"No, Herr Captain," answered the sailor; but the answer sounded somewhat wanting in heartiness.

"Because we think nothing of women," said Hugo, with immovable seriousness. "Beyond pity and gratitude, the story never goes; then we sail away, and regret remains with them."

This time the sailor made no reply, but he looked at his master as if much taken aback.

"And it is indeed most fortunate that it is so," ended Captain Almbach, with great emphasis. "Women on our 'Ellida!' Heaven preserve us from them!"

With which he left Jonas and went out of the room. The latter looked after him with an expression in which it was difficult to decide whether it consisted more of annoyance or sadness; finally, however, the latter sentiment seemed to prevail, as he let his head droop, and uttered a sigh, saying, in an undertone--

"Yes, certainly, she is a woman also--more's the pity!"

Hugo had gone across into his brother's study, where he found him alone. The piano stood open, but Reinhold himself lay extended on the couch, his head thrown back on the cushions. The face, with its half-closed eyes and high forehead, with its dark hair falling over it, looked alarmingly pale. It was an attitude, not of repose, but of the most supreme fatigue and exhaustion, and he barely changed it at his brother's entrance.

"Reinhold, really this is too bad of you," said the latter, coming up to him. "Half the town is in commotion with your opera; in the theatre everything is in a whirl; people openly fight for tickets. His Excellency the Director does not know where his head is, and Donna Beatrice is in a regular state of nervous excitement. And you, the real promoter of all this disturbance, dream away here in *dolce far niente*. as if there were no public nor operas in the world."

Reinhold turned his head towards the new comer with a feeble, indifferent movement; his face showed that his dreams had been anything but sweet.

"You were at the rehearsal?" asked he. "Did you see Cesario?"

"The Marchese? Certainly, although he was no more at the rehearsal than I was. This time he preferred to give a performance himself in the higher equestrian art; I have just paid a high tribute of admiration to his bravery."

"Cesario? How so?"

"Well, he rode no less than three times up and down the same street, and regularly under a certain balcony; let his horse curvet so senselessly that one dreaded an accident every moment. He will break his own and his beautiful animal's neck too, if he should try that often."

Unfortunately this time mine was the only, probably not much wished for, physiognomy which he saw at the window."

The evidently irritable tone of these words caught Reinhold's attention--he half raised himself up.

"At which window?"

Hugo bit his lips; in his anger he had quite forgotten to whom he spoke. His brother remarked his hesitation.

"Do you mean the Erlau's house?" asked he, quickly. "It seems to me you often visit it."

"Sometimes, at least," was Captain Almbach's quick response. "You know I have always enjoyed the privilege of neutrality there; even when the battle was raging most fiercely in my uncle's house, I have asserted this old privilege there, and it is tacitly recognised by both parties."

Reinhold had raised himself entirely, but the eagerness had quite disappeared from his features; in its place was a dark expression of enquiry, as he said--

"Then Cesario has also the *entrée* of the Erlau's house? Of course you introduced him there."

"Yes, I was so--stupid," said Captain Almbach, speaking angrily, "and I seem to have caused something very charming by it. We had hardly left Mirando when Don Cesario--who cannot resolve to sacrifice his freedom--who rides past the only lady in the neighbourhood without looking at her even--loses no time on the strength of that introduction in making himself agreeable at the Villa Fiorina; and this was done, the Herr Consul tells me, in so pleasant and modest a manner that it was impossible to repulse him; the more so, as our departure from Mirando removed the only cause of their seclusion. Then he was fortunate enough to discover Herr Doctor Conti, who was making his *villegiatura* somewhere in the vicinity, and bring him to the Herr Consul. The doctor's treatment produced results beyond all expectation, and Don Cesario is almost looked upon in the family as the saviour of life, which he knows how to make use of. Trust one of those women-haters! They are the worst of all; Jonas has just given me a speaking example of it. He has started a wonderful theory of pity, in which he believes firmly as in the Gospel; but all the same, it has caught him hopelessly, and the aristocratic Marchese Tortoni is on the same path."

It could not have escaped any calm observer, that under the Captain's mocking speech, which was usually only dictated by mischief, a bitterness lay concealed which, with all his scoffing, he could not quite control; but Reinhold was far from calm. He had listened as if he would read every word from off his brother's lips, and at the last remark he started up wildly.

"On what path? What do you mean by it?"

Hugo stepped back as if struck, "My God, Reinhold, how can you fly out like that? I only meant--"

"It concerns Ella, does it not?" interrupted Reinhold, with the same violence. "To whom else can these attentions be paid?"

"Certainly, to Ella," said Captain Almbach. It was the first time for months that this name had been mentioned between them. "And just for this reason, it can and must be indifferent to you."

Simple as the remark was, it seemed to hit Reinhold unexpectedly hard. He strode up and down the room once or twice, and at last stopped before his brother.

"Cesario has no idea of the truth," said he, in a suppressed voice; "he made some enthusiastic remarks to me at the beginning. I may have betrayed to him, involuntarily, how much they pained me, as since then he has not touched the topic again."

"Erlau appears to have given him a similar hint," added Hugo. "He tried to find out something about it from me--if any and what connection existed between you and that family. I naturally avoided it, but he seems to suspect some former enmity between you and Erlau."

Reinhold looked down gloomily. "This connection will indeed not long remain a secret. Beatrice knows it already, and, as I fear, from a very unsafe source, whence no silence can be expected. Cesario must learn it sooner or later, after what you have just disclosed to me. He is romantic enough to take anything of the sort seriously, and give himself up, with his whole soul, to a hopeless passion."

Captain Almbach leaned with folded arms against the piano, a slight pallor lay upon his face, and his voice trembled faintly, as he answered--

"Who tells you that it is hopeless?"

"Hugo, that is an insult," stormed Reinhold. "Do you forget that Eleonore is my wife?"

"She was," said Captain Almbach, emphasising the word strongly. "You surely think now as little of asserting such rights as she would be inclined to admit them."

Reinhold was silent. He knew best with what determination even the slightest appearance of any right was denied him.

"You have both been satisfied with mere separation," continued Hugo, "without requiring judicial divorce. You did not need it, and what restrains Ella from it I understand only too well. In such a case final decisions as to the possession of the boy must be made. She knew that you would never quite sacrifice your paternal rights, and trembled at the thought of giving you the boy even for a time. Your tacit resignation of him was sufficient for her; she preferred to give up all satisfaction, in order to remain in undisturbed possession of her child."

Reinhold stood there as if struck by lightning. The glow of agitation which had so lately coloured his brow disappeared; he had become deadly pale again, as he asked, in a suppressed voice--

"And this--this you think was the sole reason?"

"So far as I know Ella, the sole one which could prevent her completing the step which you had commenced."

"And you think that Cesario has hopes?"

"I do not know it," said Hugo, seriously, "but we both know that nothing stands in the way of Ella's freedom, if she were really disposed to assert it still. You forsook her, gave her up entirely for years, and all the world knows why it was done, and what kept you continuously away from her. She has not only law, but also public opinion on her side, and I fear the latter would compel you to leave the boy with her. Beatrice stands terribly in the way of your paternal rights."

"You think that Cesario has hopes?" repeated Reinhold, but this time the words sounded moody and full of menace.

"I believe that he loves her, loves her passionately, and that sooner or later he will try to woo her. He will then certainly learn that the imaginary widow was the wife of his friend, and still bears that friend's name, but I doubt if this will exercise any influence upon him, as not the slightest shadow falls upon Ella. Only your friendship may receive an irrecoverable blow; but even without this, it would be at an end, so soon as passion speaks; consider this, Reinhold, and do not let yourself be carried away to any rash act. You broke your bonds in order to set yourself free. Thereby you also made Eleonore free--perhaps for another."

Captain Almbach's voice fell at the last words, and, as if to suppress or conceal some violent emotion, he turned quickly to depart. Although his brother's agitation, whom he left alone, did not escape him, he had not the remotest suspicion of the firebrand which his words threw into the other's breast.

If Reinhold had shown almost nothing but fatigue and indifference lately to those around him, if a sensation often overcame him that for him there was an end of life and love, this moment proved that the same wild passion could still rage in his heart which had once drawn the young artist away from his bonds at home; and the manner in which the storm had been loosed, betrayed, if not to others yet to himself, that which hitherto he *would* not know, and which now disclosed itself to him with merciless distinctness. The defiance and bitterness with which he had armed himself against the wife who dared to let him feel that he had once deeply offended her, and that she would now and never more pardon this offence, succumbed before the burning pain which suddenly blazed forth in his breast. But although his pride taught him to meet the coldness, indifference and irreconciliation with harshness, he still could not prevent it that so soon as the picture of his child rose before him its mother's form also stood by its side. Certainly it was no longer the same Ella, who a few months previously barely held a place in his recollection, but the woman, who on that evening, when for the first time he recognised what he had so frivolously given up, and what he had irretrievably lost, had shown him such an energetic will, and such a never dreamed of depth of feeling. Near the child's fair curly head there hovered, ever and ever, the face with those large, deep blue eyes, whose glance had struck him so annihilatingly. He did not confess to himself with what passion he clung to this picture, with what longing he dreamed away hours in these recollections; he did not even confess the thought which lay unexpressed in his soul, that the woman who still bore his name, who was the mother of his child, notwithstanding all that had happened, still belonged to him, and although he had forfeited the right of possession, at any rate no other dared approach her.

And now he must hear that another already stretched forth his hand to the prize, and offered everything to gain it. His brother's words unsparingly disclosed the motive, to which alone he owed it, that Ella had not answered his flight with letters of divorce. Only for the child's sake was she still called his wife; not because one trace of liking for him lingered in her heart. And if she were now to take the step once avoided; if on her side she removed the chain, now when a Cesario offered her his hand, who could prevent her; who could blame the woman, who after the lapse of years sought at last in a purer, better love, recompense for the treachery her husband had exercised towards her? The danger did not lie in the fact that Marchese Tortoni, who was

handsome, rich, and who, belonging to one of the noblest families, was the aim of so many aspirations, could raise his wife to a brilliant position; that could only come under Erlau's consideration; but Reinhold knew that Cesario, with his noble and thoroughly pure character, with his glowing enthusiasm for everything beautiful and ideal, might indeed win the heart of an Eleonore--yes, must win it--if this heart were still free; and this conviction robbed him of all self-possession. There was once an hour in which the young wife had lain full of despair on her knees by her child's cradle, with the annihilating consciousness that at that moment her husband was forsaking her, his child, and his home for another's sake--that hour now revenged itself on him, who was guilty of it, revenged itself in the words, which stood as if written in letters of flame before his soul--"Therefore you made her free also--perhaps for another."

## CHAPTER V.

A storm of applause rolled through the opera house, and the curtain had not even been drawn up as yet. It was for the overture, whose last tones had just resounded. The theatre was filled to overflowing in every place, with the sole exception of one small proscenium box close to the stage; this was occupied by a single elderly gentleman, probably some rich eccentric, whom it pleased to procure by lavish expenditure of money the entire possession of a box, as on such an evening it would otherwise hardly have been obtained. Every where else the dazzlingly lighted spaces and tiers of boxes, with their rich parterres of ladies, offered a brilliant and variegated picture. The world of artists, as well as aristocracy, was fully represented. All which the town possessed in the way of beauties, celebrities and persons of distinction, had appeared to prepare a new triumph for the much admired favourite of society. And was this merely what it was all for? No young composer was offering his work timidly to the approbation or disapprobation of the public: a recognised and undisputed sovereign in the realms of music stepped before the world with a new display of his talent, in order to gain a new conquest by it. This certainly lay written very plainly, although not as if it were agreeable, upon Maestro Gianelli's face, who conducted the orchestra. At the same time he did not venture to fail in zeal or attention. He knew only too well that if he attempted here, where of course a portion of the success depended upon him, to intrigue against the all-powerful Rinaldo, it must cost him his post, perhaps his entire future, as in such a case the disfavour of the public would be ensured to him. Therefore he did his duty to the fullest extent, and the overture was performed with perfect execution.

The curtain rustled, and in anticipation the composer received the homage of eager silence. Before the first act was half concluded there was not one of the audience who had not already forgiven Reinhold the tyranny with which he had disposed of all means in his hands, and insisted mercilessly on having his views carried out. The representation was in every respect perfect, and the scenery a masterwork. All felt that it was a different hand to that of the usual manager which had ruled here, and raised simple theatrical effects everywhere to artistic beauty; but all these external advantages disappeared before the all-attracting power of the work.

It was, perhaps, the most perfect which Rinaldo had ever composed in his own peculiar line, a line by many so much admired, and by so many others deplored. At all events this time he produced the very best in that style to which Beatrice's influence had drawn him; was it the highest which he could produce? This question was absorbed at present in the ringing applause with which the audience greeted this new creation of their favourite. Was it not Rinaldo again with all the fiery spirit of his genius, of which none could tell positively whether it were at home above, in the heights of idealism, or below in the depths of passion, and which roused again in men's hearts all feelings which lay between these two poles.

The storm raged over the northern heaths, and the billows surged against the coast. As mists are driven along the cliffs, so rose and fell the tones in chaotic confusion, until at last a dreamlike, beautiful melody dawned forth. But it only hovered like a fleeting vapoury picture over the whole, never completed, never ringing forth clear and full, and soon it was lost amid other sounds, which not so pure and sweet as it, yet attracted with a singularly strange charm. The mists separated, and out of them appeared the demon-like beautiful form, which was the chief performer and central figure of the whole opera. Loud acclamation greeted Signora Biancona's appearance on the stage. Beatrice showed to-day that she still understood how to be beautiful, as at the commencement of her career. What art may have done towards it was not now brought into consideration, enough that the apparition standing before the public was perfect in every respect. The half fantastic, half classic costume displayed her figure in all its grace, her dark curls flowed loosely over her shoulders, and her eyes gleamed with the old devouring fire. And now that voice was raised, which had been the admiration of almost all Europe, full and powerful, filling the extensive space--the singer still stood at the zenith of her beauty and artistic strength.

