The Project Gutenberg eBook of Charles Auchester, Volume 2 (of 2), by Elizabeth Sara Sheppard

Title: Charles Auchester, Volume 2 (of 2)

Author: Elizabeth Sara Sheppard

Release date: July 16, 2012 [EBook #40259]

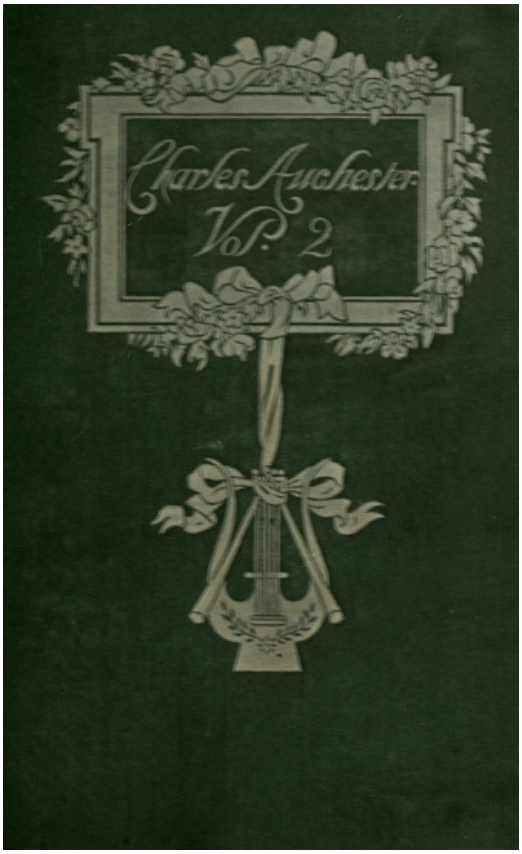
Language: English

Credits: Produced by Melissa McDaniel and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive)

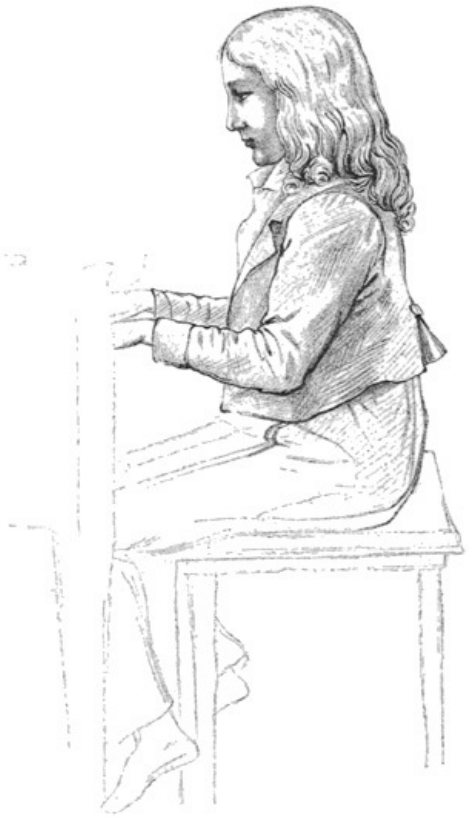
Transcriber's Note:

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected. Inconsistent spelling and hyphenation in the original document have been preserved.

The following possible typographical errors were left uncorrected:
Page 173: "musical electicism" should possibly be "musical eclecticism"
Page 228: "eflish mood" should possibly be "elfish mood"
Page 295: "Dunisnane" should possibly be "Dunsinane"



CHARLES AUCHESTER
Volume II.



MENDELSSOHN FROM A SKETCH MADE IN HIS YOUTH.

CHARLES AUCHESTER

BY

ELIZABETH SHEPPARD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY GEORGE P. UPTON

AUTHOR OF "THE STANDARD OPERAS," "STANDARD ORATORIOS," "STANDARD CANTATAS," "STANDARD SYMPHONIES," "WOMAN IN MUSIC," ETC.

In Two Volumes

VOLUME II.

CHICAGO

A. C. McCLURG AND COMPANY

1891

CHARLES AUCHESTER.

CHAPTER I.

Well, as if but yesterday, do I remember the morning I set out from Lorbeerstadt for Cecilia. I had no friends yet with whom to reconnoitre novel ground; I was quite solitary in my intentions, and rather troubled with a vague melancholy, the sun being under cloud, and I not having wished Aronach good-day. He was out in the town fulfilling the duties of his scholastic pre-eminence, and I had vainly sought him for an audience. He had surrendered me my violin when he gave me the paper in his writing, and I also carried my certificate in my hand. Of all my personal effects I took these only,—my bed and bedding, my clothes and books having preceded me; or, at least, having taken another form of flight. Iskar was to come also that time, but did not intend to present himself until the evening. Aronach had also forewarned me to take a coach, but I rather chose to walk, having divine reminiscences upon that earthly road.

With Starwood I had a grievous parting, not unallayed by hope on my part, and I left him wiping his eyes,—an attention which deeply affected me, though I did not cry myself.

I shall never forget the singularly material aspect of things when I arrived. Conventionalism is not so rampant in Germany as in England, and courtesy is taught another creed. I think it would be impossible to be anywhere more free, and yet this sudden liberty (like a sudden light) did but at first serve to dazzle and distress me. Only half the students had returned, and they, all knowing each other, or seeming to do so, were standing in self-interested fraternities, broken by groups and greeters, in one immense hall, or what appeared to me immense, and therefore desolate. I came in through the open gates to the open court; through the open court into the

open entry and from that region was drawn to the door of that very hall by the hollow multitudinous echo that crept upon the stony solitude. It was as real to me a solitude to enter that noble space; and I was more abashed than ever, when, on looking round, I perceived none but males in all the company. There was not even a picture of the patron saintess; but there *was* a picture, a dark empannelled portrait, high over the long dining-tables. I concluded from the style that it was a representation of one Gratianos, the Bachist, of whom I had once heard speak.

The gentlemen in the hall were none of them full grown, and none wonderfully handsome at first sight. But the manner of their entertainment was truly edifying to me, who had not long been "out" in any sense. They every one either had been smoking, were smoking, or were about to smoke,—that is, most of them had pipes in their mouths, or those who had them not in their mouths had just plucked them therefrom, and were holding them in their hands, or those who had not yet begun were preparing the apparatus.

In a corner of the hall, which looked dismally devoid of furniture to an English eye, there was a great exhibition of benches. There were some upright, others kicking their feet in the air, but all 5
packed so as to take little space, and these were over and above the benches that ran all round the hall. In this corner a cluster of individuals had collected after a fashion that took my fancy in an instant, for they had established themselves without reference to the primary use and endowment of benches at all. Some sat on the legs thereof, upturned, with their own feet at the reversed bottoms, and more than a few were lying inside those reversed bottoms, with distended veins and excited complexions, suggesting the notion that they were in the enjoyment of plethoric slumber. To make a still further variation, one bench was set on end and supported by the leaning figures of two contemporaneous medalists; and on the summit of this bench, which also rested against the wall, a third medalist was sitting, like an ape upon the ledge of Gibraltar,—unlike an ape in this respect, that he was talking with great solemnity, and also that he wore gloves, which had once on a time been white. The rest were bareheaded, but all were fitted out with mustachios, either real or fictitious, for I had my doubts of the soft, dark tassels of the Stylites, as his own pate was covered with hemp,—it cannot have been hair. Despite its grotesqueness, this group, as I have said, attracted me, for there was something in every one of the faces that set me at my ease, because they appeared in earnest at their fun.

I came up to them as I made out their composition, and they one and all regarded me with calm, not malicious, indifference. They were very boyish for young men, and very manly for young boys, certainly; and remained, as to their respective ages, a mystery. The gentleman on the pedestal did not even pause until he came to a proper climax,—for he was delivering an oration,—and I 6
arrived in time to hear the sentence so significant: "So that all who in verity apply themselves to science will find themselves as much at a loss without a body as without a soul, for the animal property nourisheth and illustrateth the spiritual, and the spiritual would be of no service without the animal, any more than should the flame that eateth the wood burn in an empty stove, or than the soup we have eaten for dinner should be soup without the water that dissolved the component nutritives."

Here he came to a full stop, and gazed upon me through sharp-shaped orbs. Meantime I had drawn out my certificate and handed it up to him. He took it between those streaky gloves, and having fixed a horn-set glass into his one eye, shut up the other and perused the paper. I don't know why I gave it to him in particular, except that he was very high up, and had been speaking. But I had not done wrong, for he finished by bowing to me with exceeding patronage.

"One of us, I presume?"

"Credentials!" groaned one who was, as I had supposed, asleep. But my patron handed me very politely my envelope, and gravely returned to the treatment of his theme,—whatever that might have been. Nobody appeared to listen except his twain supporters, and they only seemed attentive because they were thoroughly fumigated, and had their senses under a spell. The rest began to yawn, to sneer, and to lift their eyes, or rather the lids of them. I need scarcely say I felt very absurd, and at last, on the utterance of an exceedingly ridiculous peroration from the orator, I yielded at once to the impulse of timidity, and began to laugh. The effect was of sympathetic magnetism. Everybody whose lips were disengaged began to laugh too; and finally, those very 7
somnolent machines, that the benches propped, began to stir, to open misty glances, and to grin like purgatorial saints. This laugh grew a murmur, the murmur a roar, and finally the supporters themselves, fairly shaking, became exhausted, staggered, and let the pedestal glide slowly forwards. The theorist must certainly have anticipated such a crisis, for he spread his arms and took a flying jump from that summit, descending elegantly and conveniently as a cat from a wall upon the boarded floor.

"Schurke!"[1] said he to me, and held me up a threatening hand; but, seized with a gleeful intention, I caught at it, and with one pull dragged off his glove. The member thus exposed was evidently petted by its head, for it was dainty and sleek, and also garnished with a blazing ring; and he solemnly held it up to contemplate it, concluding such performance by giving one fixed stare to each nail in particular. Then he flew at me in a paroxysm of feigned fierceness; but I had already flung the glove to the other end of the hall. The whole set broke into a fresh laugh, and one said, "Thou mightest have sent it up to the beard there, if thou hadst only thought of it."

"Never too late, Mareschal!" cried another, as he made a stride to fetch the glove, which, however, lay three or four strides off. He gathered it up at last, crumpled it in his hand, and threw it high against the wall. It just missed the picture though, and fell at the feet of two

perambulators arm-in-arm, one of whom stood upon the glove till the other pushed him off, and gave the forlorn kidling a tremendous kick that sent it farther than ever from the extempore target. There was now a gathering and rush of a dozen towards it. They tore it one from the other again; and, once more flinging it high,—this time successfully,—it hit that panelled portrait just upon the nose. A shout, half revengeful, half triumphant, echoed through the hall; but the game was not at its height. 8

"Gloves out, everybody!" cried several; and from all the pockets present, as it seemed, issued a miscellaneous supply. Very innocently, I gave up a pair of old wool ones that I happened to have with me; and soon, very soon, a regular systematized pelting commenced of that reverend representation in its recess.

I am very sure I thought it all fun at first; and as there is nothing I like so well as fun after music, I lent myself quite freely to the sport. About fifty pairs of gloves were knotted and crumpled, pair by pair, into balls, and whoever scrambled fastest secured the most. As the unsuccessful shots fell back, they were caught by uplifted hands and banged upwards with tenfold ardor, and no one was so ardent and risibly dignified as the worthy of the pedestal. He behaved as if some valuable stake were upon his every throw; and further, I observed that after the game once began, nobody, except myself, laughed. It was, at least, for half an hour that the banging, accompanied by a tremulous hissing, continued. I myself laughed so much that I could not throw, but I stood to watch the others. So high was the picture placed that very few were the missiles to reach it; and such as touched the time-seared canvas elicited an excitement I could neither realize nor respond to. All at once it struck me as very singular they should pelt that particular spot on the wall, and I instantly conjectured them to be inimical to the subject of the delineation. I was just making up my mind to inquire, when the great door hoarsely creaked, and a voice was heard, quite in another key from the murmurous shout, to penetrate my ear at that distance, so that I immediately responded,—"Has Carl Auchester arrived?" 9

There was no reply, nor any suspension of the performance on hand, except on my part. But for me I turned, gladly, yet timorously, and joined the speaker in a moment. He greeted me with what appeared to me an overawing polish, though, in fact, it was but the result of temperament not easily aroused. He was very slim and fair, and though not tall, gave me the impression of one very much more my senior than he really was. He held his arm as a kind of barrier between me and the door until I was safely out of the hall; then said to me, in a tone of chill but still remonstrance,—

"Why did you go in there? That was not a good beginning."

"Sir," I replied, not stammered, for I felt my cause was good, "how was I to know I ought not to go in there? It seemed quite the proper place, with all those Cecilians about; and, besides, no one told me where else to go. But if I did wrong, I won't go in there again, and I certainly have not been harmed yet."

"You must go there at times; it is there you will have to eat. But a few who are really students hold aloof from the rest, who idle whenever they are not strictly employed, as you have had reason to notice. I was induced to come and look for you, of whom I should otherwise have no knowledge, in obedience to the Chevalier Seraphael's request that I should do so."

"Did he really remember me in that manner? How good, how angelic!" I cried. And yet I did not quite find my new companion charming; his irresistible quiescence piqued me too much, though he was anything but haughty. 10

"Yes, he is good, and was certainly very good to bear in mind one so young as you are; I hope you will reward his kindness. He gives us great hopes of you."

"Are you a professor, sir?" I asked, half afraid of my own impulse.

"I am *your* professor," he announced, with that same distance. "I am first violin."

I did not know whether I was pleased or sorry at that instant, for I could detect no magnetic power that he possessed, and rather shrank from contact with him at present. He led me up many stairs,—a side staircase, quite new, built steeper and narrower than the principal flight. He led me along thwart passages, and I beheld many doors and windows too; for light and air both reigned in these regions, which were fresh, and smelled of health. He led me into a chamber so lengthened that it was almost a gallery, for it was very high besides. Here he paused to exhibit a suite of prophets' chambers, one after the other completely to the end; for in every division was a little bed, a bench, and washing-table, with a closet closed by hasps of wood. The uniform arrangement struck me as monotonous, but academical. My guide, for the first time, smiled, but very slightly, and explained,—

"This is my division,—*les petits violons*, you know, Auchester; you may see the numbers on every alcove. And here you practise, except when met in class or at lecture. Your number is 13, and you are very nearly in the middle. See, you have a curtain to draw before your bed, and in this closet there is a box for books, as well as a niche for your instrument, and abundant room for clothes, unless you bring more than you can possibly want. The portmanteau and chest, which were brought this morning, you may keep here, if you please, as well." 11

I did not thank him, for I was pre-occupied with an infernal suggestion to my brain, which I revealed in my utter terror.

"Oh, sir, do we all practise together, then? What a horrible noise! and how impossible to do anything so! I can't, I know!"

Another half-smile curled the slender brown moustache.

"It was indeed so in the times I can still remember. But see how much more than you can own you are indebted to this Chevalier Seraphael!"

He walked to the wall opposite the alcove, and laying hold of a brass ring I had not noticed, drew out a long slide of wood, very thick and strong, which shut one in from side to side.

"There is such a one to every bed," continued he; "and if you draw them on either hand, you will hear nothing, at least nothing to disturb you. Come away now; I have not much time to spare, and must leave you elsewhere."

He led me from the chambers, and down the stairs again, and here and there, so that I heard an organ playing in one region, and voices that blended again to another idea; and then all was stillness, except the rustle of his gown. But before I could make up my mind to approve or criticise the arrangements which struck me on every hand, I found myself in another room,—this vaulted, and inspiring as nothing I had met with in that place. How exquisite was the radiant gloom that here pervaded within, as within a temple; for the sunshine pierced through little 12
windows of brown and amber, and came down in wavering dusky brightness on parchment hues and vellum, morocco, and ruddy gold. Here a thick matting returned no footfall; and although the space was small, and very crowded too, yet it had an air of vastness, from the elevated concave of the roof. Benches were before each bookcase, that presented its treasury of dread tomes and gigantic scores; also reading-desks; and besides such furniture, there were the quaintest little stalls between each set of shelves,—shrine-like niches one could just sit in, or even at pleasure lie along; for seats were in them of darkest polished wood. Some were already occupied, and their occupants were profoundly quiet,—perhaps studying, perhaps asleep.

"Here," observed my guide, "you are only allowed to come and remain in silence. If one word be spoken in the library, expulsion of the speaker follows. The book-keeper sits out there," pointing to an erection like a watch-box, "and hears, and is to observe all. You may use any book in this place, but never carry it away; and if required for quotation as well as for reference, you may here make your extracts, but never elsewhere. There are ink-bottles in every desk. And if you take my advice, you will remain here until the supper-bell; for while here, you will at least be out of mischief. We are not to-day in full routine; but that makes it the more dangerous to be at large."

"Will you set me some task, then, sir? I do want something to be at."

He seemed only to sneer at such a desire. "Nonsense! there is enough for to-day in mastering all those names;" and he took down a catalogue and handed it to me. 13

I ran into one of those dear, dark recesses, and there he left me.

When he had gone, I did not open my book for a time. I was in a highly wrought mood, which was induced by that sombre-tinted, struggling sunshine, whose beams played high in the ceiling, like fireflies in a cedar shade, so fretted and so far. It was delicious as a dream to be safe and solitary in that dim palace of futurity, whose vistas stretched before me into everlasting lengths of light. I read not for a long, long hour; and when I did open my book (itself no mean volume as to size), I was bewildered and bedimmed by a swarm of names, both of works and authors, I had never heard of,—Huygens, Martini, Euler, Pfeiffer, and Marpurg alone meeting me as distant acquaintances, and Cherubini as a dear old friend.

This was, in fact, a *catalogue raisonné*, and I was not in a very rational mood. I therefore shut the book, and began to pace the library. It is extraordinary how intense is the power of application in the case of those who are apprenticed to a master they can worship as well as serve. I thought so then. Nothing could divert the attention of those supine students in the recesses, nor of the scribes at the desks. I went quite close to many of them, and could have looked into their eyes, but that they were, for the most part, closed; and I should have accused them of being asleep but that their lips were moving, and I knew they were learning by heart. Great black-letter was the characteristic of one huge volume I stayed to examine as it lay upon a desk, and he who sat before it had a face sweeter than any present, sensible as interesting; and I did not fear him, though his eyes were wide open and alert. He was making copious extracts, and as I peeped between the pages he held by his thumb and a slight forefinger, he observed me and gave me a 14
smile, at the same time turning back the title-page for my inspection. That was encircled by a wreath of cherubs' faces for flowers, and musical instruments for leaves, old and droll as the title, "Caspar Bartholin, his Treatise on the Wind Music of the Ancients."

I smiled then, and nodded, to express my thanks; but a moment afterwards he wrote for me, on a sheet in his blotting-case, which he carried with him,—

"We may write, though we may not speak. Are you just arrived?"

He handed me the pen to answer, and I wrote: "Only an hour or two ago; and I got into a scrape directly. I am Carl Auchester, from England; but I am not English. What is your name?"

He smiled warmly as he read, and thus our correspondence proceeded: "Franz Delemann. What was your scrape? I wonder you had one, now I know your name."

"Why?" I replied. "There is no reason why I should keep clear any more than another; but I went into the great hall, where so many of them were about, and they made a great noise, for they were pelting the picture that is on the wall; and while I was helping them, just for fun, the gentleman who brought me in here fetched me out, and said it was a bad beginning."

"That was his way of putting it," resumed my new associate. "He is very matter-of-fact, that Anastase, but I know what he meant. We are a very small party, and the rest persecute us. They would have been glad to get you over to their side, because it would have been such a triumph for them,—coming first, as you did come." 15

Oh! how I did scribble in response. "I have not an idea what you mean. Pray tell me quickly."

"The Chevalier Seraphael took the place here of somebody very unlike him. I thought the Cerinthias had told you."

"The what?"

"The Fräulein who came in with you the day of the concert, who came to the pavilion with Seraphael and yourself, was one of the Cerinthias. I thought, of course, you knew all; for her words are better than any one's, and you had been together,—so she told me afterwards."

"Is she Cerinthia? What a queer name!"

"They are a queer set, though I don't suppose there ever was such a set. The brother and the two sisters appear to possess every natural gift among them. The father was a great singer and celebrated master, but not a German. He came here to secure their education in a certain style, and just as he got here, he died. Then the brother, though they had not a penny among them all, made way by his extraordinary talent; and as he could play on any instrument, he was admitted to the second place in the band, and his sister was taken upon the foundation. Milans-André made a great deal of their being here, though it was perfectly natural, *I* think. The youngest had been put out to nurse, and kept in some province of France until old enough to be admitted also; but then something happened which changed that notion. For when Seraphael took the place of Milans-André, he had every arrangement investigated, that he might improve to the utmost; and it was discovered—after this fashion—that this Maria Cerinthia had been allowed to occupy a room which was inferior to all the others. I think the rain came in, but I am not sure of that,—I only know it was out of the way and wretched. Seraphael was exceedingly vexed, almost in a 16 passion, but turned it into amusement, as he does so often before others when he is serious at heart. He had the room turned into what it was just fit for,—a closet for fagots.

"Then this proud Cerinthia—the brother, I mean, whose name, by the way, is Joseph—took offence himself; and declaring no arrangement should be altered on account of his sister, took her away, and had a lodging in the village instead. She comes here every day at the same time, and is what we call an out-Cecilian,—never staying to meals or to sleep, that is. Seraphael took no notice; and I was rather surprised to discover that he has been to see them several times,—because, you see, I thought *he* was proud in his way to have his generosity rejected."

"Does he like them so very much, then?"

"He ought."

Now, I wanted to be very angry at the intimation, but my informant had too expressive a face; so I merely added, "They are then very wonderful?"

"They are all wonderful, and the little one, who is not quite eight years old (for she has come to live with them since they lived alone), is a prodigy, but not beautiful, like the one you saw."

"*She* is, I suppose, the cleverest in all the house?"

"She must be so; but is so very quiet one does not hear about her, except at the close of the semester, when she carries off the medals,—for everything of the best belongs to her. She is a vocalist, and studies, of course, in the other wing; we never meet the ladies, you know, except in public."

"Oh! of course not. Now, do tell me what you mean about the two parties." 17

"I mean that when Milans-André went away no one knew how much mischief he had done. His whole system was against Bach, and this is properly a school for Bach. He could not eradicate the foundation, and he could not confess his dislike against our master in so many words. The only thing was to introduce quite a new style, or I am sure it might be called 'school,' for he has written such an immense deal. It was an opera of his, performed in this town, that at once did for him as far as those were concerned whom he had deceived, and that determined us not to submit ourselves any longer. He was becoming so unpopular that he was too happy to resign. Still, he left a number for himself behind him greater than those who had risen against him."

"Tell me about that opera, pray. You write interesting letters, sir."

"I have interesting matter, truly. The opera was called 'Emancipation; or, the Modern Orpheus.' The overture took in almost all of us, it was so well put together; but I fancy you would not have approved of it, somehow. The theatre here is very small, and was quite filled by our own selves and a few artists,—not one amateur, for it was produced in rehearsal. The scenery was very good, the story rambling and fiendish; but we thought it fairy-like. There was a perfect hit in the hero,

who was a monstrous fiddle-player, to represent whom he had Paganini, as he had not to speak a word. The heroines, who were three in number, were a sort of musical nuns, young ladies dedicated to the art; but they, first one, then another, fell in with the fiddler, and finding him, became enamoured of him. He condescends to listen to the first while she sings, or rather he comes upon her as she is singing the coolest of all Bach's solos in the coolest possible style. He waits till the end with commendable patience, and then, amidst infernal gesticulations, places 18
before her a cantata of his own, which is something tremendous when accompanied by the orchestra. The contrasted style, with the artful florid instrumentation, produces rapture, and is really an *effect*, though I do not say of what kind. The next heroine he treats to a grand scena, in which the violin is absolutely made to speak; and as it was carried through by Paganini, you may conjecture it was rather bewitching. The last lady he bears off fairly, and they converse in an outlandish duet between the voice of the lady and the violin. I can give you no outline of the plan, for there is no plot that I could find afterwards, but merely the heads of each part. Next comes a tumble-down church, dusty, dark, repelling to the idea from the beginning; and you are aware of the Lutheran service which is being droned through as we are not very likely to hear it, in fact. By magic the scene dissolves; colored lights break from tapering windows; arches rise and glitter like rainbows; altar-candles blaze and tremble; crimson velvet and rustling satin fill the Gothic stalls on either side; and while you are trying to gather in the picture, the Stabat Mater bursts out in strains about as much like weeping as all the mummery is like music.

"The last scene of all is a kind of temple where priests and priestesses glide in spangled draperies, while the hierarch is hidden behind a curtain. Busts and statues, that I suppose are intended for certain masters, but whom it is not very easy to identify, as they are ill fashioned and ill grouped, are placed in surrounding shrines. At strains for signs from that curtained chief, the old heads and figures are prostrated from the pedestals, the ruins are swept aside by some utilitarian angel, and the finale consists in a great rush of individuals masked, who crown the 19
newly inaugurated statue of the elevated Orpheus, and then dance around him to the ballet music, which is accompanied by the chorus also, who sing his praise.

"It was very exciting while it went on,—as exciting to see as it is absurd to remember; and there was nothing for it but applause upon the spot. When the curtain fell, and we were crushing and pressing to get out, having been hardly able to wake ourselves up, and yet feeling the want that succeeds enjoyment or excitement that goes no further,—you know how,—one chord sounded behind the curtain from one instrument within the orchestra. It arrested us most curiously; it was mystical, as we call it, though so simple: enough to say that under those circumstances it seemed a sound from another sphere. It continued and spread,—it was the People's Song you heard the day you first came to us. It was once played through without vocal illustration, but we all knew the words, and began to sing them.

"We were singing still in a strange sort of roar I can't describe to you, when the music failed, and the curtain was raised on one side. He—Seraphael, whom we knew not then—stood before us for the first time. You know how small he is: as he stood there he looked like a child of royal blood, his head quite turned me, it was so beautiful; and we all stood with open mouths to see him, hoping to hear him speak. He spread out those peculiar hands of his, and said, in his sweet, clear voice: 'That song, oh ladies and gentlemen, which you have shown you love so well, is very old, and you do not seem to be aware that it is so, nor of its author. Who wrote it, made it for us, think you?' 20

"His beauty and his soft, commanding voice had just the effect you will imagine,—everybody obeyed him. One and another exclaimed, 'Hasse!' 'Vogler!' 'Hegel!' 'Storace!' 'Weber!' But it was clear the point had not been contested. Then he folded his arms together and laid them on his breast, with a very low bow that brought all the hair into his eyes. Then he shook back the curls and laughed.

"'It is *Bach*, my dear and revered Sebastian Bach,—of all the Bachs alone *the* Bach; though indeed to any one Bach, one of us present is not fit to hold a candle. You do not love Bach,—I do. You do not reverence him,—he is in my religion. You do not understand him,—I am very intimate with him. If you knew him, you too would love and worship and desire of him to know more and more. Ladies and gentlemen, you are all just. He has no one to take his part, as has your nondescript modern Orpheus. I shall give a lecture on Bach in this theatre to-morrow evening. Everybody comes in free. Only come!'

"Who could refuse him? Who could have refused him as he stood there, and flying behind the curtain, peeped again between the folds of it and bowed? Besides, there was a strong curiosity at work,—a curiosity of which many were ashamed. Do I tire you?"

"More likely yourself. Do finish about the lecture."

"The supper-bell will be soon ringing, and will shake the story out of me, so I must make haste. I can tell it you properly some time. The next evening there was such a crowd at the door that they kicked it in, and stood listening outside. The curtain was done away with, and we never could make out how that organ came there which towered behind; but there it stood, and a pianoforte in front. The Chevalier appeared dressed in black, with nothing in his arms but a heap of 21
programmes, written in his own hand, which he distributed himself, for he had no assistant. You know that Forkel has written a life of Bach? Well, I have since read this, and have been puzzled to find how such a poem as we listened to could have sprung from the prose of those dry memoirs. The voice was enough, if it had not said what it did say,—so delicious a voice to hear that no one stirred for fear of losing it.

"I cannot give you the slightest outline; but I have never read any romance so brilliant, nor any philosophy that I could so take into myself. The illustrations were fugue upon fugue. Oh, to hear that organ with its grand interpretations, and the silver voice between! and study upon study for the harpsichord that from the new pianoforte seemed to breathe its old excitement—chorale upon chorale—until, with that song restored to its own proper form, it ended,—I mean, the lecture. I cannot say, though, about the ending, for I was obliged to leave before it was over; the clear intellect was too much for me, and the genius knocked me down. Many others left upon my very heels; but those who stayed seemed hardly to recall a word that had been said. All were so impressed, for that night, at least, that I can remember nothing to compare with it, except the descriptions in your English divinity books of the revivals in religion of your country. The next day, however, the scoffers found their tongues again, and only we to whom the whole affair had appeared on the occasion itself a dream, awoke to a reality that has never left us. We have not been the same since, and that is one reason we were so anxious you should be one with the students of Bach even before you knew what you must profess." 22

"Oh! I come from a good school, for Aronach is full of Bach. But do tell me about the others."

"The Andréites, as they call themselves, are not precisely inimical to Seraphael,—that would be impossible, he is so companionable, so free and truly great; but they, one and all, slight Bach, and as some of them are professors, and we all study under the professor of our voice or instrument in particular, it is a pity for the fresh comers to fall into the wrong set."

"But I am safe, at least, for I am certain that Anastase is of the right school."

"The very best; he is a Seraphaelite. They call us Seraphaelites, and we like it; but Seraphael does not like it, so we only use the word now for parole,—Bruderschaft."[2]

"Why, I wonder, does he not like it?"

"Because he is too well bred."

Oh, how I enjoyed that expression! It reminded me of Lenhart Davy and his sayings. I was just going to intrude another question when my intention was snapped by the ringing of the bell, which made a most imposing noise. The sound caused a sudden rush and rustle through the library; gowned and ungowned figures forsook the nooks and benches, and they each and all put by their books as deftly, dexterously as Millicent used to lay her thimble into her work-box when she was a wee maiden. They did not stare at me at all, which was very satisfactory; and I found occasion to admire all their faces. I told my companion so, and he laughed, rubbing his eyes and stretching; then he put his arm about my neck in strict fraternal fashion, which gratified me exceedingly, and not the less because he was evidently by several years my elder. We left the library together, and right rejoiced was I to hear myself speak again; the first thing that occurred 23 to me to say, I said: "Oh! I wanted so much to know what is your instrument."

"I don't think I shall tell you," he replied, in a guileless voice, interesting as his behavior and language.

"Why not? I must know it at last, must I not?"

"Perhaps you will not think so well of me, when you know what I exist for."

"That would make no difference, for every instrument is as great with reference to others as some are in themselves."

"Seraphael could not have put it better. I play the trombone. It is a great sacrifice at present."

"But," I returned, "I have not heard the instrument,—is it not a splendid sort of trumpet? You mean it is not good for solos?"

"It is quite to itself,—a mere abstraction considered by itself; but to the orchestra what red is to the rainbow."

"I know who said that. He puts brass last, I see."

"Oh, you are a thief! You know everything already. Yes, he does put the violet first."

"The violin? Yes, so he called it to me; but I did not know he was fond of calling it so."

"It is one of his theories. It was, however, one day after he had been expounding it to a few of us who were fortunate enough to be present, when he was glancing through the class-rooms, that he put up his hands, and in his bright way, you know, scattering your reasoning faculties like a burst of sunshine, said, 'Oh, you must not entertain a word I have said to you,—it is only to be dreamed.'"

"What did he say? What had he said? Do, pray, out with it, or I cannot eat, I am sure." 24

We were just outside the hall doorway now; within were light and a hundred voices mingled. Into the dusk he gave his own, and I took it safely home in silence.

"His theory,—oh, it was in this way! Strings first, of course, violet, indigo, blue,—violin, violoncello, double-bass,—upon these you repose; the vault is quite perfect. Green, the many-sounded kinds of wood, spring-hued flutes, deeper, yet softer, clarinetti, bassoons the darkest

tone, not to be surpassed in its shade,—another vault. The brass, of course, is yellow; and if the horns suggest the paler dazzle, the trumpets take the golden orange, and the red is left for the trombones,—vivid, or dun and dusk."[3]

"Oh, my goodness! I don't wonder he said it was a dream!"

"It certainly would be dangerous to think of it in any other light!"

"And you a German!" I cried. "Did you think I meant it?"

"You would mean it," he retorted, "if you knew what lip-distorting and ear-distracting work it is practising this same trombone." 25

"But what is your reason, then, for choosing it, when you might choose *mine*?"

"Do you not know that Seraphael has written as no one else for the trombone? And he was heard to sigh, and to say, 'I shall never find any one to play these passages!'"

"Oh, Delemann! and that was the reason you took it up? How I love you for it!"

CHAPTER II.

All lives have their prose translation as well as their ideal meaning; how seldom *this* escapes in language worthy, while *that* tells best in words. I was a good deal exhausted for several days after I entered the school, and saw very little except my own stuntedness and deficiency in the mirror of contemplation. For Anastase took me to himself awfully the first morning, all alone; examined me, tortured me, made me blush and hesitate and groan; bade me be humble and industrious; told me I was not so forward as I might be; drenched me with medicinal advices that lowered my mental system; and, finally, left me in possession of a minikin edition of what I had conceived myself the day before, but which he deprived me of at present, if not annihilated forever. 26

It was doubtless a very good thing to go back to the beginning, if he intended to re-create me; but it happened that such transmutation could not take place twice, and it had already occurred once. Still, I was absolved from obvious discomfiture to the regenerator by my silent adaptations to his behavior.