The melodies flowed forth, still more glowing, more fiery, and before the audience a picture of sounds was unfolded which seemed to borrow its colours, now from the brightest sunlight, now from the scorching heat of a crater. It portrayed the lost wild life of one whose cup was filled to the brim, and who drained it to the very dregs. This rushing forth beyond all bounds and limits, the volcanic glow of feelings, the goblinlike play with tones carried the hearers irresistibly away on the sea of passion, there to cast them adrift between shuddering and enchantment, between heaven and hell. At times, indeed, notes rang out like pæans of joy and triumph, but between were startling, harsh discords, and then again sounds of that first lost melody were wafted back, which ran through the entire opera like a soft, intensely painful yearning plaint. As a dream of love and happiness passes through the soul of man without ever descending to reality, so breathed and died these tones in the distance, while in the foreground stood ever and ever again the one figure, which Rinaldo had endowed with the highest dramatic power, of which he was a master like none other, which he had surrounded with all the magic of his melodies, whose sensual, entrancing charms were laid like a ban upon the listeners' souls.

Beatrice was, if any one, adapted to understand this music exactly in its innermost being and nature and to do it justice; she, whose peculiar element was passion, who, as an actress, had sought and found her triumph in it only. It rang out of every note of her singing, quivered out of every motion in her acting, which raised itself to a greater dramatic height than ever before, while she represented hate and love, devotion and despair, rage and revenge with life-like truth. It was as though this woman poured forth a stream of fire, which imparted itself to the audience, who, half charmed, half alarmed, followed her performance. Never yet had the singer been so entirely part of her task, never yet had she delivered it so perfectly as this time. No one guessed, indeed, for what prize she struggled, what urged her to employ her best powers. Was it not to win back *him*, whom already she had more than half lost! He had admired the actress before he had learned to love the woman, and the actress now called all the power of her talent to her aid, in order to maintain that of the woman. For the first time the storm of applause was indifferent to her, as it succeeded every scene; for the first time she did not care for the worship of the crowd; she only waited for the one glance of passionate rapture which had so often thanked her on such evenings--but to-day she waited in vain.

"Signora Biancona surpasses herself tonight," said Marchese Tortoni, enthusiastically, to Captain Almbach, who was in his box. "Often as I have admired her, I never saw her like this before."

"Nor I," replied Hugo, monosyllabically.

Cesario looked at him in undisguised astonishment. "That sounds very cool, Signor Capitano. Have you no other expression of admiration for this woman, who stands so close to your brother?"

Hugo's countenance was indeed as cool as his tone, while he replied quietly, "That is just Reinhold's taste. Sometimes our views lie very far apart. However, it would be unjust not to admire Signora Biancona to-night without reserve, and I do it, too--that is to say, from a spectator's point of view. Close to her, such a passion, beyond all reason, which seems to know no limits, would be rather unnatural. I can never quite dismiss the thought that one day Donna Beatrice will carry this truly masterful acting into reality, and could be a sort of Medea there also, who only breathes forth death and ruin. That she *can* do it, one sees by her eyes and--although I do not otherwise exactly belong to the timid class, I could not love such a woman."

"And yet Reinhold's works require exactly this fiery representation," said the Marchese, reproachfully, "and of that only a Biancona is capable."

"Yes, to be sure, she has always been his doom," murmured Hugo, "and he will never be free so long as this doom reigns over him."

The two gentlemen had long since remarked Consul Erlau in the opposite stage box, and exchanged greetings with him. They never suspected that he was not alone any more than did others of the audience, as the lady who accompanied him sat far behind in the background of the box, entirely concealed by the folds of the half lowered curtain, but yet so that she could quite overlook the stage, and her companion, when he spoke to her, took the precaution of rising and stepping back also. She wished, evidently, to avoid being seen, and also to avoid a visit from the two gentlemen.

Ella had actually obtained the fulfilment of her wish by her indulgent adopted father. So far she knew but few, and only the unimportant compositions of her husband, several songs and fantasias, nothing else. The peculiar field of his labours and its results--the opera--was unknown to her. In consequence of the deadly wound inflicted upon her, she had never been able to conquer herself sufficiently to witness the triumphs which his operas obtained in her native town, those triumphs which were founded on the ruins of her life's happiness; and what she learned from the newspapers, or through strangers to whom her near connection with the admired composer was not known, only plunged the dagger deeper into her soul. Now, for the first time, the tone poet, Rinaldo, appeared before her in the most genial of his works, now she learned to know the power of those notes which so often had conquered friends and foes, and even carried away opponents to admiration, and the effect was overpowering. Half bent forward, listening breathlessly, the young wife followed every note of the music; she was now still capable, amid all

the beauties which developed themselves before her, of gazing into the dark depths which were disclosed therein. For the first time she understood her husband's character entirely and wholly, this glowing artist's nature with all its contradictions, with its storms, tempests and struggles; for the first time she comprehended what the deeply injured wife *would* not comprehend until now, the inner need of nature which compelled Reinhold to tear himself loose from the confined fetters of provincial every-day life and to follow the call of his genius, which made this catastrophe for him a struggle between life and death.

That he also broke those bonds, which under every circumstance ought to have been held sacred by him, that he sacrificed the duties of a father and a husband, who forsook his own for what would have been justifiable independence of a free man, could not be exonerated even by his genius; but in Ella's heart there now dawned, softly suggested, the question--what had she herself been in those days to her husband, that she should have required him to resist temptation, which came before him in the guise of a Beatrice Biancona, and what could she offer against a passion, whose glowing romance had, from the first, ruled the artist more than the man. The wife entrusted to him was then far too much oppressed with the burden of her education and surroundings, to be able to raise herself in any degree to his height; in her place there stood another in all the glory of her beauty and talent, and this other showed the young composer the path of liberty and fame. He had succumbed! Ella felt from the depths of her inmost heart that he would not have done so, could she have been to him then what she was to-day.

For the last time the curtain was drawn up, and until the last note Reinhold showed that he had been true to himself. The finale was as grand as the entire opera, and created a thrilling effect. Yet the work was wanting in one thing, the highest, for which not all the brilliant flashes of genius could atone, namely, harmony with itself. It had no peace, and awoke none in the minds of the audience. The composer appeared to have infected his work with the conflict which lay unappeased in his own breast; it was after all but the despair of life, of happiness, of himself. When the nightlong tempest had raged until exhausted, no fluttering morning's red peeped forth, promising a new and better day; on the wide, dreary waste of waters only the wreck was driven about, and clinging to it the shipwrecked traveller reached his native coast at last--too late to be saved. When wearied and wounded to death he sinks down there; once more is heard completed, as if 'twere ghostly tones from the far off unapproachable distance, that dream-like melody for the first time ringing out full and perfect in death, and the notes fade and die softly, as the life-blood ebbs away.

The reception of this opera by the audience far surpassed any success which Rinaldo had ever gained. Surely this music and performance were certain of approbation from a southern public. There every spark took fire, there each flame ignited and spread from one to another. One would have imagined the applause must have exhausted itself at last, the acclamations must have moderated themselves, but to-day even the most exalted enthusiasm appeared capable of rising still higher. After the close of each act, after every scene, it broke forth anew, and ended at last in a regular uproar with which the whole house demanded the composer's appearance most tumultuously.

Signor Rinaldo let them wait long before he acceded to this demand, he allowed Signora Biancona to come forward alone, again and again, in despite of all the stormy cries which were for him. Only at the end of the opera, when the calls resembled a riot and the enthusiasm could no longer be controlled, only then did he show himself and was greeted in such a manner by the audience as must have satisfied the most immeasurable ambition.

Proudly and calmly Reinhold stepped on to the stage; he stood almost immovable amid the enthusiastic acclamations. He had long since learned to accept all triumphs as something due to him, and great as were to-day's, not for one moment did they deprive him of his self-possession. His dark eyes swept slowly along the rows of boxes, but suddenly remained fascinated at a certain point. It was as though an electric shock had at once passed through his whole being, he started so violently, and his glance flashed--that glance of passionate delight for which Beatrice tonight had in vain laid out all the power of her talent; and if the fair head which had only become visible for one moment did disappear again at the next, yet he knew who was concealed behind the curtains of the box, who was witness of his triumph.

"Eleonore, that was imprudent!" said Erlau, also retreating from the balustrade. "You leaned too far forward. You were seen."

The young wife made no reply; she stood erect, both hands grasping the back of the seat from which she had risen in perfect self-forgetfulness. The large eyes, full of tears, were still directed unabashed to the stage where Reinhold just then came forward again to thank the audience, that cheering excited crowd, for whom he was the sole centre of attraction. All the thousand eyes were fixed upon him alone; all these lips and hands announced his victory, and while wreaths and branches of laurel fell at his feet, his name, as if carried aloft by one surging wave, resounded back in a thousand echoes.

---

At the --- Embassy a large *soirée* took place, the first entertainment of its kind for the season. A numerous assembly of guests moved through the magnificent apartments of the ambassadorial hotel. Trains swept and uniforms flashed in the rooms beaming with light and scented with the

perfume of flowers; near charming ladies' faces and distinguished wearers of orders might be seen many grave, noteworthy figures in simple civilian's dress, and amongst all these well-known forms and names, many foreign ones were mixed, who, according to their appearance and title, claimed more or less attention, to lose themselves again in the throng of guests.

Reinhold and Captain Almbach were also amongst those invited; the former was, as usual, the object of flattery and compliments from all sides, although demonstrated rather less noisily than so lately in the theatre. Reinhold had for long been considered one of the greatest celebrities in society. His new opera made him quite the lion of the season, and nowhere could he show himself without being surrounded and congratulated by every one present.

The charming representative of his work, Signora Biancona, shared this universal attention with him. Unfortunately, this time it was impossible to express the admiration of both at the same time, as they seemed rather to avoid than seek each other. Observant lookers-on declared that some slight rupture must have occurred between them, as they had arrived separately and never once drew together. Nevertheless the actress was continually surrounded with admiration, due, probably, in no small degree to her beauty. Beatrice understood perfectly how to "drape" herself for the drawing-room as well as for the stage, and if her toilette generally displayed something fantastic, it harmonised so peculiarly with her style of appearance that she only appeared the more fascinating. The singer preferred black, like many of her country women, and had selected it again to-day, but the dress composed of velvet, satin and lace was still most extravagantly magnificent, and rich jewels glistened on the dark ground. Single crimson flowers, apparently scattered carelessly here and there in her hair, seemed to fasten the black lace veil, and with these the Italian's dark complexion and burning flash of her eyes, formed a whole, which if intended to create an effect, certainly attained this result in the highest degree.

"Ah, Herr Almbach, so I find you here?" asked Lord Elton, who, glad to find any one with whom he could speak English, came up to Captain Almbach. "I wanted to see you for several days. Your brother's new opera----"

"For mercy's sake, my Lord, do not talk about that!" interrupted Hugo, with a gesture of horror, "since the day of its performance I have been nearly plagued to death with my brother's opera; everybody feels in duty bound to congratulate me too. How often have I wished for a revolution, an earthquake, or at least a slight outbreak of Vesuvius, so that at least something else may be talked of in society."

Lord Elton shook his head half-laughingly, half-disapprovingly. "Herr Almbach, you should not speak so recklessly, if a stranger heard you he might misunderstand you."

"Oh, I have amused myself several times by getting rid of some of his worst admirers by such expressions of my sentiments," said Hugo, quite unconcerned. "I do not feel obliged to offer myself upon the altar of my brother's popularity by listening to their speeches. How Reinhold can endure this triumph so long, I cannot conceive. Artist natures must be very peculiarly organised in this respect; my sailor's nerves would have given way long since."

Lord Elton seemed to enjoy the Captain's humour again to-day; he remained steadily at his side, and was a silent, but yet very attentive listener to all the remarks which Hugo as usual poured forth mercilessly upon every known and unknown person.

"If I only knew why Marchese Tortoni suddenly makes such a comet-like course through the room," mocked he; "that door seems to be the magnet which attracts him irresistibly--ah! yes, now indeed I can understand this move."

The last words sounded so unmistakably angry, that Lord Elton also looked attentively at the entrance. There appeared Consul Erlau with Ella on his arm. Marchese Tortoni was immediately at her side, and all three passed through the doorway. The lady wore an apparently simple white costume, but one could see that Erlau liked to display himself as a millionaire, even so far as his adopted daughter was concerned. The white lace dress, which floated so lightly around Ella's delicate figure, far surpassed in costliness most of those heavy velvet and satin robes which rustled through the room, and the row of pearls which adorned her neck was of such enormous value, that many of the sparkling jewels were as nothing beside it. Her fair head merely wore its natural ornament; no diamond, not even a flower, decorated the rich blonde plaits, whose faint golden glimmer harmonised so wondrously well with the delicate pink colour of her complexion. That figure required no studied artifice of the toilet to prove itself beautiful, it was so without any such aid, and if the ladies' glances soon discovered what cost was concealed under this seemingly simple costume, the gentlemen had no less keen eyes for the poetry of the apparition which sailed past them.

The three had arrived in the middle of the room, when, by chance, one of the groups in whose midst Reinhold had been, suddenly broke up, and he himself appeared standing almost immediately opposite to his wife. It was not the first encounter of this kind between the husband and wife, and they must always be prepared for the possibility of meeting on such occasions. And so Ella seemed to be; only for a moment did her arm tremble on that of her companion, and a fleeting colour came and went in her cheeks; then, however, the large eyes swept calmly on, and she turned to the Marchese, who was telling her the names of some of the persons present. Reinhold, on the contrary, stood as powerless as if he had forgotten everything around him.



Although his wife's present, appearance was no longer strange to him, yet she looked quite different by the dim lamp-light of the garden room at Villa Fiorina, in the gloomy, rainy light of the verandah on that stormy day, and in the half-dark background of the opera box. He had never seen her as to-night, in the dazzling flood of light in the saloon, in the airy pale dress; and, despite the place and surroundings, it came wafted to him, as a recollection of that dream-like morning hour at Mirando, when the sea broke so deeply blue beneath the castle terrace, and the scent of flowers arose from the gardens, while the white figure leaned against the marble parapet--certainly her face was turned from him then, but now it was turned to another. At the sight of Cesario, who still maintained his place by her side, dream and recollection vanished; before Reinhold rose his brother's words which had robbed him of all peace almost ever since that conversation. "Perhaps for another," resounded in his heart. An ardent, threatening glance fell upon Cesario; returning to the circle he had barely left, he withdrew with a violent movement from the Marchese's greeting and address.

The latter looked at him astounded. He had not the remotest idea of the cause of this sudden avoidance, but he suspected for long already, that more than enmity only, as he had imagined, lay between Reinhold and Erlau. It had not escaped him that some secret connection had taken place between Ella and his friend, and to-day's encounter confirmed this notion only too strongly. Cesario was too proud to take refuge in espionage like Beatrice, and so he endured an uncertainty, whose explanation he had as yet no right to require of Ella or the Consul, and which Reinhold would not explain to him.

The German merchant was almost a stranger in the gathering, yet his companion's appearance soon began to create a sensation. Erlau had, to be sure, knitted his brows at the unexpected sight of Reinhold, but when he perceived that Ella remained apparently quite calm, the meeting rather gave him satisfaction. The Consul was evidently very proud of his adopted daughter, and noted the admiring glances and whispered remarks which followed her everywhere. He told himself that her former husband must see these glances, must hear these remarks, and with a scarcely concealed triumphant expression he walked on past the groups.

The throng of guests moving up and down, and the numerous reception rooms, made it easy for those to avoid each other who did not wish to meet.

About a quarter of an hour after Erlau's arrival, Captain Almbach drew near to greet him.

"Are you here, Herr Captain Almbach?" asked the Consul, astonished.

Hugo made a slightly ironical bow. "I have the honour. Does it displease you so much?"

"Certainly not! You know I am always pleased to see you; but out of our own house one only meets you in your brother's company. It appears impossible to go anywhere in society without running up against Signor Rinaldo."

"He is intimate with the master of the house," explained Hugo.

"Naturally," growled the Consul. "I should like to find one circle that does not adore him, and in which he does not reign. I could not refuse our Ambassador's invitation, and wished, too, to show my poor Eleonore something more than merely a sick-room. Have you spoken to her?"

"Of course," said Captain Almbach, looking across the room where Ella was standing engaged in conversation with the Marchese, Lord Elton, and some ladies; "that is to say as much as Marchese Tortoni made it possible for me to do so. He claims the lion's share of the conversation. I retire modestly."

"Yes, my dear Herr Captain, you must accustom yourself to that," laughed Erlau. "In society Ella is seldom at liberty to converse with one alone. I wish you could see her do the honours of my drawing-room. Here, we are almost entire strangers, otherwise I assure you Marchese Tortoni and Lord Elton would not be the only ones who would annoy you in this way."

Ella in the meanwhile had finished her conversation, and left the group with a slight bow, in order to return to her adopted father. As the Marchese, much to his displeasure, was detained by one of the ladies, Ella was crossing the room quite alone, when suddenly, in the middle of it, a dark velvet dress pushed past her so closely and rudely that it seemed as if done on purpose. Looking up, she perceived close to her the beautiful but, at this moment, alarming countenance of Signora Biancona.

Ella betrayed neither fear nor confusion, she took her lace dress up slowly, and moved slightly aside. There lay on her part a quiet, but very determined protest against any contact in this movement, and Beatrice seemed to understand it only too well, still she came even nearer. Ella felt a hot breath close to her cheek, and heard the whispered words--

"Signora, I beg for a moment's audience!"

Ella answered with a look of astonishment and indignation. "You--of me?" asked she, equally low, but with an unmistakable intonation.

"I beg for a few moments," repeated Beatrice, "you will grant me them, Signora?"

"No!"

"No?" said the Italian's voice, in hardly concealed scorn. "Then you fear me so much that you dare not be alone with me even for a short time?"

## CHAPTER VI.

Signora Biancona appeared to have touched the right chord. The bare possibility of such an idea broke down Ella's opposition. "I will hear you," replied she, quickly, "but where?"

"In the little verandah at the right of the gallery. We shall be alone there; I will go first, you need only follow me."

With an almost imperceptible motion, Ella bowed her head. The few words had been exchanged so rapidly and softly, that no one had overheard a syllable, no one even noticed the close vicinity of the two ladies, who, at that moment, were only surrounded by strangers; therefore, none remarked it when Signora Biancona immediately afterwards disappeared from the room, and Ella a few minutes later followed her example.

The gallery, adorned with statues and paintings, next to the reception-room was almost empty. Only few guests had sought the cooler apartment, at the end of which a glass door led into a half-open verandah, which by day probably offered an extensive view over the surrounding gardens, but tonight had been included in the entertaining rooms, as it also had been decorated with flowering and foliage plants, and if not so brilliantly lighted as the saloons, yet was sufficiently so; at any rate it was quite empty, and the half-hidden room, lying somewhat apart, which was unknown to most of the guests, offered the possibility of an undisturbed conversation.

Beatrice was already there when Ella's lace dress rustled through the doorway, but the young wife remained very close to it, without advancing even a single step beyond. With just the same unbending, proud bearing which she had shown at the first meeting in the *locanda*. did she now await the commencement of this half-compulsory interview. The Italian's eyes hung with a truly devouring expression on the white figure which stood opposite to her, flooded with the light of the lamps, and whose beauty moved her to the bitterest hatred.

"Signora Eleonore Almbach!" began she at last, "I regret having to explain to you that your *incognito* is already betrayed. For the present only to me, but I do not believe that it can be long maintained."

"And upon whom would it fall?" asked Ella quietly. "I did not spare myself when I assumed this *incognito*."

"Whom then? Perhaps Rinaldo?"

"I do not know Signor Rinaldo."

The words sounded so icily positive, that it was impossible to entertain any doubt as to what she meant to express, and Beatrice was silenced for a moment by them. It was quite beyond her to understand the pride which could not even forgive a Rinaldo for a breach of faith once made.

"Indeed, I was not prepared for this denial," replied she. "If Rinaldo--"

"You wished to speak to me," interrupted Ella, "and I promised to listen to you. That the decision has cost me something, I need hardly explain to you; at least I did not expect to hear this name from you, nor do I wish it. Let our conversation be as short as possible. What have you to say to me?"

"Above all, I have to beg you to employ a different tone in our interview," said Beatrice, with irritation. "You are speaking to Beatrice Biancona, whose name is surely known to you in other ways than merely through our personal connection with one another, and who may indeed endure hatred and enmity on the part of an opponent, but not the contempt you are pleased to express."

Ella remained perfectly unmoved at this demand. She stepped a little aside, under cover of the tall foliage plants, so that she might not be seen from the gallery, and then turned again to the speaker.

"I did not seek this interview. It was you, Signora, who to some extent forced me to it, therefore you must allow me to preserve the tone which I deem to be suitable towards you; none other is at my disposal."

A glance of wild, deadly hatred shot out of Beatrice's eyes, but she felt that if she now gave way to her passion, it would rob her of all power, and prepare her antagonist a new triumph. She therefore crossed her arms, and replied with annihilating scorn--

"You make me do severe penance, Signora Almbach, for having been the conqueror in a struggle whose prize was your husband's love."

"You are mistaken," responded Ella, coldly. "I *never* struggle for any man's love. I leave that to women who first gain such a prize with difficulty, and then must ever tremble lest they lose it."

The last words seemed to have touched a sore spot. Beatrice paled.

"Certainly you had a right to claim him on the strength of the bridal altar," said she, still retaining the former contemptuous tone. "Only, alas, even this talisman does not protect one from the misfortune of being forsaken."

Now it was she who aimed mercilessly for a wound which she herself had made, but the arrow glanced harmlessly back. Ella drew herself up erect and proud--

"Certainly not from the pain of such a fate, but at any rate from its shame. For the forsaken wife there remain the interest, the sympathy of the whole world; for the forsaken lover--only contempt."

"Only that?" said Beatrice grimly. "You mistake, Signora; one other thing remains for her--revenge!"

"Is that intended for a threat to me?" asked Ella. "Whoever challenges your revenge, may seek to protect herself against it; I am free from it."

"Of course, you came from the north where passion is not known, as we understand the word," cried the Italian. "With you prejudices, duties, the world's opinion, stand for ever and ever in the front--a woman's *love* only comes in the second rank."

"Certainly in the second rank." Ella's tone was now one of unconcealed scorn. "In the first stands woman's honour; we are accustomed to place it unconditionally and everywhere in front--a prejudice certainly from which Signora Biancona has long since emancipated herself."

Ella did not know the rival whom she irritated, otherwise she would not perhaps have ventured to let the pride of the deeply injured wife speak in so crushing a manner; the effect was an appalling one.

It was as if all at once a demon sprang up in the Italian, as if her whole being really shot forth "death and destruction," so flashed her dark eyes; a half smothered cry of fury broke from her lips, and forgetting everything around her, she took one or two steps forward.

Ella shrank back at this more than threatening movement--

"What does that mean, Signora?" said she firmly. "Violence perhaps? You forget where we are. I see that I was wrong to accede to this interview, it is high time to end it."

Beatrice appeared to recover her senses to some extent; at least she stood still, although the unnatural expression of her eyes had not faded; convulsively her hand crushed the black lace veil which fell over her shoulders; she did not notice that in doing so one of the red flowers detached itself from her hair, and fell to the ground.

"You shall learn to repent these words--this hour, Signora," hissed she through her clenched teeth. "You do not know revenge? Very well, I know it, and shall know how to show it to you and him."

She swept away and left the young wife alone behind, who could not bring herself to re-enter the drawing-room immediately after this scene, and encounter Erlau's anxious enquiries. Drawing a long breath, she sat down on one of the seats, and rested her head on her hand. This wild hatred and threat of vengeance did shake her, but it showed her the truth also, through all veils. Only the successful rival is hated, only what is lost is avenged, or at least what is given up for lost--the infatuation was at an end.

But whom did these threatening words concern? Reinhold? The wife paled; she herself had offered a firm bold front to the menace; but at this thought a breath as of trembling fear passed through her soul, and as if in half unconscious pain she pressed her hand to her bosom and whispered--

"Oh, my God, that cannot be. She loves him surely."

"Eleonore!" said a voice quite close to her.

Ella started up. She recognised the voice at the first sound, even before she saw the figure, which stood on the other side of the doorway, as though it did not dare to pass. Reinhold seemed to gain courage when he saw no repelling movement, and entered completely.

"What is it?" asked he uneasily, "I find you alone here in this distant room, and just now I saw another come from it and hurry through the gallery. You spoke--"

"To Signora Biancona," added Ella, as he stopped.

"Did she insult you?" cried Reinhold irately. "I know her look, which betokened no good. I almost suspected it when I saw her disappear so suddenly from the drawing-room, and you were to be seen no more. I came too late, as it appears. Did she insult you, Ella?"

His young wife rose, and made a movement as if to leave--

"If she had done so, you understand surely that your protection would be the last which I should claim."

She tried to pass him, and reach the door. Reinhold made no attempt to detain her, but his glance rested upon her with such sad reproach, that she stopped involuntarily.

"Eleonore," said he softly, "one more question before you go--only one. You were at my opera--why deny it? I saw you, as you saw me. What urged you to go?"

Ella lowered her eyes, as if it were a fault of which she was accused, and a treacherous warmth flowed over her brow and cheeks, as she hesitatingly replied--

"I wanted to become acquainted with the composer, Rinaldo, in his works."

"And now that you have become acquainted with him?"

"Do you wish for my judgment upon your new creation? The world says it is a masterwork."

"It was a confession," said he with strong emphasis. "I did not, indeed, imagine that you would hear it, but as it was so--did you understand it?"

His wife was silent.

"I only saw your eyes for one moment," continued he passionately, "but I saw that tears stood in them. Did you understand me, Ella?"

"I comprehended that the author of such tones could not endure the narrow circle of my parent's house," replied Ella firmly, "and that perhaps he chose the best for himself when he broke through it and plunged into a life full of warmth and passion, such as his music paints. You have sacrificed everything to your genius--I bear you testimony that this genius was worthy of the sacrifice."

The last words sounded intensely bitter; they seemed to have touched the same chord in Reinhold.

"You do not know how cruel you are," said he in a like tone, "or rather you know it only too well, and make me suffer tenfold for every pang I once caused you. What indeed is it to you, if I rise or succumb in a life which the world deems unequalled happiness, which I often, so often already, would have given away for a single hour of rest and peace! What is it to you, if your husband, the father of your child, be devoured with wild longing for reconciliation with a past which he could never quite tear out of his heart, if at last he despairs of everything and of himself! He has merited his fate; therefore the rod was broken over him, and the elevated, virtuous pride of his wife denies him every word of reconciliation, denies him even the sight of his child--"

"For Heaven's sake, Reinhold, control yourself," interrupted Ella anxiously. "We are not alone here--if a stranger heard us!"

He laughed bitterly--

"Well, then he would hear the great crime, that the husband has for once dared to speak to his wife. And if all the world learn it, I care no longer upon whom the discovery, whom the condemnation falls. Ella you must remain," interrupted he beside himself, as he saw she wished to depart. "For once I must ease my breast of what I have carried about with me for months, and as you are at other times so inaccessible to me, you must listen to me now and here. You must I say."