That which would assuredly become a penance to the physique in dark or wintry weather, remained still a charming matutinal romance; namely, that we all rose at four o'clock, except any one who might be delicate, and that we practised a couple of hours before we got anything to eat, —I mean formally, for, in fact, we almost all smuggled into our compartments wherewithal to keep off the natural, which might not amalgamate with the spiritual, constraining appetite. Those early mornings were ineffaceably effective for me; I advanced more according to my desires than I had ever advanced before, and I laid up a significant store of cool, sequestered memories. I could, however, scarcely realize my own existence under these circumstances, until the questioner within me was subdued to "contemplation" by my first "adventure." 27

I had been a week in durance, if not vile, very void, for I had seen nothing of the Cerinthias nor of their interesting young advocate, except at table,—though certainly on these latter occasions we surfeited ourselves with talk that whetted my curiosity to a double edge. On the first Sunday, however, I laid hold of him coming out of church, when we had fulfilled our darling duties in the choir,—for the choir of our little perfect temple, oak-shaded and sunlit, was composed entirely of Cecilians, and I have not time in this place to dilate upon its force and fulness. Delemann responded joyously to my welcome; and when I asked him what was to be our task on Sunday, he answered that the rest of the day was our own, and that if I pleased we would go together and call upon that Maria and her little sister, of whom I knew all that could be gained out of personal intercourse.

"Just what I wished," said I; "how exactly you guessed it!"

"Oh, but I wanted to go myself!" answered Franz, laughing, "for I have an errand thither;" and together we quitted the church garden, with its sheltering lime shadow, for the sultry pavement.

It cannot have been five minutes that we walked, before we came in front of one of those narrowest and tallest of the droll abodes I was pretty well used to now, since I had lived with Aronach. We went upstairs, too, in like style to that of the old apprentice home, and even as there, did not rest until nearly at the top. Delemann knocked at a door, and, as if perfectly accustomed to do so, walked in without delay. The room we entered was slightly furnished, but singularly in keeping with each other were the few ornaments, unsurpassably effective. Also a light clearness threw up and out each decoration from the delicate hue of the walls and the mild fresco of their borders, unlike anything I had yet seen, and startling, in spite of the simplicity of the actual accommodations, from their excelling taste. Upon brackets stood busts, three or four, and a single vase of such form that it could only have been purchased in Italy. At the window were a couch and reading-desk, also a table ready prepared with some kind of noonday meal; and 28

at the opposite end of the apartment rose from the polished floor the stove itself, entirely concealed under lime-branches and oak-leaves. The room, too, was not untenanted, for upon the couch, though making no use whatever of the desk, lay a gentleman, who was reading, nevertheless, a French newspaper. He was very fine,—grand-looking, I thought; his dress appeared courtly, so courtly was his greeting. "You have not come for me, I know," he observed to Delemann, having seated us; "but the girls, having dined, are gone to rest: we don't find it easy to dispense with our siesta. You will surely eat first, for you must be hungry, and I am but just come in." He was, in fact, waiting for the soup, which swiftly followed us; and so we sat down together. Franz then produced a little basket, which I had noticed him to carry very carefully as we came along; but he did not open it, he placed it by his side upon the table. It was covered, and 29
the cover was tied down with green ribbon. I was instantly smitten curious; but a great stay to my curiosity was the deportment of our host. I had seen a good many musicians by this time, and found them every one the alone civilized and polished of the human race; but there were evidences of supremacy in a few that I detected not even in the superior many. Some had enthralled me more than this young Cerinthia for I now know he was young, though at that time he appeared extremely my elder, and I could have believed him even aged; but there was about him an unassuming nobility that bespoke the highest of all educations,—that according to the preparations and purposes of nature. He seemed to live rationally, and I believe he did, though he was not to the immediate perception large-hearted. He ate, himself, with the frugality of Ausonia, but pressed us with cordial attention; and for me, I enjoyed my dinner immensely, though I had not come there to eat. Franz did not talk to him about his sisters, as I should have perhaps wished, and I dared not mention them, for there was that in Cerinthia's hazy, lustrous eyes that made me afraid to be as audacious as my disposition permitted. Presently, while we were drinking to each other, I heard little steps in the passage; and as I expected an apparition, I was not surprised when there entered upon those light feet a little girl, who, the first moment reminded me of Laura, but not the next, for her face was unlike as my own. She was very young, indeed, but had a countenance unusually formed, though the head was infantine,—like enough to our entertainer to belong to him, like as to delicacy of extremities and emerald darkness of eye.
She wore a short white frock and two beautiful plaits of thick bright hair kept and dressed like 30
that of a princess. She took no notice of me, but courtesyed to Delemann with an alien air most strange to me, and then ran past him to her brother, whom she freely caressed, at the same time, as it were, to hide her face. "Look up! my shy Josephine," said he, "and make another courtesy to that young gentleman, who is a great friend and connoisseur of the Chevalier Seraphael." Josephine looked back at me from beneath her heavy eyelashes, but still did not approach. Then I said, "How is your sister, Miss Josephine? I am only a little friend of the Chevalier,—she is the great one."

"I know," replied she, in a sage child's voice, then looking up at her brother, "Maria is tired, and will not come in here, Joseph."

"She is lying down, then?"

"No, she is brushing her hair." We all laughed at this.

"But run to tell her that Franz Delemann is here, and Carl Auchester with him; or if you cannot remember this name, Delemann's alone will do."

"But she knows, for we heard them come in, and she said she should stay in her room; but that if Mr. Delemann had a letter for her I might carry it there."

"I don't know whether there is a letter in here, Josephine, but this basket came for her."

"How pretty!" said Josephine; and she stretched her tiny hand, a smile just shining over her face that reminded me of her beautiful sister. I saw she was anxious to possess herself of it, but I could not resist my own desire to be the bearer.

"Let me take it to her!" I exclaimed impulsively. Cerinthia looked up, and Franz, too, surprised enough; but I did not care, I rose. "She can send me back again, if she is angry," I pleaded; and 31
Cerinthia fairly laughed.

"Oh, you may go! She will not send you back, though I should certainly be sent back if *I* took such a liberty."

"Neither would she admit me," said Delemann.

"Why, you came last Sunday," put in little Josephine and then she looked at me, with one little finger to her lip.

"Come too!"

So we went, she springing before me to a door which she left ajar as she entered, while I discreetly remained outside.

"May he come, Maria?" I heard her say; and then I heard that other voice.

"Who, dear little Josephine,—which of them?"

"The little boy."

"The little boy!" she gave a kind of bright cry, and herself came to the door. She opened it, and standing yet there, said, with the loveliest manner, "You will not quarrel with this little thing! But

forgive her, and pray come in. It was kind to come all the way up those stairs, which are steep as the road to fame."

"Is that steep?" I asked, for her style instantly excited me to a rallying mood.

"Some say so," she replied,—"those who seek it. But come and rest." And she led me by her flower-soft finger-tips to a sofa, also in the light, as in the room I had quitted, and bathed in airs that floated above the gardens, and downwards from the heavens into that window also open. A curtain was drawn across the alcove at the end, and between us and its folds of green, standing out most gracefully, was a beautiful harp; there were also more books than I had seen in a sitting-room since I left my Davy, and I concluded they had been retrieved from her lost father's 32
library. But upon the whole room there was an atmosphere thrown neither from the gleaming harp nor illustrating volumes; and as my eyes rested upon her, after roving everywhere else, I could only wonder I had ever looked away. Her very dress was such as would have become no other, and was that which she herself invested with its charm. She wore a dark-blue muslin, darker than the summer heaven, but of the self-same hue; this robe was worn loosely, was laced in front over a white bodice. Upon those folds was flung a shawl of some dense rose-color and an oriental texture, and again over that shady brilliance fell the long hair, velvet-soft, and darker than the pine-trees in the twilight. The same unearthly hue slept in the azure-emerald of her divinely moulded eyes, mild and liquid as orbed stars, and just as superhuman. The hair, thus loosened, swept over her shoulder into her lap. There was not upon its stream the merest ripple,—it was straight as long; and had it not been so fine, must have wearied with its weight a head so small as hers.

"What magnificent hair you have!" said I.

"It seems I was determined to make of it a spectacle. If I had known you were coming, I should have put it out of the way; but whenever I am lazy or tired, I like to play with it. The Chevalier calls it my rosary."

I was at home directly.

"The Chevalier! Oh! have you seen him since that day?"

"Four, five, six times."

"And I have not seen him once."

"You shall see him eight, nine, ten times. Never mind! He comes to see me, you know, out of that kindness whose prettiest name is charity." 33

"Where is he now?" I inquired, impatient of that remark of hers.

"Now? I do not know. He has been away a fortnight, conducting everywhere. Have you not heard?"

"No,—what?"

"Of the Mer de Glace overture and accompaniments?"

"I have not heard a word."

She took hold of her hair and stroked it impatiently; still, there was such sweetness in her accent as made me doubt she was angry.

"I told Florimond to tell you. He always forgets those things!"

I looked up inquiringly; there was that in her eye which might be the light of an unfallen tear.

"But I don't know who you mean."

"I am glad not. How silly I am! Oh, *madre mia*! this hot weather softens the brain, I do believe,—I should never have done it in the winter. And all this time I have been wondering what is that basket upon which Josephine seems to have set her whole soul."

"It is for you," said Josephine.

"Oh," I exclaimed, "how careless I am! Yes, but I do not know who it comes from. Franz brought it."

"Young Delemann? Oh, thank him, please! I know very well. Here, then, *piccola, carina*! you shall have to open it. Where are the ivory scissors?"

"Oh, how exquisite!" I cried; for I knew she meant those tiny fingers.

"Exquisite, is it? It is again from the Chevalier."

"Did he say so? I thought it like him; but you are so like him."

"I well, I believe you are right,—there is a kind of likeness."

She raised her eyes, so full of lustre, that I even longed for the lids to fall. The brilliant smile, like 34
the most ardent sunlight, had spread over her whole face. I forgot her strange words in her unimaginable expression, until she spoke again. All this while the little one was untwisting the green bands which were passed over and under the basket. At length the cover was lifted: there

were seven or eight immense peaches. I had thought there must be fruit within, from the exhaling scent, but still I was surprised. There was no letter. This disappointed me; but there were fresh leaves at the very bottom. My chief companion took out these, and laid each peach upon a leaf: her fingers shone against the downy blush. She presented me with one after another. "Pray eat them, or as many as you can; I do not eat fruit to-day, for it is too hot weather, and *she* must not eat so many." I instantly began to eat, and made efforts to do even more than I ought. Josephine carried off her share on a doll's plate. Then her sister rose and took in a birdcage from outside the window, where it had hung, but I had not seen it. There was within it a small bird, and dull enough it looked until she opened the door, when it fluttered to the bars, hopped out, stood upon a peach, and then, espying me, flew straight into her bosom. It lay there hidden for some minutes, and she covered and quite concealed it with her lovely little hand. I said,—

"Is it afraid of me? Shall I go?"

"Oh dear no!" she replied; "it does like you, and is only shy. Do you never wish to be hidden when you see those you like?"

"I never have yet, but I daresay I shall, now I come to think about it."

"You certainly will. This silly little creature is not yet quite sure of us; that is it." 35

"Where did it come from?"

"It came from under the rye-stacks. He—that is always the Chevalier, you know—was walking through the rye-fields when the moon was up; the reapers had all gone home. He heard a small cry withering under the wheat, and stayed to listen. Most men would not have heard such a weak cry; no man would have stayed to listen, except one, perhaps, besides. He put aside all the loose ears, and he found under them—for it could not move—this wretched lark, with its foot broken,—broken by the sickle."

There was no quiver of voice or lip as she spoke. I mention this merely because I am not fond of the mere sentiment almost all women infuse into the sufferings of inferior creatures, while those with loftier claims and pains are overlooked. She went on,—

"How do you think he took it up? He spread his handkerchief over the stubble, and shelled a grain or two, which he placed within reach of the lark upon the white table-cloth. The lark tried very hard, and hopped with its best foot to reach the grains, then he drew the four corners together, and brought it here to me. I thought it would die, but it has not died; and now it knows me, and has no mind to go away."

"Does it know him?"

"Not only so, but for him alone will it sing. I let it fly one day when its foot was well; but the next morning I found it outside the window pecking at its cage-wires, and it said, 'Take me back again, if you please.'"

"That is like the Chevalier too. But you *are* like him; I suppose it is being so much with him."

"And yet I never saw him till the first day I saw you, and you had seen him long before. I think it must be dead, it is so still." 36

Hereupon she uncovered the lark's head; it peeped up, and slowly, with sly scrutiny, hopped back to the peach and began to feed, driving in its little bill. I wanted to know something now, and my curiosity in those days had not so much as received a wholesome check, much less a quietus; and therefore presumptuously demanded,—

"Who was the somebody, Fräulein Cerinthia, that might stop to listen to a bird's cry besides the Chevalier. You stopped."

"And that is why you wished to know. I had better have said it in the right place. Did anybody ever tell you you are audacious? It was Florimond Anastase."

"My master!" and I clapped my hands.

"Mine, sir, if you please."

"But he teaches me the violin."

"And he does not teach me the violin, but is yet my master."

"How, why?"

"I belong to him, or shall."

"Do you mean that you are married to Anastase?"

"Not yet, or I should not be here."

"But you will be?"

"Yes,—that is, if nothing should happen to prevent our being married."

"You like to be so, I suppose?"

She gazed up and smiled. Her eyes grew liquid as standing dew. "I will not say you are again

audacious, because you are so very innocent. I do wish it."

"I said *like*, Fräulein Cerinthia."

"You can make a distinction too. Suppose I said, No."

"I should not believe you while you look so."

"And if I said, Yes, I daresay you would not believe me either. Dear little Carl,—for I must call you little, you are so much less than I,—do you really think I would marry, loving music as I do, unless I really loved that which I was to marry more than music?" 37

So thrilling were her tones in these simple words, of such intensity her deep glance, with its fringe all quivering now, that I was alienated at once from her,—the child from the woman; yet could like a child have wept too, when she bent her head and sobbed. "Could anything be more beautiful?" I thought; and now, in pausing, my very memory sobs, heavy laden with pathetic passion. For it was not exactly sorrow, albeit a very woful bliss. She covered her eyes and gave way a moment; then sweeping off the tears with one hand, she broke into a smile. The shower ceased amidst the sunlight, but still the sunlight served to fling a more peculiar meaning upon the rain-drops,—an iris lustre beamed around her eyes. I can but recall that ineffable expression, the April playing over the oriental mould.

"I might have known you would have spoken so, Fräulein Cerinthia," I responded, at last roused to preternatural comprehension by her words; "but so few people think in that way about those things."

"You are right, and agree with me, or at least you will one day. But for that, all would be music here; we should have it all *our own way*."

"You and the Chevalier. Do you know I had forgotten all about your music till this very minute?"

"I am very happy to hear that, because it shows we are to be friends."

"We have the best authority to be so," I replied; "and it only seems too good to be true. I am really, though, mad to hear you sing. Delemann says there never was in Europe a voice like yours, and that its only fault is it is so heavenly that it makes one discontented." 38

"That is one of the divinest mistakes ever made, Carlino."

"The Chevalier calls me Carlomein. I like you to say 'Carlino,' it is so coaxing."

"You have served me with another of your high authorities, Maestrino. The Chevalier says I have scarcely a voice at all; it is the way I sing he likes."

"I did not think it possible. And yet, now I come to consider, I don't think you look so much like a singer as another sort of musician."

She smiled a little, and looked into her lap, but did not reply. It struck me that she was too intuitively modest to talk about herself. But I could not help endeavoring to extort some comment, and I went on.

"I think you look too much like a composer to be a singer also."

"Perhaps," she whispered.

I took courage. "Don't you mean to be a composer, Fräulein Cerinthia?"

"Carlino, yes. The Chevalier says that to act well is to compose."

"But then," I proceeded hastily, "my sister—at least Mr. Davy—at least—you don't know who I mean, but it does not matter,—a gentleman who is very musical told me and my sister that the original purpose of the drama is defeated in England, and that instead of bringing the good out of the beautiful, it produces the artificial out of the false,—those were his very words; he was speaking of the *music* of operas, though, I do remember, and perhaps I made some mistake."

"I should think not." 39

"In England it is very strange, is it not, that good people, really good people, think the opera a dreadful place to be seen in, and the theatres worse? My sister used to say it was so very unnatural, and it seems so."

"I have heard it is so in England,—and really, after all, I don't so much wonder; and perhaps it is better for those good people you spoke of to keep away. It is not so necessary for them to go as for us. And this is it, as I have heard, and you will know how, when I have said it to you. Music is the soul of the drama, for the highest drama is the opera,—the highest possible is the soul, of course; and so the music should be above the other forms, and they the ministers. But most people put the music at the bottom, and think of it last in this drama. If the music be high, all rise to it; and the higher it is, the higher will all rise. So, the dramatic personification passes naturally into that spiritual height, as the forms of those we love, and their fleeting actions fraught with grace, dissolve into our strong perception of the soul we in them love and long for. The lights and shades of scenery cease to have any meaning in themselves, but again are drawn upwards into the concentrated performing souls, and so again pass upwards into the compass of that tonal paradise. But let the music be degraded or weak, and down it will pull performers, performance,

and intention, crush the ideal, as persons without music crush *our* ideal,—have you not felt? All dramatic music is not thus weak and bad, but much that they use most is vague as well as void. I am repeating to you, Carlino, the very words of the Chevalier: do not think they were my own."

"I did, then, think them very like his words, but I see your thoughts too, for you would say the same. Is there no music to which you would act, then?" 40

"Oh, yes! I would act to any music, not because I am vain, but because I think I could help it upwards a little. Then there is a great deal for us: we cannot quarrel over Mozart and Cimarosa, neither Gluck nor Spohr; and there is one, but I need hardly name him, who wrote 'Fidelio.' And the Chevalier says if there needed a proof that the highest acting is worthy of the highest music, the highest music of the highest form or outward guise of love in its utmost loveliness, that opera stands as such. And, further, that all the worst operas, and ill-repute of them in the world, will not weigh against the majesty and purity of Beethoven's own character in the opposing scale."

"Oh! thank you for having such a memory."

"I have a memory in my memory for those things."

"Yes, I know. Does the Chevalier know you are to marry Anastase?"

"No."

I was surprised at this, though she said it so very simply; she looked serene as that noonday sky, and very soon she went on to say: "Florimond, my friend, is very young, though I look up to him as no one else could believe. I am but fifteen, you know, and have yet been nearly three years betrothed."

"Gracious! you were only a little girl."

"Not much less than now. I don't think you would ever have called me a little girl, and Florimond says I shall never be a woman. I wished to tell the Chevalier, thinking he would be so good as to congratulate me, and hoping for such a blessing; but I have never found myself able to bring it out of my lips. I always felt it withdraw, as if I had no reason, and certainly I had no right, to confide my personal affairs to him. Our intercourse is so different." 41

"Yes, I should think so. I wonder what you generally talk about."

"Never yet of anything but music."

"That is strange, because the Chevalier does not usually talk so,—but of little things, common things he makes so bright; and Franz tells me, and so did another of our boys, that he only talks of such small affairs generally, and avoids music."

"So I hear from my brother. He talks to Josephine about her doll. He did tell me once that with me alone he 'communed music.'"

"Again his words!"

She assented by her flying smile.

"He never plays to you, then?"

"Never to myself; but then, you see, I should never ask him."

"And he would not do it unless he were asked. I understand that. You feel as I should about asking *you*."

"Me to sing?" she inquired in a tone beguiling, lingering, an echo of *his* voice ever sleepless in my brain, or that if sleeping, ever awoke to music. I nodded.

"No," said she again, with quickness, "I will not wait to be asked."

As she spoke she arose, and those dark streams of hair fell off her like some shadow from her spirit; she shone upon me in rising,—so seemed her smile. "Oh!" I cried eagerly, and I caught, by some impulse, the hem of her garment, "you are going to be so good!"

"If you let me be so," she replied, and drew away those folds, passing to her harp. Her hand, suddenly thrown upon the wires, whose resistance to embrace so sweet made all their music, 42
caught the ear of little Josephine, who had been playing very innocently, for a prodigy, in the corner; and now she came slowly forwards, her doll in her arms, and stood about a yard from the harp, again putting up one finger to her lip, and giving me a glance across the intervening space. She looked, as she so peered, both singular and interesting in the blended curiosity and shyness that appertain to certain childhoods; but it seemed to me at that moment as if she were a strayed earthling into some picture of a scene in that unknown which men call heaven. For the harp and the form which appeared now to have grown to it—so inseparable are the elements of harmony, so intuitively they blend in meeting—were not a sight to suggest anything this side of death. All beauty is the gauge of immortality; and as I wondered at her utter loveliness, I became calm as immortality only permits and sanctions when on it our thoughts repose, for it our affections languish. Her arms still rested behind and before the strings as she tuned them; still her hair swept that cloud upon the softness of her cheek, toned the melancholy arch of her brow: but the deep rose-hues of her now drooping mantle, and the Italian azure of her robe, did not retrieve the fancy to any earthly apparition. They seemed but transparent and veil-like media through which

the whiteness of light found way in colors that sheathed an unendurable naked lustre. I thought not in such words, but such thoughts were indeed mine; and while I was yet gazing,—dreaming, I should say, for I ever dream on beauty,—she played some long, low chords, attenuated golden thwarting threads of sound, and began forthwith to sing. She sang in German, and her song was a prayer for rest,—a Sunday song, as little Josephine said afterwards to me. But it might have 43
been a lay of revenge, of war, or of woe, for all I heard that the words conveyed, as I could not exist except in the voice itself, or the spirit of which the voice was formed. I felt then that it is not in voice, it is not in cunning instrument, that the thing called music hides; it is the uncreate intelligence of tone that genius breathes into the created elements of sound. This girl's or angel's voice was not so sweet as intelligible, not so boundless as intense. It went straight into the brain, it stirred the soul without disturbing; the ear was unconscious as it entered that dim gallery, and rushed through it to the inward sympathetic spirit. The quality of the voice, too, as much pertained to that peculiar organization as certain scents pertain to particular flowers. It was as in the open air, not in the hothouse, that this foreign flower expanded, and breathed to the sun and wind its secrets. It was what dilettanti call a contralto voice, but such a contralto, too, that either Nature or culture permitted the loftiest flights; the soprano touches were vivid and vibrating as the topmost tones of my violin. While the fragrance yet fanned my soul, the flower shut up. She ceased singing and came to me.

"Do you like that little song? It is the Chevalier's."

"A Sunday song," observed Josephine, as I mentioned.

"A Sunday song!" I cried, and started. "I have not heard a word!"

"Oh!" she said, not regretfully, but with excitement, "you must then hear it again; and Josephine shall sing it, that you may not think of my voice instead of the song."

I had not time to remonstrate, nor had I the right. The child began quite composedly, still holding her doll. She had a wonderful voice. But what have I to do with voices? I mean style. Josephine's 44
voice was crude as a green whortleberry; its sadness was sour, its strength harsh; though a voice shrill and small as the cricket's chirp, with scarcely more music. But she sang divinely; she sang like a cherub before the Great White Throne.

The manner was her sister's; the fragrance another, a peculiar wood-like odor, as from moss and evanescent wild-flowers, if I may so compare, as then it struck me. I listened to the words this while, to the melody,—the rush of melodies; for in that composer's slightest effect each part is a separate soul, the counterpoint a subtle, fiery chain imprisoning the soul in bliss. Ineffable as was that air,—ineffable as is every air of his,—I longed to be convinced it had been put together by a *man*. I could not, and I cannot to this hour, associate anything material with strains of his. When Josephine concluded, I was about to beg for more; but the other left her harp, and kissing her little care, brought her with herself to the couch where she had quitted me. How strange was the sweetness, how sweet the change in her manner now!

"How pale you look!" said she; "I shall give you some wine. I can feel for you, if you are delicate in health, for I am so myself; and it is so sad sometimes."

"No wine, please; I have had wine, and am never the better for it. I believe I was born pale, and shall never look anything else."

"I like you pale, if it is not that you are delicate."

"I think I am pretty strong; I can work hard, and do."

"Do not!" she said, putting her loveliest hand on my hair, and turning my face to hers, "do not, 45
lieber, work hard,—not too hard."

"And why not? for I am sure you do."

"That is the very reason I would have you not do so. I *must* work hard."

"But if you are delicate, Fräulein Cerinthia?"

"God will take care of me; I try to serve him. None have to answer for themselves as musicians." She suddenly ceased, passed one hand over her face. She did not stir, but I heard her sigh; she arose, and looked from the window; she sat down again, as if undecided.

"Can I do anything for you?" I asked.

"No, I want nothing; I am only thinking that it is very troublesome the person who sent those fruits could not come instead of them. I ought to have kept it from you, child as you are."

"Child, indeed! why, what are you yourself?"

"Young, very young," she replied, with some passion in her voice; "but so much older than you are in every sense. I never remember when I did not feel I had lived a long time."

I was struck by these words, for they often returned upon me afterwards, and I rose to go, feeling something disturbed at having wearied her; for she had not the same fresh bloom and unfatigued brightness as when I entered. She did not detain me, though she said, "Call me Maria, please; I should like it best,—we are both so young, you know! We might have been brother and sister." And in this graceful mood my memory carried her away.

CHAPTER III.

I need not say I looked upon Anastase with very different eyes next time I crossed his path. He had never so much interested me; he had never attracted me before,—he attracted me violently now, but not for his own sake. I watched every movement and gesture,—every intimation of his being, separable from his musical nature and dissociated from his playing. He seemed to think me very inattentive on the Monday morning, though, in fact, I had never been so attentive to him before; but I did not get on very well with my work. At last he fairly stopped me, and touched my chin with his bow. 46

"What are you thinking about this morning, sir?" he inquired, in that easy voice of his, with that cool air.

I never told a lie in my life, white or black. "Of you, sir," I replied. With his large eyes on mine, I felt rather scorched, but still I kept faith with myself. "Of the Fräulein Cerinthia."

"I thought as much. The next Sunday you will remain at home."

"Yes, sir; but that won't prevent my thinking about you and her."

"Exactly; you shall therefore have sufficient time to think about us. As you have not control enough to fasten your mind on your own affairs, we must indulge your weakness by giving it plenty of room." 47

Then he pointed to my page with his bow, and we went on quietly. I need not say we were alone. After my lesson, just before he proceeded to the next violin, he spoke again.

"You do not know, perhaps, what test you are about to endure. We shall have a concert next month, and you will play a first violin with me."

"Sir!" I gasped, "I cannot—I never will!"

"Perhaps you will change your note when you are aware who appointed you. It is no affair of mine."

"If you mean, sir, that it is the Chevalier who appointed me, I don't believe it, unless you gave your sanction."

He turned upon me with a short smile,—just the end of one,—and raised his delicate eyebrows. "Be that as it may, to-night we rehearse first, in the lesser hall; there will be nobody present but the band. The Chevalier will hold his own rehearsal the week after next, for there is a work of his on this occasion,—therefore we shall prepare, and, I trust, successfully; so that the polishing only will remain for him."

"Bravo, sir!"

"I hope it will be bravo; but it is no bravo at present," said he, in dismissing me.

I had never heard Anastase play yet, and was very curious,—I mean, I had never heard him play consecutively; his exhibitions to us being confined to short passages we could not surmount,—bar upon bar, phrase upon phrase, here a little, and there a very little. But now he must needs bring himself before me, to play out his own inner nature.

I found Delemann in his own place presently,—a round box, like a diminutive observatory, at the very top of the building, and communicating only with similar boxes occupied by the brass in general. I let myself in, for it would have been absurd to knock amidst the demonstrations of the alto trombone. He was so ardent over that metallic wonder of his that I had to pluck his sleeve. Even then he would not leave off, at the risk of splitting that short upper lip of his by his involuntary smile, until he had finished what lay before him. It was one great sheet, and I espied at the top the words: "Mer de Glace,—Ouverture; Seraphael." Madder than ever for a conclusion, I stopped my ears till he laid down that shining monster and took occasion to say, "That is what we are to have to-night." 48

"I know. But how abominable is Anastase not to let me have my part to practise!"

"Very likely it is not ready. The brass came this morning, and the strings were to follow. Mine was quite damp when I had it."

We went into rehearsal together, Franz and I. What a different rehearsal from my first in England! Here we were all instruments. Franz was obliged to leave me on entering, and soon I beheld him afar off, at the top of the wooden platform, on whose raised steps we stood, taking his place by the tenor trombone,—a gentleman of adult appearance who had a large mouth. I have my own doubts, private and peculiar, about the superior utility of large mouths, because Franz, of the two, played best; but that is no matter here.

Our *saal* was a simple room enough, guiltless of ornament; our orchestra deal, clear of paint or varnish; our desks the same, but light as ladies' hand-screens,—this was well, as Anastase, who was not without his crochet, made us continually change places with each other, and we had to carry them about. There were wooden benches all down the *saal*, but nobody sat in them; there was not the glimmer of a countenance, nor the shine of two eyes. The door-bolts were drawn inside; there was a great and prevalent awe. The lamps hung over us, but not lighted; the sun was a long way from bed yet, and so were we. Anastase kept us at "L'Amour Fugitif" and 49

"Euryanthe,"—I mean, their respective overtures,—a good while, and was very quiet all the time, until our emancipation in the "Mer de Glace." His *face* did not change even then; but there was a fixity and straightening of the arm, as if an iron nerve had passed down it suddenly, and he mustered us still more closely to him and to each other. My stand was next his own; and, looking here and there, I perceived Iskar among the second violins, and was stirred up,—for I had not met with him except at table since I came there.

It is not in my power to describe my own sensations on my first introduction to Seraphael's orchestral definite creation. Enough to say that I felt all music besides, albeit precious, albeit inestimable, to have been but affecting the best and highest portion of myself, but as exciting to loftier aspirations my constant soul; but that *his* creation did indeed not only first affect me beyond all analysis of feeling, but cause upon me, and through me, a change to pass,—did first recreate, expurge of all earthly; and then inspire, surcharged with heavenly hope and holiest ecstasy. That qualitative heavenly, and this superlative holiest, are alone those which disabuse of the dread to call what we love best and worship truest by name. No other words are expressive of that music which alone realizes the desire of faith,—faith supernal alike with the universal faith of love.

As first awoke the strange, smooth wind-notes of the opening *adagio*, the fetterless chains of ice seemed to close around my heart. The movement had no blandness in its solemnity, and so still 50
and shiftless was the grouping of the harmonies that a frigidity actual, as well as ideal, passed over my pores and hushed my pulses. After a hundred such tense, yet clinging chords, the sustaining calm was illustrated, not broken, by a serpentine phrase of one lone oboe, *pianissimo* over the *piano* surface, which it crisped not, but on and above which it breathed like the track of a sunbeam aslant from a parted cloud. The slightest possible retardation at its close brought us to the refrain of the simple *adagio*, interrupted again by a rush of violoncello notes, rapid and low, like some sudden under-current striving to burst through the frozen sweetness. Then spread wide the subject as plains upon plains of *water-land*, though the time was gradually increased. Amplifications of the same harmonies introduced a fresh accession of violoncelli, and oboi contrasted artfully in syncopation, till at length the strides of the *accelerando* gave a glittering precipitation to the entrance of the second and longest movement.

Then Anastase turned upon me, and with the first bar we fell into a tumultuous *presto*. Far beyond all power to analyze as it was just then, the complete idea embraced me as instantaneously as had the picturesque chilliness of the first. I have called it tumultuous, but merely in respect of rhythm; the harmonies were as clear and evolved as the modulation itself was sharp, keen, unanticipated, unapproachable. Through every bar reigned that vividly enunciated ideal, whose expression pertains to the one will alone in any age,—the ideal that, binding together in suggestive imagery every form of beauty, symbolizes and represents something beyond them all.

Here over the surge-like, but fast-bound *motivo*—only like those tossed ice-waves, dead still in 51
their heaped-up crests—were certain swelling *crescendos* of a second subject, so unutterably, if vaguely, sweet that the souls of all deep blue Alp-flowers, the clarity of all high blue skies, had surely passed into them, and was passing from them again.

Scarcely is it legitimate to describe what so speaks for itself as music; yet there are assuredly effects produced by music which may be treated of to the satisfaction of the initiated.

It was not until the very submerging climax that the playing of Anastase was recalled to me. Then, amidst long, ringing notes of the wild horns, and intermittent sighs of the milder wood, swept from the violins a torrent of coruscant *arpeggi*, and above them all I heard his tone, keen but solvent, as his bow seemed to divide the very strings with fire; and I felt as if some spark had fallen upon my fingers to kindle mine. As soon as it was over, I looked up and laughed in his face with sheer pleasure; but he made no sign, nor was there the slightest evidence of the strenuous emotion to which he had been abandoned,—no flush of cheek nor flash of eye, only the least possible closer contraction of the slight lips. He did nothing but find fault, and his authority appeared absolute; for when he reprimanded Iskar in particular, and called him to account for the insertion extraordinary of a queer *appogiatura*, which I did not know he had heard, that evil one came down without a smirk, and minced forth some apology, instead of setting up his crest, as usual. I was very thankful at last when the room was cleared, as it was infernally hot, and I had made up my mind to ask Anastase whether my violin were really such a good one; for I had not used it before this night. 52

When no one was left except he and I, I ventured to ask him whether I could carry anything anywhere for him, to attract his attention.

"Yes," said he, "you may gather up all the parts and lay them together in that closet," pointing to a wooden box behind the platform; "but do not put your own away, because you are going to look over it with me."