He seized her arm, so as to detain her by force; but at the same moment Marchese Tortoni appeared at the door, and stepped almost furiously between them.

Reinhold let his wife's arm go, and drew back. Cesario's appearance showed him that the latter must have been present at least during the last scene; with dark brow and a grave look the Marchese placed himself at once by Ella's side.

"May I offer you my arm, Signora?" said he, very positively. "Your uncle is uneasy at your absence. You will allow me to accompany you to him."

Reinhold had already mastered his astonishment, but not his excitement. The interruption at such a moment irritated him to excess, and the sight of Cesario at his wife's side robbed him completely of his self-control.

"I request that you will withdraw, Cesario," said he violently and dictatorially, with that superiority which he had always employed towards his young friend and admirer, but he forgot that he no longer held the foremost place with the latter. The Marchese's eyes flashed with indignation, as he replied--

"The tone of your request is as singular, Rinaldo, as the request itself; you will therefore understand if I do not accede to it. I certainly did not understand the German words which you exchanged with Signora Erlau, but yet I saw that she was to be compelled to stay when she wished to go. I fear she requires protection--pray command me, Signora!"

"You will protect her from *me*?" cried Reinhold, becoming excited. "I forbid *you* to approach this lady!"

"You appear to forget that it is not Signora Biancona in this case," said the Marchese, cuttingly. "You may have a right there to forbid or allow, but here--"

"I have it here more than any other."

"You lie."

"Cesario! You will answer for this to me," cried Reinhold angrily.

"As you please," replied the Marchese, equally violently.

Ella had up to this time tried in vain to interrupt the sentences which were exchanged rapidly between the wildly excited men; they did not listen to her, but the last words, whose meaning she understood only too well, showed her the whole extent of the danger of this unhappy meeting. With quick decision she stepped between them, and said with a determination which commanded attention even at this moment--

"Marchese Tortoni, do not proceed any farther! It is a misunderstanding."

Cesario turned at once to her. "Pardon, Signora! We forgot your presence;" said he more calmly. "But you overlook the fact that in Signor Rinaldo's words there lies an insult to you, which I am not inclined to tolerate. I cannot and shall not retract my words, unless you were to convince me that he is right."

Ella struggled with herself in agonising indecision. Reinhold stood silent and gloomy; she saw that he would not speak now, that with this silence he wished to compel her, either to deny or acknowledge him as her husband; but to deny him, meant in this case to call forth the worst consequences. The insult had taken place, and with the two men's characters, a fatal meeting was inevitable. If it were not withdrawn, no choice remained to the wife.

"Signor Rinaldo goes too far when he still claims rights which he once possessed," replied she at last. "But no insult lay in his words, he spoke--of his wife!"

Reinhold breathed more freely--at last she confessed it before Cesario. The latter stood as if struck by lightning. Often as he had sought for a solution of the enigma, he had never expected one such as this.

"Of his wife!" repeated he almost stupefied.

"We have been separated for years," said Ella voicelessly.

This explanation restored the Marchese's steadiness. He immediately guessed the cause of the separation; did he not know Beatrice Biancona? The one name made all clear to him, and left no doubt as to whose side the fault lay on now. The Captain was right in his conjecture; the discovery, instead of frightening Cesario away, rather made him break forth in passionate partizanship for the beloved and injured wife.

"Well then, Signora," said he quickly, "it only rests with you, whether you will recognise a claim, which Rinaldo founds upon a past, which exists no longer, and which he himself surely destroyed. You alone have to decide whether I may still approach you, if in future I may dedicate a feeling to you, which I confess openly is now more than the cold admiration of a stranger, and which one day you must accept or refuse."

He spoke with all the ardour of a long suppressed emotion, but also with the noble, immovable confidence of a man, to whom the beloved one is elevated above all doubt, and the language was sufficiently plain; it pressed urgently for a decision, from which the wife shrank back tremblingly.

"Yes, indeed Eleonore, you must decide," said Reinhold, now taking up the word. His voice all at once sounded unnaturally calm, but the glance which hung openly on his wife with an expression as if in the next moment the fiat of life or death should fall from her lips, showed better how it was with him. For one second's duration both their eyes met, and Ella could have

been no woman had she not now seen that the most perfect, annihilating revenge lay in her hand. One single "Yes" from her lips would avenge all that she had suffered. Slowly she turned to Cesario.

"Marchese Tortoni--I beg you to desist--I still consider myself bound."

A short portentous pause followed the words. Ella saw what a struggle between pain and pride of the man, who would not show how deeply he had been struck, went forward in the young Italian's beautiful features; she saw him bow to her, without speaking a word, and turn to go; but courage failed her to cast a glance to the other side.

"Cesario!" cried Reinhold, going a step towards him as if in rising repentance. "We are friends."

"We *were* so," replied the Marchese, coldly. "You surely comprehend, Rinaldo, that this hour separates us. My accusation against you I must certainly retract! your wife's explanation exonerates you from it--farewell, Signora."

He left the husband and wife alone. Neither spoke during the next few minutes. Ella bent low over one of the perfumed flowers, and a few tears fell upon the broad shining leaves. Then her name was borne to her ear by a trembling breath--she seemed not to hear it.

"Eleonore!" repeated Reinhold.

She raised her eyes to him. Intense pain still rested on her face, but her voice sounded under perfect control again.

"What have I said then? That I shall never make use of the freedom which your step gave me? That was certain from the first; without this the experience of my marriage protects me from any second one. I have my child, and in it the object and happiness of my life. I require no other love."

"You, certainly not," said Reinhold, with quivering lip, "and my doom is indifferent to you--you have always loved your child only, and never me. For his sake you could break through all the prejudices of your bringing up and become another woman; you could not do it for your husband."

"Did he then ever give me such love as I found in my child?" asked Ella, in a very low voice. "Let it be, Reinhold! You know who stands between us, and will ever stand."

"Beatrice? I will not accuse her, although she was more to blame for my departure than than you perhaps believe. Yet, I was always master of my will--why did I yield to the fascination? But if I have now recognised its deception, and tear myself away--"

"Will you forsake her, as you forsook me?" interrupted his wife, in reproachful condemnation. "Do you think that *that* could reconcile us? I have lost all belief in you, Reinhold, and it will not be restored to me, even if you sacrifice a second person now. I have no cause for sparing or considering this Biancona, but she loves you; she offered up all for you, and you yourself gave her an undisputed right of possession for years. If even you would now destroy the fetters you forged for yourself she would still part us for ever. It is too late; I *cannot* trust you any more."

Immeasurable sadness rang in the last words, but at the same time unbending firmness. In the next moment Ella had left the room. Reinhold was alone.

---

It was on the day following this entertainment, already towards evening, when Captain Almbach entered Reinhold's drawing-room.

"Is my brother still not visible?" asked he of the servant who met him.

The latter shrugged his shoulders, and pointed across to the locked door of the study.

"You know, Signor, that we dare not disturb him. Signor Rinaldo has locked himself in."

"Since this morning!" murmured Captain Almbach; "that begins, indeed, to be alarming. I must absolutely find out what has happened."

He went to the study door, and knocked in such a manner that it could not be unheard.

"Reinhold, open the door! It is I."

No answer came from within.

"Reinhold, twice to-day have I demanded admittance to you in vain. If you do not open the door now, I shall think some misfortune has happened, and burst it open in a minute."

The threat seemed to have some effect. Steps were heard inside the room; the bolt was pushed back, and Reinhold, standing before his brother who entered quickly, said impatiently--

"Why this disturbance? Can I never be alone?"

"Never!" said Hugo, reproachfully. "Since this morning you have been inaccessible to everybody--even to me; and your face shows that you are more fitted to bear anything than being alone. That unfortunate *soirée* last night; Heaven knows what befel you all! Ella suddenly disappeared from the room, and I am convinced you spoke together. Marchese Tortoni, who also became invisible, returned with a countenance as if he had received his verdict of death, and left the party the next moment. I find you in the gallery in a state of excitement beyond description, and Donna Beatrice looked like the last judgment day, as she entered her carriage. I bet that she alone has caused all the mischief. What is the matter between you?"

Reinhold folded his arms, and looked gloomily at the ground. "Nothing more now--we are separated from henceforward."

Captain Almbach stepped back in intense surprise. "What does it mean? You accompanied her."

"Yes, she knew how to manage that, and so at last it came to a decision between us."

"You have broken with her?" asked Hugo.

"I--no," replied Reinhold, with a bitter expression; "it was told me plainly enough that I might sacrifice no 'second.' It was Beatrice who brought the rupture violently about. Why must she force me to an interview so immediately after it had become clear to me what I had lost for her sake? She called me to account for my thoughts and feelings, and I told her the truth which she demanded--mercilessly perhaps, but if I was cruel, she challenged me to it ten times over."

"I can imagine it, from what I know of Bianca," said Hugo, in an under tone.

"From what you know of her?" repeated his brother. "Do not believe it! Did I not only really learn to know her last evening? It was a scene; I tell you, Hugo, even you, with all your energy, would not have been equal to her. One must have something of a fiend in one's nature to resist such a woman. That hour put its seal upon our separation."

The words were full of gloomy moodiness, but betrayed no relief, no removal of any weight. Captain Almbach shook his head.

"I fear the story will certainly not end there. This Beatrice is not a woman to waste away in helpless tears. Be upon your guard, Reinhold!"

"She threatened me with all her vengeance," said Reinhold darkly, "and so far as I know her, she will keep to it. Let her then! I do not tremble before what I called up myself--with happiness I had parted already."

"And if this separation continued irretrievable, do you not believe in the possibility of a reconciliation with Ella?" asked Hugo, gravely.

"No, Hugo, that is over. I know that she cannot forget. Not one voice in her heart speaks for me now, if it even ever spoke. The cleft between us is too wide, too deep; no bridge leads across it now. I have given up the last hope."

The brothers' conversation was interrupted at this moment by Jonas, who entered hastily.

Reinhold looked up, annoyed that his brother's servant should venture to enter his study so unceremoniously, and Hugo had a rebuke ready on his lips, when a glance at the sailor's face arrested it.

"What is it, Jonas?" asked he uneasily. "Is it anything important?"

"Herr Captain!--the sailor's voice had quite lost its usual quiet tone, it trembled audibly----"I have just come from Herr Erlau's house--you know that I often go there now--the old gentleman is beside himself; all the servants are running about--Annunziata cries her eyes out, although she really is not to blame for it, and young Frau Erlau just now----"

"What has happened?" cried Reinhold, with the dread of presentiment. "Some misfortune?"

"The child is gone," said Jonas, desperately; "since this forenoon. If they do not find it again, I believe the mother will lose her life."

"Who? Little Reinhold?" enquired Hugo, while his brother stared at the messenger of evil, without power over a single word. "How could it happen? Was no one there to look after him?"

"He was playing in the garden as usual," related Jonas, "and Annunziata with him; she went into the house for a quarter of an hour, as she often does. When she returned, the garden door was open, the child gone, and not a trace of him to be found. They have roused all the neighbourhood, searched all the environs, but no ponds nor pits, where the little one could come to grief, are anywhere near, and if he had run away, he is big enough, after all, to find his way back again. No one can understand the mystery."

The brothers' looks met. In both their eyes stood the same terrible thought. The next moment, Reinhold, pale as a corpse, and trembling with excitement in all his limbs, seized his hat from the table.

## CHAPTER VII.

"I will soon procure the solution," cried Reinhold. "I know where to seek it. You go first to Ella, Hugo! I will follow--perhaps with the child."

The more thoughtful Hugo caught him quickly by the arm.

"Reinhold, I implore you, do not be too hasty! We do not know the particulars so far. The child may have strayed away, and, as it does not speak Italian, not have found its way back yet. Perhaps it has already been brought home to its mother. What are you going to do?"

"Demand the restoration of my son," cried Reinhold, with fearful wildness. "That, then, was the vengeance which this fury had thought of. Ella and me--she would strike us both with one single deadly blow! but I will succeed in reaching her. Let me alone, Hugo! I must go to Beatrice."

"That would be of no use," cried Captain Almbach, whom the expression on his brother's face alarmed, and who endeavoured in vain to restrain him. "If your suspicion be well founded, she will know, too, how to play her part. You will only irritate her more. We must adopt other means."

Reinhold broke away by main force. "Leave me alone; if any one can, I shall compel her to deliver up my child! If I do not compel her--well, a catastrophe must ensue."

He rushed away. Beatrice's house lay rather far from his; yet he traversed the distance in less than a quarter of an hour. Usually, he required no announcement there; all the doors flew open before him; he was wont to be considered as master here. To-day the servant who opened the door assured him positively the Signora could not be spoken to by any one, not even Signor Rinaldo; she was very ill, and had strictly forbidden--

Reinhold did not let the man complete his sentence. He thrust him aside, hurried through the ante-room, and tore open the drawing-room door. The room was empty, equally so the adjoining boudoir; the doors of the remaining rooms stood wide open, nowhere was she whom he sought, not a sign of her; she had evidently left the house.

Reinhold saw that he came too late, and in the overwhelming consciousness of this discovery, he felt vaguely that Beatrice's flight had saved him from a crime. In his present state of mind he would have been capable of anything towards the abductor of his child. By calling all his strength together, he forced himself to be calm, and returned to the servant, who had not dared to follow him, but stood frightened and uncertain in the anteroom.

"Signora has gone then--since when?"

The servant hesitated in his reply. The questioner's face appeared to betoken no good.

"Marco, you must answer me! You see that I shall not be deterred by any excuse; you seek to deceive me, according to the Signora's commands. Once more, when did she go, and where?"

Marco was evidently not initiated into the secret, as he was not at all prepared for this question. However, he may have listened to part of the scene which took place the preceding evening between his mistress and Signor Rinaldo, and explained to-day's affair in his own way. It was quite in keeping with Beatrice's violent character, that she should now have left the town for a few days, if only to render it impossible to continue the performance of Rinaldo's opera, and that the latter should be beside himself with anger was easily comprehended. It was not, indeed, the first disagreement between the two, and all quarrels so far had always ended in a reconciliation. With the prospect of such a readjustment of affairs, the servant was clever enough not to injure himself with the ruling side, and therefore intimated that Signora had left the house early this morning, with the distinct order that all enquiries were to be replied to "that she was ill." She had driven away in her own carriage; where, he did not know.

"And where did she drive to?" asked Reinhold, breathlessly. "Have you not heard what address she gave the coachman?"

"I believe--to Maestro Gianelli's house."

"Gianelli! then he, too, is in the plot. Perhaps he may still be reached. Marco, so soon as



Signora arrives, or any news of her, let me know at once! At once! I will pay you with gold for every word. Do not forget this!"

With these words, almost thrown at the servant in his flight, Reinhold hastened away. Marco looked astounded after him. To-day's scene was enacted much more tempestuously than any former ones under similar circumstances, and Signor Rinaldo's excitement surpassed anything he had seen before. What then had happened? The maestro could not possibly have eloped with Biancona? It really almost looked like it.

In Consul Erlau's house naturally intense confusion and excitement reigned. Captain Almbach, who had hurried there without delay, undertook at once the management of the enquiries which had been already set on foot with the greatest energy and caution, but even he could not discover anything. In the meanwhile, the one fact was clear--that the child had disappeared tracelessly, and so remained. As to whether it had left the garden voluntarily, whether it had been tempted out, all supposition was at a loss. No one had noticed anything unusual, no one had missed the little one until the moment when Annunziata returned to fetch him. The poor little Italian was dissolved in tears, and yet she was quite blameless in the occurrence, as her young mistress herself had called her into the house. The boy was old enough not to require constant supervision, and he often played alone in the perfectly enclosed place. Hugo had not yet dared to give words to the suspicion which he shared with his brother, and which every moment became more lively. He had only hinted slightly at an abduction, and was at once met with utter incredulity. Robbers in the middle of the street, in the most aristocratic quarter--impossible! A misfortune was more likely. Once more they began a search, notwithstanding the approaching darkness, in the neighbouring gardens and the rest of the vicinity.

In the meanwhile, Erlau essayed in vain to pacify his adopted daughter, and to point out to her the possibilities and probabilities which still might let her hope for a happy termination; Ella did not hear him. Silent and deadly pale, without shedding a single tear, she sat by his side now, after having taken part for hours in the vain researches, which she even to some extent had conducted herself. Although Hugo had not alluded to that possibility by a syllable, the mother's thoughts took the same direction, and the more inexplicable the child's disappearance remained, the more irrepressibly did the recollection of her yesterday's encounter force itself upon her, the recollection of Beatrice's wild hatred, and burning threats of vengeance; and clear, and ever clearer arose the presentiment that this was no case of accident or misfortune, but that it was one of crime.

A carriage dashed madly up the street, and stopped before the house. Ella, who started at every noise, imagined in every arrival a messenger bringing news, flew to the window; she saw her husband descend and enter the house. A few minutes later he stood before her.

"Reinhold, where is our child?"

It was a cry of deadly fear and despair, but also a reproach more wounding than could be conceived. She demanded her child of him! Was he alone to blame that it had been torn from the mother?

"Where is our child?" repeated she, with a vain attempt to read the answer in his face.

"In Beatrice's hands," replied Reinhold, firmly. "I came too late to rescue it from her; she has fled already with her prey, but at least I know her track, Gianelli betrayed it to me; the rogue was cognizant, if he were not literally an assistant, but he saw plainly that I was in earnest with my threat to shoot him down if he did not tell me the road she had taken with the child. They have fled to the mountains in the direction towards A---. I shall follow them at once. There is not a moment to be lost, only I wished to bring you the information, Ella. Farewell!"

Erlau, who had listened to all much shocked, wished now to interpose with questions and advice, but Ella gave him no time for it. The certainty, fearful as it was, restored her courage; she stood already at her husband's side.

"Reinhold, take me with you!" implored she, determinedly.

He made a gesture of refusal. "Impossible Eleonore! It will be a journey as for very life, and when I reach the goal, perhaps even a struggle between it and death. That were no place for you; I must fight it out alone. Either I shall bring you your son back, or you see me now for the last time. Be calm! The possibility of his rescue is now in his father's hands."

"And the mother shall, in the meanwhile, despair here?" asked his wife, passionately. "Take me with you! I am not weak--you know it. You need fear no tears or fainting from me when action is required, and I can bear all, only not the fearful uncertainty and inactivity, only not the anxious waiting for news, which may not arrive for days. I shall accompany you!"

"Eleonore, for God's sake!" interposed Erlau, horrified. "What an idea! It would be your death."

Reinhold looked at his wife silently for a few seconds, as if he would examine how far her strength went.

"Can you be ready in ten minutes?" asked he, quietly. "The carriage waits below."

"In half the time."

She hurried into the adjoining room. The Consul wanted to forbid, beg, entreat once more, but Reinhold cut him short.

"Leave her alone, as I do," said he, energetically. "We *cannot* give way now to cold consideration. I do not see my brother here, and I have not time to seek him. Tell him what has happened, what I have discovered. He must take the necessary steps here at once to ensure us help, which we may perhaps require, and then follow us. We shall first take the direct route to A---. There Hugo will find farther information about us."

He turned, without waiting for a reply, to the door, where Ella already appeared in hat and cloak. The young wife threw herself, with a short tempestuous farewell greeting, on to her adopted father's breast, to whose protest she would not listen; then she followed her husband. Erlau looked out of the window as Reinhold lifted her into the carriage, entered it himself, shut the door, and the horses started off in full gallop. This was too much for the shaken nerves of the old gentleman, especially after the alarm and excitement of the last few hours; almost unconscious, he sank into an arm-chair.

Hardly ten minutes later Hugo entered; he had already heard from one of the servants of his brother's sudden arrival and equally sudden departure with Ella. At his first hasty questions, Erlau recovered a little. He was beside himself at his daughter's decision, still more at the independence of her husband, who had borne her away without any more ado. Arrival, explanation and departure, all had taken place as in a hurricane; this mode of action resembled a regular elopement, and what could the poor wife do on such a journey? What might not occur, what happen, if they really overtook this dreadful Italian? The Consul was nearly in despair at the thought of all the possibilities to which his favourite was exposed.

Hugo listened silently to the report, without betraying especial surprise or horror. He appeared to have expected something of the sort, and when Erlau had ended, laid his hand soothingly on the latter's arm, and said quietly, but yet with a slight tremor in his voice--

"Let it be, Herr Consul! The parents are now on their child's track; they will, it is to be hoped, find the little one and--each other also."

---

A carriage moved up the steep twisting road of the pass, which led through the mountains to A---. Notwithstanding the four powerful horses and cheering cries of the driver, it proceeded but slowly. This was one of the worst spots in the whole chain of hills. The occupants of the carriage, a lady and gentleman, had descended from it, and struck into a foot path, which shortened the road almost by half; they stood already on the summit, while the conveyance was still some considerable distance behind them.

"Rest yourself, Ella!" said the gentleman, as he led the lady into the shade of the rocky wall. "The exertion was too much for you; why did you insist on leaving the carriage?"

His wife still kept her fixed, comfortless gaze turned to the pass, which on the other side descended into the valley, and whose windings could be partly overlooked.

"We are a quarter of an hour sooner at the top, at any rate," said she, feebly. "I wanted to look out over the road, perhaps even discover the carriage."

Reinhold's glance followed the same direction, in which nothing, however, could be discerned but the figures of two men, looking like peasants, who coming down the hill lustily, sometimes disappeared in the turns of the road, soon again to reappear.

"We cannot, indeed, be so near them," said he pacifyingly, "although we have flown since last evening. You see, at least, we are on the right track. Beatrice has been seen everywhere, and the child beside her. We *must* overtake her."

"And when we do--what then?" asked Ella, listlessly. "Our boy is unprotected in her hands. God knows what plans she will pursue with him."

Reinhold shook his head--

"Plans? Beatrice never acts upon plans or calculations. The impulse of the moment decides everything with her. The thought of revenge has suddenly overcome her, and like lightning she has carried it out, like lightning fled with her prey. Where? To what end? That is not even clear to herself, and for the moment she does not enquire. She wished to strike you and me in our most vulnerable point, and she has succeeded; more she did not wish."

He spoke with great bitterness, but with most perfect certainty. They stood alone at the summit of the pass; the carriage was still far below them, and just then disappeared at the last turn of the road. The mountains here bore an abrupt, wild character; almost naked the sharp rocks rose upwards, now in mighty groups, now wildly split and broken. Only aloes could take

root in the clefts of the yellow grey stone, and here and there a fig tree spread its meagre shade. Yonder, on the other side of the valley, a building hung in dizzy height on the mountain's wall, a castle or monastery, grey as the rock itself, and barely to be distinguished from it at this distance. Lower down at the edge of an abyss, a little hill-town had nestled itself, which built in and upon the rock seemed almost to form part of it, and its deserted decayed appearance harmonised with the loneliness around. Still lower, whirled the broad rushing stream, occupying almost the entire width of the valley, so that there barely remained space for the road by its side. Over the whole scene, however, lay that glowing sunlight of a southern autumn day, which is not inferior at all to the power of a northern midsummer one; although the sun had long left its noontide height, the air was still quivering with heat; sharply and harshly illuminated, every single object stood out almost painfully clear to the sight, and the heated stones literally burned under the scorching rays to which they were incessantly exposed.

"It would be folly to precede the carriage, even only by another step," said Reinhold. "It would overtake us in a moment on the downward route. Now we have a view over the whole."

Ella did not contradict him; her countenance bore plainly enough an expression of the most extreme physical and mental exhaustion. This drive of twenty hours without rest, added to the deadly fear at heart, the ever renewed agonising excitement when the track sought for now appeared and again was lost--this was too much for the mother's heart, and the woman's strength. She sat down on a piece of rock, leaned her head silently against the mountain's side, and closed her eyes.

Her husband stood by her and looked down silently at the beautiful pale countenance, which in its deadly exhaustion appeared almost alarming. The sharp points of the rock buried themselves deeply in her white forehead and left red marks there. Reinhold slowly pushed his arm between the stone and his wife's fair plaits; she did not seem to feel it, and encouraged by it he put his arm quite round her, and attempted to give her a better support against his shoulder.

Now Ella started slightly and opened her eyes; she made a movement as if she would withdraw from him, but his look disarmed her--this look which rested upon her with such painful, anxious tenderness; she saw that he did not tremble less for her at this moment than he trembled for his child. She let her head sink back again, and remained motionless in his arms.

He bent low over her--

"I fear, Eleonore," said he, with an effort, "you have had too much confidence in your strength. You will break down."

Ella shook her head denyingly--

"When I have got my boy again--perhaps then. Not before."

"You will recover him," said Reinhold energetically. "How? At what cost? I do not certainly yet know; but I know how to master Beatrice when the demon is roused in her. Have I not often stood opposed to her at times, when perhaps every other person had trembled before her, and have known how to enforce my will? Once more, for the last time I shall try it, should she and I become the sacrifice."

"You believe in danger, also for yourself?" Ella's voice sounded as if full of trembling fear.

"Not if I meet her alone, only if you approach her; promise me that you will stay behind at the last station, will not show yourself when we arrive. Remember that in the child she has a shield against every attack; every means of force on our side, and everything would be lost if she were to see you at my side."

"Does she hate me so much?" asked Ella, astonished. "I irritated her, it is true, but yet it was you who offended her most deeply."

"I?" repeated Reinhold. "You do not know Beatrice. If I came before her penitent, wishful to return, there would be an end of her hatred and her revenge. One single oath, that I and my wife are separated and remain so, that I have given up all idea of a reunion, she would give you back your child without a struggle, without resistance. If I *could* do this, the danger would be over."

Ella's eye sought the ground; she did not dare to look up, as she asked almost inaudibly--

"And can you not do it, then?"

His eyes flashed, he let his arm drop from her shoulders, and stepped back--

"No, Eleonore, I cannot, and I shall not, as it would be perjury. So little as I shall ever return to the bonds which I had felt degraded me long before I saw you again, so little shall I give up a hope which is more to me than life. Oh, do not draw back so from me! I know I may not come near you with sentiments to which I have forfeited the right, but you cannot prescribe my feelings to me, and if you did not see before--would not see--Beatrice's burning hatred to you, and you alone, must show you, how much you are avenged."

Ella made a sudden deprecating motion--"Oh, Reinhold, how can you at this moment--"

"It is perhaps the only one in which you do not reject me," interrupted Reinhold. "May I not, in the hour when we both tremble for our child's life, tell the mother what she has become to me? Even then when I first trod Italy's shore, there lay upon me something like a suspicion of what I had lost. I could not rejoice over the newly-won freedom the artist's career gained at last; and the richer and more brilliant my life became externally, the deeper grew that longing for a home which yet I had never possessed. You, to be sure, do not know the dull pain which will not be still even in the midst of the whirl of passion, in the noise of triumph, in the proudest success of one's creations, which becomes torture in solitude, from which one must fly, even if only by means of intoxication, by the wildest excitement. I believed that it was only the longing for my child; then I saw the child again--saw you--and I knew what this longing craved for; then began the atonement for everything of which I had been guilty towards you."

He spoke quietly, without reproach or bitterness, and the words seemed therefore to act all the more powerfully on Ella; she had risen as if she would flee from his tone and gaze, and yet could not.

"Spare me, Reinhold!" begged she almost imploringly. "I can feel and think of nothing now but my child's danger. When I have the boy safe in my arms, then--"

"Well, then?--" asked he in breathless eagerness.