I did as he directed, and then brought myself back to him. But before I could begin, he took my fiddle from my arms, and turning it round and round, demanded, "Where did you get this?" I told him in a few words its history, or what I imagined to be its history. He looked rather astonished, but made no comment, and then he began to play to me. I do not suppose another ever played like him; I may, perhaps, myself a very little, but I never heard anybody else. The peculiar strength of his tone I believe never to have been surpassed; the firmness of his *cantabile* never equalled; his expression in no case approached. Santonio's playing dwindled in my mind, for

Anastase, though so young, performed with a pointedness altogether mature; it was that on which to repose unshifting security for the most ardent musical interest; yet, with all its solidity, it was not severe even in the strictest passages. Of all playing I ever heard on my adopted instrument, and I have heard every first-rate and every medium performer in Europe, it was the most forceful,—let this term suffice just here. I said to him when he had finished with me, "How much fuller your playing is than Santonio's! I thought his wonderful until I heard yours." But with more gentleness than I had given him credit for, he responded, laying down my little treasure, "I consider his playing myself far more wonderful than mine. Mine is not wonderful; it is a wrong word to use. It is full, because I have studied to make it the playing of a leader, which must not follow its own vagaries. Neither does Santonio, who is also a leader, but a finer player than I,—finer in the sense of delicacy, experience, finish. Now go and eat your supper, Auchester." 53

"Sir, I don't want any supper."

"But I do, and I cannot have you here."

I knew he meant he was going to practise,—it was always his supper, I found; but he had become again unapproachable. I had not gained an inch nearer ground to him, really, yet. So I retired, and slipped into the refectory, where Franz was keeping a seat for me.

I was positively afraid to go out the next Sunday, and the next it rained,—we all stayed in. On the following Wednesday would come our concert, and by this time I knew that the Chevalier would be accompanied by certain of his high-born relations. But do not imagine that we covered for them galleries with cloth and yellow fringe. It was altogether to me one of my romance days; and, as such, I partook in the spirit of festivity that stirred abroad. The day before was even something beyond romance. After dinner we all met in the garden-house, as we called the pillared alcove, to arrange the decorations for our hall, which were left entirely to ourselves, at our united request. About fifty of us were of one mind, and, somehow or other, I got command of the whole troop,—I am sure I did not mean to put myself so. I sent out several in different directions to gather oak-branches and lime-boughs, vine-leaves and evergreens, and then sat down to weave garlands for the arches among a number more. Having seen them fairly at work, I went forth myself, and found Maria Cerinthia at home; she came with me directly, and we made another pilgrimage in search of roses and myrtles. Josephine went too, and we all three returned laden from the garden of a sincere patroness down in the valley beneath the hill, of whom we had asked such alms. 54

Entering Cecilia, after climbing the slope leisurely, we saw a coach at the porter's door,—the door where letters and messages were received, not the grand door of the school, which all day stood open for the benefit of bustling Cecilians. I thought nothing of this coach, however, as one often might have seen one there; but while Maria took back Josephine, I obtained possession of all the flowers which she had placed in my arms, promising to be with us anon in the garden-house. Past the professors' rooms I walked; and I have not yet mentioned the name of Thauch, our nominal superintendent, the appointed of the Chevalier, who always laughingly declared he had selected him because he knew nothing about music, to care for us *out* of music. Thauch sat at the head of the middle table, and we scarcely saw him otherwise or spoke to him; thus I was astonished, and rather appalled, to be called upon by him when I reached his room, which was enclosed, and where he was writing accounts. I was not aware he even knew my name; but by it he called upon me. "Sir," I said, "what do you want?" as I did not desire to halt, for fear of crushing up my sweet fresh roses. He had risen, and was in the doorway, waiting, with true German deliberation, until I was quite recovered from my breathlessness; and then he did not answer, but took my shoulders and pushed me into his parlor, himself leaving the room, and shutting himself out into the passage. 55

Shall I ever forget it? For, gasping still, though I had thrown all my flowers out of my arms, I confronted the bright, old-fashioned, distinct, yet dream-like faces of two who sat together upon the chairs behind the door. You will not expect me to say how I felt when I found they were my own sister Millicent, my own Lenhart Davy, and that they did not melt away. I suppose I did something,—put out my hands, perhaps, or turned some strange color which made Davy think I should faint; for he rose, and coming to me, with his hilarious laugh put his arms about me and took me to my sister. When once she had kissed me, and I had felt her soft face and the shape of her lips, and smelled the scent of an Indian box at home that clung to her silk handkerchief yet, I cried, and she cried too; but we were both quiet enough about it,—she I only knew was crying by her cheek pressing wet against mine. After a few moments so unutterable, I put myself away from her, and began distinctly to perceive the strangeness of our position. Millicent, as I examined her, seemed to have grown more a woman than I remembered; but that may have pertained to her dress, so different from the style with which I associated her,—the white ribbons and plain caps under the quaint straw bonnet, and the black-silk spencer. Now, she wore a mantle of very graceful cut, and the loveliest pink lining to her delicate fancy hat; this gave to her oval countenance a blushful clearness that made her look lovely in my eyes. And when I did speak, what do you think I said? "Oh, Millicent, how odd it is! Oh, Mr. Davy, how odd you look!"

"Now, Charles," said he, in answer,—and how the English accents thrilled the tears into my eyes,—"now, Charles, tell me what you mean by growing so tall and being so self-possessed. You are above my shoulder, and you have lost all your impudence." 56

"No, Mr. Davy, I haven't—kiss me!" said I; and I threw my arms about him, and clung on there till curiosity swelled unconquerable.

"Oh, Mr. Davy, how extraordinary it is of you to come so suddenly, without telling me! And

mother never said the least word about it. Oh, Millicent, how did you get her to let you come? And, oh," suddenly it struck me very forcibly, "how very strange you should come with Mr. Davy! Is anybody ill? No, you would have told me directly, and you would not be dressed so."

Millicent looked up at Davy with an unwonted expression, a new light in her eyes, that had ever slept in shade; and he laughed again.

"No, nobody is ill, and she would *not* be dressed so if I had not given her that bonnet, for which she scolded me instead of thanking me,—for it came from Paris."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, and I felt all over bathed in delight. I ran to Millicent, and whispered into that same bonnet, "Oh, Millicent! are you married to Mr. Davy?"

She pulled off one of her pale-colored gloves and showed me the left hand. I saw the ring—oh, how strange I felt,—hot and cold; glad and sorry; excited, and yet staid! I flew to my first friend and kissed his hand: "Dear Mr. Davy, I am so glad!"

"I thought you would be, Charles. If I had anticipated any objection on your part, I should have written to you first!"

"Oh, Mr. Davy!" I cried, laughing, "but why did they not write and tell me?" 57

"My dear brother, it was that we wished to spare you all disappointment."

"You mean I could not have come home. No, I don't think I could, even for your wedding, Millicent, and yours, Mr. Davy; we have been so busy lately."

Davy laughed. "Oh, I see what an important person you have become! We knew it; and it was I who persuaded your mother not to unsettle you. I did it for the best."

"It was for the best, dearest Charles," said Millicent, looking into Davy's face as if perfectly at home with it. She had never used to look into his face at all.

"Oh!" I again exclaimed, suddenly reminded, "what did you wear, Millicent, to be married in?"

"A white muslin pelisse, Charles, and Miss Benette's beautiful veil."

"Yes; and, Charles," continued Davy, "Millicent gratified us both by asking Miss Benette to be her bridesmaid."

"And did she come?" I asked, rather eagerly.

"No, Charles; she did not."

"I knew she would not," I thought, though I scarcely knew why.

"But she came, Charles, the night before, and helped them to dress the table; and so beautiful she made it look that everybody was astonished,—yet she had only a few garden flowers, and a *very* few rare ones."

"But how long have you been married, Mr. Davy? and are you going to live *here*? What will the class do? Oh, the dear class! Who sits by Miss Benette now, Mr. Davy?"

He laughed.

"Oh, Charles, if you please, one question at a time! We have been married one week,—is it not, Millicent?" 58

She smiled and blushed.

"And I am not going to leave my class,—it is larger now than you remember it. And I have not left my little house, but I have made one more room, and we find it quite wide enough to contain us."

"Oh, sir, then you came here for a trip! How delicious! Oh, Millicent, do you like Germany? Oh, you will see the Chevalier."

"Well, Charles, it is only fair, for we have heard so much about him. Nothing in your letters but the Chevalier, and the Chevalier, and we do not even know his name from *you*. Clo says whenever your letters come, 'I wish he would tell us how he sleeps;' and my mother hopes that Seraphael is 'a good man,' as you are so fond of him."

"But, Charles," added Davy, with his old earnestness and with a sparkling eye, "how, then, shall we see him, and where? For I would walk barefoot through Germany for that end."

"Without any trouble, Mr. Davy, because to-morrow will be our concert, and he is coming to conduct his new overture,—only his new overture, mind! He will sit in the hall most part, and you will see him perfectly."

"My dear, dear Charles," observed Millicent, "it is something strange to hear you say 'our concert.' How entirely you have fulfilled your destiny! And shall we hear you play?"

"Yes," I replied, with mock modesty, but in such a state of glowing pride that it was quite as much as I could do to answer with becoming indifference. "Yes, I am to play a first violin."

"A first violin, Charles?" said Davy, evidently surprised. "What! already? Oh, I did not predict

wrong! What if I had kept you in my class? But, Millicent, we must not stay," he added, turning to her; "we only came to carry Charles away, as we are here on forbidden ground." 59

"Not at all, Mr. Davy," I cried, eager to do the honors of Cecilia. "A great many of them go out to see their friends and have their friends come to see them; but I had no one until now, you see."

"Yes, but, Charles," replied my sister, "we understand that no visitors are permitted entrance the day before a concert, and thought it a wise regulation too. They made an exception in our case because we came so far, and also because we came to take you away."

"Where are we going, then? Going away?"

"Only to the inn, where we have a bed for you engaged, that we may see something of you out of study. You must go with us now, for we have obtained permission."

"Whatever shall I do?"

"What now, Charles?"

"Well, Mr. Davy, you may laugh, but we are to decorate our concert-hall, and they are waiting for me, I daresay. All those flowers, too, that you made me throw down, were for garlands. If I might only go and tell them how it is—"

"See, Charles, there is some one wanting to speak to *you*. I heard a knock."

I turned, and let in Franz. He could not help glancing at the pink lining, while he breathlessly whispered, "Do not mind us. Fräulein Cerinthia is gone to fetch her brother; and while they are at supper, we shall dress the hall under her directions, and she says you are to go with your friends."

"That is my sister, Delemann," said I; and then I introduced them, quite forgetting that Millicent had changed her name, which amused them immensely after Franz was gone, having gathered up 60
my roses and taken them off. Then Davy begged me to come directly, and I hurried to my room and took him with me. How vain I felt to show him my press, my screen, my portmanteau full of books, and my private bed, my violin, asleep in its case; and last, not least, his china cup and saucer, in the little brown box! While I was combing my hair, he stood and watched me with delight in his charming countenance, not a cloud upon it.

"Oh, dear Mr. Davy, how exquisite it is that you should be my brother! I shall never be able to call you anything but Mr. Davy, though."

"You shall call me whatever you please. I shall always like it."

"And, sir, please to tell me, am I tidy,—fit to walk with a bride and bridegroom?"

"Not half smart enough! Your sister has brought your part of the wedding ceremony in her only box,—and, let me tell you, Charles, you are highly favored; for the muslin dresses and laces will suffer in consequence!"

"I don't believe that, sir," said I, laughing.

"And why not, sir?"

"Because, sir, my sisters would none of them travel about with muslin dresses if they had only one box."

"They would travel about, as Mrs. Davy does, in black silk," answered Davy, pursuing me as I ran; but I escaped him, and rejoined Millicent first, who was waiting for us with all possible patience.

There are a few times of our life—not the glorious eternal days, that stand alone, but, thank God! many hours which are nothing for us but pure and passive enjoyment, in which we exist. How exquisitely happy was I on this evening, for example! The prospect of the morrow so intensely 61
bright, the present of such tender sweetness! How divine is Love in all its modifications! How inseparable is it from repose, from rapture!

As we went along the village and passed the shops, in the freshening sunbeams, low-shining from the bare blue heaven, I fetched a present for my brother and sister in the shape of two concert-tickets, which, contrary to Tedescan custom, were issued for the advantage of any interested strangers. I put them into Millicent's hand, saying, "You know I gave you no wedding-gift."

"Yes, Charles, you gave me this," and she looked up at Davy; "I should never have known him but for you."

"Which means, my love, that I am also to thank Charles for introducing me to you;" and Davy took off his hat with mock reverence.

"Oh! that won't do, Mr. Davy; for you said you had seen a beautiful Jewess at our window before you knew who lived in our house; and of course you would have got in there somehow, at last."

"*Never!*" said Davy, in a manner that convinced me he never would.

"Then I *am* very glad," said I,—"glad that I ran away one morning. The Chevalier says that nothing happens accidentally to such as I."

They laughed till they saw how serious I had grown again, and then smiled at each other. Arrived at our inn, we rested. Will it be believed that Davy had brought some of his own tea, besides several other small comforts? This much amused me. After our tea—a real home tea, which quite choked my unaccustomed faculties at first—Davy put his wife on the sofa, and with a bright 62
authority there was no resisting, bade her be still while he fetched my part of the ceremony. This consisted of half a dozen pairs of beautiful white kid gloves,—treasures these indeed to a fiddler!—a white silk waistcoat, a small case of Spanish chocolate, and a large cake, iced and almonded.

"That was made at home, Charles," said Millicent, "and is exactly like that we sent to our friends."

In those days it was not old fashion, gentle reader, to send out bride-cake to one's friends. I need only mention a white favor or two, and a frosted silver flower, because I reserved the same for Josephine Cerinthia.

CHAPTER IV.

In my box-bed at that flower-baptized inn, I certainly did not sleep so well as in my own nest at 63
school. Here it was in a box, as ever in that country of creation; and in the middle of the night I sat up to wonder whether my sister and new-found brother thought the *locale* as stifling as I did. I was up before the sun, and dressed together with his arrangement of his beams. We had—in spite of the difficulty to get served in rational fashion—a right merry breakfast, thanks to the company and the tea. I had not tasted such, as it appeared to me, since my infancy.

How Davy did rail against the toilet short-comings,—the meagre, shallow depths of his basin! And he was not happy until I took him to my portion (as we called our sleeping-places at Cecilia), and let him do as he pleased with my own water-magazine. This was an artificial lake of red ware, which was properly a baking-dish, and which I had purchased under that name for my private need. If it had not been for the little river which flowed not half a mile from our school, and which our Cecilians haunted as a bath through summer, I could not answer, in my memory's conscience, for their morality if, as I of course believe, cleanliness be next to godliness.

After breakfast, and after I had taken Davy back, I returned myself alone to seek Maria and escort her. Davy and Millicent seemed so utterly indisposed to stir out until it was necessary, and 64
so unfit for any society but each other's, that I did not hesitate to abscond. I left them together,—Davy lazier than I had ever seen him, and *she* more like brilliant evening than unexcited morning. What am I writing? Is morning ever unexcited to the enthusiast? I think his only repose is in the magical supervention of the mystery night brings to his heart.

I was sorry to find that neither Maria, Josephine, nor Joseph was at home. The way was clear upstairs, but all the doors were locked, as usual, when they were out; and I went on to Cecilia in a pet. It was nine when I arrived,—quite restored. Our concert was to be at ten.

What different hours are kept in Germany; what different hearts cull the honey of the hours! Our dining-hall was full; there was a great din. Our garden-house was swept and garnished as I remembered it the day I came with one, but not quite so enticing in its provisions,—that is to say, there were no strawberries, which had been so interesting to me on the first occasion. I retreated to the library. No one was there. I might not go among the girls, whose establishment was apart, but I knew I should meet them before we had to take our places; and off I scampered to Franz's observatory. Will it be believed?—he was still at work, those brass lips embracing his, already dressed, his white gloves lying on his monster's cradle.

"My dear Delemann," I exclaimed, "for pity's sake, put that down now!"

"My dear Carl, how shall I feel when that moment comes?" pointing to the up-beat of bar 109, where he first came in upon the field of the score. 65

"I don't think you will feel different if you practise half an hour more, any how."

"Yes, I shall; I want rubbing up. Besides, I have been here since six."

"Oh, Delemann, you are a good boy! But I don't feel nervous at all."

"You, Carl! No, I should think not. You will have no more responsibility than the hand of a watch, with that Anastase for the spring,—works, too, that never want winding up, and that were bought ready made by our patroness."

"Dear Franz, do come; I am dying to see the hall."

"I don't think it is done. Fräulein Cerinthia went out to get some white roses for a purpose she held secret. The boughs are all up, though."

"My dear Franz, you are very matter of fact."

"No, I am not, Carl; the tears ran down my face at rehearsal."

"That was because I made a mouth at you, which you wanted to laugh at, and dared not."

"Well," said Franz, mock mournfully, "I can do nothing with you here, so come."

He rolled up his monster and took up his gloves. I had a pair of Millicent's in my pocket.

"We must not forget to call at the garden-house for a rose to put here," said Franz, running his slight forefinger into his button-hole. We accordingly went in there. A good many had preceded us, and rifled the baskets of roses, pinks, and jasmine, that stood about. While we were turning over those still left, up came somebody, and whispered that Anastase was bringing in the Cerinthias. I eagerly gazed, endeavoring, with my might, to look innocent of so gazing. But I only 66
beheld, between the pillars, the clear brow and waving robes of my younger master as he bent so lowly before a maiden raimented in white, and only as he left her; for he entered not within the alcove. As he retreated, Maria advanced. She was dressed in white, as I have said; but so dazzling was her beauty that all eyes were bent upon her. All the chorus-singers were in white; but who looked the least like her? With the deep azure of our order folded around her breast, and on that breast a single full white rose, with that dark hair bound from the arch of her delicate forehead, she approached and presented us each also with a single rose, exquisite as her own, from the very little basket I had carried to her that Sunday, now quite filled with the few flowers it contained. "They are so fresh," said she, "that they will not die the whole morning!" And I thought, as I saw her, that nothing in the whole realm of flowers was so beautiful, or just then so fresh, as herself!

A very little while now, and our conductor, Zittermayer, the superior in age of Anastase, but his admirer and sworn ally, came in and ordered the chorus forwards. They having dispersed, he returned for ourselves,—the gentry of the band. As soon as I aspired through the narrow orchestra door, I beheld the same sight in front as from the other end at the day of my initiation into those sceneries, or very much the same,—the morning sun, which gleamed amidst the leafy arches, and in the foreground on many a rosy garland. For over the seats reserved for the Chevalier and his party, the loveliest flowers, relieved with myrtle only, hung in rich festoons; and as a keystone to the curtained entrance below the orchestra, the Cecilia picture—framed in virgin roses by Maria's hand—showed only less fair than she. At once did this flower-work form a 67
blooming barrier between him and the general audience, and illustrate his exclusiveness by a fair, if fading, symbol.

The hall had begun to fill; and I was getting rather nervous about my English brother and sister, who could not sit together, however near, when they entered, and found just the seats I could have chosen for them. Millicent, at the side of the chamber, was just clear of the flowery division; for I gesticulated violently at her to take such place.

I felt so excited then, seeing them down there,—of all persons those I should have most desired in those very spots,—that I think I should have burst into tears but for a sudden and fresh diversion. While I had been watching my sister and brother, a murmur had begun to roll amidst the gathered throng, and just as the conductor came to the orchestra steps, at the bottom he arrested himself. The first stroke of ten had sounded from our little church, and simultaneously with that stroke the steward, bearing on his wand the blue rosette and bunch of oak-leaves, threw open the curtain of the archway under us and ushered into the appropriated space the party for whose arrival we auspiciously waited. I said Zittermayer arrested himself,—he waited respectfully until they were seated, and then bowed, but did not advance to salute them further. They also bowed, and he mounted the steps.

I was enchanted at the decorum which prevailed at that moment; for, as it happened, it was a more satisfactory idea of homage than the most unmitigated applause on the occasion. The perfect stillness also reigned through Cherubini's overture, not one note of which I heard, though I played as well as any somnambule, for I need scarcely say I was looking at that party; and being 68
blessed with a long sight, I saw as well as it was possible to see all that I required to behold.

First in the line sat a lady, at once so stately and so young looking, that I could only conjecture she was, as she was, *his* mother. A woman was she like, in the outlines of her beauty, to the Medicis and Colonnas, those queens of historic poesy; unlike in that beauty's aspect which was beneficent as powerful, though I traced no trait of semblance between her and her super-terrestrial son. She sat like an empress, dressed in black, with a superb eye-glass, one star of diamonds at its rim, in her hand; but still and stately, and unsmiling as she was, she was ever turned slightly towards him, who, placed by her side, almost nestled into the sable satin of her raiment. He was also dressed in black, this day, and held in those exquisite hands a tiny pair of gloves, which he now swung backwards and forwards in time to the movement of our orchestra, and then let fall upon the floor; when that stately mother would stoop and gather them up, and he would receive them with a flashing smile, to drop them again with inadvertence, or perhaps to slide into them his slender fingers. Hardly had I seen and known him before I saw and recognized another close beside him. If *he* were small and sylphid, seated by his majestic mother, how tiny was that delicate satellite of his, who was nestled as close to his side as he to hers. It was my own, my little Starwood, so happily attired in a dove-colored dress, half frock, half coat, trimmed with silver buttons, and holding a huge nosegay in his morsels of hands. I had scarcely time to notice him after the first flush of my surprise; but it was impossible to help seeing that my pet was as happy as he could well be, and that he was quite at home. 69

Next Starwood was a brilliant little girl with long hair, much less than he, nursing a great doll exquisitely dressed; and again, nearest the doll and the doll's mamma, I perceived a lady and a

pair of gentlemen, each of whom, as to size, would have made two Seraphaels. They were all very attentive, apparently, except the Chevalier; and though he was still by fits, I knew he was not attending, from the wandering, wistful gaze, now in the roof, now out at the windows, now downcast, shadowy, and anon flinging its own brightness over my soul, like a sunbeam astray from the heavens of Paradise. When at length the point in the programme, so dearly longed for, was close at hand, he slid beneath the flowery balustrade, and as noiselessly as in our English music-hall, he took the stairs, and leaned against the desk until the moment for taking possession. Then when he entered, still so inadvertent, the applause broke out, gathering, rolling, prolonging itself, and dissolving like thunder in the mountains.

I especially enjoyed the fervent shouts of Anastase; his eye as clear as fire, his strict frame relaxed. Almost before it was over, and as if to elude further demonstrations, though he bowed with courteous calmness, Seraphael signed to us to begin. Then, midst the delicious, yet heart-wringing ice tones, shone out those beaming lineaments; the same peculiar and almost painful keenness turned upon the sight the very edge of beauty. Fleeting from cheek to brow, the rosy lightnings, his very heart's flushes, were as the mantling of a sudden glory.

But of his restless and radiant eyes I could not bear the stressful brightness, it dimmed my sight; whether dazzled or dissolved, I know not. And yet,—will it be believed?—affectionate, earnest, and devoted as was the demeanor of those about me, no countenance glistened except my own in 70
that atmosphere of bliss. Perhaps I misjudge; but it appears to me that pure Genius is as unrecognizable in human form as was pure Divinity. I encroach upon such a subject no further. To feel, to feel exquisitely, is the lot of very many,—it is the charm that lends a superstitious joy to fear; but to appreciate belongs to the few, to the one or two alone here and there,—the blended passion and understanding that constitute, in its essence, worship.

I did not wonder half so much at the strong delight of the audience in the composition. How many there are who *perceive* art as they perceive beauty,—perceive the fair in Nature, the pure in science,—but receive not what these intimate and symbolize; how much more fail in realizing the Divine ideal, the soul beyond the sight, the ear!

Here, besides, there were plenty of persons weary with mediocre impressions, and the effect upon them was as the fresh sea-breeze to the weakling, or the sight of green fields after trackless deserts. I never, never can have enough,—is *my* feeling when that exalted music overbrims my heart; sensation is trebled; the soul sees double; it is as if, brooding on the waste of harmony, the spirit met its shadow, like the swan, and embraced it as itself. I do not know how the composition went, I was so lost in the author's brightness face to face; but I never knew anything go ill under his direction. The sublimity of the last movement, so sudden yet complete in its conclusion, left the audience in a trance; the spell was not broken for a minute and a half, and then burst out a tremendous call for a repeat. But woe to those fools! thought I. It was already too late; with the mystical modesty of his nature, Seraphael had flown downstairs, forgetting the time-stick, which 71
he held in his hand still, and which he carried with him through the archway. As soon as it was really felt he had departed, a great cry for him was set up,—all in vain; and a deputation from the orchestra was instructed to depart and persuade him to return: such things were done in Germany in those days! Anastase was at the head of this select few, but returned together with them discomfited; no Seraphael being, as they asserted, to be found. Anastase announced this fact, in his rare German, to the impatient audience, not a few of whom were standing upright on the benches, to the end that they might make more clatter with their feet than on the firmer floor. As soon as all heard, there was a great groan, and some stray hisses sounded like the erection of a rattlesnake or two; but upon second thoughts the people seemed to think they should be more likely to find him if they dispersed,—though what they meant to do with him when they came upon him I could not conjecture, so vulgar did any homage appear as an offering to that fragrant soul. My dear Millicent and her spouse waited patiently, though they looked about them with some curiosity, till the crowd grew thin; and then, as the stately party underneath me made a move and disappeared through the same curtain that had closed over Seraphael, I darted downwards past the barrier and climbed the intervening forms to my sister and brother. Great was my satisfaction to stand there and chatter with them; but presently Davy suggested our final departure, and I recollected to have left my fiddle in the orchestra, not even sheltered by its cradle, but where every dust could insult its face.

"Stay here," I begged them, "and I will run and put it by; I will not keep you waiting five minutes." 72

"Fly, my dear boy," cried Davy, "and we will wait until you return, however long you stay."

I did not *mean* to stay more than five minutes, nor should I have delayed, but for my next adventure. When I came to my door, which I reached in breathless haste, lo! it was fastened within, or at least would not be pulled open. I was cross, for I was in a hurry, and very curious too; so I set down my violin, to bang and push against the door. I had given it a good kick, almost enough to fracture the panel, when a voice came creeping through that darkness, "Only wait one little moment, and don't knock me down, please!" I knew that voice, and stood stoned with delight to the spot, while the bolt slid softly back in some velvet touch, and the door was opened.

"Oh, sir!" I cried, as I saw the Chevalier, looking at that instant more like some darling child caught at its pretty mischief than the commanding soul of myriads, "oh, sir! I beg your pardon. I did not know you were here."

"I did not suppose so," he answered, laughing brightly. "I came here because I knew the way, and

because I wanted to be out of the way. It is I who ought to beg *thy* pardon, Carlomein."

"Oh, sir! to think of your coming into my room,—I shall always like to think you came. But if I had only known you were here, I would not have interrupted you."

"And I, had I known thou wouldst come, should not have bolted thy door. But I was afraid of Anastase, Carlomein."

"Afraid of Anastase, sir,—of *Anastase*?" I could find no other words.

"Yes, I am of Anastase even a little afraid." 73

"Oh, sir! don't you like him?" I exclaimed; for I remembered Maria's secret.

"My child," said the Chevalier, "he is as near an angel as artist can be,—a ministering spirit; but yet I tell thee, I fear before him. He is so still, severe, and perfect."

"Perfect! perfect before *you*!"

I could have cried; but a restraining spell was on my soul,—a spell I could not resist nor appreciate, but in whose after revelation the reason shone clear of that strange, unwonted expression in Seraphael's words. Thus, instead, I went on, "Sir, I understand why you came here, that they might not persecute you,—and I don't wonder, for they are dreadfully noisy; but, sir, they did not mean to be rude."

"It is I who have been rude, if it were such a thing at all; but it is not. And now let me ask after what I have not forgotten,—thy health."

"Sir, I am very well, I thank you. And you, sir?"

"I never was so well, thank God! And yet, Carlomein, thy cheek is thinner."

"Oh! that is only because I grow so tall. My sister, who is just come from England—" Here I suddenly arrested myself, for my unaddress stared me in the face. He just laid his little hand on my hair, and smiled inquiringly, "Oh! tell me about thy sister."

"Sir, she said I looked so very well."

"That's good. But about her,—is she young and pretty?"

"Sir, she is a very darling sister to me, but not pretty at all,—only very interesting; and she is very young to be married."

"She is married, then?" He smiled still more inquiringly. 74

"Yes, sir, she is married to Mr. Davy, my musical godfather."

"I remember; and this Mr. Davy, is he here too?" He left off speaking, and sat upon the side of my bed, tucking up one foot like a little boy.

"Yes, sir."

"And now, I shall ask thee a favor."

"What is that, sir?"

"That thou wilt let me see her and speak to her; I want to tell her what a brother she has. Not only so, to invite her—do not be shy, Carlomein—to my birthday feast."

"Oh, sir!" I exclaimed; and regardless of his presence, I threw myself into the very length of my bed and covered my face.

"Now, if *thou* wilt come to my feast, is another question. I have not reached that yet."

"But please to reach it, sir!" I cried, rendered doubly audacious by joy.

"But thou wilt have some trouble in coming,—shalt thou be afraid? Not only to dance and eat sugar-plums."

"It is all the better, sir, if I have something to do; I am never so well as then."

"But thy sister must come to see thee. She must not meddle, nor the godpapa either."

"Oh! sir, Mr. Davy could not meddle, and he would rather stay with Millicent,—but he does sing so beautifully."

He made no answer, but with wayward grace he started up.

"I think they are all gone. Cannot we now go? I am afraid of losing my *queen*."

"Sir, who is she?" 75

"Cannot it be imagined by thee?"

"Well, sir, I only know of *one*."

"Thou art right. A queen is only *one*, just like any other lady. Come, say thou the name; it is a

virgin name, and stills the heart like solitude."

"I don't think that does still."

"Ah! thou hast found that too!"

"Sir, you said you wished to go."

He opened the door, the lock of which he had played with as he stood, and I ran out first.

The pavilion was crowded. "Oh, dear!" said Seraphael, a little piqued, "it's exceedingly hot. Canst thou contrive to find thy friends in all this fuss? I cannot find *mine*."

"Sir, my brother and sister were to wait for me in the concert-hall; they cannot come here, you know, sir. If I knew your friends, I think I could find them, even in this crowd."

"No," answered the Chevalier, decisively, as he cast his brilliant eyes once round the room, "I know they are not here. I do not *feel* them. Carlomein, I am assured they are in the garden. For one thing, they could not breathe here."

"Let us go to them to the garden."

He made way instantly, gliding through the assembly, so that they scarcely turned a head. We were soon on the grass,—so fresh after the autumn rains. Crossing that green, we entered the lime-walk. The first person I saw was Anastase. He was walking lonely, and looking down, as he rarely appeared. So abstracted, indeed, was he that we might have walked over him if Seraphael had not forced me by a touch to pause, and waited until he should approach to our hand.

"See," said the Chevalier gleefully, "how solemn he is! No strange thing, Carlomein, that I should be afraid of him. I wonder what he is thinking of! He has quite a countenance for a picture." 76

But Anastase had reached us before I had time to say, as I intended, "I know of what he is thinking."

He arrested himself suddenly, with a grace that charmed from his cool demeanor, and swept off his cap involuntarily. Holding it in his hand, and raising his serious gaze, he seemed waiting for the voice of the Chevalier. But, to my surprise, he had to wait several moments, during which they both regarded each other. At last Seraphael fairly laughed.

"Do you know, I had forgotten what I had to say, in contemplating you? It is what I call a musical phiz, yours."

Anastase smiled slightly, and then shut up his lips; but a sort of flush tinged his cheeks, I thought.

"Perhaps, Auchester, you can remind the Chevalier Seraphael."

I was so irritated at this observation that I kicked the gravel and dust, but did not trust myself to speak.

"Oh!" exclaimed Seraphael, quickly, "it was to request of you a favor,—a favor I should not dare to ask you unless I had heard what I heard to-day, and seen what I saw."

It might have been my fancy, but it struck me that the tones were singularly at variance with the words here. A suppressed disdain breathed underneath his accent.

"Sir," returned Anastase, with scarcely more warmth, "it is impossible but that I shall be ready to grant any favor in my power. I rejoice to learn that such a thing is so. I shall be much indebted if you can explain it to me at once, as I have to carry a message from Spoda to the Fräulein Cerinthia." 77

Spoda was Maria's master for the voice.

"Let us turn back, then," exclaimed Seraphael, adroitly. "I will walk with you wherever you may be going, and tell you on the way." Seraphael's "I will" was irresistible, even to Anastase.

I suddenly remembered my relations, who would imagine I had gone to a star on speculation. It was too bad of me to have left them all that time. My impression that Seraphael had to treat at some length with my master, induced me to say, "Sir, I have left my brother and sister ever so long; I must run to them, I think."

"Run, then," said the Chevalier; "thou certainly shouldst, and tell them what detained thee. But return to me, and bring them with thee."

I conceived this could not be done, and said so.

"I will come to thee, then, in perhaps half an hour. But if thou canst not wait so long, go home with thy dear friends, and I will write thee a letter."

I would have given something for a letter, it is true; but I secretly resolved to wait all day rather than not see him instead, and rather than *they* should not see him.

I ran off at full speed; and it was not until I reached the sunny lawn beyond the leafy shade that I looked back. They were both in the distance, and beneath the flickering limes showed bright and dark as sunlight crossed the shadow. I watched them to the end of the avenue, and then raced

on. It was well I did so, or I should have missed Davy and my sister, who, astonished at my prolonged absence, were just about to institute a search.

"Oh, Millicent!" I cried, as I breathlessly attained a seat in front of both their faces, "I am so sorry, but I was obliged to go with the Chevalier." And then I related how I had found him in my room. 78

They were much edified; and then I got into one of my agonies to know what they both thought about him. Davy, with his bright smile at noonday, said in reply to my impassioned queries, "He certainly is, Charles, the very handsomest person I have ever seen."