"I shall perhaps not have the courage any longer to pain his father," added Ella, while a flood of tears rushed from her eyes.

Reinhold did not say another word; but he held her hand firmly in his own as if he would never loosen it again. At the same moment, the carriage appeared on the top of the hill, and the driver stopped to give himself and the tired animals a little rest.

Almost simultaneously, the two peasants who had been visible before on the road, arrived from the other side. They stared curiously at the beautiful pale lady and strange, distinguished-looking gentleman who stepped towards them and asked where they came from. They named a place which lay at the exit of the valley, some miles distant.

"Have you seen no carriage?" enquired Reinhold.

"Certainly, Signor. A travelling carriage like yours; but they had only two horses, you have four."

"Did you see the occupants?" interposed Ella, in a trembling voice. "We seek a lady with a child."

"With a little boy?--quite right, Signora. She is a good way before you; you must drive sharply if you would overtake her," said the elder of the two men while stepping nearer, somewhat alarmed, as the lady looked as if about to sink down at the news; but at the same moment her companion threw his arm round her, and supported her.

"Courage, Eleonore! We are near the crisis; now we must act."

He lifted her into the carriage, and sprang in after her. The few words which he addressed to the driver must have contained some unusual promise, as the latter swung his whip sharply across the horses, and away they went after the object of their pursuit.

The latter had indeed gained a considerable advantage, and their carriage was also driven at a rapid pace. Beatrice was alone in it with little Reinhold, who, tired with crying and the restless, fatiguing journey, had fallen asleep. The fair, curly little head was pressed deeply into the cushions; his hands were twined instinctively around the side rests, as if they sought a support against the incessant jolting and shaking of the uneven road. The child slept soundly and deeply, but Beatrice hardly noticed it just now. She was in that state of supreme mental irritation which even puts a limit to the wildest passion. She was as if in a heavy, stupid trance, from which only one object stands out with fearful distinctness--the recollection of that hour when Rinaldo cast himself free from her, when he called her the curse and misfortune of his life, and acknowledged to her with proud defiance that his love belonged to his wife alone. These words pierced the Italian's heart ever again as if with a burning thorn. Whatever she had done, however she may have sinned, she had loved this one man with all the ardour of her soul--to this one she had been unfailingly true; she had considered his love as her right, of which no power on earth could deprive her, and now she lost it through the woman whom she feared the last of all others--through his wife. His wife and his child! They had ever been the dark shadow which menaced this happiness, and which now, coming forward out of the gloomy past, took form and life in order to destroy it.

Beatrice had hated both, even before she knew them. Did she not know best what place they still maintained in Reinhold's remembrance? Had she not often enough tried in vain to tear him away from it? There must surely be something in the once despised power of sacred wedlock; it was victorious at last against the beautiful, charming Bianca--against the admired actress; and now made her taste the whole agony of being forsaken, to which she had once so indifferently

condemned another, without asking if that other's heart broke under this unmerited fate. The fetters, apparently dissolved, had never quite loosed the fugitive; now they encircled him again, and Beatrice felt, with desperate certainty, that she had never possessed the place in his heart which once more his wife occupied.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The passionate woman did indeed not act upon any plan or calculation when she seized upon this last extreme means of cooling her revenge. Her appearance in the Erlau's garden entirely concerned her hated rival. She did not find Ella, but instead found the boy alone, without supervision; and the idea, as well as the execution of his abduction, were the work of a moment. At first the child willingly followed the beautiful stranger, who drew it caressingly towards her, and when he commenced to become frightened, and asked to be taken back to his mother, it was already too late. Beatrice never thought of the possible consequences of her step when she carried her prey away triumphantly; she only felt that no stroke from a dagger could hit Ella's heart so deeply and certainly as the loss of her child, and that this loss would raise an everlasting barrier between the parents. It was this which she had wished. But now she must see how to ensure the booty. Gianelli must give his hand to aid the flight so hastily undertaken.

Now more than a day's journey lay already between the child and its parents; but they must make a halt some time; some time this aimless, planless flight must come to an end.

The vengeance had succeeded beyond expectation--what now?

Little Reinhold still slept. Had he only borne his father's features, perhaps that had preserved him from all ill; but this golden fair hair, this rosy countenance, and those deep blue eyes--just now closed, to be sure--all belonged to the mother--the woman whom Beatrice hated as she had never yet hated anything in the world, and this likeness was ominous to the sleeping child. The burning eyes of his companion rested for some minutes fixedly on his face; then she suddenly started as if frightened at her own thoughts, tore her gaze away from the boy, and turned aside.

Yonder, up above, she beheld the carriage which was following theirs. A travelling carriage was very rare on this road, and it came in the same direction--came with the greatest speed. Beatrice guessed at once what it meant. So her track was already betrayed, and the pursuers were at her heels--let them, indeed! She felt herself to be all-powerful so long as she had the child in her hands.

Rising quickly, she ordered the coachman to lash the horses to their greatest pace. He obeyed, and now commenced a wild race between the two carriages. More than once the powerful animals could hardly keep up, more than once the drag threatened to break and overturn the occupants. None paid any attention to it, and promises of excessive rewards spurred the two drivers on to scorn any danger. It was a furious, reckless drive; rocks and ravines seemed to fly past on both sides; ever higher rose the mountainous wall, the more the road descended; ever nearer rushed the river; yet the four-in-hand had undeniably the best of it. Both carriages now rolled down the valley, but the space between them was diminished every moment--a few hundred yards, and the fugitives would be overtaken.

The first vehicle thundered across the bridge which here united the two banks. Beyond, it suddenly stopped. Beatrice herself had given the order to do so; she saw that now no evasion, no escape was possible, she must be prepared for extremities. The carriage stood close to the edge of the river, which shot along with intense rapidity. Slowly Beatrice opened the door, while with her left hand she grasped little Reinhold, whom the mad gallop had awoken, and who gazed affrighted into the foaming, raging waves which rushed past close below him. He did not know how near his parents were. Now the second carriage had reached the bridge, and the moment Ella beheld her child all consideration and recollection were at an end. She forgot Reinhold's warning not to show herself, to leave the decisive step alone to him; and bent far out of the door.

"Reinhold!" resounded across--it was a cry of inexpressible, trembling fear. The child cried out as it recognised its mother, and stretched both arms to her. Weeping noisily, it tried to go to her: but this sight was its ruin. Beatrice had become white as a corpse when she saw the husband and wife side by side. Together, then! What should have separated had united them, and if in the next moment Reinhold reached the fugitive, and tore his son from her, they would be bound together for ever, and for the forsaken one there would only remain contempt or revenge.

But the choice was already made. A single step, quick as lightning towards the stream, decided all. Beatrice had not loosed her hold of the child, and with the strength of despair drew it down with her into the flood of death.

A scene of indescribable confusion followed this horrible deed. The drivers of both carriages had sprung down from their seats and ran objectlessly up and down the banks; they did not even attempt to give any succour, which was only possible at the sacrifice of their own lives. Ella stood on the bridge; she wanted to cast herself in after those whom she could not rescue; but better help was at hand. She saw the waves splash up high as her dearest disappeared amidst them--saw how these waves also closed the next moment over her husband's head. Reinhold had thrown himself in immediately after his child, which, in the fall, had torn itself away from Beatrice, and now re-appeared at some little distance. Moments of agony ensued, in comparison with which all previous suffering was but play. For Ella, life and death were struggling together in these foaming, hissing waves, with which the two bodies fought, the one helpless, almost powerless to resist, the other toiling fiercely to the one point which at last he attained. The father grasped his child, drew it to himself, and strove to reach the shore with him. Now he planted his foot upon the rocky ground, now he seized the overhanging rocky points on which to support himself; and now, too, the mother regained power and motion. She rushed to both. Slowly Reinhold mounted the cliff; his breast heaved with fearful exertion; his arms bled, wounded by the sharp stones to which he had held, but these arms encircled his boy whom he clasped against his heart for the first time for years, and sinking down half-unconsciously, he placed the child in its mother's arms.

---

"Then this is really and irrevocably to be a farewell visit?" asked Consul Erlau of Captain Almbach, who sat near him. "Your departure comes very suddenly and unexpectedly. What will your brother, what will Eleonore, say to it? Both calculated quite positively upon keeping you here a few weeks longer."

On Hugo's usually light brow there lay a shadow to-day, and on his features a strange, bitter expression, as he replied--

"You will soon reconcile yourselves to the parting. Reinhold will not feel my absence in the constant society of wife and child; and Ella--" he broke off suddenly. "Consider it as being all for the best, Herr Consul. They will both be far too much occupied with each other and their newly-recovered happiness to ask after *me*."

"Yes, indeed," rejoined the Consul, "and the greatest loser in this reconciliation am I. For years I have looked upon Eleonore as my child, have considered her and the little one as my indisputable property; and now, all at once, her husband makes good his so-called rights and takes them both from me, without my being able to raise any objection to it. I do not understand Eleonore, that she has pardoned him so readily."

"Well, it was not done so very readily," said Hugo gravely. "He met with resistance enough, and I hardly believe he would ever have overcome it without that catastrophe which finally came to their assistance. He bought the reconciliation with his child's rescue. Ella would have been no wife and mother if she had turned away from him then, when he laid her boy, uninjured, in her arms. That moment atoned for all, and you know as well as I that saving the child nearly cost the father's life."

"Yes, certainly, he could do nothing more sensible than become dangerously ill after the affair," grumbled Erlau, who decidedly seemed to be in a very uncharitable mood. "That was enough to call Ella to his side at once, from which she was not to be removed again, and he very wisely would not let her leave him. One knows all that. Danger and fear, care and tenderness without end! You surely do not require me to rejoice over this reconciliation? I wish we had left this Italian journey alone, then I should have kept my Eleonore, and Herr Reinhold could have continued his genial, romantic artist's life here. That would have been perfectly right for me."

"You are unjust," said Hugo reproachfully.

"And you out of sorts," added Erlau. "I do not understand exactly what has happened to you Herr Captain; your brother is out of danger, your sister-in-law amiability itself, the little one has attached himself most tenderly to you, but your cheerfulness seems quite to have left you since everything has been swimming in love and peace around us. You play no jokes upon any one, you annoy no one with your teasings and nonsense, one hardly ever hears a word of fun from you. I fear something has got into your head, or even your heart."

Hugo laughed loudly but somewhat forcedly.

"Why not, indeed! I can no longer bear to remain such a time on shore, and give up the sea. This inactivity of months wearies me. Thank God, it is coming to an end at last. Early to-morrow I depart, and in a few more days I shall be out on the waves again."

"And then we all fly apart quite prettily to every point of the compass," said the Consul, who still could not get the better of his irritation. "You sail to the West Indies, your brother and Eleonore will also leave; I go back to H---, a most pleasant solitude which awaits me there at home! Herr Reinhold certainly was gracious enough to promise me that I should see his wife and child from time to time. From time to time! As if that could satisfy me, after having had her about me every moment for years. Of course, now the husband and father must decide about it! I am convinced he will never let her leave him for a week; he is just as overwhelming in his tenderness as he once was in his carelessness."

It almost seemed as if the subject of the conversation were painful to Captain Almbach, as he broke it off quickly by rising and taking leave of the Consul heartily, but yet rather curtly and hastily. Erlau evidently saw him go with regret, as however great was the prejudice which he entertained against Reinhold, he was as decidedly prepossessed in Hugo's favour, and if the latter had been the repentant prodigal, the Consul would have regarded the reconciliation with a much more favourable eye than he did now where every feeling of justice was lost in the pain of the impending separation from his favourite. It only slightly consoled the old gentleman that he took his restored health home with him; his house appeared very desolate to him now, and he sighed deeply as the door closed after his guest.

Hugo, in the meantime, returned to his brother's abode which he still shared. His room, in consequence of the preparations for his departure, was in the greatest disorder already. He had ordered Jonas to pack up, and put all ready for the early morning, and the sailor had partly obeyed these directions, as the boxes stood open on the floor, and the travelling requisites lay about on the table and chairs.

But there seemed to be no talk of packing at present, as Jonas sat quite calmly on the lid of the large travelling chest, and near him little Annunziata, whom he had probably called to help him in this difficult business. The conversation between them, notwithstanding the young Italian's very defective knowledge of German, was in full course, and Jonas had also placed his arm, unabashed, round her waist, and was just in the act of stealing a kiss from her, which did not seem to be the first, and most likely would not have been the last, if Hugo's appearance had not put an end to any farther confidential arrangements.

The couple started up, alarmed at the unexpected opening of the door. Annunziata recovered herself first. She fled with a slight exclamation past Captain Almbach into the ante-room, where she disappeared and left the explanation of the situation to her companion. Jonas however, transfixed from fright, and stiff as a statue, stood without moving, looking at his master, who now entered completely and shut the door behind him.

"Do you call that packing the boxes?" asked he. "Then you have gone so far happily with your exercise of pity?"

Jonas sighed deeply--

"Yes, Herr Captain, I am so far," replied he, resignedly.

The confession was made with such comical humiliation, that Hugo had difficulty to suppress a smile; still he said with a grave face--

"Jonas, I never thought to experience such things in you. It is only lucky that you are a man of principles, which will not allow you to let such follies become serious. Principles before everything! Our 'Ellida,' lies ready to sail; to-morrow we start for the harbour, and when we return from the West Indies, you will have driven this love story out of your head, and Annunziata in the meanwhile will have taken another--"

"She will leave that alone," cried Jonas furiously. "I will kill her and myself too if she does anything of the kind."

"Will you not extend the killing to me also?" asked Hugo coolly. "You seem to be quite in the humour for it. You have gone so far as kissing, that is certain. I have actually witnessed with my own eyes how seaman William Jonas, of the 'Ellida,' has kissed a woman, and I should have thought that with this fact, enough to set one's hair on end, all would have stopped."