"Mr. Davy! Handsome! I am quite sure you are laughing, or you would never call him handsome."

"Well, I have just given offence to my wife in the same way. It is very well for me that Millicent does not especially care for what is handsome."

"But she likes beauty, Mr. Davy; she likes whatever I like; and I know just exactly how she feels when she looks at your eyes. What very beautiful eyes yours are, Mr. Davy! Don't you think so, Millicent?"

Davy laughed so very loud that the echoes called back to him again, and Millicent said,—

"He knows what I think, Charles."

"But you never told me so much, did you, my love?"

"I like to hear you say 'my love' to Millicent, Mr. Davy."

"And I like to say it, Charles."

"And she likes to hear it. Now, Mr. Davy, about 'handsome.' You should not call him so,—why do you? You did not at the festival."

"Well, Charles, when I saw this wonderful being at the festival, there was a melancholy in his expression which was, though touching, almost painful; and I do not see it any longer, but, on the contrary, an exquisite sprightliness instead. He was also thinner then, and paler,—no one can wish to see him so pale; but his colour now looks like the brightest health. He certainly *is* handsome, Charles."

"Oh, Mr. Davy, I am sorry you think so! But he does look well. I know what you mean, and I should think that he must be very happy. But besides that, Mr. Davy, you cannot tell how often his face changes. I have seen it change and change till I wondered what was coming next. I suppose, Mr. Davy, it is his forehead you call handsome?" 79

"It is the brow of genius, and as such requires no crown. Otherwise, I should say his air is quite royal. Does he teach here, Charles? Surely not."

"No, Mr. Davy, but he appoints our professors. I suppose you know he chose my master, Anastase, though he is so young, to be at the head of all the violins?"

"No, Charles, it is not easy to find out what is done here, without the walls."

"No, Mr. Davy, nor within them either. I don't know much about the Chevalier's private life, but I know he is very rich, and has no Christian name. He has done an immense deal for Cecilia. No one knows exactly how much, for he won't let it be told; but it is because he is so rich, I suppose, that he does not give lessons. But he is to superintend our grand examination next year."

"You told us so in your last letter, Charles," observed Millicent; and then I was entreated to relate the whole story of my first introduction to Cecilia, and of the Volkslied, to which I had only alluded,—for indeed it was not a thing to write about, though of it I have sadly written!

I was in the heart of my narration, in the middle of the benches, and, no doubt, making a great noise, when Davy, who was in front, where he could see the door, motioned me to silence; I very well knew why, and obeyed him with the best possible grace.

As soon as I decently could, I turned and ran to meet the Chevalier, who was advancing almost timidly, holding little Starwood in his hand. The instant Starwood saw me coming, he left his hold and flew into my arms; in spite of my whispered remonstrances, he *would* cling to my neck so fast that I had to present the Chevalier while his arms were entwined about me. But no circumstance could interfere with even the slightest effect *he* was destined to produce. Standing before Davy, with his little hands folded and his whole face grave, though his eyes sparkled, he said, "Will you come to my birthday-feast, kind friends? For we cannot be strangers with this Carl between us. My birthday is next week, and as I am growing a man, I wish to make the most of it." 80

"How old, sir, shall you be on your birthday?" I asked, I fear rather impertinently, but because I could not help it.

"Ten, Carlomein."

"Oh, sir!" we all laughed, Millicent most of all. He looked at her.

"You are a bride, madam, and can readily understand my feelings when I say it is rather discomposing to step into a new state. Having been a child so long, I feel it soon becoming a man;

but in your case the trial is even more obvious."

Millicent now blushed with all her might, as well as laughed, Davy, to relieve her embarrassment taking up the parable.

"And when, sir, and where, will it be our happiness to attend you?"

"At the Glückhaus, not four miles off. It is a queer place which I bought, because it suited me better than many a new one, for it is very old; but I have dressed it in new clothes. I shall hope to make Charles at home some time or other before we welcome you, that he may make you, too, 81
feel at home."

"It would be difficult, sir, to feel otherwise in your society," said Davy, with all his countenance on flame.

"I hope we shall find it so together, and that this is only the beginning of our friendship."

He held out his hand to Millicent, and then to Davy, with the most perfect adaptation to an English custom considered uncouth in Germany; Millicent looking as excited as if she were doing her part of the nuptial ceremony over again. Meantime, for I knew we must part, I whispered to Starwood,—"So you are happy enough, Star, I should suppose?"

"Oh, Charles! too happy. My master was very angry, at first, that the Chevalier carried me away."

"He carried you away, then? I thought as much. And so Aronach was angry?"

"Only for a little bit, but it didn't matter; for the Chevalier took me away in his carriage, and said to master, 'I'll send you a rainbow when the storm is over.' And oh! Charles, I practise four hours at a time now, and it never tires me in the least. I shall never play like *him*, but I mean to be his shadow."

I loved my little friend for this.

"Oh, Charles! I am so glad you are coming to his birthday. Oh, Charles! I wish I could tell you everything all in a minute, but I can't."

"Never mind about that, for if you are happy, it is all clear to me. Only one thing, Star. Tell me what I have got to do on this birthday."

"Charles, it's the silver wedding, don't you know?"

"What, is he going to be married?"

"Who, Carlomein? Starwood won't tell!" said the Chevalier, turning sharply upon me and bending his eyes till he seemed to peep through the lashes. "He knows all about it, but he won't tell. Wilt 82
thou, my shadow? By the by, there is a better word in English,—'chum;' but we must not talk slang, at least not till we grow up. As for thee, Carlomein, Anastase will enlighten thee, and thou shalt not be blinded in that operation, I promise thee. 'Tis nothing very tremendous."

"Charles, I think we detain the Chevalier," observed Davy, ever anxious; and this time I thought so too.

"That would be impossible, after my detaining *you*; but I think I must find my mother,—she will certainly think I have taken a walk to the moon. Come, Stern! Or wilt thou leave me in the lurch for that Carl of thine?"

"Oh! I beg pardon, sir; please let me come too." And I dearly longed to "come too," when I saw them leave the hall hand in hand.

"Now, Charles, we will carry you off and give you some dinner."

"I don't want any dinner, Mr. Davy; I must go to Anastase."

"I knew he was going to say so!" said Millicent. "But, Charles, duty calls first; and if you don't dine we shall have you ill."

"I don't know whether I may go to the inn."

"Oh, yes! Lenhart obtained leave of absence at meals for you as long as we are here."

"Oh! by the by, Millicent, you said you had only come for one week."

"But, Charles, we may never have such another opportunity."

"Yes," added Davy, "I would willingly *starve* a month or two for the sake of this feast."

"Bravo, Mr. Davy. But then, Millicent?" 83

"Oh, Millicent! she shall starve along with me." We all laughed, and as we walked out of the courtyard into the bright country, he continued,—

"You know, Charles, I suppose, what is to be done, musically, at this birthday?"

"No, Mr. Davy, not in the least; and it is because I did not that I refused my dinner. After dinner, though, I shall go and call on Maria Cerinthia, and make her tell me."

"A beautiful name, Charles,—is she a favorite of yours?"

"She is the most wonderful person I ever saw or dreamt of, Millicent; she does treat me very kindly, but she is above all of us except the Chevalier."

"Is she such a celebrated singer, then?"

"She is only fifteen; but then she seems older than you are, she is so lofty, and yet so full of lightness."

"A very good description of the Chevalier himself, Charles."

"Yes, Mr. Davy, and the Chevalier, too, treats her in a very high manner,—I mean as if he held her to be very high."

"Is she at the school too?"

"She only attends for her lessons; she lives in the town with her brother, who teaches her himself and her little sister. They are orphans, and so fond of one another."

I was just about to say, "She is to marry Anastase;" but as I had not received general permission to open out upon the subject, I forbore. We dined at our little inn, and then, after depositing Davy by the side of Millicent, who was reposing,—for he tended her like some choice cutting from the Garden of Eden,—I set out on my special errand. On mounting the stairs to Maria's room, I took 84
the precaution to listen; there were no voices to be heard just then, and I knocked, was admitted, and entered. In the bright chamber I found my dread young master certainly in the very best company; for Josephine was half lost in leaning out of the window, and side by side sat Anastase and Maria. I did not expect to see him in the least, and felt inclined to effect a retreat, when she, without turning her eyes, which were shining full upon his face, stretched out both her lovely hands to me: and Anastase even said. "Do not go, Auchester, for we had, perhaps, better consult together."

"Yes, oh, yes, there is room here, Carlino; sit by me."

But having spoken thus, she opened not her lips again, and seemed to wait upon his silence. I took the seat beside her,—she was between us; and I felt as one feels when one stands in a flower garden in the dusk of night, for her spiritual presence as fragrance spelled me, and the mystery of her passion made its outward form as darkness. Her white dress was still folded round me, and her hair was still unruffled; but she was leaning back, and I perceived, for the first time, that his arm was round her. The slender fingers of his listless hand rested upon the shoulder near me, and they seemed far too much at ease to trifle even with the glorious hair, silk-drooping its braids within his reach. *He* leaned forwards, and looked from one to the other of us, his blue eyes all tearless and unperturbed; but there was a stirring blush upon his cheeks, especially the one at her side, and so deep it burned that I could but fancy her lips had lately left their seal upon it,—a rose-leaf kiss. Such a whirl of excitement this fancy raised around me (I hope I was not preternatural either) that I could scarcely attend to what was going on. 85

"The Chevalier Seraphael," said Anastase, in his stilly voice, "has been writing a two-act piece to perform at his birth-night feast,[4] which is in honor, not so much of his own nativity, as of his parents arriving just that day at the twenty-fifth anniversary of their nuptials. He was born in the fifth year of their marriage, and upon their marriage-day. We have not too much time to work (but a week), as I made bold to tell him; but it appears this little work suggested itself to him suddenly,—in his sleep, as he says. It is a fairy libretto, and I should imagine of first-rate attraction. This is the score; and as it is only in manuscript, I need not say all our care is required to preserve it just as it now is. Your part, Auchester, will be sufficiently obvious when you look it over with the Fräulein Cerinthia, as she is good enough to permit you to do so; but you had better not look at it at all until that time."

"But, sir, she can't undertake to perfect me in the fiddle part, can she?"

"She could, I have no doubt, were it necessary," said Anastase, not satirically, but seriously; "but it just happens you are not to play."

"Not to play! Then what on earth am I to do? Sing?"

"Just so,—sing."

"Oh, how exquisite! but I have not sung for ever so long. In a chorus, I suppose, sir?"

"By no means. You see, Auchester, *I* don't know your vocal powers, and may not do you justice; but the Chevalier is pleased to prefer them to all others for this special part."

"But I never sang to him."

"He has a prepossession, I suppose. At all events, it will be rather a ticklish position for you, as 86
you are to exhibit yourself and your voice in counterpart to the person who takes the precedence of all others in songful and personal gifts."

"Sir,"—I was astonished, for his still voice thrilled with the slightest tremble, and I knew he meant Maria,—"I am not fit to sing with her, or to stand by her, I know; but I think perhaps I could manage better than most other people, for most persons would be thinking of their own voices, and how to set them off against *hers*; now I shall only think how to keep my voice down,

so that hers may sound above it, and everybody may listen to it, rather than to mine."

Maria looked continually in her lap, but her lips moved. "Will you not love him, Florimond?" she whispered, and something more; but I only heard this.

"I could well, Maria, if I had any love left to bestow; but you know how it is. I am not surprised at Charles's worship."

It was the first time he had called me Charles, and I liked it very well,—him better than ever.

"I suppose, sir, I *may* have a look at the score, though?"

"No, you may not," said Maria, "for I don't mean we should use this copy. I shall write it all out first."

"But that will be useless," answered Anastase; "he made that copy for us."

"I beg your pardon; I took care to ask him, and he has only written out the parts for the instruments. He thinks nothing of throwing about his writing; but it shall be preserved, for all that."

"And how do you mean to achieve this copy?" demanded Anastase. "When will it be written?" 87

"It will be ready to-morrow morning."

"Fräulein Cerinthia!" I cried, aghast, "you are not going to sit up all night?"

"No, she is not," returned Anastase, coolly; and he left the sofa and walked to the table in the window where it lay,—a green-bound oblong volume of no slight thickness. "I take this home with me, Maria; and you will not see it until to-morrow at recreation time, when I will arrange for Auchester to join you, and you shall do what you can together."

"Thanks, sir! but surely you won't sit up all night?"

"No, I shall not, nor will a copy be made. In the first place, it will not be proper to make a copy. Leave has not been given, and it cannot be thought of without leave,—did you not know that, Maria? No, I shall not sit up; I am too well off, and far too selfish, too considerate perhaps, besides, to wish to be ill."

Maria bore this as if she were thinking of something else,—namely, Florimond's forehead, on which she had fixed her eyes; and truly, as he stood in the full light which so few contours pass into without detriment, it looked like lambent pearl beneath the golden shadow of his calm brown hair.

My hand was on the back of the sofa; she caught it suddenly in her own and pressed it, as if stirred to commotion by agony of bliss; and at the same moment, yet looking on him, she said, "I wonder whether the Chevalier had so many fine reasons when he chose somebody to administer the leadership, or whether he did it simply because there was no better to be had?"

He smiled, still looking at the book, which he had safely imprisoned between his two arms. "Most likely, in all simplicity. But a leader, even of an orchestra, under *his* direction is not a fairy queen." 88

"Is Herr Anastase to lead the violins, then? How glorious!" I said to Maria.

"I knew you would say so. What then can go wrong?"

"And now I know what the Chevalier meant when he said, 'I must go find my queen.' You are to be Titania."

"They say so. You shall hear all to-morrow,—I have not thought about it, for when Florimond brought me home, I was thinking of something else."

"He brought you home, then?"

"And told me on the way. But he had to tell me all over again when we came upstairs."

"But about the rehearsals?"

"We shall rehearse here, in this very room, and also with the orchestra at a room in the village where the Chevalier will meet us; for he has his parents staying with him, and they are to know nothing that is to happen."

"I wish I could begin to study it to-night; I am so dreadfully out of voice since I had my violin,—I have never sung at all, indeed, except on Sundays, and then one does not hear one's self sing at all."

"It is of no consequence, for the Chevalier told us your master, Aronach, told him that your voice was like your violin, but that it would not do to tell you so, because you might lose it, and your violin, once gained, you could never lose."

"That is true; but how very kind of him to say so! He need not have been afraid, though, for all I am so fond of singing. Perhaps he was afraid of making me vain."

Anastase caught me up quickly. "Carl, do not speak nonsense. No musicians are vain; no true

artists, ever so young: they could no more be vain than the angels of the Most High!" 89

"Well said, Florimond!" cried Maria, in a moment. "But it strikes me that many a false artist, fallen-angel like, indulges in that propensity; so that it is best to guard against the possibility of being suspected, by announcing, with free tongues, the pride we have in our art."

"That is better to be announced by free fingers, or a voice like thine, than by tongues, however free; for even the false prophet can prate of truth."

I perceived now the turn they were taking; so I said, "And do miracles in the name of music too, sir, can't they?—like Marc Iskar, who, I know, is not a true artist, for all that."

Anastase raised his brows. "True artists avoid personalities: that is the reason why we should use our hands instead of our tongues. Play a false artist down by the interpretation of true music; but never cavil, out of music, about what is false and true."

"Florimond, that is worthy to be your creed! You have mastery; we are only children."

"And children always chatter,—I remember that; but it is, perhaps, scarcely fair to blame those who own the power of expression for using it, when we feel our own tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth."

"So generous, too!" I thought; and the thought fastened on me. I felt more than ever satisfied that all should remain as it was between them. 90

CHAPTER V.[5]

The day had come, the evening,—an early evening; for entertainments are early in Germany, or were so in my German days. The band had preceded us, and we four drove alone,—Maria, shrouded in her mantilla, which she had never abandoned, little Josephine, Anastase, and myself. Lumberingly enough under any other circumstances; on this occasion as if in an aërial car. Dark 91
glitter fell from pine-groves, the sun called out the green fields, the wild flowers looked enchanted; but for quite two hours we met no one, and saw nothing that reminded us of our destination. At length, issuing from a valley haunted by the oldest trees, and opening upon the freest upland, we beheld an ancient house all gabled, pine-darkened also from behind, but with torrents of flowers in front sweeping its windows and trailing heavily upon the stone of the illustrated gateway. A new-made lawn, itself more moss than grass, was also islanded with flowers in a thick mosaic: almost English in taste and keeping was this garden-land. I had expected something of the kind from the allusion of the Chevalier; but it was evident much had been done,—more than any could have done but himself to mask in such loveliness that gray seclusion. The gateway was already studded with bright-hued lamps unlighted, hung among the swinging garlands; and as we entered we were smitten through and through with the festal fragrance. In the entrance-hall I grew bewildered, and only desired to keep as near to Anastase and Maria as possible. Here we were left a few minutes, as it were, alone; and while I was expecting a special retainer to lead us again thence, as in England, the curtain of a somewhat obscure gateway, at the end of the space, was thrust aside, and a little hand beckoned us instantaneously forward. Forward we all flew, and I was the first to sunder the folded damask and stand clear of the mystery. As I passed beneath it, and felt who stood so near me, I was subdued, and not the less when I discovered where I stood. It was in a little theatre, real and sound, but of design rare as if raised within an Oriental dream. We entered at the side of the 92
stage; before us, tier above tier, stretched tiny boxes with a single chair in each, and over each, festooned, a curtain of softest rose-color met another of softest blue. The central chandelier, as yet unlighted, hung like a gigantic dewdrop from a grove of oak-branches, and the workmen were yet nailing long green wreaths from front to front of the nest-like boxes. Seraphael had been directing, and he led us onward to the centre of the house.

"How exquisite!"—"How dream-like!"—"How fairy!" broke from one and another; but I was quite in a maze at present, and in mortal fear of forgetting my part. The Chevalier, in complete undress, was pale and restless; still to us all he seemed to cling, passing amidst us confidingly, as a fearful and shy-smitten child. I thought I understood this mood, but was not prepared for its sudden alteration; for he called to some one behind the curtain, and the curtain rose,—rose upon the empty theatre, with the scenery complete for the first act. And then the soul of all that scenery, the light of the fairy life, flashed back into his eyes; elfin-like in his jubilance, he clapped those little hands. Our satisfaction charmed him. But I must not anticipate. Letting the curtain again fall, he preceded us to the back of the scenery; and I will not, because I cannot in conscience, reveal what took place in that seclusion for artists great and small,—sacred itself to art, and upon which no one dwells who is pressing onward to the demonstration, ever so reduced and concentrated, of art in its highest form.

At seven o'clock the curtain finally rose. It rose upon that tiny theatre crowded now with clustering faces, upon the chandelier, all glittering, like a sphere of water with a soul of fire, the lingering day-beams shut out and shaded by a leaf-like screen. Out of all precedent the curtain 93
rose, not even on the overture; for as yet not a note had sounded, since the orchestra was tuned,

before the theatre filled. It rose upon a hedge of mingled green and silver, densely tangled leafage, and a burst of moon-colorless flowers, veiling every player from view, and hiding every instrument of the silent throng, who, with arm and bow uplifted, awaited the magic summons. But by all the names of magic, how arose that flower-tower in the midst? For raised above the screen of sylvan symbol was a turret of roots, entwisted as one sees in old oaks that interlace their gnarled arms, facing the audience, and also in sight of the orchestra; and this wild nest was clad with silver lilies twice the size of life, whose drooping buds made a coronal of the margin where the turret edged into the air. And in the turret, azure-robed, glitter-winged,—those wings sweeping the folded lilies as with the lustrous shadow of their light,—stood our Ariel, the Ariel of our imaginations, the Ariel of that haunted music, yet unspelled from the silent strings and pipes!

We behind, among the rocks,—those gently painted rocks that faded into a heavenly distance,—could only glimpse that delicate form, hovering amidst up-climbing lilies, those silver-shadowy plumes; that glorious face was shining into the light of the theatre itself, and we waited for his voice to reassure us. We need not have feared, even Maria and I. I was quivering and shuddering; but yet she did not sigh, her confidence was too unshaken, albeit in such a trying position, so minutely critical to maintain, did author perhaps never appear. In an instant, as the first soft blaze had broken on the world in front, did our Ariel raise his wand, no longer *like* the stem of a 94
lily, but a lily-stem itself, all set with silver leaves, and whose crowning blossom sparkled with silver frostwork. He raised it, but not yet again let it sweep,—descending downwards, on the contrary, he clasped it in his roseate lilied fingers; and all amidst the great white buds, that made him shrink to elfin clearness, he began, in a voice that might have been the soul of that charmed orchestra, to recite the little prologue, which may thus be rendered into English:

"A while ago, a long bright while, I dwelt
In that old Island with my Prospero.
He gave, not lent, me Freedom, which I fed
Sometimes on spicy airs that heavenward roll
From flowers that wing their spirits to the stars,
And scented shade that droppeth fruit or balm.
But soon a change smote through me, and I fell
Weary of stillness in the wide blue day,
Weary of breathless beauty, where the rose
Of sunset flushes with no fragrant sigh,
For that my soul was native with the spheres
Where music makes an everlasting morn.
All music in that ancient isle was mine
That pulsed the air or floated on the calm,—
Old music veiled in the bemoaning breeze,
Or whispering kisses to the yearning sea,
Where foam upblown sprayed with its liquid stars
My plumes for all their dim cerulean grain.
From age to age the lonely tones I stored
In crystal deeps of unheard memory;
Froze them with virgin cold fast to the cups
Of wavering lilies; bade the roses bind
The orbed harmonies in burning rest;
Thrilled with that dread elixir, dreaming song,
The veins of violets; made the green gloom
Of myrtle-leaves hush the sounds intricate;
Charged the deep cedars with all mourning chords.
And having wide and far diffused my wealth,—
Safe garnered, spelled, unknown of reasoning men,— 95
I long to summon it, to disenchant
My most melodious treasure breathless hid
In bell and blade, in blossom-blush and buds
And mystic verdure, the soft shade of rest.
Methinks in this wild wood, this home of flowers,
My harmonies are clustered; yea, I feel
The voiceless silence stir with voiceful awe;
I feel the fanning of a thousand airs
That will not be repressed, that crave to wake
In resurrection of tone infinite
From the tranced beauty, her divinest death.
Arise, my spirits! wake, my slumbering spells!
Dawn on the dreamland of these alien dells!"

As the last words died away, pronounced alike with the rest in accents so peculiar, yet so pure, so soft, yet so unshaken,—he swept the stem of lilies around his brow. The frosted flower flashed shudderingly against the lamplight, and with its motion without a pause opened the overture, as by those words themselves invoked and magically won from the abyss of sylvan silence. Three long, longing sighs from the unseen wind instruments, in withering notes, prepared the brain for the rush of fairy melody that was as the subtlest essences of thought and fragrance enfranchised. The elfin progression, *prestissimo*, of the subject, was scarcely realized as the full suggestion dawned of the leafy shivering it portrayed. The violins, their splendors concentrated like the rainbows of the dewdrops, seemed but the veiling voices for that ideal strain to filter through; and yet, when the horns spoke out, a blaze of golden notes, one felt the deeper glory of the strings to be more than ever quenchless as they returned to that ever-pulsing flow. Accumulating

in orchestral richness, as if flower after flower of music were unsheathing to the sun, no words, no expression self-agonized to caricature, can describe that fairy overture. I am only reverting to the feeling, the passion it suggested; not to its existent art and actual interpretation. 96

Its dissolution not immediate, but at its fullest stream subsiding, ebbing, seemed, instead of breaking up and scattering the ideal impression received, to retain it and expand it in itself through another transition of ecstasy into a musical state beyond. During the ethereal modulations, by a sudden illumination of the stage, the scenery behind uncurtained all along, started into light. Still beneath the leafy cloud, by mystic management, the hidden band reposed; but before the audience a sylvan dream had spread. The time was sunset, and upon those hills I spoke of it seemed to blush and burn, still leaving the foreground distinct in a sort of pearly shadow. That foreground was masked in verdure, itself precipitous with descending sides clothed thick with shrubs that lifted their red bells clear to the crimson beams behind, and shelving into a bed of enormous leaves of black-green growth such as one sometimes comes upon in the very core of the forest. Beneath those leaves we nestled, Maria and I. I can only speak of what I felt and others saw; not of that which any of us heard. For simultaneously with the blissful modulation into the keynote of the primeval strain, we began our part side by side unseen. It was a duet for Titania and Oberon, the alto being mine, the mezzo-soprano hers; and it was to be treated with the most distant softness. The excitement had overpassed its crisis with me, and no calm could have been more trance-like than that of both our voices, so far fulfilling his aspiration, which conceived for that effect all the passionless serenity of a nature devoid of pain,—the prerogative of a fairy life alone. 97

"Ariel, we hear thee!
Slumbering, dreaming, near thee,
Bursting from control
As from death the soul,
From the bud the flower,
From the will the power;
Risen, by the spell
Thou alone canst quell,
Hear we, Ariel,
Ariel, we feel thee!
Music, to reveal thee,
Drowns, as dawn the night,
Us in thy delight.
We, immortal, own
Thee supreme alone.
Strongest, in the spell
Thou canst raise or quell,
Feel we, Ariel!"

And Maria shook the leaves above her spreading, and waving aside the broad-green fans, stood out to the audience as a freshly blossomed idea from the shadows of a poet's dream. For here had music and poetry met together, here even as righteousness and peace had embraced, heaven-sent and spiritual; nor was there aught of earth in that fancy hour. I was nearest her, and supported her with my arm; her floating scarf, transparent, spangled, fell upon my own rose-hued mantle, which blushed through its lucid mist. Her hair, trembling with water-like gems, clothed her to the very knees; her cheek was white as her streaming robe, but her eye was as a midnight moon, bright yet lambent; and while she sang she looked at Anastase, as he stood a little above the others in the band, and appeared to have eyes for his violin alone. The next movement was a fairy march *pianissimo*,—a rustling, gathering accompaniment that muffled a measure delicate as precise: it was as for the marshalling of troops of fairies, who by the shifting of the scenery 98 appeared clustering to the stems of the red foxgloves that bent not beneath that fragile weight. And as the march waned ravishingly, another verse arose for the duet we sang,—

"Ariel, behold us!
In thy strains enfold us,
Minding but that we
Ministrant may be.
On thy freak or sport
Waits our fairy court:
Mortals cannot tell
How to cross thy spell,
Nor we, Ariel!"

And Ariel lifted the lily wand, and silence awaited his reply. Still, while he spoke in that recitative so singularly contrasting with the voice of any song, might be heard weird snatches from the veiled orchestra, as if music fainted from delight of him,—strange sounds, indeed, now sigh, now sob, that broke against his unfaltering accents, yet disturbed them not.

"Friends, royal darlings of mine ancient age,
Welcome, right welcome, in the realm of sound
To majesty and honor! Sooth to say
Long time I languished for your presences
That nothing save our Music seeks and finds;
Though Poesy seeks to find and has not met,
As we, through might of Music, face to face.

Your potence is my boon; I bid it work
With mine own spells, in soul-like, eager flame
To flash about my spirit and make day,
Till, as in times of old, we shine as one.
Far in those undulating vales apart
A castle lifts its glittering ghostly hue,
In whose calm walls, that years spare tenderly,
Dwelleth the rival soul of Faërie
And Music,—one whose very name is spell 99
Immutable,—for that fixed name is Love.
And Love holds yonder his best festal rite
This evening, when the moontime draweth nigh.
Twain souls love there, and meet; but not as cleft
By late long parting—they have met and loved
Years upon years, since youth; none ever loved
So long as they unparted, unappalled,
Save my Titania and her Oberon!
For twenty-five their one-like summers count
Since the dim rapture of the bridal dream.
Such among mortals jubilant they call
The Silver Wedding,—rare and purer crown
Than the wreathed myrtle of the marriage morn.
All that is rare and pure is of our own;
Our elements mix gladly into joy:
But chiefly Love is our own atmosphere,
And chiefly those who love our pensioners
Remain,—for where unsullied Love remains,
Doth Faërie consecrate its festal strains."

The curtain fell on the first act as Ariel finished speaking. Again rising, the scene indeed had changed. The gray castle immediately fronted the audience, its buttresses glistening in the perfect moonlight, the full languid orb itself divided by the dark edge of a tower. The many windows shone ruby with the gleam inside that seemed ready to pour through the stonework; and on the ground-floor especially, the radiance was as if sun-lamps blazed within. And midst the blaze, scarcely softened by the outer silver shine, rose the exciting, exhilarating burden of an exquisite dance-measure, brilliant, almost delirious; albeit distance-clouded, as it issued from another band behind the stage. The long, straight alleys of moon-bathed lindens to which the waltz-whirlwind floated, parted on either hand and left a smooth expanse of lawn, now white, heaving like a moon-kissed sea; and as soon as the measure had passed into its glad refrain, two 100
little Loves struck from the lime avenues to the lawn, directly before the ball-room. I call them Loves; but they were anything but Cupids, for they were mystical little creatures enough, and in the prevailing moonlight showed like bright birds of blushing plumage as they each carried a roseate torch of tinted flame that made their small bodies look much like flame themselves. They were no others than Josephine and my own Starwood; but it would have been impossible to recognize them unprepared. As they stood they paused an instant, and then flung the torches high into the air against the side of the castle; and as the rose-flame kissed the moonbeams upon the walls, it was extinguished, but the whole building burst into an illumination entirely of silver lamps,—calm, not coruscant; translucent, streaming; itself like concentrated moonshine, or the light of the very lilies. And with the light that drank up into itself the rose-radiance, our Ariel with the silvered hedge, the lilies, the shine, the shimmer, swelled upon the vision in softest swiftness; and Ariel, leaning upon his nest, seemed listening to the dance symphonies afar.

Soon a great shout arose,—no elfin call, but a cry of wonder-stricken earthlings. And then the hall front opened,—a massy portal that rolled back; and out of the ball-room, amidst the diminishing dance-song, poured the dancers upon the lawn in ranks, their fluttering airy dresses passing into the silver light like clouds. And as they streamed forth, there broke a delicate peal of laughter in response to the wondering shout, accompanied by the top-notes of the violins, vividly *piano*; then Ariel arose, and himself addressed the multitude. Sharp, sweet notes in unison, intermitted this time with his words, but ceased when he turned to his fairy troop and incited them to do homage 101
to the name of love. Nor do I even essay to describe our feats subsequently, which might in their relation tend to deteriorate from the conviction that the illustrated music was all in all, not their companion, but their element and creator.

Except that in the last scene, after exhibiting every kind of charm that can co-exist with scenic transition, the portraits of the father and mother in whose honor the fairydom had united, appeared framed in an archway of lilies with their leaves of silver, painted with such skill that the imagery almost issued from the canvas; and while Titania and Oberon supported the lustrous framework on either hand,—themselves all shivering with the silver radiance,—on either hand, to form a vista from which the gazers caught the picture, rose trees of giant harebells, all silver,—white as if veined with moonshine; and the attendant fairies, springing winged from their roots, shook them until the tremulous silver shudder was, as it were, itself a sound,—for as they quivered, or seemed to quiver, did the final chorus in praise of wedded love rise chime upon chime from the fairy voices and the rapt Elysian orchestra.

"All that's bright must fade." This passionate proverb is trite and travestied enough, but neither in its interpretation of necessity irrelevant or grotesque. I do not envy those who would strangle melancholy as it is born into the soul; and again to quote, though from a source far higher and

less investigated, "There are woes ill bartered for the garishness of joy." Such troubles we may not christen in the name of sorrow, for sorrow concerns our personality; and in these we agonize for others, not a thought of self intrudes,—we only feel and know that we can do nothing, and are silent.

At this distance of time, with the mists of boyish inexperience upon my memory of myself, I can 102
only advert to the issues of that evening as they appeared. As they are, they can only be read where all things tell, where nothing that has happened shall be in vain, where mystery is eternal light. How strangely I recall the smothered sound, the long-repressed shout of rapture, that soared and pierced through the fallen and folded curtain,—the eminent oblivion of everything but him for whom it was uttered, or rather kept back. For the music bewitched them still, and they could no more realize their position in front, even among the garlanded tiers, than we behind, stumbling into regions of lampless chaos.

I felt I must faint if I could not retreat, and as instinctively I had sought for Maria's hand. I found it, and it saved me; for though I could not hear her speak, I knew she was leading me away. I had closed my eyes, and when I opened them we were together again in the little dressing-room that had been devoted to us alone, and in which we had robed and waited.

"Oh, Carlino!" said Maria, "I hope no one is coming, for I feel I must cry."

"Do not, pray!" I cried, for her paleness frightened me; "but let me help you to undress. I can do that, though I could not dress you, as the Chevalier seemed to think."

For the Chevalier had slyly entered beforehand and had himself invested her with the glittering costume. I was still in a dream of those elfin hands as they had sleeked the plumes and soothed the spangled undulations of the scarf, and I could not bear her to be denuded of them, they had become so natural now. I had stripped off my own roseate mantle and all the rest in a moment, and had my own coat on before she had moved from the chair into which she had flung herself, or 103
I had considered what was to be done next. I was running my fingers through my hair, somewhat distraught in fancy, when some one knocked at the door. I went to it, and beheld, as I expected, our Ariel,—*unarielized* yet, except that he had doffed his wings.

"Is she tired?" he whispered softly; "is she very tired?" And without even looking at me, he passed in and stood before her.

"Thank you for all your goodness!" said he, in the tenderest of all his voices, no longer cold, but as if fanned by the same fire that had scorched his delicate cheek to a hectic like the rose fresh open to the sun.

"And you, sir, oh you!" Maria exclaimed with enthusiasm, lifting her eyes from all that cloud of hair, as twin sunbeams from the dark of night. "Oh, your music! your music! it is of all that is the most divine, and nothing ever has been or shall be to excel it. It breaks the heart with beauty; it is for the soul that seeks and comprehends it, all in all. And will you not, as you even promised, reform the drama?"

"If it yet remains to me, after all is known; that I cannot yet discern. Infant germ of all my art's dread children, inspiration demands thee only!" He checked himself; but as naturally as if no deep, insufferable sentiment had imbued his words, his caressing calm returned. "I did not come for a compliment, I came to help you; also to bring you some pretty ice, made in a mould like a little bird in a little nest. But I will not give it you now, because you are too warm." He was smiling now, as he glanced downwards at the crystal plate he held.

"I am not warm," she answered, very indifferently, still with grateful intention, "and I should like 104
some ice better than anything, if you are so kind as to give it me."

"Let me feed you, then," was his sweet reply; and she made no resistance. And he fed her, spoonful by spoonful, presenting her with morsels so fairy that I felt he prolonged the opportunity vaguely, and almost wondered why. Before it was over, another knock came,—very impatient for so cool a hand, as it was that of Anastase himself. However, there was no exhilaration of manner on his part; one would not have thought he had just been playing the violin.

"They are all inquiring for you, sir," he said, very respectfully, to Seraphael; "your name is calling through and through the theatre."

"I daresay," replied the Chevalier lightly, daringly; but he made no show of moving, though Maria had finished the ice-bird and last straw of the nest. Then Anastase approached. "That weight of hair will tire you; let me fasten it up for you, Maria, and then we need detain no one, for Carl, I see, is ready." A change came upon the Chevalier; as if ice had passed upon his cheek, he paled, he turned proud to the very topmost steep of his shadeless brow, he laughed coldly but airily. "Oh, if that is it, and you want to get rid of us, Carl and I will go. Come, Carlomein, for we are both of us in the way; but I will say it is the first time any one ever dared to interfere between the queen and her chosen consort."

"It would be impossible," said Anastase, with still politeness, "that you should be in the way,—that is our case, indeed; but Maria, as *Maria*, would certainly not detain you."

"Maria, as Maria, would have said you are too good, sir, to notice the least of your servants,—too 105
good to have come and stayed; but," she added, looking at Anastase with her most enchanting sweetness, a smile like love itself, "*he* will always have it that I am content he should do

everything for me." I was astonished, for nothing, except the seasonable excitement, could have drawn forth such demonstration from her before the Chevalier. He was not looking at her, he looked at me vividly; I could not bear his eyes simultaneously with Maria's words, he had so allured my own, though I longed to gaze away.

"Come!" he continued, holding his hand to me, "come, Carlomein." I took his hand. He grasped me as if those elfin fingers were charged with lightning. I shook and trembled, even outwardly, but he drew me on with that convulsive pressure never heeding, and holding his head so high that the curls fell backwards from the forehead. We passed to the stage. He led me behind the stage—deserted, dim—to another door behind that, opened by waving drapery, to the garden-land. He led me in the air, round the outside of the temporary theatre, to the main front of the house, to the entrance through the hall, swiftly, silently, up the stairs into the corridor, and so to a chamber I had never known nor entered. I saw nothing that was in the room, and generally I see everything. I believe there were books; I felt there was an organ, and I heard it a long time afterwards. But I was only conscious this night that then I was with him,—shut up and closed together with his awful presence, in the travail of presentiment.

He had placed me on a seat, and he sat by me, still holding my hand; but his own was now relaxed and soft, the fingers cold, as if benumbed. 106

"Carlomein," he said, "I have always loved you, as you know; but I little thought it would be for this."

"How, sir? Why? I am frightened; for you look so strange and speak so strangely, and I feel as if I were going to die."

"I wish we both were! But do not be frightened. Ah! that is only excitement, my darling. You will let me call you so to-night?"

"Let you, dear, dearest sir! You have always been my darling. But I am too weak and young to be of any use to you; and that is why I wish to die."

"My child, if thou wert strong and manly, how could I confide in thee? Yet God forgive me if I show this little one too much too early!"

His eyes wore here an expression so divine, so little earthly that I turned away, still holding his hand, which I bathed in tears that fell shiveringly from my dull heart like rain from a sultry sky. It was the tone that pierced me; for I knew not what he meant, or only had a dream of perceiving *how much*.

"Sir, you could not tell me too much. You have taught me all I know already, and I don't intend ever to learn of anybody else."

"My child, it is God who taught thee. It is something thou hast to teach *me* now."

"Sir, is it anything about myself?" I chose to say so, but did not think it.

"No; about some one those eyes of thine do love to watch and wait on, so that sometimes I am almost jealous of thine eyes! But it cannot be a hardened jealousy while they are so baby-kind."

"It is Maria, then, sir, of course. But they are not babies,—my eyes, I mean; for they know all about her, and so do I. I know why sometimes she seems looking through us instead of at us. It is 107
because she is seeing other eyes in her soul, and our eyes are only just eyes to her, and nothing else,—you know what I mean, sir?"

I said all this because I had an instinctive dread of his self-betrayal beyond what was needed. Alas! I had not even curiosity left. But I was mistaken in him, so far. He leaned forwards, stroked my hair, and kissed it.

"Whose eyes, then, Carlomein?"

"My master, Anastase, is that person whose eyes I mean."

"Impossible! But I was wrong to ask thee. Assuredly, thou art an infant, and couldst even make me smile. That is a fancy only. Not Anastase, my child! Any one but Anastase."

What anguish curled beneath those coaxing tones!

"Sir, I know nothing about it, except that it is true. But that it is true I *do* know, for Maria told me so herself; and they will be married as soon as she is educated." I trembled as I spoke in sore dismay; for the truth was borne to me that moment in a flash of misery, and all I could feel was what I was fool enough to say, "Oh that I were Maria!" He turned to me in an instant; made a sort of motion with both his arms, like wings, having released the hand I held. I looked up now, and saw that a more awful paleness—a virgin shadow appalling as that of death—had fixed his features. I threw myself into his arms; he was very still, mute, all gentleness. I kissed the glistening dress, the spangled sleeves. He moved not, murmured not. At last my tears would flow. They rushed, they scalded; I called out of the midst of them, and heard that my own voice, child as I was, fell hollow through my hot lips.

"Oh, let my heart burst! Do let me break my heart!" I sobbed, and a shiver seemed to spread from 108
my frame to his. He brought me closer to his breast, and bowed his soft curls till they were wet with my wild weeping through and through. It heaved not. No passion swelled the pulses of that

heart; still he shivered as if his breath were passing. In many, many minutes I heard his voice; it was a voice all tremble, like a harp-string jarred and breaking. "Carlomein, you will ever be dearer to me than I can say from this night; for you have seen sorrow no man should have seen, and no woman could have suffered. You know what I wished; yet perhaps not yet,—how should you? Carlomein, when you become a man I hope you will love me as you do now when you know what I do feel, what I do wish. May you never despise suffering for my sake! May you never suffer as I do! You *only* could; I know no one else, poor child! God take you first, before you suffer *so*. You see the worst of it is, Carlomein, that we need not have suffered at all, if I had only known it from the beginning. But it is very strange, is it not?" He spoke as if inviting me to question him.

"What, dearest sir?"

"That she should not love me. How could she help it?"

Of all his words, few as they were indeed, these touched me most. I felt, indeed, how could she help it? But I was, child as I was, too wise to say so.

"You see, sir, she could not help loving Anastase!"

"Nor could I help loving her, nor can I; but the sorrow is, Carlomein, that neither on earth nor in heaven will she wish to be mine."

"Sir, in heaven it won't matter whether she married Anastase or not; for if she were perfect here, she could but love you, and *there* she will be perfect and will understand you, sir." 109

"Sweet religion, if true. Sweet philosophy,—false as pleasant."

"But, sir, you will not be unhappy, because it is of no use; and besides, she will find it out, and you would not like that. And you will not break your heart, sir, because of music."

"I should never break my heart, Carlchen, under any earthly circumstances." He smiled upon me indifferently; a pure disdain chiselled every feature in that attitude. "There is now no more to be said. I need scarcely say, my child, never speak of this. But I *will* command you to forget it—as I forget—have already forgotten."

He rose, and passed his hand, with weary grace, over the curls that had fallen forward; and then he took me by the hand and we went out together, I knew not whither.

I returned that night with my brother and sister to Cecilia. I never had taken part in a scene so brilliant as the concluding banquet, which was in the open air, and under shade lamp-fruited; but I knew nothing that happened to me, was cold all over, and for a time, at least, laid aside my very consciousness. Millicent was positively alarmed by my paleness, which she attributed, neither wrongly, to excitement; and it was in consequence of her suspicion that we retired very early.

We met no one,—having bowed to the king and queen of the night's festival,—nor did I behold the Chevalier, except in the distance, as he glided from table to table to watch that all should fare well at them, though he never sat himself. Maria was seated by Anastase. I noticed them, but did not gaze upon them. Their aspect sickened me. It was well that Millicent believed me ill, for I was 110 thus not obliged to speak, and she and Davy had it all to themselves on the road.

That time, when she got me to bed, I became strangely affected in a fashion of my own, and not sleeping at all, was compelled to remain there day after day for a week, not having the most shadowy notion of that which was my affection. It was convenient that Davy knew a great deal about such suffering on his own account, or I might have been severely tampered with. He would not send for a doctor, as he understood what was the matter with me; and presently I got right. In fact, my nerves, ever in my way, were asserting themselves furiously; and as I needed no physic, I took none, but trusted Davy and kept quiet.

I heard upon my resuscitation that Maria, Anastase, and Delemann had all been to inquire after me, and, oh, strange sweetness! also the Chevalier. It was some satisfaction when Millicent said he was looking very well and had talked to her for half an hour. This news tended most to my restoration of anything; and it was not ten days before I returned to school, my people having left the village the same morning only.

I saw as much of Anastase as before, now; but I felt as if till now I had never known him, nor of how infinite importance a finite creature may become under certain circumstances. In a day or two I had worked up to the mark sufficiently to permit myself a breath of leisure; and towards the afternoon I went after Maria, to accompany her home. This she permitted; but I knew that Anastase would be with her in the evening, and refused her invitation to enter, for I felt I could not bear to see them together just then. I entreated her, therefore, to take a walk with me 111 instead. She hesitated, on account of her preparation for the morrow; but when I reminded her that Anastase desired her to walk abroad daily, she assented. "Florimond would be pleased."

Up the green sides of the hill we wandered, and again into the valley. It was a mild day, with no rude wind to break the silken thread of conversation, and I was mad to talk to her. I could hardly tell how to begin, though I knew what I wanted to find out well enough; but I need not have been afraid. She was singularly unsuspicious.

"So, Carl," she began herself, "the Chevalier took you into his room,—his very room where he writes, was it?"

"I don't know," I said, "whether he writes there. I should think he would write anywhere. But it was stuffed full of books and had an organ."

"A large organ?"

Heaven help and pardon me! I had not seen anything in the room specifically; but I drew upon my imagination,—usually a lively spring enough.

"Oh! yes, a very large organ, with beautiful carving about it,—cherubs above, with their wings spread, I believe; and the books bound exquisitely, and set in cabinets."

"What sort of furniture?"

"I don't know. Oh! I think it was dark red, and very rich looking. Embroidered cloths, too, upon the tables and sofas,—but really I may be mistaken, because, you see, I was not looking at them."

"No, I should think not. Carnation is his favorite color, you know; he told me so."

"He tells you everything, I think, Maria."

"Yes, of course he does,—just as one talks to a little child that asks for stories." 112

"That is not the reason,—it cannot be. Besides, he always talks about himself to you, and one never talks about one's self to children."

"Do not you? But, Carl, he chiefly talks to me about music."

"And for that, is he not himself music? But, Maria, I can, telling you his favorite color, talking about himself as much as if he told you he had a headache."

"Well, Carl, he did come to me when he had scratched his finger and ask me to tie it up."

"And did you? Was that since *the* evening?"

"It was the day before yesterday. He was going to play somewhere. But, Carl, we shall not hear him play again."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean not until next year. He is going to travel."

"To travel—going away—where—who with?" I was stupid.

"He told us all so the other day,—just before you returned, Carl. He went through all the class-rooms to bid farewell. I was in the second singing-room with Spoda and two or three others. He spoke to Spoda, 'Have you any commands for Italy,—any part of Italy? I am going unexpectedly, or we would have had a concert first; but now we must wait until May for our concert.' Spoda behaved very well and exhibited no surprise, only showered forth his *confetti* speeches about parting. Then the Chevalier bowed to us who were there and said, 'My heart will be half here, and I shall hope to find Cecilia upon the self-same hill,—not a stone wanting.' And then he sighed; but otherwise he looked exceedingly happy. And who, do you think, is going with him?"

"His father, I should imagine." 113

"No; old Aronach, and your little friend,—who, Carl, I suspect, makes a sort of chevalier of you, from what I hear."

"Yes; he is very fond of me. But, Maria, what is he going away for? Is he going to be married?"

She smiled with her own peculiar expression,—wayward, yet warm.

"Oh, dear, no! nothing of the kind, I am sure. I cannot fancy the Chevalier in love even. It seems most absurd."

"I do not think that; he is too lovable not to be loved."

"And that is just why he never will love—to marry, I mean—until he has tried everything else and pleased himself in every manner."

"Maria, how do you know? And do you think he will marry one day?"

"Carl, I believe there is not anything he will not do; and yet he will be happy, very happy,—only not as he expects. I am certain the Chevalier thinks he should find as much in love as in music,—for himself, I mean. Now, I believe it would be nothing to him in comparison."

I could scarcely contain myself, I so sincerely felt that she was mistaken. But I seriously resolved to humor her, lest I should say too much, or she should say too little.

"Oh, of course! But I don't think he would *expect* to find more in love, because he knows how he is loved."

"Not *how*, Carl, only how much."

"But, Maria, I fancy he wants as much love as music; and that is plenty."

"But, Carl, he makes the music, and we love him in it, just as we love God in His works; and I 114

cannot conceive of any love being acceptable to him when it infringed his right as supreme."

"You mean that he is proud."

"So proud that if love came to him without music, I don't think he would take any notice of it."

I felt as surely as she did, sure of that singular pride, but also that it was not a fallen pride, and that she could read it not.

"You mean, Maria, that if you and I were not musical,—supposing such a thing to be possible,—he would not like us nor treat us as he does now?"

"I know he would not."

"But then it would be impossible for us to be as we are if we were changed as to music, and we could not love as we do."

"I don't think that has anything to do with it, and indeed I am sure not. You see, Carl, you make me speak to you openly. I have never done so before, and I should not, but that you force me to it, —not that I dislike to speak of it, for I think of nothing else,—but that it might be troublesome."

Could it be that she was about, in any sense, to open her heart? Mine felt as if it had collapsed, and would never expand again; but I was very rejoiced, for many reasons.

"Oh, Maria! if I could hear you talk all day about your own feelings, I should know really that you cared to be my friend; but I could not ask you to do so, nor wish, unless you did."

"Carl, if you were not younger than I am I should hesitate, and still more if, where I came from, we did not become grown up so fast that our lives seem too quick, too bright! Oh! I have often thought so, and shall think so again; but I will not now, because I intend to be very happy. You 115
know, Carl, you cannot understand, though you may *feel*, what I feel when I think of Florimond. And it is possible you think him higher than I do, for you do him justice now."

"I suppose I do,—I am very certain that I adore his playing."

"I do not care for his playing, or scarcely. And yet I am aware that it is the playing of a master, of a musician, and I am proud to say so. Still, I would rather be that violin than hear it, and endure the sweet anguish he pours into it than be as I am, so far more divided from him than it is."

"Maria!"

"But Florimond does not mind my feeling this, or I should not say it,—on the contrary, he feels the same; and when first Heaven made him love me, he felt it even then."

"Was that long ago, Maria?"

"It is beginning to be a long time, for it was in the summer that I was twelve, before my father died. I was in France that summer, and very miserable, working hard and seeming to do nothing, for my father, rest his soul! was very severe with me, and petted Josephine,—for which I thank and praise him, and love her all the better. We were twenty miles from Paris, and lodged in a cottage whose roof was all ruins; but it was a dry year, and no harm came,—besides, we had been brought up like gypsies, and were sometimes taken for them. In the day I practised my voice and studied Italian or German; then prepared our dinner, which we ate under a tree in the garden, Josephine and I, though she was almost a baby then, and slept half her time. One noon she was asleep upon the grass, and I was playing with the flowers she had plucked, with no sabots on, for 116
I was very warm, when I heard a step and peeped behind that tree. I saw a boy, or, as I thought him, a very wonderful man, putting aside the boughs to look upon me. You have told me, Carl, how you felt when you first saw the Chevalier; well, it was a little as I felt when I saw that face, only instead of looking on, as you did, I was obliged to look away and hide my eyes with my hand. He was, to my sight, more beautiful than anything I had ever seen or dreamed about; and therefore I could not look upon him, for I know I was not thinking about myself. Still, I felt sure he was coming to speak to me, and so he did; but not for a long time, for he stepped round the tree and sat down upon the turf just near me, and played with the sabots and the wild thyme I had played with, and presently put out his hand to stroke Josephine's hair as it lay in my lap. I never thought of being angry, or of wondering at him even, for the longer I had him near me, the better, though I was rather frightened lest my father should return; but at last he did speak, and when once he began, there was not soon an end. We talked of all things. I can remember nothing, but I do know this,—that we never spoke of music, except that I told how I passed my time, and how my father taught me. He went away before Josephine awoke, and nobody knew he had come; but I returned the next day to the place where I had seen him, and again I found him there. In that country one could do such things, and it was the hour my father was absent,—for he had other pupils at the houses of the inhabitants several miles about, and we lived frugally, in order that he might give us all advantages when we should be old enough. I saw Florimond every day for a week, and then for a week he never came. That week I was taken ill,—I could not help it; I 117
was too young to hide it. And when he came again, I told him I should have died if he had stayed away. And then he said that he loved me, but that he was going a journey, and should not for a long time see me again, but that I was never, never to forget him; and he gave me a bit of his hair softer than any curl. I gave him, too, my mother's ring, that I had always kept warm in my bosom; and I never even lamented that he was departed, because I knew I should be his forever. We had a long, long talk,—of feelings and fears and mysteries, of the flowers of heaven and earth, of

glory and bliss, of hope and ecstasy. We poured out our hearts together, and did not even trouble ourselves to say we loved. I think he was there three hours; but I sent him away myself, just in time to be quite ready, and not at all in a tremble, for my father's supper. Papa came home by sunset, much later than usual, and I tried hard to wake up, but was as a wanderer in sleep, until he took from his pocket a parcel and gave it me to open. He was in great good humor to-night, for he had heard of my brother's success at the Académie; but it was not my brother who sent the parcel, which contained two tickets for a grand concert in Paris the next morning, and a little anonymous billet to beg that we would go, I and my father.

"My father was much flattered, and still more because there was a handful of gold to pay the expenses of our journey. This settled the matter; we did go in the diligence that night. I took my best frock and gloves, and we slept at a grand hotel for once in our lives, and supped there, and breakfasted the next morning before setting out for the concert. When I walked into the streets 118
with my father I envied the ladies their bonnets,—for I had not even my mantilla, it was too shabby; and I wore alone a wreath of ivy that I had gathered from under that very tree at home, and I was thinking too seriously of one only person to wish to see or to be seen. We went into the very best places, but I thought as I sat down how I must have changed in a short time; for a little while before I would have almost sold myself to go to this same concert, and now I did not care. There was a grand vocal trio first, and then a fantasia for the harp, and then a tenor solo. But next in the programme came one of Fesca's solos for the violin; and when I saw the violinist come up into the front, I fell backwards, and should have swooned had he not begun to play. His tones sustained me, drew me upwards; it was Florimond,—my Florimond; mine then as now."

"I thought it would turn out so," I exclaimed, rudely enough. "But, Maria, when you said music had nothing to do with love, I think you were mistaken, or that you misunderstood yourself; for though I can't express it, I am sure that our being musical makes a great difference in the way we feel, and that though we don't allude to it, it will go through everything, and make us what we are."

"Perhaps you are right, and, Carl, I should not like to contradict you; but I know I should have loved Florimond if he had not been a musician,—if he had been a shoemaker, for instance."

"Yes, because he still might have been musical; and if the music had remained within him, it might have influenced his feelings even more than it does now."

"Carl, but I don't love in that way all those who are musical, therefore why must it be the music that makes me love *him*? What will you say to me, now, when I tell you I cannot imagine wishing 119
to marry the Chevalier?"

"Maria!"

"Carl, I could not; it would abase the power of worship in my soul, it would cloud my idea of heaven, it would crush all my life within me. I should be transported into a place where the water was all light and I could not drink, the air was all fire to wither me. I should flee from myself in him, and in fleeing, die."

Her strange words, so unlike her youth, consumed my doubts as she pronounced them. I shuddered inwardly, but strove to keep serene. "Maria, that may be because you had loved when you saw him, and it would have been impossible for you to be inconstant."

"Carlino, no. You and I are talking of droll things for a girl and a boy; but I would rather you knew me well, because, perhaps, it will help you when you grow up to understand some lady better than you would if I did not speak so openly. Under no circumstances could I have loved him so as to wish to belong to him in that sense. For, Carl, though it might have been inconstant, it would not have been unfaithful to myself if I had seen and loved him better than Florimond; it might have been that I had not before found out what I ought to submit my soul to, nor could I have helped it; such things have happened to many, I daresay,—to many natures, but not to mine; if I feel once, it is entirely and for always, and I cannot think how it is that so few women, even of my own race, are so unfixed about their feelings and have so many fancies. I sometimes believe there is a reason for my being different, which, if it is true, will make him sadder than the saddest,—
you can guess what I mean?" 120

"Yes, Maria, but I know there is nothing in it; it is what my mother would call a morbid presentiment, and I wish she could talk to you about it. I should think there might be truth in it, but that it always proves false. My sister had it once, so had my dear brother, Mr. Davy. I don't believe people have it when they are really going to die."

"It is not a morbid presentiment, for 'morbid' means 'diseased,' and I am sure I am not diseased; but my idea is that people who form so fast cannot live long. I am only fifteen, and I feel as if I had lived longer than anybody I know."

"Then," said I, laughing, for I felt it was wrong to permit her much range here, "I shall die soon, Maria."

"No, Carl. You are not formed; you are like an infant,—your heart tells itself out, one may count its beats and sing songs to them, as Florimond says; but your brain keeps you back, though it is itself so forward."

I was utterly puzzled. "I don't understand, Maria."

"But you will, some time. Your brain is burning, busy, always dreaming and working. The dreams of the brain are often those which play through the slumbers of the heart. If your heart even awoke, your brain would still have the upper hand, and would keep down, keep back your heart. There is no fear for you, Carl, passionate as you are."

"Well, Maria, I must confess it frightens me a little when you talk so,—first, because you are so young yourself; and secondly, because if it is all true, how much you must know,—you must know almost more than you feel; it is too much for a girl to know, or a boy either, and I would rather know nothing than so very much." 121

"Carl, all that I know I get from my heart. I am really excessively ignorant, and can teach and tell of nothing in the world but love. That is my life and my faith; and when my heart is bathing in the love that is my own on earth, all earth seems to sink beneath my feet, and I tremble as if raised to heaven. I feel as if God were behind my joy, and as if it must be more than every other knowledge to make me feel so. And when I sing, it is the same,—the music wraps up the love; I feel it more and more."

"But, Maria, you are so awfully musical."

"Carl, till I knew Florimond I never really sang. I practised, it is true, and was very sick of failures; but *then* my voice grew clear and strong, and I found what it was meant for,—therefore I cannot be so musical as you are. And I revere you for it, Carl, and prophesy of you such performances that you can never excel them, however much you excel."

"Why, Maria, how we used to talk about music together!"

"I did not know you so well then, Carl; but do you suppose that music, in one sense, is not all to me? I sometimes think when women try to rise too high, either in their deeds or their desires, that the spirit which bade them so rise sinks back again beneath the weakness of their earthly constitution and never appeals again; or else that the spirit, being too strong, does away with the mortal altogether,—they die, or rather they live again."

"Do you ever talk in this strange manner to Anastase, Maria,—I mean, do you tell him you love him better than music?"

"He knows of himself, not but that I have often told him; but you may imagine how I love him, Carl, when I tell you he loves music better than me, and yet I would have it so, chiefly for one reason." 122

"What is that?"

"That if I am taken from him he will still have something to live for until we meet again."

It is a strange truth that I was unappalled and scarcely touched by these pathetic hints of hers; in fact, looking at her then, it was as impossible to associate with her radiant beauty any idea of death as for any but the most tasteless moralist to attach it to a new-blown rose-flower with stainless petals. It was a day also of the most perfect weather, and the suggestion to my mind was that neither the day nor she—neither the brilliant vault above, nor those transparent eyes—could ever "change or pass." I was occupied besides in reflecting upon the mystery that divided the two souls I felt ought never to have been separated, even *thought* of, apart. I did not know then how far she was right in her mystical assertion that the premature fulness of the brain maintains the heart's first slumber in its longest unbroken rest.

CHAPTER VI.

I left her at her house and returned to Cecilia, feeling very lonely, and as if I ought to be very miserable, but I could not continue it; for I was, instead of recalling her words, in a mood to recall those of Clara in our parting conversation. The same age as Maria, with no less power in her heavenly maidenhood, she came upon me as if I had seen them together, and watched the strange calm distance of those unclouded eyes next the transparent fervors of Maria's soul,—that soul in its self-betrayal so wildly beautiful, so undone with its own emotion. Clara I remembered as one not to be approached or reached but by fathoming her crystal intellect; and even then it appeared to me that there was more passion in her enshrining stillness than in anything but the music that claimed and owned her. But Maria had seemed on fire as she had spoken, and even when she spoke not, she passed into the very heart by sympathy abounding, summer-like. I little thought how soon, in that respect, her change would come. 123

There was one, too, whom I saw not again until that change. Over this leaf of my history I can only glance, for it would be as a sheet of light unrelieved by any shade or pencilling; suffice it to say that day by day, in morning's golden dream, at dream-like afternoon, I studied and soared. I was—after the Chevalier had left, and the excitement of his possible presence had ceased—blissfully happy again, and in much the same state as when I lived with Aronach; certainly I did not expand, as Maria might have said. The advent of the Chevalier, which was as a king's visit, being delayed until the spring, I had left off hoping he might appear any fine morning, and my 124

initiation—"by trance"—went on apace; I was utterly undisturbed.

At Christmas we had a concert,—a concert worthy of the name; and with all the Christmas heartedness of Germany we dressed our beloved hall with its evergreens and streamers. Besides, that overture, the "Mer de Glace," which, even under an inferior conductor, would make its way, was one of our interpretations; and it appeared to have some effect upon the whole crew that was not very material, as nothing would do in our after sledging party, but that all the instruments should be carried also, and an attempt made to refrigerate the ice-movement over again, by performing it in the frosty air, upon the frost-spelled water. I was to have gone to England this year, as arranged; but the old-fashioned frump, a very hard winter, had laid in great stores of snow, with great raving winds, and my mother took fright at the idea of my crossing the water,—besides, it was agreed that as Millicent and Davy had seen me so lately, I could get on very well as I was until June.

It was not such a disappointment as it should have been, for I knew that Clara had gone to London, and that I could not have seen her. She was making mysterious progress, according to Davy; but I could not get out all I wanted, for I did not like to ask for it. There was something, too, in my present mode of life exiling from all excitement; and it is difficult for me to look back and believe it anything but the dream of fiction,—still, that is not strange, for fiction often strikes us as more real than fact. 125

I had a small letter from Starwood about this time.

"Dearest Carl," he wrote, as he always spoke to me, in English, "I wish you could see the Chevalier now, how well he looks, and how he enjoys this beautiful country. We have been to see all the pictures and the palaces, and all the theatres; we have heard all the cathedral services, and climbed over all the mountains,—for, Carl, we went also to Switzerland; and when I saw the 'Mer de Glace,' I thought it was like that music. *Now* we are in a villa all marble, not white, but a soft, pale-gray color, and there are orange-trees upon the grass. All about are green hills, and behind them hills of blue, and the sky here is like no other sky, for it is always the same, without clouds, and yet as dark as our sky at night; but yet at the same time it is day, and the sun is very clear. The moon and stars are big, but there is something in the air that makes me always want to cry. It is melancholy, and a very quiet country,—it seems quite dead after Germany; but then we do live away from the towns.

"The Chevalier is writing continually, except when he is out, and the Herr Aronach is very good,—does not notice me much, which I like. His whole thoughts are upon the Chevalier, I think, and no wonder. Carl, I am getting on fast with my studies, am learning Italian," etc. There was more in the little letter; but from such a babe I could not expect the information I wanted. Maria and her suite—as I always called her brother Joseph and the little Josephine—had left Cecilia for Christmas Day, which they were to spend with some acquaintance a few leagues off, and a friend, too, of Anastase, who, indeed, accompanied them. On Christmas Eve I was quite alone; for though I had received many invitations, I had accepted none, and I went over to the old place 126 where I had lived with Aronach, to see the illuminations in every house. It was a chilly, elfin time to me; but I got through it, and sang about the angels in the church next day.

To my miraculous astonishment Maria returned alone, long before Josephine and her brother, and even without Anastase. He, it appeared, had gone to Paris to hear a new opera, and also to play at several places on the road. It was only five days after Christmas that she came and fetched me from my own room, where I was shut in practising, to her own home. When she appeared, rolled in furs, I was fain to suppose her another than herself, produced by the oldest of all old gentlemen for my edification, and I screamed aloud, for she had entered without knocking, or I had not heard her. She would not speak to me then and there, saving only to invite me, and on the road, which was lightened over with snow, she scarcely spoke more; but arrived on that floor I was so fond of, and screened by the winter hangings from the air, while the soft warmth of the stove bade all idea of winter make away, we sat down together upon the sofa to talk. I inquired why she had returned so soon.

"Carl," she said, smoothing down her hair, and laying over my knees the furry cloak, "I am altering very much, I think, or else I have become a woman too suddenly. I don't care about these things any longer."

"What things, Maria,—fur mantles, or hair so long that you can tread upon it?"

"No, Carl. But I forget that I was not talking to you yesterday, nor yet the day before, nor for many days; and I have been dreaming more than ever since I saw you." 127

"What about?"

"Many unknown things,—chiefly how different everything is here from what it ought to be. Carl, I used to love Christmas and Easter and St. John's Day; now they are all like so many cast-off children's pictures. I can have no imagination, I am afraid, or else it is all drawn away somewhere else. Do you know, Carl, that I came away because I could not bear to stay with those creatures after Florimond was gone? Florimond is, like me, a dreamer too; and much as I used to wonder at his melancholy, it is just now quite clear to me that nothing else is worth while."

"Anastase melancholy? Well, so he is, except when he is playing; but then I fancied that was because he is so abstracted, and so bound to music hand and foot, as well as heart and soul."

"Very well, Carl, you are always right; but my melancholy, and such I believe his to be, is exquisite pleasure,—too fine a joy to breathe in, Carl. How people fume themselves about affairs that only last an hour, and music and joy are forever."

"You have come back to music, Maria; if so, I am not sorry you went away."

"I never left it, Carl, it left me; but now I know why,—it went to heaven to bring me a gift out of its eternal treasure, and I believe I have it. Carl, Carl! my fit of folly has served me in good stead."

"You mean what we talked about before you went, before the Chevalier went also?"

"Yes, I meant what I said then; but I was very empty, and in an idle frame. I thought the last spark of music had passed out of me; but there has come a flame from it at last."

"What do you mean? And what has that to do with your coming back, and with your being melancholy,—which I cannot believe quite, Maria?" 128

"Oh, Carl! I am very ignorant, and have read no books; but I am pretty sure it is said somewhere that melancholy is but the shadow of too much happiness, thrown by our own spirits upon the sunshine side of life. I was in that queer mood when I went to Obertheil that if an angel had walked out of the clouds I should not have taken the trouble to watch him; Florimond was all and enough. So he is still. But listen, Carl. On Christmas we were in the large room, before the table, where the green moss glittered beneath the children's tree, and there were children of all sizes gazing at the lights. They crowded so together that Florimond, who was behind, and standing next me, said, 'Come, Maria, you have seen all this before: shall we go upstairs together?' And we did go out silently, we were not even missed. We went to the room which Florimond had hired, for it was only a friend's house, and Florimond is as proud as some one who has not his light hair. The little window was full of stars; we heard no sound as we stood there except when the icicles fell from the roof. The window was open too; but I felt no cold, for he held me in his arms, and I sheltered him, and he me. We watched the stars so long that they began to dance below before we spoke. Then Florimond said that the stars often reminded him how little constancy there was in anything said or done, for that they ever shone upon that which was forgotten. And I replied it was well that they did so, for many things happened which had better be forgotten, or something as unmeaning. He said, then, it was on that account we held back from expressing, even remotely, what we felt most. And I asked him whether it might not rather be that music might 129 maintain its privilege of expressing what it was forbidden to pronounce or articulate otherwise. Then he suggested that it was forbidden to an artist to exalt himself in his craft, as he is so fond of saying, you know, except by means of it, when it asserts itself. And then I demanded of him that he should make it assert itself; and after I had tormented him a good while, he fetched out his violin and played to me a song of the stars.

"And in that wilderness of tone I seemed to fall asleep and dream,—a dream I have already begun to follow up, and *will* fulfil. I have heard it said, Carl, that sometimes great players who are no authors have given ideas in their random moments to the greatest writers, that these have reproduced at leisure,—I suppose much as a painter takes notions from the colored clouds and verdant shadows; but I don't know. Florimond, who is certainly no writer, has given me an idea for a new musical poem, and what is more strange, I have half finished it, and have the whole in my mind."

"Maria! have you actually been writing?" I sprang from the sofa quite wild, though I merely foresaw some touching memento, in wordless *Lied* or *scherzo* for one-voiced instrument, of a one-hearted theme.