"Preserve us," said Jonas, defiantly. "That is only the beginning--then comes the marrying."

"Will you marry too?" asked Captain Almbach, in a tone of most intense indignation. "You will marry a woman? But consider, Jonas, that women are to blame for everything, that all mischief in the world originated with them, that a man only has peace and quiet when far from them, that--"

"Herr Captain," replied the sailor, who contrary to all respect, interrupted his master in the middle of his speech, as he heard his own words from the other's lips--

"Herr Captain, I was an idiot."

"Oh! your Annunziata seems to have inspired you with much self-knowledge already, and that is the more admirable as language in your conversation plays a very inferior part. Your chosen one speaks German thoroughly badly, and you have not caught much more Italian than merely her name. To be sure I saw just now how capitally you managed to help yourselves. Your conjugation of '*amare*.' if not quite grammatical, was extremely comprehensible."

"Yes, indeed, we know how to help ourselves," said Jonas, full of self-consciousness. "We understand each other however always, and on the main point we understand each other at once. I like her, she will have me, and we shall marry each other."

"And so it ends!" finished Hugo. "And how about our departure, amid these suitable arrangements?"

"I shall still go to the West Indies, Herr Captain," answered Jonas eagerly. "We cannot marry in quite so head-over-heel a fashion, and my bride will meanwhile remain with young Frau Almbach, who has promised to take care of her. When I return, however, Annunziata thinks my seafaring must end. She thinks when she takes a husband that he must stay with her also, and not sail about for years on all kinds of seas. We could set up a little public house in some place, where I should not be so far from the ocean, and should always meet with my comrades, Annunziata thinks."

"Your Annunziata seems to think a great deal," remarked Captain Almbach, "and you naturally submit like a converted woman-hater and obedient bridegroom to this opinion of your 'future.' Then on this voyage, the 'Ellida' is to have the honour of counting you amongst her crew? Afterwards she must look out for another sailor and I for another servant?"

"Yes, afterwards," said Jonas, somewhat shamefacedly. "If-if you do not also--Herr Captain--you had better marry too."

"Don't come to me with your proposals!" cried Hugo, jumping up angrily. "I should have thought it would be sufficient at present, that you come under petticoat-government. Now, pack my boxes and take leave of your Annunziata! As we start very early tomorrow, I--have also still to take leave."

The last words sounded so peculiarly forced, that Jonas looked up astonished. He knew that it was not his master's wont to let farewells in any place be hard for him, and yet he fancied that this one made Hugo's heart right heavy. Fortunately the sailor was in similar plight; therefore he did not trouble much about it, but set to work to pack, while Hugo went across to the rooms which his sister-in-law inhabited now. He stood motionless for a few moments before the closed door, as if he did not dare to enter; then all at once, as if with sudden determination, he put his hand on the latch and opened it.

Ella sat at her writing table. She was alone, and in the act of closing a letter she had just concluded, when her brother-in-law entered, and came quickly to her.

"Have you announced your return to Germany?" asked he, pointing to the letter. "Herr Consul Erlau will make all H---- rebellious with his despair at being obliged to return without you and the little one."

Ella laid her pen aside and rose. "I am sorry that uncle should feel our parting so much," replied she; "I have already tried my utmost to procure a substitute, and by letter begged one of his relations to take my place in his house now that other duties call me. His wish for us to accompany him to H----, and for us to live with him for a time, I could not agree to on Reinhold's account. We have once already given society there cause to busy themselves about us; if we return now, there would be no end to the painful curiosity and interest, and Reinhold still so much needs consideration. He cannot bear the slightest allusion to the past as yet, without exciting himself dangerously. We must certainly seek another quieter residence."

"At all events, it is fortunate that you have decided him to return to Germany at all," said Hugo; "he has been estranged from home long enough, both as regards his life and his musical labours. It is time that he should at last take root in his fatherland."

Ella smiled. "You preach that to me and him daily, and yourself long restlessly to go far away? Confess it now, Hugo, you can hardly wait for the day of your departure, and it is difficult enough for you to endure the few weeks you still have with us."

"The difficulty is removed already," said Hugo, with feigned unconcern, "I leave tomorrow."

"To-morrow?" cried Ella, half-astonished, half-alarmed. "But you promised, though, to remain until our departure."

Captain Almbach bent low over the papers and writing materials on the table, as if searching for something amongst them.

"Things have changed since then, and I have received news from the 'Ellida' which calls me away at once. You know that with us sailors that sort of thing often happens quickly and unexpectedly. I was just going to tell you and Reinhold of it, and bid you farewell at the same time, as I must start early in the morning."

He had poured it all out hastily, without looking up. Ella's eyes were fixed gravely and searchingly upon his face.

"Hugo, that is an excuse," said she, decidedly; "you have received no news, at least, none so urgent. What has occurred? Why will you go?"

"You interrogate me like a criminal judge," said Hugo, jokingly, with an attempt to regain the old cheerful tone. "Be prudent, Ella! you have to deal with a confirmed sinner, who will indeed confess nothing."

"Yes; I see that something has happened to drive you away," said Ella, uneasily, "and for long I



have known that something has come between us which estranges you from Reinhold and me more every day. Be candid, Hugo. What have you against us? Why will you forsake us now?"

She had gone closer to him, and laid her hand upon his arm beseechingly, but perfectly unembarrassed. Captain Almbach's countenance was intensely pale, as he looked silently on the ground; at last he slowly raised his eyes.

"Because I can bear it no longer," he broke out with sudden violence; "I have urged your reconciliation with Reinhold so long, and now that it has taken place, and I must look on at it daily, hourly--now only I feel how little talent I have for being a saint or for platonic friendship. I must go away if I do not wish to be ruined. My God, Ella, do not look at me as if an abyss were opened out before you! Have you really had no conception, then, of the state of mind I am in, and what these last weeks at your side have cost me?"

Ella had shrunk back at these last words, her pallor and the expression of deadly fear in her face gave an answer, even before she opened her lips to reply.

"No, Hugo, I had no conception of it," replied she, in a trembling voice. "When we first met, I felt myself obliged to repel a fleeting fancy. That it could ever be serious with you, I never deemed possible."

"Nor I either," said Hugo, glumly. "At the beginning, I too, believed I could laugh and scoff away this feeling--scoff it away like all others; and now it has become earnest, such bitter earnest, that I was on the high road to learn to hate my brother, to loathe the whole world, until the latter part of my time here became a hell--perhaps it will be better out on the sea, perhaps not either. But go I must, the sooner the better."

Something so wild, so passionate lay in those words, and Hugo's whole manner betrayed so plainly the difficulty with which he had suppressed his internal agony, that Ella found no courage for a harsh reply. She turned silently away. After a few moments Captain Almbach again came to her side.

"Do not turn from me, Ella, as from a criminal!" said he, with returning gentleness. "I am going, perhaps never to return, and the hour of my confession is also that of my farewell. I might, indeed, have spared you it, should not have made your heart heavy too with what oppresses mine. God knows I had the honest intention of being silent, and bear it until I had departed; but after all, one is but mortal, and when you begged me to remain, and looked so kindly at me, there was an end of my self-control. Reinhold himself prophesied that I should some day meet those eyes which would put a stop to all scoffing, all thoughtlessness. The only misfortune was, that I must find them in his wife. If this were not so, I had better have bid adieu to all freedom and independence for these eyes' sake, have become a quiet, steady married man, and have denied my whole nature; but it would have been a pity for old Hugo Almbach after all--therefore, probably Heaven raised an obstacle, and said 'No.'"

## CHAPTER IX.

Captain Almbach tried in vain to speak in his old scoffing way; to-day it would not come to his aid. His lips quivered, and his words sounded like the bitterest irony. Ella saw how deeply the wound had eaten into the man whom in this respect she had considered invulnerable.

"You should have gone long since, Hugo," said she, in gentle reproach, "now it is too late to spare you the pain; but if a sister's love--"

"For God's sake, refrain from that," interrupted he impetuously. "Only none of that respect, friendship, and all the fine things with which ideal people console themselves in like cases, and which kill an ordinary man, when his throbbing heart is expected to satisfy itself with them. I know, indeed, that you have always looked upon me as a brother, that your heart has always and ever clung to Reinhold, even then, when he betrayed and forsook you; but I cannot bear to hear it now from your lips. Of course it serves me right. Why did I become untrue to her, my beautiful blue bride of the ocean, to whom now only I belong? She makes me atone for ever having thought of forsaking her for another, and yet it always seemed to me as if I gazed into her blue depths when I looked into Ella's eyes." He threw his head back with a half-defiant motion. "And to me those, eyes unveiled themselves first, then, when my brother never suspected what riches he called his own. I knew better than he what the woman was whom he gave up for a Bianca's sake, and in despite of that he bears away the prize for which I could have given everything. Such demon-like, artistic natures always conquer one of us who have nothing to oppose excepting a

warm heart and ardent, bounteous love. Reinhold takes back what never, even for a moment, ceased to be his own property, and I--go; so we are all provided for."

An immeasurable bitterness lay in these words, which betrayed only too well that his love for his brother could no longer resist a passion which appeared to have changed Hugo's entire nature. He made a movement as if to leave the room. Ella held him back.

"No, Hugo, you shall not go thus," said she, firmly. "Not with this bitterness against Reinhold and me in your heart. Our happiness has already had to be rebuilt on the ruins of a stranger's life; it would be too dearly paid for if it were to cost us our brother also. We should never, never get over it if we knew you were unhappy far away--unhappy through us."

She had raised her eyes to him beseechingly and sadly. Captain Almbach looked down upon the young wife with a singular mixture of anger and tenderness.

"Do not trouble about me," replied he, with emotion, "I do not belong to those men who at once yield themselves up to despair because they must tear themselves away from that on which their whole heart now hangs, and if in the wrench, a piece of the heart goes too, well, he can bear it still as it is. I shall bear it; whether I shall overcome it is a different question. When Reinhold is quite recovered again, tell him what has driven me away from being near him and you. I do not wish to stand before my brother as a hypocrite, and I should have confessed it to him myself long since, only that I still dreaded the excitement for him of such an acknowledgment; he has become only much too irritable on every point which concerns you. Tell him that Hugo *could* not stay--not one hour longer--and that he had given you his word not to return again until he could appear before his brother's wife as he ought."

The hand, which was extended to her in farewell, grasped hers with a convulsive pressure, when the door opened, and little Reinhold rushed in, flying to his uncle with childish eagerness--

"Uncle Hugo, you are going away?" cried he breathlessly. "Jonas has packed his boxes, and says you will leave to-morrow morning. Uncle Hugo, you shall not; you must stay with us."

Captain Almbach lifted up the boy, and pressed his lips with passionate violence upon the child's--

"Take that kiss to your mother," whispered he in a half-smothered voice. "She will surely dare to take it from your lips. Farewell my child. Farewell, Ella!"

"Mamma," said little Reinhold, as he looked astonished after his uncle--who had put him down so hastily and then left the room--"Mamma, what is the matter with Uncle Hugo? He cried actually, as he kissed me."

Ella drew the child nearer to her, and now her lips also touched the child's forehead, which was still damp, as if from two tears having fallen upon it.

"It grieves your uncle to leave us," answered she, softly. "But he must go--God grant that he may return to us one day."

---

The course of time had altered but little in the old seaport and commercial town of H----. It looked just the same as ten years ago, when the Italian Opera Company gave its first performances there. The older portion of the town lay just as gloomy and full of corners, the newer as aristocratic and quiet as in those days. In the streets and by the harbour the old busy life and activity still reigned, and now, on a spring evening, the old damp, foggy atmosphere lay again upon the town and its environs.

In the Erlau's house, unusual excitement prevailed. The extensive establishment usually conducted with such superior quiet and punctuality, to-day seemed to be quite out of gear. There was incessant running to and fro; the whole suite of rooms was thrown open and illuminated; the servants were in gala livery, and were called first to one place, and then to another with different orders. The carriage had been despatched more than an hour ago to the railway station, and just now the relative who superintended the Consul's household, an elderly lady, entered the drawing-room, accompanied by Dr. Welding.

"I assure you, Herr Doctor, one can do nothing with my cousin," complained she, as she sat down in an arm chair with a countenance expressive of exhaustion. "He disturbs the whole house, and drives all the servants into confusion with his orders and arrangements. Nothing is festive and brilliant enough for him. Of course I rejoice to see my dear Eleonore again, and to become personally acquainted with her celebrated husband; but the Consul has made me so nervous already with his excitement that I only wish the reception ceremonies were over."

"But this is the first time he welcomes his adopted daughter to his house again," said Welding. The Doctor was barely altered in the long lapse of time, he merely looked a little older. It was still the same sharp, intelligently-cut face, the penetrating glance, and tone of irony peculiar to him in his voice, with which he now continued: "Herr Reinhold Almbach appears most decidedly to maintain the superiority of his influence over his wife compared with that of the Consul. You know he has actually managed that Erlau should always go to them in the 'capital,' and we were

not allowed, notwithstanding all promises, to see Frau Eleonore until her husband determined to accompany her here. He cannot spare her for a single week it appears!"

"No, certainly not," cried the lady excitedly. "You should only hear my cousin relate all about it; he who was at first so prejudiced against Reinhold, is now quite reconciled to him and Eleonore's happiness. Between them reigns a love so pure and clear, so firm and strong, and yet surrounded by such a fairy-like, poetic halo, that it almost sounds like a legend in our time, so wanting in happiness and love!"

The Doctor inclined himself ironically. "Perfectly right, dear Madam. I see with pleasure what appreciative attention you bestow on my articles. Exactly the same sentiment appeared in No. 12 of the morning paper, in a review of the *libretto* of Reinhold's newest opera."