"I have not written a note, Carl,—that remains to be done, and that is why I came back so soon, to be undisturbed, and to learn of you; for you know more about these things than I do,—for instance, how to arrange a score."

"Maria, you are not going to write in score? If so, pray wait until the Chevalier comes back."

"The Chevalier! as if I should ever plague him about my writing. Besides, I am most particularly anxious to finish it before any one knows it is begun." 130

"But, Maria, what will you do? I never heard of a woman writing in score except for exercise; and how will you be pleased to hear it never once?"

"Ah! we shall know about that when it is written."

"Maria, you look very evil,—evil as an elf; but you are pale enough already. What if this work make you ill?"

"Nothing ever makes us ill that we like to do, only what we like to have. I acknowledge, Carl, that it might make me ill if this symphony were to be rehearsed, with a full band, before the Chevalier. But as nothing of that kind can happen, I shall take my own way."

"A symphony, Maria? The Chevalier says that the symphony is the highest style of music, and that none can even attempt it but the most formed, as well as naturally framed musicians."

"I should think I knew that; but it is not in me to attempt any but the highest effect. I would rather fail there than succeed in an inferior. The structure of the symphony is quite clear to my brain,—it always has been so; for I believe I understand it naturally, though I never knew why

until now. Carl, a woman has never yet dared anything of the kind, and if I wait a few years longer I must give it up entirely. If I am married, my thoughts will not make themselves ready, and now they haunt me."

"Maria, do *not* write! Wait, at least, until Anastase returns, and ask his own advice."

"Carl, I never knew you cold before,—what is it? As if Florimond could advise me! Could I advise him how to improve his present method? and why should I wait? I shall not expose myself; it is for myself alone."

"Maria, this is the reason. You do look so fixed and strange, even while you talk about it, that I think you will do yourself some harm,—that is all; you did not use to look so." 131

"Am I so frightful, then, Carl?"

"You are too beautiful, Maria; but your eyes seem to have no sleep in them."

"They have not had, and they will not have until I have completed this task the angel set me."

"Oh, Maria! you are thinking of the Chevalier."

"I was not; I was thinking of St. Cecilia. If the Chevalier had ordered me to make a symphony, I should to everlasting have remained among the dunces."

I often, often lament, most sadly, that I am obliged to form her words into a foreign mould, almost at times to fuse them with my own expression; but the words about the angel were exactly her own, and I have often remembered them bitterly.

"You will find it very hard to write without any prospect of rehearsal, Maria."

"I can condense it, and so try it over; but I am certain of hearing it in my head, and that is enough."

"You will not think so still when it is written. How did it first occur to you?"

"In a moment, as I tell you, Carl, while the violin tones, hot as stars that are cold in distance, were dropping into my heart. The subjects rose in Alps before me. I both saw and heard them; there were vistas of sound, but no torrents; it was all glacier-like,—death enfolding life."

"What shall you call it, Maria?"

"No name, Carl. Perhaps I shall give it a name when it shall be really finished; but if it is to be what I expect, no one would remember its name on hearing it." 132

"Is it so beautiful, then, Maria?"

"To my fancy, *most* beautiful, Carl."

"That is like the Chevalier."

"He has written, and knows what he has written; but I do not believe he has ever felt such satisfaction in any work as I in this."

"I think in any one else it would be dreadfully presumptuous,—in you it is ambitious, I believe; but I have no fear about your succeeding."

"Thank you, Carl, nor I. Will you stay here with me and help me?"

"No, Maria, for you do not want help, and I should think no one could write unless alone. But I will prevent any one else from coming."

"No one else will come; but if you care to stay here, Carl, I can write in my room, and you, as you said you have set yourself certain tasks, can work in this one. I am very selfish I am afraid, for I feel pleasantly safe when you are near me. I think, Carl, you must have been a Sunday-child."

"No, Maria; I was born upon a Friday, and my mother was in a great fright. Shall you write this evening?"

"I must go out and buy some paper."

CHAPTER VII.

We dined together, and then walked. I cannot record Maria's conversation, for her force now waned, and I should have had to entertain myself but for the unutterable entertainment at all times to me of a walk. She bought enough paper to score a whole opera had she been so disposed; and her preparations rather scared me on her account. For me, I returned to Cecilia to inform our powers why I should absent myself, and where remain; and when I came back with "books and work" of my own, she was very quietly awaiting me for supper, certainly not making attempts, either dread or ecstatic, at present. I was, indeed, anxious that if she accomplished her 133

intentions at all, it should be in the vacation, as she studied so ardently at every other time; and it was this anxiety that induced me to leave her alone the next day and every morning of that week. I knew nothing of what she did meanwhile, and as I returned to Cecilia every night for sleep, I left her ever early, and heard not a note of her progress; whether she made any or not remaining at present a secret.

We reassembled in February. At our first meeting, which was a very festive banquet, our nominal head and the leading professors gave us an intimation that the examinations would extend for a month, and would begin in May, when the results would be communicated to the Chevalier Seraphael, who would be amongst us again at that time, and distribute the prizes after his own 134
device, also confer the certificates upon those who were about to leave the school. I was not, of course, in this number, as the usual term of probation was three years in any specific department, and six for the academical course,—the latter had been advised for me by Davy, and acceded to by my mother. I gave up at present nearly my whole time to mastering the mere mechanism of my instrument, and had no notion of trying for any prize at all. I believe those of my contemporaries who aspired thus were very few at all, and Marc Iskar being among them had the effect upon me of quenching the slight fever of a desire I might have had so to distinguish myself. It struck me that Maria should try for the reward of successful composition; but she was so hurt, and looked so white when I alluded to it, that it was only once I did so. As to her proceedings, whatever they were, the most perfect calm pervaded them, and also her. I scarcely now heard her voice in speech; though it was spoken aloud by Spoda, and no longer whispered, that she would very soon be fit for the next initiation into a stage career, or its attendant and inductive mysteries. One evening I went to see her expressly to ascertain whether she would really leave us, and I asked her also about her intentions.

"Carl," she said, "I wish I had any. I don't really care what they do with me, though I wish to be able to marry as soon as possible. I believe I am to study under Mademoiselle Venelli at Berlin when I leave Cecilia. She teaches declamation and that style."

"Maria, you are very cool about it. I suppose you don't mind a bit about going."

"I should break my heart about it if I did not know I must go one day, and that the sooner I go the sooner I shall return,—to all I want, at least. But I have it not in my power to say I will do this, or 135
will not have that, as it is my brother who educates me, and to whom I am indebted."

"If you go, Maria, I shall not see you for years and years."

"You will not mind that after a little time."

"Maria, I have never loved to talk to any one so well."

"If that is the only reason you are sorry, I am very glad I go."

She smiled as she spoke, but not a happy smile. I could see she was very sad, and, as it were, at a distance from her usual self.

"Maria, you have not told me one word about the symphony."

"You did not ask me."

"Were you so proud, then? As if I was not dying to see it, to hear it; for, Maria, don't tell me you would be contented without its being heard."

"I am not contented at all, Carl. I am often discontented,—particularly now."

"About Anastase? Does not Anastase approve of your writing?"

"He knows nothing of it. I would not tell him for a world; nor, Carl, would you."

"I don't know. I would tell him if it would do you any good, even though you disliked me to do so."

"Thanks; but it would do me no good. Florimond is poor: he could not collect an orchestra; and proud: he would not like me to be laughed at."

"Then what is it, Maria?"

"Carl, you know I am not vain."

I laughed, but answered nothing; it was too absurd a position. 136

"Well, I am dying of thirst to hear my first movement, which is written, and which is that sight to my eyes that my ears desire it to the full as much as they. The second still lingers,—it will not be invoked. I could, if I could calculate the effect of the first, produce a second equal to it, I know. But as it is yet in my brain, it will not give place to another."

"You have tried it upon the piano,—try it for me."

"No, I cannot, Carl. It is nothing thus; and, strange to say, though I have written it, I cannot play it."

"I can believe that."

"But no one else would, Carl; and therefore it must be folly for me to have undertaken this writing,—for we are both children, and I suppose must remain so, after all."

It struck me that the melancholy which poured that pale mask upon her face was both natural and not unnecessary,—I even delighted in it; for a thought, almost an idea, flashed straight across my brain, and lighted up the future, that was still to remain my own, although that dazzle was withdrawn. I knew what to do now, though I trembled lest I should not find the way to do it.

"So, Maria, you are not going to finish it just now. Suppose you lend it to me for a little. I should like to examine it, and it will do me good."

"Carl, it is not sufficiently scientific to do you good, but I wish you would take it away, for if I keep it with me, I shall destroy it; and I shall like it to remain until some day, when God has taught me more than in myself I know, or than I can learn of men."

"I will take the greatest care of it, Maria," I said, almost fearing it to be a freak on her part that she suffered my possession, or that she might withdraw it. "You will ask me for it when you want 137
it; and, Maria, I have heard it said that it is a good thing to let your compositions lie by, and come to them with a fresh impression."

"That is exactly what I think. You see with me, Carl, that all which has to do with music is not music now."

"I think that there is less of the world in music than in anything else, even in poetry, Maria. But, of course, music must itself fall short of our ideas of it; and I daresay you found that your beautiful feelings would not change themselves into music exactly as beautiful as they were. I know very little music yet, Maria, but I never found *any* that did not disappoint my feeling about it when I was hearing it, except the Chevalier's."

"That is it, Carl. What am I to endeavor, after anything that he has accomplished? But I feel that if I could not produce the very highest musical work in the very highest style, I would not produce any, and would rather die."

"I cannot understand that; I would rather worship than be worshipped."

"I would not. I cannot tell why, but I have a feeling, which will not let me be content with proving what has gone before me. Dearly as I love Florimond, he could not put this feeling out of me. I am not content to be an actress. There have been actresses who were queens, and some few angels. I know my heart is pure in its desires, and I should have no objection to reign. But it must be over a new kingdom. No woman has ever yet composed."

"Oh, yes, Maria!"

"I say no to you, Carl,—not as I mean. I mean no woman has been supreme among men, as the 138
Chevalier among musicians. I have often wondered why. And I feel—at least, I did feel—that I could be so, and do this. But I feel it no longer,—it has passed. Carl, I am very miserable and cast down."

I could easily believe it, but I was too young to trust to my own decision. Had Clara been speaking, I should have implicitly relied, for she always knew herself. But Maria was so wayward, so fitful, and of late so peculiar that I dared not entertain that confidence in her genius which was yet the strongest presentiment that had ever taken hold upon me. I carried away the score, which I had folded up while she had spoken; and I shall never forget the half-forlorn, half-wistful look with which she followed it in my arms as I left her. But I dared not stay, for fear she should change her mind; and although I would fain have entered into her heart to comfort her, I could not even try. I was in a breathless state to see that score, but not much came to my examination. The sheets were exquisitely written, the manner of Seraphael being exactly imitated, or naturally identical,—the very noting of a fac-simile, as well as the autograph. It was styled, "First Symphony," and the key was F minor. But the composition was so full and close as to swamp completely my childish criticism. I thought it appeared all right, and very, very wonderful; but that was all. I wrapped it in one of my best silk handkerchiefs, to keep it from the dust, and laid it away in my box, together with my other treasures from home, which ever reposed there; and then I returned to my work, but certainly more melancholy than I had ever remembered myself in life.

In March, one day, Maria stayed from school; but her brother Joseph brought me from her a message. She was indisposed, or said to be so, and begged me to go and see her. There was no 139
difficulty in doing so, but I was surprised that Anastase should not be with her, or at least that he should appear, as he did, so unconcerned. When I expressed my regret to Joseph Cerinthia, he added that she was only in bed for a cold. I was both pleased and flattered that she had sent for me, but still could not comprehend it, as she was so little ill. I ran down, after the morning, intending to dine with her, or not, I did not care which. But instead of her being in bed, she was in the parlor.

"I thought, Maria, you were not up."

"I was not; and now I am not dressed. Carl, I sent for you to ask for the manuscript again."

I looked at her to see whether she meant her request, for it was by no means easy to say. She looked very brilliant, but had an unusual darkness round her eyes,—a wide ring of the deepest violet. She either had wept forth that shadow, or was in a peculiar state. Neither tears nor smiles were upon her face, and her lips burned with a living scarlet,—no rose-soft red, as wont. Her hair, fastened under her cap in long bands, fell here and there, and seemed to have no strength.

She had been drinking *eau sucrée*, for a glass of it was upon the table, and a few fresh flowers, which she hastened to put away from her as I entered. I was so much affected by her looks, though no fear seized me, that I took her hand. It was dry and warm, but very weak and tremulous.

"Maria, you were at that garden last night, and danced. I knew how it would be,—it was too early in the year."

"I was not at the Spielheim, for when Florimond said none of you were going from Cecilia, I declined. But no dancing would have made me ill as I have been; it was nothing to care for, and is now past." 140

"Was it cold, then? It seems more like fever."

"It was neither, or perhaps a little of both. Let me have my score again, Carl. I need only ask for it, you know, as it is mine."

"You need not be so proud, Maria. I shall of course return it, but not unless you promise me to do no more to it just now."

"Not *just* now. But I made believe to be ill on purpose that I might have a day's leisure. I must also copy it out."

"Maria, you never made believe, for if you *could* tell a lie, it would not be for yourself. You *have* been ill, and I suspect much that I know how. If you will tell me, I will fetch the score,—that is, if it is good for you to have it. But I would rather burn it than that it should hurt you; and I tell you, it all depends upon that."

"I will tell you, Carl, and more, because it is over now, and cannot happen again. I was lying in my bed, and heard the clock strike ten. I thought also that I had heard it rain; so I got up and looked out. There was no rain, but there were stars; and seeing them, my thoughts grew bright,—bright as when I imagined that music; and being in the same mood,—that is, quiet and yet excited, if you can believe in both together,—I went to my writing. It was all there ready for me; and Josephine, who always disturbs me, because she talks, was very fast asleep. It may sound proud, Carlino, but I am certain the Chevalier was with me,—that he stood behind my chair, and I could not look round for fear of seeing him. He guided my hand; he thrust out my ideas,—all grew clear; and I was not afraid, even of a ghost companion." 141

"But the Chevalier is alive and well."

"And yet, I tell you, his ghost was with me. Well, Carl, I had written until I could not see, for my lamp went out, and it was not yet light. I suppose I then fell asleep, for I certainly had a vision."

"What was that, Maria?"

"Countless crowds, Carl, first, and then a most horrible whirl and rush. Then a serene place, gray as morning before the sun, with great golden organ-pipes, that shot up into and cut through the sky; for although it was gray beneath, and I seemed to stand upon clouds, it was all blue over me, and when I looked up, it seemed to return my gaze. I heard a sound under me, like an orchestra, such as we have often heard. But *above*, there was another music, and the golden pipes quivered as if with its trembling; yet it was not the organ that seemed to speak, and no instrument was there besides. This music did not interfere with the music of the orchestra,—still playing onwards,—but it swelled through and through it, and seemed to stretch like a sky into the sky. Oh, Carl, that I could describe it to you! It was like all we feel of music,—beyond all we hear, given to us in hearing."

She paused. Now a light, quenched in thrilling tears, arose, and glittered from her eyes. She looked overwrought, seraphic; for though her hand, which I still held, was not changed or cold, her countenance told unutterable wonder,—the terrors of the heavenliest enthusiasm, I knew not how to account for.

"Maria, dear! I have had quite as strange dreams, and almost as sweet. It was very natural, but you were very, very naughty all the same. What did you do when you awoke?"

"I awoke I don't know how, Carl, nor when; but I resolved to give into my symphony all that the dream had given me, and I wrote again. This time I left off, though in a very odd manner. The clock struck five, and all the people were in the streets. I was cold, which I had forgotten, and my feet were quite as ice. I was about to turn a leaf when I shivered and dropped my pen. But when I stooped down to find it in the early twilight, which, I thought, would help me, I fell upon the floor. My head was as if fire had burst into it, and a violent pain came on, that drove me to my bed. I have had such a pain before,—a little, but very much less; for I believed I could not bear it. I did fall asleep too, for a long time, and never heard a sound; and when I arose, I was as well as I need to be, or ever expect. But as I don't wish to be ill again, I must finish the symphony at once." 142

"So you think I shall allow it? No, Maria, it is out of the question; but I will fetch a doctor for you."

"Carl, you are a baby. I have seen a doctor in Paris for this very pain. He can do nothing for it, and says it is constitutional, and that I shall always be subject to it. Everybody has something they are subject to,—Florimond has the gout."

I laughed,—glad to have anything at all to laugh at.

"I am really well now, Carl,—have had a warm bath, and leeches upon my temples; everything. The woman here has waited upon me, and has been very kind; and now I have sent her away, for I do hate to seem ill and be thought ill."

"Leeches, Maria?"

"Oh, that is nothing! I put them on whenever I choose. Did you never have them on, Carl?"

"No, never. I had a blister for the measles, because I could not bear to think about leeches. I did not know people put them on for the headache." 143

"I always do, and so does everybody for such headaches as mine. But they have taken away the pain, and that is all I care for. They are little cold creepers, though; and I was glad to pull them off."

"Show me the marks, Maria."

She lifted her beautiful soft hair. Those cruel little notches were some hieroglyph to me of unknown suffering that her face expressed, though I was too young, and far too ignorant, to imagine of what kind and import.

"I promise you, Maria, that if you attempt to write any more, I will tell Anastase. Or no,—I have thought of something far more clever: I will make off with the rest at once."

I had an idea of finding her sheets in her own room; and plunging into it,—frightening Josephine, who was nursing her doll, into a remote corner, I gathered all the papers, and folding them together, was about to rush downstairs without returning to Maria, when she called upon me so that I dared not help listening. For, "You dare not do it, Carl!" she cried; "you will kill me, and I shall die now."

Agonized by her expression, which was not even girl-like, I halted for an instant at her open door.

"Then, Maria, if I leave them here, on your honor, will you not touch them or attempt to write?"

"It is not your affair, Carl, and I am angry."

She showed she was angry,—very pale, with two crimson spots, and she bit her lip almost black.

"It *is* my affair, as you told *me*, and not your brother or Florimond. He or Florimond would not allow it, you know as well as I do."

"They should and would. And, pray, why is it I am not to write? I should say you were jealous, Carl, if you were not Carl. But you have no right to forbid it, and shall not." 144

"I do not know how to express my fear, but I am afraid, and, Maria, I will not let it be done."

Lest I should commit myself, I closed the door, stumbled down the dark staircase, tore through the street, and deposited the sheets with the others in the box. I am conscious these details are tedious and oppressive; but they cannot be withheld, because of what I shall have to touch upon.

Fearful were the consequences that descended upon my devoted head. I little expected them, and suffered from them absurdly, child as I was, and most witless at that time. Maria returned on the following day week, and looking quite herself, except for those violet shades yet lingering,—still not herself to me in any sense. She scarcely looked at me, and did not speak to me at all when I managed to meet her. Anastase alone seemed conscious that she had been ill. He appeared unable to rid himself of the impression; for actually during my lesson, when his custom was to eschew a conventionalism even as a wrong note, he asked me what had been the matter with her. I told him I believed a very awful headache, with fever, and that I considered she had been very ill indeed. I saw his face cloud, though he made reply all coolness, "You are mistaken, Auchester. It was a cold, which always produces fever, and often pain." Thus we were all alike deluded; thus was that motherless one hurried to her Father's house!

Meantime, silent as I kept myself on the subject of the symphony, it held me day by day more firmly. I longed almost with suffering for the season when I should emancipate myself from all my doubts.

CHAPTER VIII.

The season came, and I shall never forget its opening. It was late in April,—exquisite weather, halcyon, blooming; my memory expands to it now. From Italy he returned. He came upon us suddenly,—there was no time to organize a procession, to marshal a welcome chorus; none knew of his arrival until he appeared. 145

We had been rambling in the woods, Franz and I, and were lounging homewards, laden with wild-flowers and lily bunches. Franz was a kind creature to me now, and in my loneliness I sought him

always. We heard, even among the moss, a noise of distant shoutings,—nobody shouted in that spot except our own,—and we hurried homewards. I was quite faint with expectation, and being very weary, sat down to rest on one of those seats that everywhere invite in shady places, while Delemann sped onwards for information.

Returning, he announced most gleefully, "The Chevalier has arrived; they are drawing the carriage up the hill." I am ashamed of what I did. I could not return to Cecilia; I wandered about in the village, possessed by a vague aspiration that I should see him there, or that he would espy me: no such thing.

I came back to supper excited, expectant; he was gone. I deserved it, and felt I did, for my cowardice; but at the end of supper the head of the central table, having waited until then, deliberately took from his deep pocket and presented me with a note, a very tiny note, that was none the fresher for having lain an hour or two amidst snuff and "tabac." But this noteling almost set me raving. It was short indeed, yet honey sweet. 146

> I am not to find thee here, my Carl, although I came on purpose. Art not thou still my eldest child? Come to me, then, to-morrow, it will be thy Sunday, and thy room shall be ready; also two little friends of thine,—I and he. Do not forget me.
>
> Thine,
>
> SERAPHAEL.

He had made every arrangement for my visit, and I never think of his kindness in these particulars without being reminded that in proportion to the power of his genius was it ever beneficently gentle. I spent such an afternoon as would have been cheaply purchased by a whole life of solitude; but I must only advert to one circumstance that distinguished it.

We were walking upon the lovely terrace amongst bright marbles just arranged, and dazzling flowers; he was gentle, genial, animated,—I felt my time was come. I therefore taught myself to say: "Sir, I have a very, most particular favor to ask of you; it is that you will condescend to give me your opinion of a piece of music which some one has written. I have brought it with me on purpose,—may I fetch it? It is in my hat in the house."

"By all means, this very moment, Carlomein,—or, no, rather we will go in-doors together and examine it quietly. It is thine own, of course?"

"Oh, no, sir! I should have said so directly. It is a young lady's, and she knows nothing of my bringing it. I stole it from her."

"Ah! true," he replied, simply; and led me to that beautiful music-room. I was fain to realize Maria's dream as I beheld those radiant organ-pipes beneath their glorious arch, that deep-wooded pianoforte, with its keys, milk-white and satin-soft, recalling me but to that which was lovelier than her very vision,—the lustrous presence pervading that luxury of artistic life. Seraphael was more innocent, more brilliant in behavior at his home than anywhere; the noble spaces and exquisitely appointed rooms seemed to affect him merely as secluded warmth affects an exotic flower; he expanded more fully, fragrantly, in the rich repose. 147

At the cedar writing-table he paused, and stood waiting silently while I fetched the score. As I unfolded it before him I was even more astonished than ever at the perfection of its appearance; I hesitated not the least to place it in those most delicate of all delicate hands. I saw his eyes, that seemed to have drawn into them the very violet of the Italian heaven, so dark they gleamed through the down-let lashes, fasten themselves eagerly for an instant upon the title-sheet, where, after his own fashion, Maria had written her ancient name, "Cerinthia," only, in the corner; but then he laid the score, having opened the first page, upon the table, and knelt down before it, plunging his fingers into the splendid curls of his regal head, his very brow being buried in their shadow as he bent, bowed, leaned into the page, and page after page until the end.

With restless rapidity his hand flashed back the leaves, his eye drank the spirit of those signs; but he spoke not, stirred not. It seemed to me that I must not watch him, as I was doing most decidedly, and I disentangled myself from that revery with a shock.

I walked to the carved music-stands, the painted music-cases. I examined the costly manuscripts and olden tomes arrayed on polished cabinets. I blinded myself with the sunshine streaming through stained compartments in the windows to the carnation-toned velvet of the furniture. I peered into the pianoforte, and yearned for it to awaken; and rested long and rapturously before a mighty marble likeness of the self-crowned Beethoven. It was garlanded with grapes and vine-leaves that fondled the wild locks in gracefullest fraternity; it was mounted upon a pedestal of granite, where also the alabaster fruits and tendrils clustered, clasping it like frozen summer, and beneath the bust the own investment glittered,—"Tonkunst's Bacchus."[6] It was no longer difficult to pass away the time without being troublesome to myself or Seraphael. I was lost in a triumphant reminiscence that the stormy brow, the eyes of lightning, the torn heart, the weary soul, were now heaven's light, heaven's love, its calm, its gladness. For quite an hour I stood there, so remembering and desiring ever to remember. And then that sweet, that living voice aroused me. Without looking up, he said,— 148

"Do you mean to say, Carlomein, that she has had no help here?"

"Sir, she could have had none; it was all and entirely her own. No one knew she had written except myself."

Then in his clearest tones he answered: "It is as I expected. It is terrible, Carlomein, to think that this work might have perished; and I embrace thee, Carlomein, for having secured to me its possession."

"Is it so very good then, sir? Maria was very ignorant about it, and could not even play it for herself."

"I daresay not, she has made too full a score." He smiled his sweetest smile. "But for all that, we will not strike out one note. Why is it not finished, Carlomein?"

I might have related the whole story from beginning to end; but his manner was very regal just now, and I merely said: "I rather think she was dissatisfied with the first two movements, for although she said she could finish it, she did not, and I have kept it some time." 149

"You should have written to me, Carlomein, or sent it to me; it must and shall be finished. The work is of Heaven's own. What earthly inspiration could have taught her strains like these? They are of a priestess and a prophetess; she has soared beyond us all."

He arose suddenly; a fixed glow was upon his face, his eyes were one solemn glory. He came to the piano, he pushed me gently aside, he took his seat noiselessly, as he began to play. I would not retire. I stood where I could both see and hear. It was the second movement that first arrested him. He gave to the white-faced keys a hundred voices. Tone upon tone was built; the chords grew larger and larger; no other hand could have so elicited the force, the burden, the breadth of the orchestral medium, from those faint notes and few. His articulating finger supplied all needs of mechanism. He doubled and redoubled his power.

Never shall I forget it,—the measures so long and lingering, the modulations so like his own, the very subject moulded from the chosen key, like sculpture of the most perfect chiselling from a block of the softest grain,—so appropriate, so masterly. But what pained me through the loveliness of the conception was to realize the mood suggesting it,—a plaint of spiritual suffering, a hungering and thirsting heart, a plea of exhausted sadness.

He felt it too; for as the weary, yet unreproachful strain fell from under his music-burdened fingers, he drooped his glorious head as a lily in the drenching rain, his lips grew grave, the ecstatic smile was lost, and in his eyes there was a dim expression, though they melted not to tears. I was sure that Maria had conserved her dream, for a strange, intermittent accompaniment streamed through the loftier appeal, and was as a golden mist over too much piercing brightness. 150

The movement was very long, and he never spoke all through it, neither when he had played as far as she had written; but turned back to the first, as yet untried.

Again was I forcibly reminded of what I had said on my first acquaintance with her; she had, without servile intention, caught the very spirit of Seraphael as it wandered through his compositions, and imprisoned it in the sympathy of her own. It was as two flowers whose form is single and the same, but the hues were of different distribution, and still his own supreme. I cannot describe the first movement further. I was too young to be astonished, carried away by the miracle of its consummation under such peculiar circumstances; but I can remember how completely I felt I might always trust myself in future when any one should gain such ascendency over my convictions,—which, by the way, never happened.

I must not dwell upon that evening,—suffice it to say that I left the score with the Chevalier; and though he did not tell me so in so many words, I felt sure he himself would restore it to the writer.

On Monday evening I was very expectant, and not in vain, for she sent me a note of invitation,—an attention I had not received from her since my rebellious behavior. She was alone, and even now writing. She arose hastily, and for some moments could not command her voice; she said what I shall not repeat, except that she was too generous as regarded her late distance, and then she explained what follows. 151

"The Chevalier came this morning, and, Carl, I could only send for you because it is you who have done it all for me, in spite of my ingratitude; and, alas! I never can repay you. I feel, Carl, now, that it is better not to have all one wishes for at once; if I had not waited, the shock would have killed me."

I looked at her, tried to make out to my sight that she did not, even now, look as if ready to die; her lips had lost their fever rose, and were pale as the violets that strewed her eyes. The faint blue threads of veins on the backs of her hands, the thin polish of those temples standing clear from her darkest hair,—these things burned upon my brain and gave me a sickening thrill. I felt, "Can Anastase have seen her? Can he have known this?"

I was most of all alarmed at what I myself had done; still, I was altogether surprised at the renewal of my fears, for on the Saturday she had not only seemed, but been herself,—her cheeks, her lips, her brow, all wearing the old healthful radiance.

"Maria," I exclaimed, "dear Maria, will you tell me why this symphony makes you ill, or look so ill? You were quite well on Saturday, I thought, or you may quite believe I should never have done what I did."

"Do I look ill, Carl? I do not feel ill, only desperately excited. I have no headache, and, what is

better, no heart-pain now. Do you know what is to be? I tell you, because you will rejoice that you have done it. This work is to be finished and to be heard. An orchestra will return my dream to God."

"Ah! your dream, Maria,—I thought of that. But shall *I* hear it, Maria?" 152

"You will play for me, Carl,—and Florimond. Oh! I must not remember that. And the Chevalier, Carl,—he even entreated, the proud soul, the divinely missioned, entreated me to perpetuate the work. I can write now without fear; he has made me free. I feared myself before; now I only fear him."

"Maria, what of Anastase? Does he know, and what does he think?"

"Do not ask me, Carl, for I cannot tell you what he did. He was foolish, and so was I; but it was for joy on both our parts."

"You cried then! There is nothing to be ashamed of."

"We ought to have restrained ourselves when the Chevalier was by. He must love Florimond now, for he fetched him himself, and told him what I had done, and was still to do."

It is well for us that time does not stay,—not grievous, but a gladsome thought that all we most dread is carried beyond our reach by its force, and that all we love and long to cherish is but taken that it may remain, beyond us, to ripen in eternity until we too ripen to enjoy it. Still, there is a pain, wholly untinctured with pleasure, in recalling certain of its shocks, re-living them, returning upon them with memory.

The most glorious of our days, however, strike us with as troubled a reminiscence, so that we ought not to complain, nor to desire other than that the past should rest, as it does, and as alone the dead beside repose,—in hope. I have brought myself to the recollection of certain passages in my youth's history simply because there is nothing more precious than the sympathy, so rare, of circumstance with passion; nothing so difficult to describe, yet that we so long to win. 153

It is seldom that what happens as chance we would have left unchanged, could we have passed sentence of our will upon it; but still more unwonted is it to feel, after a lapse of eventful times, that what *has* happened was not only the best, but the only thing to happen, all things considered that have intervened. This I feel now about the saddest lesson I learned in my exuberant boyhood,—a lesson I have never forgotten, and can never desire to discharge from my life's remembrance.

Everything prospered with us after the arrangement our friend and lord had made for Maria. I can only say of my impressions that they were of the utmost perfectibility of human wishes in their accomplishment, for she had indeed nothing left to wish for.

I would fain delineate the singular and touching gratitude she evinced towards Seraphael, but it did not distribute itself in words; I believe she was altogether so much affected by his goodness that she dared not dwell upon it. I saw her constantly between his return and the approaching examinations; but our intercourse was still and silent. I watched her glide from room to room at Cecilia, or found her dark hair sweeping the score at home so calmly—she herself calmer than the calmest,—calm as Anastase himself. Indeed, to him she appeared to have transferred the whole impetuousness of her nature; he was changed also, his kindness to myself warmer than it ever had been; but from his brow oppressed, his air of agitation, I deemed him verily most anxious for the result. Maria had not more than a month to work upon the rest of the symphony and to complete it, as Seraphael had resolutely resolved that it should be rehearsed before our summer separation.

Maria I believe would not have listened to such an arrangement from any other lips; and 154
Florimond's dissatisfaction at a premature publicity was such that the Chevalier—autocratic even in granting a favor, which he must ever grant in his own way—had permitted the following order to be observed in anticipation.

After our own morning performance by the pupils only and their respective masters, the hall would be cleared, the audience and members should disperse, and only the strictly required players for the orchestra remain; Seraphael himself having chosen these. Maria was herself to conduct the rehearsal, and those alone whose assistance she would demand had received an intimation of the secret of her authorship. I trembled when the concluding announcement was made to me, for I had a feeling that she could not be kept too quiet; also, Anastase, to my manifest appreciation, shared my fear. But Seraphael was irresistible, especially as Maria had assented, had absorbed herself in the contemplation of her intentions, even to eagerness, that they should be achieved.

Our orchestra was, though small, brilliant, and in such perfect training as I seldom experienced in England. Our own rehearsals were concluded by the week before our concert, and there remained rather less for me to do. Those few days I was inexpressibly wretched,—a foreboding drowned my ecstatic hopes in dread; they became a constant effort to maintain, though even everything still smiled around us.

The Tuesday was our concert morning, and on the Sunday that week I met Maria as we came from church. She was sitting in the sunlight, upon one of the graves. Josephine was not near her, nor her brother, only Florimond, who was behind me, ran and joined her before I beheld that she

beckoned to me. I did hardly like to go forward as they were both together, but he also made me approach by a very gentle smile. The broad lime-trees shadowed the church, and the blossoms, unopened, hung over them in ripest bud; it was one of those oppressively sweet seasons that remind one—at least me—of the resurrection morning. 155

"Sit down by me, Carl," said Maria, who had taken off her gloves, and was already playing with Florimond's fingers, as if she were quite alone with him, though the churchyard was yet half filled with people.

"Maria," I said, sitting down at the foot of a cross that was hung with faded garlands, "why don't you sit in the shade? It is a very warm day."

"So it is very warm, and that is what I like; I am never warm enough here, and Florimond, too, loves the sun. I could not sit under a tree this day, everything is so bright; but nothing can be as bright as I wish it. Carl, I was going to tell Florimond, and I will tell you, that I feel as if I were too glad to bear what is before me. I did not think so until it came so very near. I am afraid when I stand up my heart will fail."

"Are you frightened, Maria?" I asked in my simplicity.

"That is not it, though I am also frightened. But I feel as if it were scarcely the thing for me to do, to stand up and control those of whom I am not master. Is it not so, Florimond?"

"Maria, the Chevalier is the only judge; and I am certain you will not, as a woman, allow your feelings to get the better of you. I have a great deal more to suffer on your account than you can possibly feel."

"I do not see that."

"It is so, and should be seen by you. If your work should in any respect fail, imagine what that failure would cost me." 156

I looked up in utter indignation, but was disarmed by the expression of his countenance; a vague sadness possessed it, a certain air of tender resignation; his hauteur had melted, though his manner retained its distance.

"As if it could be a failure!" I exclaimed; "why, we already know how much it is!"

"I do not, Auchester, and I am not unwilling to confess my ignorance. If our symphony even prove worthy of our Cecilia, I shall still be anxious."

"Why, Florimond?" she demanded, wistfully.

"On account of your health. You know what you promised me."

"Not to write for a year. That is easy to say."

"But not so easy to do. You make every point an extreme, Maria."

"I cannot think what you mean about my health."

"You cannot?"

She blushed lightly and frowned a shade. "I have told you, Florimond, how often I have had that pain before."

"And you told me also what they said."

His tones were now so grave that I could not bear to conjecture their significance. He went on.

"I do not consider, Maria, that for a person of genius it is any hardship to be discouraged from too much effort, especially when the effect will become enhanced by a matured experience."

"You are very unkind, Florimond."

Indeed, I thought so, too.

"I only care to please you."

"No, Maria, you had not a thought of me in writing." 157

"And yet you yourself gave me the first idea. But you are right; I wrote without reference to any one, and because I burned to do so."

"And you burn less now for it? Tell me that."

"I do not burn any longer, I weary for it to be over; I desire to hear it once, and then you may take it away, and I will never see it any more."

"That is quite as unnatural as the excessive desire,—to have fatigued of what you loved. But, Maria, I trust this weariness of yours will not appear before the Chevalier, after all his pains and interest."

"I hope so too, Florimond; but I do not know."

It did not. The next day the Chevalier came over to Cecilia, and slept that night in the village. The

tremendous consequence of the next twenty-four hours might almost have erased, as a rolling sea, all identical remembrance; and, indeed, it has sufficed to leave behind it what is as but a picture once discerned, and then forever darkened,—the cool, early romance of the wreaths and garlands (for we all rose at dawn to decorate the entrance, the corridors, the hall, the reception-room), the masses of May-bloom and lilies that arrived with the sun; the wild beauty overhanging everything; the mysterious freshness I have mentioned, or some effects just so conceived, before.

I myself adorned with laurels and lilies the conductor's desk, and the whole time as much in a dream as ever when asleep,—at all events I could even realize less. Maria was not at hand, nor could I see her, she breakfasted alone with Anastase; and although I shall never know what happened between them that morning, I have ever rejoiced that she did so.

When our floral arrangements were perfected I could not even criticise them. I flew to my bed and sat down upon it, holding my violin, my dearest, in my arms; there I rested, perhaps slept. 158
Strange thoughts were mine in that short time, which seemed immeasurably lengthening,—most like dreams, too, those very thoughts, for they were all rushing to a crisis. I recalled my cue, however, and what that alarming peal of a drum meant, sounding through the avenues of Cecilia.

As we ever cast off things behind, my passion could only hold upon the future. I was but, with all my speed, just in time to fall into procession with the rest. The chorus first singing, the band in the midst, behind, our professors in order, and on either side our own dark lines the female pupils,—a double streak of white. I have not alluded to our examinations, with which, however, I had had little enough to do. But we all pressed forward in contemporaneous state, and so entered the antechamber of the hall. It was the most purely brilliant scene I ever saw, prepared under the eye of the masters in our universal absence; I could recognize but one taste, but one eye, one hand, in that blending of all deep with all most dazzling flower-tints.

One double garland, a harp in a circle,—the symbol of immortal harmony,—wrought out of snowy roses and azure ribbons, hung exactly above the table; but the table was itself covered with snowy damask, fold upon fluted fold, so that nothing, whatever lay beneath it, could be given to the gaze.

Through the antechamber to the decorated hall we passed, and then a lapse of music half restored me to myself,—only half, despite the overture of his, with choral relief, with intersong, that I had never heard before, and that he had written only for us: despite his presence, his conducting charm.

In little more than an hour we returned, pell-mell now, just as we pleased, notwithstanding calls 159
to order and the pulses of the measuring voices. Just then I found myself by Maria. Through that sea-like resonance she whispered,—

"Do not be surprised, Carl, if the Chevalier presents you with a prize."

"I have not tried for one, Maria."

"I know that, but he will nevertheless distinguish you, I am certain of it."

"I hope not. Keep near me, Maria."

"Yes, surely, if I can; but oh, Carl, I am glad to be near you! Is that a lyre above the table? for I can scarcely see."

She was, as I expected, pale,—not paler than ever; for it was very long since she had been paler than any one I ever saw, except the Chevalier. But his was as the lustre of the whitest glowing fire,—hers was as the light of snow. She was all pale except her eyes, and that strange halo she had never lost shone dim as the darkliest violets, a soft yet awful hue. I had replied to her question hurriedly, "Yes; and it must have taken all the roses in his garden." And last of all, she said to me, in a tone which suggested more suffering than all her air: "I wish I were one of those roses."

The table, when the rich cover was removed, presented a spectacle of fascination scarcely to be appreciated except by those immediately affected. Masses of magnificently bound volumes, painted and carved instrument-cases, busts and portraits of the hierarchy of music, lay together in according contrast. For, as I have not yet mentioned, the Chevalier had carried out his abolition of the badges to the utmost; there was not a medal to be seen. But these prizes were beyond the worth of any medal, each by each. One after another left the table in those delicate 160
hands, wafted to its fortunate possessor by a compliment more delicate still, and I fancied no more remained.

Maria still stood near me; and as the moments flew, a stillness more utter than I could have imagined pervaded her, a marbled quietness crept over every muscle; and as I met her exquisite countenance in profile, with the eyes downward and fixed, and not an eyelash stirring, she might have been the victim of despair, or the genius of enraptured hope.

I saw that the Chevalier had proceeded to toss over and over the flowers which had strewn the gifts,—as if it were all, also, over now,—and he so long continued to trifle with them that I felt as if he saw Maria, and desired to attract from her all other eyes, for he talked the whole time lightly, laughingly, with an air of the most ravishing gayety, to those about him, and to every one except ourselves.

In a few minutes, which appeared to be a very hour, he gathered up, with a handful of flowers that he let slip through his fingers directly, something which he retained in his hand, and which it now struck me that he had concealed, whatever it was, by that flower-play of his all along; for it was even diffidently, certainly with reserve of some kind, that he approached us last, as we stood together and did not stir.

"These," said he to me in a voice that just trembled, though aërially joyous, "are too small to make speeches about; but in memory of several secrets we have between us, I hope you will sometimes wear them."

He then looked full at Maria; but she responded not even to that electric force that is itself the touch of light,—her eyes still downcast, her lips unmoved. He turned to me, and softly, seriously, yet half surprised, as it were, shook his head, placing in her hand the first of the unknown 161
caskets he had brought, and the other in my own. She took it without looking up, or even murmuring her thanks; still, immediately as he returned to the table, I forced it from her, feeling it might and ought to occasion a revulsion of sensation, however slight.

It succeeded so far as that she gazed, still bending downwards, upon what I held in my own hand now, and exhibited to her. It was a full-blown rose of beaten silver, white as snow, without a leaf, but exquisitely set upon a silver stem, and having upon one of its broad petals a large dewdrop of the living diamond.

I opened my own strange treasure then, having resigned to her her own. This was a breastpin of purest gold, with the head—a great violet cut from a single amethyst—as perfectly executed as hers. I thrust it into my pocket, for I could not at that instant even rejoice in its possession. And now soon, very soon, the flower-lighted space was cleared, and we, the chosen few, alone remained.

My heart felt as if it could only break, so violent was the pulse that shook it. I knew that I must make an effort transcending all, or I should lose my power to handle the bow; and at least I achieved composure of behavior. Anastase, I can remember, came to me; he touched my hand, and as if he longed, with all loosened passion, for something like sympathy, looked into my very eyes. I could scarcely endure that gaze,—it was inquisitive to scrutiny, yet dim with unutterable forecast.

The flowers in the concert-hall were already withering when, after a short separation for refreshment, we returned there, and were shut in safely by the closed doors from the distant 162
festal throng.

It was a strange sight, those deserted seats in front, where now none rested saving only the Chevalier, who, after hovering amidst the orchestra until all the ranks were filled, had descended, as was arranged, into the void space, that he might be prepared to criticise the performance. He did not seem much in the mood for criticism; his countenance was lightening with excitement, his eyes burned like stars brought near: that hectic fire, that tremulous blaze were both for her.

As he retreated, and folding his slender arms and raising his glorious head, still stood, Maria entered with Anastase. Florimond led her forward in her white dress, as he had promised himself to lead her captive on the day of her espousals; neither hurried nor abashed, she came in her virgin calm, her virgin paleness. But as they stood for one moment at the foot of the orchestra, he paused, arrested her, his hand was raised; and in a moment, with a smile whose tenderness for that moment triumphed, he had placed the silver rose in her dark hair, where it glistened, an angelic symbol to the recognition of every one present. She did not smile in return, nor raise her eyes, but mounted instantly and stood amidst us.

I had no idea, until, indeed, she stood there, a girl amidst us,—until she appeared in that light of which she herself was light,—how very small she was, how slightly framed; every emotion was articulated by the fragility of her form as she stirred so calmly, silently. The bright afternoon from many windows poured upon the polish of her forehead, so arched, so eminent; but, alas! upon the languors also that had woven their awful mists around her eyes. Her softly curling lips spoke nothing now but the language of sleep in infancy, so gently parted, but not as in inspiration. As she raised that arm so calmly, and the first movement came upon me, I could not 163
yet regard her, nor until a rest occurred. Then I saw her the same again, except that her eyes were filled with tears, and over all her face that there was a shadow playing as from some sweeping solemn wing, like the imagery of summer leaves that trembles upon a moonlit grass.

Only once I heard that music, but I do not remember it, nor can call upon myself to describe it. I only know that while in the full thrilling tide of that first movement I was not aware of playing, or how I played, though very conscious of the weight upon my heart and upon every instrument. Even Anastase, next whom I stood, was not himself in playing. I cannot tell whether the conductress were herself unsteady, but she unnerved us all, or something too near unnerved us, —we were noiselessly preparing for that which was at hand.

At the close of the movement a rushing cadence of ultimate rapidity broke from the stringed force, but the wind flowed in upon the final chords; they waned, they expanded, and at the simultaneous pause she also paused. Then strangely, suddenly, her arm fell powerless, her paleness quickened to crimson, her brow grew warm with a bursting blood-red blush,—she sank to the floor upon her side silently as in the south wind a leaf just flutters and is at rest; nor was there a sound through the stricken orchestra as Florimond raised her and carried her from us in

his arms.

None moved beside, except the Chevalier, who, with a gaze that was as of one suddenly blinded, followed Anastase instantaneously. We remained as we stood, in a suspense that I, for one, could never have broken. Poor Florimond's violin lay shattered upon the floor, the strings shivered, and yet shuddering; the rose lay also low. None gathered either up, none stirred, nor any brought us 164
word. I believe I should never have moved again if Delemann, in his living kindness, had not sped from us at last.

He, too, was long away,—long, long to return; nor did he, in returning, re-enter the orchestra. He beckoned to me from the screen of the antechamber. I met him amidst the glorious garlands, but I made way to him I know not how. That room was deserted also, and all who had been there had gone. Whither? Oh! where might they now remain? Franz whispered to me, and of his few, sad words—half hope, half fear, all anguish—I cannot repeat the echo. But it is sufficient for all to remind myself how soon the hope had faded, after few, not many days; how the fear passed with it, but not alone. Yet, whatever passed, whatever faded, left us love forever,—love, with its dear regrets, its infinite expectations!

CHAPTER IX.

Twelve years of after-life cannot but weigh lighter in the balance of recollection than half that 165
number in very early youth. I think this now, pondering upon the threshold of middle age with an enthusiasm fixed and deepened by every change; but I did not think so the day to which I shall defer my particular remembrances,—the day I had left Germany forever,—except in dreams. There were other things I might have left behind that now I carried to my home,—things themselves all dreams, yet containing in their reminiscences the symbols of my every reality. Eternity alone could contain the substance of those shadows; that shore we deem itself to shadow, alone contains the resolution into glory of all our longings, into peace of all our pain.

Such feelings, engendered by loneliness, took me by the very hand and led me forwards that dreary December evening when I landed in England last, having obtained all that was absolutely necessary to be made my own abroad.

I have not tormented my reader or two with the most insignificant mention of myself between this evening and a time some years before; it would have been impracticable, or, if practicable, impertinent, as I lived those after years entirely within and to myself. The sudden desertion which had stricken Cecilia of her hero lord, and that suspension of his presence which ensued, had no more power upon me than to call out what was, indeed, demanded of me under such 166
circumstances,—all the persistency of my nature. And if even there had been a complete and actual surrender of all her privileges by professors and pupils, I should have been the last to be found there, and I think that I should have played to the very empty halls until ruin hungered for them and we had fallen together. As it happened, however, my solitude was more actual than any I could have provided for myself; my spirit retreated, and to music alone remained either master or slave.

The very representative of music was no longer such to me; for when we came together after that fatal midsummer no sign was left of Anastase,—"a new king had arisen in Egypt, who knew not Joseph." To him I ought, perhaps, to confess that I owed a good deal, but I cannot believe it,—I am fain to think I should have done as well alone; but there was that in the association and habitude of the place, that in the knowledge of being still under the superintendence, however formal and abstracted, of its head, that I could not, and would not, have flung up the chances of its academical career.

It was, however, no effort to disengage myself from the spot, for any notion of the presence of him I best loved was, alas! now, and had been long, entirely dissociated from it. Not one smile from those fair lips, not one ray from those awful eyes, had sunned the countenances of the ever-studious throng. A monastery could not have been more secluded from the incarnate presence of the Deity than were we in that quiet institution from its distant director.

Let it not be imagined, at the same time, that we could have existed in ignorance of that influence which was streaming—an "eastern star"—through the country that contained him as a light of life, which in the few fleeting years of my boyhood had garnered such illustrious immortality for 167
one scarcely past his own first youth. But in leaving Germany I was leaving neither the name nor the fame of Seraphael, except to meet them again where they were dearer yet and brighter than in their cradle-land.

None could estimate—and, young as I yet was, I well knew it—the proportion of the renown his early works had gained in this strange country. The noblest attribute of race, the irresistible conception of the power of race, had scarcely then received a remote encouragement, though physiologists abounded; but, like our artists, they lacked an ideal, or, like our politicians, "a man."

Still, whether people knew it or not, they insensibly worshipped the perfect beauty whose development was itself music, and whose organization, matchless and sublimated, was but the

purest type of that human nature on which the Divine One placed his signet, and which he instituted by sharing, the nearest to his own. Those who did know it, denied it in the face of their rational conviction, because it was so hard to allow that to be a special privilege in which they can bear no earthly part; for all the races of the earth cannot tread down one step of that race, nor diminish in each millennium its spiritual approximation to an everlasting endurance. Or, perhaps, to do them justice, the very conviction was as dark to them as that of death, which all must hold, and so few care to remind themselves of. At all events, it was yet a whisper—and a whisper not so universally wafted as whispers in general are—that Seraphael was of unperverted Hebrew ancestry, both recognizant of the fact and auspicious in its entertainment.

Many things affected me as changes when I landed at London Bridge, for I had not been at home 168
for three whole years, and was not prepared to meet such changes, though aware of many in myself.

I cannot allude to any now, except the railway, which was the first I had seen, and whose line to our very town, almost to our very house, had been not six months completed. I shall never forget the effect, nor has it ever left me when I travel; I cannot find it monotonous, nor anything but marvel. It was certainly evening when I entered the stupendous terminus, and nothing could have so adapted itself to the architecture as the black-gray gloom, lamp-strung, streaming with gas-jets.

Such gloom breathed deadly cold, presaging the white storm or the icing wind; and it was the long drear line itself that drew my spirit forth, as itself lonely to bask in loneliness, such weird, wild insecurity seemed hovering upon the darkened distance, such a dream of hopeless achievement seemed the space to be overpassed that awful evening. As I walked along the carriage-line I felt this, although the engine-fire glowed furiously, and it spit out sparks in bravery; but the murmur of exhaustless power prevented my feeling in full force what that power must really be.

It was not until we rolled away and left the lamps in their ruddy sea behind us, had lost ourselves far out in the dark country, had begun to rush into the very arms of night, that I could even bear to remember how little people had told me of what steam-travelling by land would prove in my experience. It seemed to me as if I, too, ought to have changed, and to carry wings; the spirit pined for an enfranchisement of its own as peculiar, and recalled all painfully that its pinings were in vain.

A thousand chapters have been expended upon the delights of return to home, and a thousand 169
more will probably insure for themselves laudable publicity. I should be an all-ungrateful wretch if I refused my single *Ave* at that olden shrine. I cannot quite forget, either, that none of my wildest recollections out-dazzled its near brightness as I approached; the poetic isolation of my late life, precious as it was in itself, and inseparable from my choicest appreciation, seeming but to enhance the genial sweetness of the reality in my reception.

Long before I arrived in that familiar parlor a presence awaited me which had ever appeared to stand between my actual and my ideal world,—it was that of my brother and earliest friend, dear Lenhart Davy, who had walked out into the winter night expressly and entirely to meet me, and who was so completely unaged, unchanged, and unalloyed that I could but wonder at the freshness of the life within him, until I remembered the fountains where it fed. He was as bright, as earnest, as in the days of my infant faith; but there was little to be said until we arrived at home.

Cold as was the season, and peculiarly susceptible as our family has ever been to cold, the street-door positively stood ajar! and hiding behind it was Margareth, oblivious of rheumatism and frost, to receive her nursling. When she had pronounced upon my growth her enchanted eulogy that I was taller than ever and more like myself, I was dragged into the parlor by Davy, and found them all, the bloom of the firelight restoring their faces exactly as I had left them. My mother, as I told her, looked younger than myself,—which might easily be the case, as I believe I was born grown up,—and Clo was very handsome in her fashion, wearing the old pictorial raiment. My
sister Lydia had lately received preferment, and introduced me on the instant to her prospects,— 170
a gentlemanly individual upon the sofa, who had not even concluded his college career, but was in full tilt for high mathematical honors at that which I have heard called Oxford's rival, but upon whose merit as a residence and Academe celestial I am not competent to sit in judgment.

These worthies dismissed, I was at liberty to spend myself upon the most precious of the party. They were Millicent and her baby, which last I had never seen,—a lady of eighteen months, kept thus late out of her cradle that she, too, might greet her uncle. She was a delicious child,—I have never found her equal,—and had that indescribable rarity of appearance which belongs, or we imagine it to belong, to an only one. Carlotta—so they had christened her after unworthy me—was already calling upon my name, to the solemn ecstasy of Davy, and his wife's less sustained gratification.

I have never really seen such a sight as that sister and brother of mine, with that only child of theirs. When we drew to the table, gloriously spread for supper, and my mother, in one of her old-fashioned agonies, implored for Carlotta to be taken upstairs, Davy, perfectly heedless, brought her along with him to his chair, placed on his knee and fed her, fostered her till she fell asleep and tumbled against his shoulder, when he opened his coat-breast for her and just let her sleep on,—calling no attention to her beauties in so many words, certainly, but paying very little attention to anything else; and at last, when we all retired, carrying her away with him upstairs,

where I heard him walking up and down his room, with a hushing footstep, long after I had entered mine.

It was not until the next morning that I was made fully aware of Davy's position. After breakfast, 171
as soon as the sun was high enough to prepare the frosty atmosphere for the reception of the baby, I returned with Millicent and himself to their own home. I had been witness to certain improvements in that little droll house, but a great deal more had been done since my last visit.

For example, there was a room downstairs, built out, for the books, which had accumulated too many; and over this room had Davy designed a very sweet green-house, to be approached from the parlor itself. The same order overlaid everything; the same perfume of cleanliness permeated every corner; and it was just as well this was the case, so jammed and choked up with all sorts of treasures and curiosities were the little landing-place, the tiny drawing-room, the very bed-room and *a half*, as Davy called my own little closet, with the little carven bed's head. Everywhere his shadow, gliding and smiling silently, though at the proper time she had plenty to say too, came Millicent after him. Nor was the baby ever far behind; for at the utmost distance might be glimpsed a nest of basket-work, lined with blush-color, placed on a chair or two among the geraniums and myrtles, and in that basket the baby lay; while her mamma, who only kept one servant, made various useful and ornamental progresses through the house.

While Davy was at home, however, Carlotta was never out of his arms, or, at least, off his lap; she had learned to lie quite quiescently across his knees while he wrote or read, making no more disturbance than a dove would have done. I believe he was half-jealous because when I took her she did not cry, but began to put her fingers into my eyes and to carry my own fingers to her mouth. This morning we had her between us when we began to talk, and it was with his eyes 172
upon her that Davy first said,—

"Well, Charles, you have told me nothing of your plans yet; I suppose they are hardly formed."

"Oh, yes! quite formed,—at least as formed as they can be without your sanction. You know what you wrote to me about,—your last letter?"

"You received that extemporaneous extravaganza, then, Charles,—which I afterwards desired I had burned?"

"I take that as especially unkind on your part, as I could not but enter with the most eager interest into every line."

"Not unkind, though I own it was a little cowardly. I felt rather awed in submitting my ideas to you when you were at the very midst of music in its most perfect exposition."

"Oh! I did not quite discover that, Lenhart. There are imperfections everywhere, and will be, in such a mixed multitude as of those who press into the service of what is altogether perfect."

"The old story, Charlie."

"Rather the new one. I find it every day placed before me in a stronger light; but it has not long held even with me. How very little we can do, even at the utmost, and how very hard we must labor even to do that little!"

"I am thankful to hear you say so, Charles, coming fresh from the severities of study; but we are some few of us in the same mind."

"Then let us hold together; and this brings me to my purpose. I am not going to settle in London, Lenhart,—that is a mistake of yours. I will never leave you while I can be of any use."

"Leave me, Charlie? Ah! would that I could cherish the possibility of your remaining here! But 173
with your power and your promise of success, who would not blame those who should prevent your appearance in London?"

"I will never make my appearance anywhere, my dearest brother,—at least not as you intend. I could have no objection to play anywhere if I were wanted, and if any one cared to hear me; but I will never give up the actual hold I have on this place. As much may be done here as anywhere else, and more, I am certain, than in London. There is more room here,—less strain and stress; and, once more, I will not leave you."

"But how, my Charlie,—in what sense?"

"I will work along with you, and for you, while I work for myself. I am young, very young, and, I daresay, very presumptuous in believing myself equal to the task; but I should wish, besides being resident professor, to devote myself especially to the organization of that band of which you wrote, and which in your letter you gave me to understand it is your desire to amalgamate with your class. You do not see, Lenhart, that, young as I am, nothing could give me a position like this, and that if I fail, I can but return to a less ambitious course."

"There is no course, Charles, that I do not consider you equal to; but I cannot reconcile it with my conscience to bind you to a service so signal for my own sake,—it is a mere sketch of a Spanish castle I had reared in an idle hour."

"We will raise a sure fame on solid foundations, Lenhart, and I do not care about fame for its own sake. After all, you cannot, with your musical electicism, prefer me to become mixed up in the horrible struggle for precedence which, in London, degrades the very nature of art, and renders

its pursuit a misnomer." 174

"You have not given up one of your old prejudices, Charles."

"No, Davy. I feel we can do more acting together than either separately, for the cause we love best and desire to serve. You know me well, and that, whatever I have learned in my life abroad, no taste is so dear to me as yours,—no judgment I should follow to the death so gladly. Besides all the rest, which is made up of a good deal more than one can say, I could never consent, as an instrumentalist, and as holding that instrument to be part of myself, to infect my style with whims and fashions which alone would render it generally acceptable. I *must* reserve what I musically believe as my musical expression, and nothing can satisfy me in that respect but the development of the orchestra."

"Poor orchestra! it is a very germ, a winter-seed at present, my ever-sanguine Charlie."

"I am not sanguine; on the contrary, I am disposed to suspect treachery everywhere, even in myself, and certainly in you, if you would have me go to London, take fashionable lodgings, and starve myself on popular precedents, among them that most magnificent one of lionizing musical professors. No, I could not bear that, and no one would care a whit for my playing as I *feel*. I should be starved out and out. If you can initiate me a little yourself into your proceedings, I think I shall be able to persuade you that I ought to be only where my impulse directs me to remain."

Davy at this juncture deprived me of the baby, who had been munching my finger all the time we talked; and when he had placed her in her nest,—a portent of vast significance,—he enlightened me indeed to the full, and we informed Millicent when she came upstairs; for nothing could be 175
done without asking her accord. It was greatly to my satisfaction that she entirely agreed with me, and a great relief to Davy, who in the plenitude of his delicate pride could hardly bear the thought of suggesting anything to anybody, lest his suggestion should unsteady any fixed idea of their own. Millicent cordially asserted that she felt there was a more interesting sphere about them than she could imagine to exist anywhere else; and perhaps she was right, for no one could sufficiently laud the extirpation of ancient prejudices by Davy's firm voice and ardent heart. I could not possibly calculate at that moment the force and extent of his singular efforts, and their still more unwonted effects in so short a time made manifest. I heard of these from Millicent, who could talk of nothing else, to me, at least, after Davy, ever anxious, had left us for his morning's lessons, which occupied him in private, though not much more than formerly, as his peculiar attention and nearly his whole time were devoted more determinately than ever to the instruction and elevation of the vocal institution he had organized.

"No one can tell, Charles," said Millicent, among other things, "how heroically and patiently he has worked, rejecting all but the barest remuneration, to bring all forward as he has succeeded in doing, and has nobly done. You will say so when you hear, and you must hear, to-morrow evening."

"I shall indeed feel strange, Millicent," I replied, "to sit at his feet once more, and to feel again all that went through me in the days when I learned of him alone. But I am very curious about another friend of mine. I suppose you can tell me just as well as he."

"About Miss Benette, Charles?"

"Yes, and also little Laura." 176

"I know nothing; we know nothing of her or what she has been doing. But you must have heard of Clara?"

"Not a word. I have been very quiet, I assure you."

"So much the better for you, Charles. But she has not lost your good opinion?"

"She would have that wherever she went."

"I believe it. My husband has, of course, never lost sight of her; yet it was not until the other day, and quite by accident, that we heard of all she has become. A very old Italian stager, Stelli by name, called on Lenhart the other day at the class, and after hearing several of the pieces, asked him whether his pupil, Miss Benette, had not belonged to it once on a time. He said, Yes; and finding that the signor was acquainted with her, brought him home to dinner; and we were told a great deal that it is very difficult to tell, even to you, Charles. She must, however, be exactly what you always imagined."

"I should not only imagine, but expect, she will remain unaltered. I do not believe such eyes could change, or the owner of such eyes."

"He says just so,—he says that she is an angel; he continued to call her *angela*, *angela*, and could call her nothing else."

"Is she singing in Italy just now?"

"It is just that we asked him. You know she went to Italy for study, and no one heard a word about her; she did not omit to write, but never mentioned what she was doing. Only the third year she sent us news of her *début*. This was but last May. The news was in a paper, not in her letter. In her letter she only spoke of ourselves, and sent us a present for baby,—such a piece of 177

work, Charles, as you never saw. I thought she would have quite given up work by that time. The letter was a simple, exquisite expression of regard for her old master; and when Lenhart answered it, she wrote again. *This* letter contained the most delicate intimation of her prosperous views. She was entirely engaged at that time, but told us she trusted to come to England an early month next year, for she says she finds, having been to Italy, she loves England best."

"That is rather what I should have expected. She had not an Italian touch about her; she would weary there."

"I should scarcely think so, Charles, for Stelli described her beauty as something rose-like and healthful,—'fresher than your infant there,' he said, pointing to baby; and from her style of singing grand and sacred airs, she has been fancifully named, and is called everywhere, 'La Benetta benedetta.'"[7]

"That strikes home to me very pleasantly, Millicent. She had something blessed and infantine in her very look. I admire that sobriquet; but those usually bestowed by the populace are most unmeaning. Her own name, however, suits her best,—it is limpid like the light in her eyes. There is no word so apt as 'clear' for the expression of her soul. And what, Millicent, of her voice and style?"

"Something wonderful, no doubt, Charles, if she obtained an engagement in the midst of such an operatic pressure as there was this year. I hope she will do something for England too. We have not so many like her that we can afford to lose her altogether."

"I know of not one, Millicent; and shall, if it be my good fortune to see her, persuade her not to 178
desert us; but Lenhart will have more chance."

"La Benetta benedetta!" I could not forget it; it haunted me like the words of some chosen song; I was ever singing it in my mind; it seemed the most fitting, and the only not irreverent homage with which one could have strewed the letters of her name,—a most successful hieroglyph. Nor the less was I reminded of her when, on the following evening, I accompanied my sister—who for once had allowed Clo to take charge of her baby—to the place, now so altered since I left it, where the vocal family united. We entered at the same door, we approached the same room; but none could again have known it unless, as in my case, he could have pointed out the exact spot on which he had been accustomed to sit. The roof was raised, the rafters were stained that favorite sylvan tint of Davy's, the windows lightly pencilled with it upon their ground-glass arches, the walls painted the softest shade of gray, harmonizing perfectly with the purple-crimson tone of the cloth that covered seats and platform. Alas! as I surveyed that platform I felt, with Davy, how much room there was for increased and novel yet necessary organism in the perfectibility of the system; for on that glowing void outspread, where his slight, dark form and white face and *glancing* hands alone shone out, I could but dream of beholding the whole array, in clustering companionship, of those mystic shapes that suggest to us, in their varied yet according forms, the sounds that creep, that wind, that pierce, that electrify, through parchment or brass or string.

In a word, they wanted a band very much. It would not have signified whether they had one or not, had the class continued in its primitive position, and in which its enemies would have desired 179
it to remain,—an unprogressive mediocrity. But as it is the nature of true art to be progressive ever, it is just as ignorant to expect shortcomings of a true artist as it would be vain to look for ideal success amongst the leaders of musical taste, neither endowed with aspiration nor volition. Now, to hear those voices rise, prolong themselves, lean in uncorrupted tone upon the calm motet, or rest in unagitated simplicity over a pause of Ravenscroft's old heavenly verses, made one almost leap to reduce such a host to the service of an appropriate band, and to institute orchestral worship there. I could but remind myself of certain great works, paradises of musical creation, from whose rightful interpretation we are debarred either by the inconsistency with the chosen band of the selected chorus, or by the inequality of the band itself. It struck me that a perfect dream might here be realized in full perfection, should my own capabilities, at least, keep pace with the demand upon them, were I permitted to take my part in Davy's plan as we had treated of it to each other. I told him, as we walked home together, a little of my mind. He was in as bright spirits as at his earliest manhood; it was a favorable moment, and in the keen December moonlight we made a vow to stand by each other then and ever.

Delightful as was the task, and responsive to my inmost resolutions, the final result I scarcely dared anticipate; it was no more easy at first than to trace the source of such a river as the Nile. Many difficulties darkened the way before me; and my own musical knowledge seemed but as a light flung immediately out of my own soul, making the narrow circle of a radiance for my feet that was unavailable for any others. My position as Davy's brother-in-law gave me a certain hold 180
upon my pupils, but no one can imagine what suffering they weetlessly imposed upon me. The number I began with, receiving each singly, not at my own home, but in a hired room, was not more than eight, amateurs and neophytes either,—the amateurs esteeming themselves no less than amateurs, and something more; the neophytes chiefly connections of the choral force, and of an individual stubbornness not altogether to be appreciated at an early period. I could laugh to remember myself those awful mornings when, after a breakfast at home which I could not have touched had it been less delicately prepared, I used to repair to that room of mine and await the advent of those gentlemen, all older than myself except one, and he the most *presto* in pretensions of the set. The room was at the back and top of a house; and over the swinging window-blind I could discern a rush now and then of a deep dark smoke, and a wail, as of a

demon sorely tried, would shrill along my nerves as the train dashed by. The trains were my chief support during the predominance of my ordeal,—they superinduced a sensation that was neither of music nor of stolidity.