"Really? Was it in the morning paper?" asked the lady, somewhat confused; she seemed glad that at this moment the Consul entered the room, who, without perceiving the Doctor, in his joyous excitement hastened towards her at once.

"My dear cousin, I have been seeking for you everywhere. The carriage may return from the station any moment, and we had agreed to receive the dear guests together. Has the red boudoir been sufficiently lighted, as I ordered? Is Henry downstairs in the vestibule with the other servants? Have you--"

"Cousin, you make me nervous with your incessant inquiries," cried the lady, in a rather irritated tone. "Is it then, the first time you have confided the arrangements of an entertainment to me? I have twice already assured you that everything is ordered according to your wishes."

"That is not enough for to-day," said Welding, joining in the conversation. "This time the Consul himself undertakes the part of master of the ceremonies, and inspects the whole house, from garret to cellar. Woe to him who does not appear before him in gala dress!"

"Scoff away!" laughed the Consul, "I shall not let it spoil the pleasure of the meeting, and indeed, I am quite reconciled to you, Herr Doctor, since you introduced such a hymn of praise about Reinhold's last work in your morning paper."

"Excuse me, I write no hymns of praise," said the Doctor, somewhat piqued. "On the contrary, I often experience that my criticisms are favoured with much less flattering names by the artists. Lately, our great dramatic and heroic tenor, who, as you know, retains his high-tragic, stage pathos even in real life, called my verdict on one of his principal parts 'the outflow of the blackest malice, which the black soul of man had ever produced!' What do you say to that?"

"Well, Reinhold, too, had to endure plenty from your pen," suggested Erlau. "Fortunately, he did not see our morning paper in Italy in those days, otherwise he would have had to read very unpleasant things about the lamentable direction of an undeniably great talent; of unpardonable wastefulness of the most precious gifts; of the mistakes of a genius, which, capable of the highest, yet was on the road to ruin himself and art; and many more such civilities."

"With which you were quite unanimous at the time," added Welding. "Certainly, I was an open opponent of Reinhold's. Unconditionally, as I ever recognised his great talents, much as I encouraged him in his first artistic attempts, I decidedly objected to the line he struck out later in Italy. Now it has become quite different. His latest work shows an alteration for which one can only wish him and art success. He has forced himself through wild fermentation to perfect freedom and clearness of artistic composition. His genius seems to have found the right course at last; this work stands thoroughly at the height of his talent."

"Naturally--and that is alone Eleonore's merit," said Erlau, with unshaken confidence, while his cousin listened very devoutly to the Doctor's words.

"Does Frau Almbach help her husband to compose?" asked Welding, maliciously.

"Leave your malice alone, Herr Doctor! You know quite well what I mean," cried the Consul, annoyed. "Now Henry, what is it?" asked he, turning to the servant who entered quickly, and announced that the carriage was arriving.

"Cousin! for mercy's sake go slower! All the servants are in the hall," cried the old lady, who had prepared to receive the arrivals solemnly and with dignity, and was now dragged forward so hastily by the Consul, who seized her arm, that the magnificence of her train could not be displayed to advantage. Erlau did not listen to her protestations, she was obliged to rush to the stairs with him. Dr. Welding, who had come by chance, without knowing the hour of the arrival, considered himself entitled, as friend of the house, to witness the family scene. He therefore remained in the drawing-room while the first speeches of reception and welcome were made outside. With great tenderness the Consul greeted his adopted daughter and little Reinhold, who, in fullest joy, hung on his neck. His cousin, on the contrary, seemed to have taken forcible possession of the bigger Reinhold, whom she conducted into the drawing-room amid a stream of compliments, while the others lingered in the first rooms.

"I rejoice exceedingly to make the acquaintance of my dear Eleonore's husband, whom I may surely greet as a relation as well as the renowned Rinaldo," assured she, while still in the

doorway. "And all H--- will be proud once again to see its distinguished townsman within its walls. Herr Almbach, we can only wish you and art success in your newest work; it stands thoroughly at the height of your talent. Your genius has at last--yes, at last--"

"Discovered the right course," suggested Dr. Welding, most amicably, as he stood near.

"Discovered the right course," continued the lady, freshly inspired. "You have forced your way through wild fermentation to most perfect freedom, and to higher spheres."

"Not quite true to the words, but it will do," murmured Welding to himself, while Reinhold, somewhat taken aback at this shower-bath of æsthetic form of speech, bowed to the lady. Fortunately, the latter now saw Ella enter on the Consul's arm, and hastened to embrace her and her boy, while the Doctor went towards Reinhold.

"May an old acquaintance recall himself to your recollection, Herr Almbach? I am not quite so bold as to receive you at once with criticising praise such as you have just experienced, but I do not welcome you the less warmly in your home."

"Aunt means it kindly," said Reinhold, half making an excuse for her. "It was rather astounding for me at first----" he stopped.

"To be received with one of my reviews," added the Doctor. "Oh, your aunt often does me the honour of reproducing my articles, although certainly sometimes on rather unsuitable occasions and with her own variations, for which I do not undertake the responsibility; for instance, with the 'higher spheres' I have usually nothing to do."

Reinhold smiled. "Time has left no marks upon you, Doctor; you still preserve your old *role*. Every third word you utter, is one of sarcasm."

"Pretty well," said "Welding, shrugging his shoulders, and turning to Ella, who greeted the old friend heartily as she stretched out her hand to him.

"Well, how do you find our Eleonore?" cried the Consul, triumphantly. "Does she not bloom like a rose? And the 'little one' has become so big that we must soon seek another designation for him."

Dr. Welding smiled, and this time, as an exception, without any maliciousness, while he replied, "Frau Eleonore has remained just like herself. That is the best compliment which one can pay her. Certainly, dear madam, I am not the last who will rejoice at this meeting, and also that the Erlau drawing-rooms, at any rate for the next few weeks, will stand again under your sceptre. Between ourselves," he lowered his voice, "it becomes sometimes rather serious when your aunt takes the lead in conversations on art."

The excitement and pleasure of meeting had made the arrivals only retire to rest very late. The morning sun was shining clearly and brightly in at the windows, when Ella entered the apartment which had been her sitting and work-room during her residence in the Erlau's house. It still displayed all the former costly furniture with which Erlau had surrounded his favourite. Reinhold was there already; he stood at the window, and looked down upon the streets of his native town, which he now visited for the first time after nearly ten years' absence. It was no longer the young composer who, in obstinate struggle with his surroundings and family, destroyed his fetters as well as his duties, so as to throw himself into a course which promised him fame and love, and which attained both by force; but neither was it the Rinaldo, whose wild, social life in Italy, had so often challenged the world's condemnation, which appeared to know no other bridle, no other law than his own personal will, and to whom the admiration on the part of the public and all around him, threatened to become so ruinous. There lay nothing more in his manner of haughty overbearing or wounding brusqueness, only that quiet self-consciousness was displayed, which showed to the advantage of the man as well as of the composer. In his eye still flashed some of the old passion, which had formed Rinaldo's peculiar element in life as in his works; but the wild, unsteady flame which once burned in this glance was extinguished, and what now beamed there was better suited to the quiet, rather sombre expression of his features. Whatever a wild, surging life might have buried in this countenance, it spoke now only of what it had conquered; and the dreamy, thoughtful gaze which at this moment was seeking the gable of the old house in Canal Street, where it arose plainly from amidst the confusion of houses, was quite that of the former Reinhold--of that Reinhold who, in the small, narrow garden-house, had sat so often before his piano, and called forth those tones which then might only be raised in the night if he did not wish to be upbraided for the "useless phantasies" which the world now called the outpourings of his genius.

Ella drew near her husband. Her appearance, indeed, justified the Consul's declaration, she bloomed like a rose. The last three years had robbed this charming figure of none of its grace, but instead had given her an expression of happiness in which she had once been wanting.

"Have you received letters so early?" asked she, pointing to two open writings which lay on the table.

Reinhold smiled--

"Of course! They were sent after us from the residence, and the sender of this letter," he lifted up the one, "you will not guess, I am sure. My newest work has brought in one thing at any rate, which is more precious to me than all the ovations with which we have been overwhelmed--a letter from Cesario. You know how deeply hurt he withdrew from us and rendered impossible every attempt on my part at approaching him or being reconciled. He could not forgive you for having so long been silent towards him, nor me, that I stood in the way of his happiness; I have had no sign of his being alive for three years, as you know. The first performance of my opera in Italy has broken the ice at last; he writes again with the old cordiality and enthusiasm, congratulates me upon my new work, which he exalts far above its deserts, and announces at the same time his intended marriage with the daughter of Princess Orvieto. She will be his wife in a few weeks."

Ella had stepped to her husband's side, and over his shoulder read the letter which he held in his hand, and in which there was not a single word of allusion to her.

"Do you know the bride?" asked she at last.

"Only a little! I saw her once only in her father's house, and merely remember her as a pretty lively child. She was educated in a convent, and then was paying a short visit in her parents' house. But I know that this union, even in those days, was a favourite wish of the families on both sides, to which Cesario's dislike to every bond which could fetter his future, as to any marriage in fact, was the only obstacle. Now, when years have passed, and the young Princess is grown up, they appear to have resumed the plan again, and Cesario has given way to his relations' pressure. Whether this *marriage de convenance* can give what such an ardent romantic nature as his is requires, is certainly another question."

Ella looked thoughtfully on the ground--

"You said though, that the bride is young and pretty, and Cesario is surely the man to inspire love in such a youthful creature, who is just entering life from a convent's education."

"We will hope so," said Reinhold gravely. "The second letter is from Hugo, and dated from----"

A slight blush passed over the young wife's countenance, as she asked with lively eagerness--

"Well, is he coming at last? May we expect him?"

Reinhold shook his head gently--

"No Ella, our Hugo will not come this time either; we must resign ourselves not to see him. Here, read it yourself!"

He handed her the somewhat bulky letter. The first page contained mere descriptions of voyages, which were sketched quite in the Captain's lively manner, sparkling with fun and humour; only just at the end were personal affairs touched upon.

"I have employed my stay in S----" wrote Hugo, "to pay a visit to Jonas, who has been settled here over a year with his Annunziata. You have fitted out the little one so richly, that they have made quite a pretty hotel out of the modest inn they intended to set up, and are going on very well indeed. The young woman has learned German at last, and is altogether a very charming hostess, but Jonas I have had to take regularly to task; it really is appalling how that tiny creature, Annunziata, governs this bear of a sailor, according to all the rules of art. I have spoken seriously to him; reminded him of his manly dignity, prophesied that he will come hopelessly under petticoat government, if it continue thus--what did the wretch answer me? 'Yes, Herr Captain, but one is so inhumanly happy with it!' So of course nothing remained but to leave him to his inhuman happiness and petticoat *régime*."

"One more piece of news I have for you, Ella. Yesterday, by chance, I took up an Italian newspaper in which I met with the announcement that a union between the houses of Tortoni and Orvieto was impending. Marchese Cesario will shortly be married to the only daughter of the Princess. You see that even an idealist does not die of an unhappy love now-a-days; instead, he consoles himself after a year or more with a young and probably beautiful woman of princely blood. Only the thoughtless one, the adventurer, cannot recover from having looked too deeply into a pair of blue eyes. I cannot come, Reinhold, not yet! You know the word which I passed to your wife; it still banishes me from your threshold. Heaven knows how long I must wander about on the sea without seeing you again; but if the recollections do not still weigh my heart down as at the beginning, yet they will not leave me. My 'Ellida,' lies in the harbour ready to sail once more, and to-morrow she will fly out afar again with her captain. So farewell, Reinhold! Kiss your boy in my name! To Ella I shall surely dare send a greeting, as you will give it to her? Perhaps we shall see each other again."

Ella folded the letter up and put it down silently--

"I hoped still that he would return to us this time, at least," said she at last--her voice sounded sad.

"I did not expect it," replied Reinhold gravely, "as I know Hugo. Much in his character seems

to glide off lightly and without traces, and perhaps really glides off, but once he has grasped anything with his whole soul, then he will not let it go for all his life. He preserves his love more truly and better than--I did."

"Did you love me then, when I was entrusted to you?" asked Ella, with gentle reproach. "Could you love the woman who did not understand you nor herself in those days? We had to be separated first in order to recover one another entirely and completely, and nothing would remind me of our separation if I did not see that shadow on your brow, ever and again, which reawakens the one recollection."

Reinhold passed his hand over his forehead--

"You mean Beatrice's death? I know, indeed, that she prepared her fate with her own hand, and yet I cannot always silence the voice which accuses me of complicity in the sin of forsaking her, of driving her to despair, to madness; she wished to strike us a crushing blow, and struck herself."

"And from the waves, which gave her her death, you rescued for me and yourself the highest, our child and our love," said his wife softly. "See, there comes our Reinhold. Will you show the child this heavily clouded brow?"

Little Reinhold put his head in at the door, and when he saw his parents in the room sprang completely inside, so rosy and fresh, so full of life and fun, that the father's gloom and the mother's seriousness could not resist his coaxing and romping. Ella kissed her boy's forehead tenderly, while Reinhold drew her and the child to himself. They had held him very indissolubly, these fetters, which once, in youthful infatuation, he had burst and broken, until he learnt to feel yonder in the life so ardently longed for, amidst all the dreamed-of treasures, that he had left the best at home; until the longing for the past awoke, and forced its way powerfully and irresistibly; until he could obtain once more, fighting through sin and the horrors of death, that which he himself had thrust from him--his wife and child; and in the gaze with which he now looked down upon both there stood written plainly and clearly the confession which his lips did not speak--that the happiness, so long and restlessly sought for, and ever denied him, was found again here at last.

## **THE END.**

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RIVEN BONDS. VOL. II \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

**START: FULL LICENSE**

**THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE**

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

## **Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up,

nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or



limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.