After a month or two, however, dating from the first week of February, when, together with the outpeering of the first snowdrop from the frost, I assumed my dignities, I discovered that I had gained a certain standing, owing to the fact of my being aware what I was about, and always attending to the matter in hand. Of my senior pupils, one was immensely conversable, so conversable that until he had disgorged himself of a certain quantity of chat, it was impossible to induce him to take up his bow; another contemplative, so contemplative that I always had to unpack his instrument for him, and to send it after him when he was gone, in a general way; a 181
third so deficient in natural musicality that he did not like my playing! and soon put up for a vacant oboe in the band of the local theatre, and left me in the lurch. But desperately irate with them as I was, and almost disgusted with my petty efforts, I made no show of either to Davy, nor did they affect my intentions nor stagger my fixed assurance. All my experiences were hoarded and husbanded by me to such purpose on my own account that I advanced myself in exact proportion to the calm *statu quo* in which remained at present my orchestral nucleus. My patience was rewarded, however, before I could have dared to hope, by a steady increase of patronage during April and May,—in fact, I had so much to do in the eight weeks of those two months that my mother declared I was working too hard, and projected a trip for me somewhere. Bless her ever benignant heart! she always held that everybody, no matter who, and no matter what they had to do, should recreate during three months out of every twelve! How my family, all celebrated as they were for nerves of salient self-assertion, endured my home-necessary practice, I cannot divine; but they one and all made light of it, even declaring they scarcely heard that all-penetrating sound distilled down the staircase and through closed parlor doors. But I was obliged to keep in my own hand most vigorously, and sustained myself by the hope that I should one day lead off my dependants in the region now made sacred by voice and verse alone. It was my habit to give no lessons after dinner, but to pursue my own studies, sadly deficient as I was in too many respects, in the long afternoons of spring, and to walk in the lengthening evenings, more delicious in my remembrance than any of my boyish treasure-times. On class-nights I would walk to Davy's, find him in a paroxysm of anxiety just gone off, leaving Millicent to bemoan his want of 182
appetite and to devise elegant but inexpensive suppers. I would have one good night-game with my soft-lipped niece, watch her mamma unswathe the cambric from her rosy limbs, see the white lids drop their lashes over her blue eyes' sleepfulness, listen to the breath that arose like the pulses of a flower to the air, feel her sweetness make me almost sad, and creep downstairs most noiselessly. Millicent would follow me to fetch her work-basket from the little conservatory, would talk a moment before she returned upstairs to work by the cradle-side, would steal with me to the door, look up to the stars or the moon a moment, and heave a sigh,—a sigh as from happiness too large for heart to hold; and I, having picked my path around the narrow gravel, smelling the fresh mould in the darkness, having reached the gate, would just glance round to sign adieu; and not till then would she withdraw into the warm little hall and close the door. Then off I was to the class, to see the windows a-glow from the street, to hear the choral glory greeting me in sounds like chastened organ-tones, to mount, unquestioned, into the room, to find the crimsoned seats all full, the crimson platform bare, save of that quick, dark form and those gleaming hands. I sit down behind, and bask luxuriously in that which, to me, is precious as "the sunshine to the bee;" or I come down stoopingly a few steps, and taking the edge of a bench where genial faces smile for me, I peep over the sheet of the pale mechanic or rejoicing weaver, whose visage is drawn out of its dread fatigue as by a celestial galvanism, and join in the psalm, or mix my spirit in the soaring antiphon. Davy meets me afterwards; we wait until everybody has passed out, we pack away the books, we turn down the gas,—or at least a gentleman does, who 183
appears to think it an essential part of music that a supreme bustle should precede and follow its celebrations, and who, locking the door after we attain the street, tenders Davy the key in a perfect agony of courteous patronage, and bows almost unto the earth. I accompany my brother home, and Millicent and he and I sup together, the happiest trio in the town. On other nights I sup at home, and after my walk, as I come in earlier, and after I have given reports of Millicent and her spouse and the baby,—also, whether it has been out this day (my mother having a righteous prejudice against certain winds),—I sometimes play to them such moving melodies as I fancy will touch them, but not too deeply, and indulge in the lighter moods that music does not deny, even to the unitiated,—often trifling with my memory of old times as they begin to seem to me, and, alas! have seemed many years already, though I am young,—so young that I scarcely know yet how young I am.

CHAPTER X.

I was in the most contented frame of mind that can be conceived of until the very May month of 184
the year I speak of, when my sensations, as usual, began to be peculiar. I don't think anybody can love summer better than I do, can more approvedly languish out, by heavy-shaded stream in an atmosphere all roses, the summer noons, can easier spend, in *insomnie* the lustrous moony nights.

But May does something to me of which I am not aware during June and July, or at the first delicate spring-time. When the laburnums rain their gold, and the lilacs toss broad-bloomed their grape-like clusters, when the leaves, full swelling, are yet all veined with light, I cannot very well work hard, and would rather slave the livelong eleven months besides, to have that month a holiday. So it happened now; and though I had no absolute right to leave my pupils and desert the first stones of my musical masonry just laid and smoothed, I was obliged to think that if I were to have a holiday at all, I had better take it then. But I had not decided until I received a double intimation,—one from Davy, and one from the county newspaper, which last never chronicled events that stirred in London unless they stirred beyond it. My joyous brother brought me the letter, and the paper was upon our table the same morning when I came down to breakfast. 185

"See here, Charles," said Clo, who, sitting in her own corner, over her own book, was unwontedly excited; "here is a piece of news for you, and my mother found it first!"

I read, in a castaway paragraph enough, that the Chevalier Seraphael, the pianist and composer, was to pay a visit to England this very summer; though to remain in strict seclusion, he would not be inaccessible to professors. He brought with him, I learned, "the fruits of several years' solitary travel, no doubt worthy of his genius and peculiar industry."

Extremely to the purpose were these expressions, for they told me all I wanted to know,—that he was alive, must be himself again, and had been writing for those who loved him,—for men and angels. Now, for my letter. I had held it without opening it, for I chose to do so when alone, and waited until after breakfast. It was a choice little supplement to that choicest of all invites for my spirit and heart,—a note on foreign paper; the graceful, firm character of the writing found no difficulty to stand out clear and black from that milk-and-water hue and spongy texture. It was from Clara,—a simple form that a child might have dictated, yet containing certain business reports for Davy, direct as from one who could master even business.

She was coming definitely to England, not either for any purposes save those all worthy of herself; she had accepted, after much consideration, a London engagement for the season; and, said she,—

"I only have my fears lest I should do less than I ought for what I love best; it is so difficult to do what is right by music in these times, when it is fashionable to seem to like it. You will give me a little of your advice, dear sir, if I need it, as perhaps I may; but I hope not, because I have 186 troubled you too much already. I trust your little daughter is growing like you to please her mother, and like her mother to please you. I shall be delighted to see it when I come to London, if you can allow me to do so."

The style of this end of a letter both amused and absorbed me; it was Clara's very idiosyncrasy. I could but think, "Is it possible that she has not altered more than her style of expressing herself has done? I must go and see."

Davy received my ravings with due compassion and more indulgence than I had dared to hope. The suspension of my duties, leaving our orchestra in limbo still longer, disconcerted him a little; but he was the first to say I must surely go to London. The only thing to be discovered was when to go, so as not to frustrate either one of my designs or the other; and I declared he must, to that end, address Clara on the very subject.

He did so, and in a fortnight there came the coolest note to say she would be in London the next day, and that she had heard the great musician would arrive before the end of the month. I inly marvelled whether in all the course of his wanderings Clara and the Chevalier had met; but still I thought and prophesied not. I was really reluctant to leave Davy with his hands and head full, that I might saunter with my own in kid-gloves, and swarming with May fancies; but for once my selfishness—or something higher, whose mortal frame is selfishness—impelled me. I found myself in the train at the end of the next week, carrying Clara's address in my memorandum-book, and my violin-case in the carriage along with me.

It was early afternoon, and exquisitely splendid weather when I arrived in London. In London, however, I had little to do just then, as the address of the house to which I was bound was rather 187 out of London,—above the smoke, beyond the stir, at the very first plunge into the surrounding country that lingers yet as a dream upon her day reality, with which dreams suit not ill, and from which they seldom part. I love the heart of London, in whose awful deeps reflect the mysterious unfathomable of every secret, and where the homeless are best at home, where the home-bred fear not to wander, assured of sweet return; but I do not love its immediate precincts,—the rude waking stage between that profound and the conserved, untainted sylvan vision, that, once overpast it, dawns upon us.

Dashing as abruptly as possible, and by the nearest way through all the brick wilderness outward, I reached in no long weary time, and by no long weary journey, though on foot, a quiet road, which by a continuous but gentle rise carried me to the clustered houses, neither quite hamlet nor altogether village, where Miss Benette had hidden her heart among the leaves.

Cool and shady was the side I took, though the sunshine whitened the highway, and every summer promise beamed from the soft sky's azure, the green earth's bloom. The painted gates I met at intervals, or the iron-wreathed portals, guarded dim walks, through whose perspective villas glistened, all beautiful as they were discerned afar in their frames of tossing creepers, with gay verandas or flashing green-houses. But the wall I followed gave me not a transient glimpse of

gardens inwards, so thickly blazed the laburnums and the paler flames of the rich acacia, not to speak of hedges all sweet-brier, matted into one embrace with double-blossomed hawthorn. I passed garden after garden and gate after gate, seeing no one; for the great charm of those regions consists in the extreme privacy of every habitation,—privacy which the most exclusive 188
nobleman might envy, and never excel in his wilderness parks or shrubberies; and when at length I attained the summit of the elevation where two roads met and shut in a sweep of actual country, and I came to the end of the houses, I began to look about for some one to direct me; then, turning the corner, I came in turning upon what I had been seeking, without having really sought it by any effort.

The turn in the road I speak of went tapering off between hedgerows; and meadow-lands, as yet unencroached upon, swept within them as far as I could see. But just where I stood, a cottage, older than any of the villas, and framed in shade more ancient than the light groves I left behind me, peeped from the golden and purple May-trees across a moss-green lawn,—a perfect picture in its silence, and a very paradise of fragrance. It was built of wood, and had its roof-hung windows and drooping eaves protected by a spreading chestnut-tree, whose great green fans beat coolness against every lattice, and whose blossoms had kindled their rose-white tapers at the sun. The garden was so full of flowers that one could scarcely bear the sweetness, except that the cool chestnut shadow dashed the breeze with freshness as it swept the heavy foliage and sank upon the checkered grass to a swoon. I was not long lost in contemplating the niche my saint had chosen, for I could have expected nothing fitter; but I was at some loss to enter, for the reminiscences of my childhood burdened me, and I dreaded lest I should be deprived of anything I now held stored within me, by a novel shock of being. I need not have feared.

After waiting till I was ashamed, I opened the tiny gate and walked across the grass, still soft with the mowing of the morning, to the front door, where I pulled a little bell-handle half 189
smothered in the wreaths of monthly roses that were quivering and fluttering like pink doves about the door and lower windows. This was as it should be, the very door-bell dressed with flowers; but more as it should be, it was that Thoné opened the door. I was almost ready to disappear again, but that her manner was the most reassuring to troublesome nerves. She did not appear to have any idea who I was, nor did she even stare when I presented my card, but like some strange bronze escaped from its pedestal, and attired in muslin, she conducted me onwards down a little low hall, half filled with the brightest plants, into a double parlor, whose folding-doors were closed, and whose diamond-paned back window looked out far, and very far, into the country.

Hearing not a voice in the next room, nor any rustle, nor even a soft foot hastily cross the beamed ceiling overhead, I dared look about me for a moment, hid my hat in confusion under a chair, saw that the round table had a bowl of flowers in its centre, caught sight of my face in the intensely polished glass-door of a small closed book-case, and, as if detected in some act, walked away to the window.

I could not have done a better thing to prepare myself for any fresh excitement; I was ready in an instant to weep with joy at the beauty that flooded my spirit. Over and beyond the garden I gazed; it did not detain my eye,—I passed its tree-tops, all apple-bloom and lilac, and its sudden bursts of grass where the tree-tops parted. I looked out to the country,—an undulating country, a sea of green, flushed here and there with a bloomy level, or a breeze upon the crimson clover; odorous bean-fields quivered, and their scent was floating everywhere,—it drowned the very 190
garden sweetness, and blended in with waftures of unknown fragrance, all wild essences shed from woodbines, from dog-roses, and the new-cut grass, or plumy meadow-sweet, by the waters of rills flowing up into the distance, silver in the sunlight. Soft hills against the heaven swept over visionary valleys; the sunshine lay white and warm upon glistening summer seas and picture cottages; over all spread the purple, melting, brooding sky, transparent on every leaf and blossom, shining upon those tender sloping hills with an amethyst haze of light, not shade.

As I stood, the things that seemed had never been, and the things that had been grew dilated and indefinitely bright,—the soft thrall of the suspense that bound me intertwining itself with mine "electric chain" as that May-dream mixed itself with all my music, veiling it as moonlight, the colors of the flowers, or as music itself veils passion.

I waited quite half an hour, and had lost myself completely, feeling as if no change could come, when, without a sound, some one entered behind me. I knew it by the light that burst through the folding-door, which had, however, again closed when I turned, for the tread was so silent I might otherwise have gone dreaming on. Clara stood before me, so little altered that I could have imagined that she had been put away in a trance when I left her last, and but this instant was restored to me.

She was not more womanly, nor less child-like; and for her being an actress, it seemed a thing impossible. I could but stand and gaze; nor did she seem surprised, nor did her eyes droop, nor her fair cheek mantle: through the untrembling lashes I caught the crystal light as she opposed me, still waiting for me to speak.

I was heartily ashamed at last, and resolved to make her welcome as she maintained that strange 191
regard. I put out my hand, and in an instant she greeted me; the infantine smile shone suddenly that had soothed me so long ago.

"I am very glad to see you, Miss Benette. It was very kind of you to let me come."

"By no means," she replied, with the slightest possible Italian softening of her accent. "I am very much obliged to you, and I am very pleased also. Please sit down, sir, for you have been standing, I am afraid, a long time. I was out at first, and since I returned I made haste; but still, I fear, I have kept you waiting."

"I could have waited all day, Miss Benette, to see such a window as this. How did you manage to put your foot into such a nest?"

"It is a very sweet little place, and the country is most beautiful. I don't know what they mean by its being too near London. I must be near London, and yet I could not exactly live in it, for it makes me idle."

"How very strange! It has the same effect upon me,—that is to say, I always dream in those streets, and lose half my purpose. Still, it must be almost a temptation to indulge a certain kind of idleness here; in such a garden as that, for example, one could pass all one's time."

"I do pass half my time in the garden, and yet I do not think it is too much, for it makes me well; and I cannot work when I am not well,—I was always unfortunate in that respect."

"How do you think I look, by the by, Miss Benette? Am I very much changed? It is perhaps, however, not a safe question."

"Quite safe, sir. You have grown more and more like your inseparable companion,—you always had a look of it, and now it takes the place of all other expression." 192

"I don't know whether that is complimentary or not, you see, for I never heard your opinion in old times. I was a very silly boy then, and not quite so well aware of what I owed to you as I may be now."

"I do not feel that you owe anything to anybody, Mr. Auchester, for you would have gone to your own desires as resolutely through peril as through pleasure; at all events, if you are still as modest as you were, it is a great blessing now you have become a soul which bears so great a part. If I must speak truth, however, about your looks, you seem as delicate as you used to be, and I do not suppose you could be anything else. You have not altered except to have grown up."

"And you, if I may say so, have not altered in growing up."

Nor had she. She had not gained an inch in height. She could never have worn that black silk frock those years; yet the folds, so grave and costly, still shielded her gentle breast to meet the snow-soft ruffle that fringed her throat: nor had she ornament upon her,—neither bracelet nor ring upon the dimpled hands, the delicate wrists. Though her silken hair had lengthened into wreaths upon wreaths behind, she still preserved those baby-curls upon her temples, nor had a shade more majesty gathered to her brow,—the regal innocence was throned there, and looked forth from her eyes as from a shrine; but it was evident that there was nothing about her from head to foot on which she piqued herself,—a rare shortcoming of feminine maturity. The only perceptible difference in the face was when she spoke or smiled; and then the change, the deepened sweetness, can be no more given to description than the notion of music to the destitute ear. It was something of a reserve too inward to be approached, and too subtile to subdue its own influence,—like perfume from unseen flowers diffusing itself when the wind awakens, while we know neither whence the windy fragrance comes nor whither it flows. 193

"Is it possible, Miss Benette," I continued,—for I forced myself absolutely to speak; I should so infinitely have preferred to watch her silently,—"that you can have passed through so much since I saw you?"

"No, I have lived a very quiet life; it is you who have lived in all the stir until you fancy there is not any calm at all."

"I should have certainly found calm here. But you, I thought, and indeed I know, have had every kind of excitement ready made to your hand, and only waiting for you to touch the springs."

"I have had no excitement till I came here."

"None? Why, who could have had more, and who could have borne the same so bravely? We have heard of you here, and it must have been a transcending tempest for the shock to echo so far."

"I do not call singing in theatres, and acting, excitement. I always felt cool and collected in them, for I knew they were not real, and that I should get through them soon, and very glad should I be; so I was patient and did my best. You look at me shocked. I knew I should shock you after all our talk."

"Oh, fie! Miss Benette, to talk so, then, and to shock yourself, as you must, if you are faithless."

"Poor I, faithless! Well, I am not important enough for it to signify. And yet I should like to tell you what I mean, because you were always kind to me, and I should not wish you to despise me now. No, Mr. Auchester, I am not faithless; I love music more and more; it is the form of my religion; I dare to call it altogether holy,—I am sure, indeed, it must be so, or it would have been trodden long ago into nothing with the evil they have heaped over it to hide it, and the mistakes they have made about it. I act and I sing, because that is what I can do best; but my idea of music goes with yours, and therefore I am not excited as I should be, if I were filling up a place such as that which you fill; though I would not leave my own for any consideration, and hope to continue 194

in it. My excitement since I came here, where most ladies would be dull or sick, has arisen from the feeling that I am brought into contact with what is most like music, as I always find solitude, and also because since I came I have been raised higher by several spirits which are lofty in their desires, instead of being dragged through a mass of all opinions as I was abroad. My pleasures here are so great that I feel my soul to be quite young again, and to grow younger; and you cannot fancy what it is to return here after being in London, because you do not go to London, and if you did go to London, you would not do as I do."

She turned to me here, and told me it was her dinner-hour, asking me to remain and dine with her. It was about two o'clock, and I hesitated not to stay,—indeed, I know not that I could have gone.

We arose together, and I led her forward. We crossed the hall to a door beyond us, when, removing her little hand from my arm, and laying it on the lock, she looked into my face and smiled.

"You remembered me so well that I hope you will remember an old friend of mine who is staying here with me." 195

Before I could reply, or even marvel, she opened the door, and we entered. The little dining-room was lined with warmer hues than the airy drawing-room, but white muslin curtains made sails within the crimson ones, and some person stood within these, lightly screened, and looking out over the blind.

"Laura," said Miss Benette, and she turned with exquisite elegance. Had it not been for her name, which touched my memory, I could not have remembered her,—certainly, at least, not then.

Perhaps, when we were seated opposite at table, with nothing between us but a vase of garden flowers, I might have made out her lineaments; but I was called upon by my reminding chivalry to assist the hostess in the dissection of spring chickens and roasted lamb, and there was something besides about that very Laura I did not like to face until she should at least speak and reveal herself, as by the voice one cannot fail to do.

However she spoke not, nor did Clara speak to her, though we two talked a good deal,—that is to say, *I* talked, as so it behooved me to behave, and as I wished to see Miss Benette eat. When, at last, all traces of the snowy damask were swept out by a pair of careful hands, and we were left alone with the cut decanters, the early strawberries, and sweet summer oranges, I did determine to look, for fear Miss Lemark should think I did not dare to do so. I was not mistaken, as it happened, in believing her to be quite capable of this construction, as I discovered on regarding her immediately.

Her childish nonchalance had ripened into a hauteur quite alarming; for though she was scarcely my own age, she might have been ten years older. Not that her form was not lithe,—lithe as it could be to be endowed with the proper complement of muscles,—but for a certain sharpness of 196
outline her countenance would have been languid in repose; her brow retained its singular breadth, but had not gained in elevation; her eyes were large and lambent, fringed with lashes that swept her cheek, though not darker than her hair, which waved as the willow in slightly-turned tresses to her waist. That waist was so extremely slight that it scarcely looked natural, and yet was entirely so, as was evident from the way she moved in her clothes.

She afforded a curious contrast to Clara in her black silk robe, for she was dressed in muslin of the deepest rose-color, with an immense skirt, its trimmings lace entirely, the sleeves dropped upon her arms, which were loaded with bracelets of all kinds, while she wore a splendid chain upon her neck. She bore this over effect very well, and would not have become any other, it appeared to me, though there was something faded in her appearance even then,—a want of color in her aspect that demanded of costume the intensest contrasts.

"You have very much grown, Miss Lemark," I ventured to say, after I had contemplated her to my satisfaction. She had, indeed, grown; she was taller than I.

"So have you, Mr. Auchester."

"She has grown in many respects, Mr. Auchester, which you cannot imagine," said Clara, with a winning mischief in her glance.

"I should imagine anything you pleased, I am afraid, Miss Benette, if you inspired me. But I have been thinking it is a very curious thing that we should meet in this way, we three alone, after meeting as we did the first time in our lives."

"It was rather different then," exclaimed Laura, all abruptly, "and the difference is, not that we are grown up, but that when we met on the first occasion, we told each other our minds, and now 197
we don't dare."

"I am sure I dare," I retorted.

"No, you would not, no more would Clara; perhaps I might, but it would be of no use."

"What did I say then that I dare not say now? I am sure I don't remember."

"You may remember," said Clara, smiling; "I think it is hardly fair to make *her* remind you."

"It is my desert, if I remembered it first. You thought me very vulgar, and you told me as much, though in more polite language."

"If I thought so then, I may be allowed to have forgotten it now, Miss Lemark, as I think your friend will grant, when I look at you."

"You do not admire my style, Mr. Auchester; I know you,—it is precisely against your taste. Even Clara does not approve of it, and you have not half her forbearance,—if, indeed, you have any."

"Nobody, Laura dear, would dispute that you can bear more dressing than I can; it does not suit me to wear colors, and you look like a flower in them. Does not that color suit her well, Mr. Auchester?"

"Indeed I think so, and especially this glorious weather, when the most vivid hues are starting out of every old stone. But Miss Lemark could afford to wear green,—a very unusual suitability; it is the hue of her eyes, I think."

Laura had looked down, with that hauteur more fixed than ever now the light of her eyes was lost; she drew in the corners of her mouth, and turned a shade colder, if not paler, in complexion. I could not imagine what she was thinking, till she said, without raising her eyes,— 198

"You know, Clara, that is not the reason you wear black and I do not. You know that you look well in anything, because nobody looks at anything you happen to wear. Besides, there is a reason I could give if I chose."

"There is no other reason that you know of, Laura," she answered, and then she asked me a question on quite another subject.

I was rather anxious to discover whether Laura had fulfilled her destiny as far as we had compassed ours; but I did not find it easy, for she scarcely spoke, and had not lost a certain abstraction in her air that alienated the observer insensibly from her. After dinner Clara rose, and I made some demonstration of going, which she met so that I could not refuse her invitation to remain at least an hour or two. We all three retired into the little drawing-room; Miss Benette placed me a chair in the open window which I had admired, and herself sat down opposite, easily as a child, and saying, "I will not be rude to-day, as I used to be, in taking out my work whenever you came."

"It suited you very well, however, and I perceive, by your kind present to my little niece, that you have not forgotten that delicate art of yours."

"I had laid it aside, except to work for babies, some time, but it was long since I had a baby to work for; and when Mr. Davy sent me word in such joy that his little girl was born, I was so rejoiced to be able to make caps and frocks."

"My sister was very much obliged to you on a former occasion too, Miss Benette."

"Yes, I suppose she was very much obliged that I did not accept Mr. Davy's hand, or would have been, only she did not know it!" 199

"I did not mean so. I was remembering whose handiwork graced her on her marriage-day."

"Oh! I forgot the veil. I have made several since that one, but not one like that exactly, because I desired that should be unique. You have not told me, Mr. Auchester, anything about Seraphael and his works."

I was so used to call him, and to hear him called, the Chevalier, that at first I started, but was soon in a deep monologue of all that had happened to me in connection with him and his music, only suppressing that which I was in the habit of reserving, even in my own mind, from my conscious self. In the midst of my relation, Laura, apparently uninterested, as she had been seated in a chair with a book in her hands, left the room, and we stayed in our talk and looked at each other at the same instant.

"Why do you look so, Mr. Auchester?" said Clara, half amused, but with a touch of perturbation too.

"I was expecting to be asked what I thought of that young lady, and you see I was agreeably disappointed, for you are too well-bred to ask."

"No such thing. I thought you would tell me yourself if you liked, but that you might prefer not to do so, because you are not one, sir, to assume critical airs over a person you have only seen a very few hours."

"You do me more than justice, Miss Benette. But though I despair of ever curing myself of the disposition to criticise, I am not inconvertible. I admire Miss Lemark; she is improved, she is distinguished,—a little more, and she would be lady-like."

"I thought 'lady-like' meant less than 'distinguished.' You make it mean more."

"Perhaps I do mean that Miss Lemark is not exactly like yourself, and that when she has lived with you a little longer, she will be indeed all that she can be made." 200

"That would be foolish to say so,—pardon!—for she has lived with me two years now, and has most likely taken as much from me by imitation as she ever will, or by what you perhaps would

call sympathy."

"I find, or should fancy I might find, to exist a great dissympathy between you."

"I suppose 'dissympathy' is one of those nice little German words that are used to express what nobody ought to say. I thought you would not go there for nothing. If your dissympathy means not to agree in sentiment, I do not know that any two bodies could agree quite in feeling, nor would it be so pleasant as to be alone in some moods. I should be very sorry never to be able to retreat into the cool shade, and know that, as I troubled nobody, so nobody could get at me. Would not you?"

"Oh! I suppose so, in the sense you mean. But how is it I have not heard of this grace, or muse, taking leave to furl her wings at your nest? I should have thought that Davy would have known."

"Should I tell Mr. Davy what I pay to Thoné for keeping my house in order,—or whether I went to church on a Sunday? Laura and I always agreed to live together, but we could not accomplish it until lately,—I mean, since I was in Italy. We met then, as we said we would. I carried her from Paris, where she was alone with every one but those who should have befriended her; her father had died, and she was living with Mademoiselle Margondret,—that person I did not like when I was young. If I had known where Laura was, I should have fetched her away before." 201

I felt for a moment as if I wished that Laura had never been born, but only for one moment. I then resumed,—

"Does she not dance in London? She looks just ready for it."

"She has accepted no engagement for this season at present. I cannot tell what she may do, however. Would you like to see my garden, Mr. Auchester?"

"Indeed, I should very particularly like to see it, above all, if you will condescend to accompany me. There is a great deal more that I cannot help wishing for, Miss Benette; but I scarcely like to dream of asking about it to-night."

"For me to sing? Oh! I will sing for you any time, but I would certainly rather talk to you,—at least until the beautiful day begins to go; and it is all bright yet."

She walked before me without her bonnet down the winding garden-steps; the trellised balustrade was lost in rose-wreaths. We were soon in the rustling air, among the flowers that had not a withered petal, bursting hour by hour.

"It would tease you to carry flowers, Mr. Auchester, or I should be tempted to gather a nosegay for you to take back to London. I cannot leave them alone while they are so fresh, and they quite ask to be gathered. Look at all the buds upon this bush,—you could not count them."

"They are Provence roses. What a quantity you have!"

"Thoné chose this cottage for me because of the number of the flowers. I believe she thinks there is some charm in flowers which will prevent my becoming wicked! If you had been so kind as to bring your violin, I would have filled up the case with roses, and then you would not have had to 202 carry them in your hands."

"But may I not have some, although I did not bring my violin? I never think of anything but violets, though, for strewing that sarcophagus."

"Sarcophagus means 'tomb,' does it not? It is a fine idea of resurrection, when you take out the sleeping music and make it live. I know what you mean about violets,—their perfume is like the tones of your instrument, and one can separate it from all other scents in the spring, as those tones from all other tones of the orchestra."

"I have a tender thought for violets,—a very sad one, Miss Benette; but still sweet now that what I remember has happened a long while ago."

"That is the best of sorrow,—all passes off with time but that which is not bitter, though we can hardly call it sweet. I am grieved I talked of violets, to touch upon any sorrow you may have had to bear; still more grieved that you have had a sorrow, for you are very young."

"I seem to feel, Miss Benette, as if you must know exactly what I have gone through since I saw you, and I am forced to remember it is not the case. I am not sorry you spoke about violets, or rather that I did, because some day I must tell you the whole story of my trouble. I know not why the violet should remind me more than does the beautiful white flower upon that rose-bush over there, for I have in my possession both a white rose that has lived five summers, and an everlasting violet which will never allow me to forget."

"I know, from your look, that it is about some one dying: but why is that so sad? We must all die, Mr. Auchester, and cannot stay after we have been called." 203

"It may be so, and must indeed; but it was hard to understand, and I cannot now read why a creature so formed to teach earth all that is most like heaven, should go before any one had dreamed she could possibly be taken; for she had so much to do. You would not wonder at the regret I must ever feel, if you had also known her."

Clara had led me onwards as I spoke, and we stood before that rose-tree; she broke off a fresh

rose quietly, and placed it in my hand.

"I am more and more unhappy. It was not because I was not sorry that I said so. Pray tell me about her."

"She was very young, Miss Benette, only sixteen; and more beautiful than any flower in this garden, or than any star in the sky; for it was a beauty of spirit, of passion, of awful imagination. She was at school with me, and I was taught by her how slightly I had learned all things; she had learned too much, and of what men could not teach her. I never saw such a face,—but that was nothing. I never heard such a voice,—but neither had it any power, compared with her heavenly genius and its sway upon the soul. She had written a symphony,—you know what it is to do that! She wrote it in three months, and during the slight leisure of a most laborious student life. I was alarmed at her progress, yet there was something about it that made it seem natural. She was ill once, but got over the attack; and the time came when this strange girl was to stand in the light of an orchestra and command its interpretation. It was a private performance, but I was among the players. She did not carry it through. In the very midst she fell to the ground, overwhelmed by illness. We thought her dead then, but she lived four days." 204

"And died, sir? Oh! she did not die?"

"Yes, Miss Benette, she died; but no one then could have wished her to live."

"She suffered so?"

"No, she was only too happy. I did not know what joy could rise to until I beheld her face with the pain all passed, and saw her smile in dying."

"She must have been happy, then. Perhaps she had nothing she loved except Jehovah, and no home but heaven."

"Indeed, she must have been happy, for she left some one behind her who had been to her so dear as to make her promise to become his own."

"I am glad she was so wise, then, as to hide from him that she broke her heart to part with him; for she could not help it: and it was worthy of a young girl who could write a symphony," said Clara, very calmly, but with her eyes closed among the flowers she was holding in her hand. "Sir, what did they do with the symphony? and, if it is not rude, what did the rose and the violet have to do with this sad tale?"

"Oh! I should have told you first, but I wished to get the worst part over; I do not generally tell people. It was the day our prizes were distributed she took her death-blow, and I received from the Chevalier Seraphael, who superintended all our affairs, and who ordered the rewards, a breast-pin, with a violet in amethyst, in memory of certain words he spoke to me in a rather mystical chat we had held one day, in which he let fall, 'the violin is the violet.' And poor Maria received a silver rose, in memory of Saint Cecilia, to whom he had once compared her, and to whom there was a too true resemblance in her fateful life. The rose was placed in her hair by the person I told you she loved best, just as she was about to stand forth before the orchestra; and 205
when she fainted it fell to my feet. I gathered it up, and have kept it ever since. I do not know whether I had any right to do so, but the only person to whom I could have committed it, it was impossible to insult by reminding of her. In fact, he would not permit it; he left Cecilia after she was buried, and never returned."

Clara here raised her eyes, bright and liquid, and yet all-searching; I had not seen them so.

"I feel for him all that my heart can feel. Has he never ceased to suffer? Was she all to him?"

"He will never cease to suffer until he ceases to breathe, and then he will, perhaps, be fit to bear the bliss that was withdrawn from him as too great for any mortal heart; that is his feeling, I believe, for he is still now, and uncomplaining,—ever proud, but only proud about his sorrow. Some day you will, I trust, hear him play, and you will agree with me how that grief must have grown into a soul so passionate."

"You mean, when you say he is proud, he will not be comforted, I suppose? There are persons like that, I know; but I do not understand it."

"I hope you never will, Miss Benette. You must suffer with your whole nature to refuse comfort."

"To any one so suffering I should say, the comfort is that all those who suffer are reserved for joy."

"Not here, though."

"But it will not be less joy because it is saved for by and by. Now that way of talking makes me angry; I believe there is very little faith."

"Very little, I grant. But poor Florimond Anastase does not fail there."

She stopped beside me as we were pacing the lawn. 206

"Florimond Anastase! you did not say so? Do you mean the great player? I have heard of that person."

Her face flushed vividly, as rose hues flowing into pearl, her aspect altered, she seemed

convicted of some mistaken conclusion; but, recovering herself almost instantly, resumed,—

"Thank you for telling me that story,—it will make me better, I hope. I do not deserve to have grown up so well and strong. May I do my duty for it, and at least be grateful! You did not say what was done with the symphony?"

"The person I mentioned would not allow it to be retained. And, indeed, what else could be done? It was buried in her virgin grave,—a maiden work. She sleeps with her music, and I know not who could have divided them."

"You have told me a story that has turned you all over, like the feeling before a thunder-storm. I will not hear a word more. You cannot afford to talk of what affects you. Now, let me be very impertinent and change the key."

"By all means; I have said quite enough, and will thank you."

"There is Laura in the arbor, just across the grass; we will go to her, if you please, and you shall see her pretty pink frock among the roses, instead of my black gown. On the way I will tell you that there is some one, a lady too, so much interested in you that she was going down to your neighborhood on purpose to find out about you; but I prevented her from coming, by saying you would be here, and she answered,—

"'Tell him, then, to come and call upon me.'"

"It can only have been one living lady who would have sent that message,—Miss Lawrence. Actually I had forgotten all about her, and she returns upon me with a strong sense of my own 207
ingratitude. I will certainly call upon her, and I shall be only too glad to identify my benefactress."

"That you cannot do; she will not allow it,—at least, to this hour she persists in perfect innocence of the fact."

"That she provided us both with exactly what we wanted at exactly the right time? She chalked out my career, at least. I'll make her understand how I feel. Is she not a character?"

"Not more so than yourself, but still one, certainly; and a peculiarity of hers is, that generous—too generous almost—as she is, she will not suffer the slightest allusion to her generosities to be made, nor hint to be circulated that she has a heart at all."

Laura was sitting in the arbor, which was now at hand, but not, as Clara prophesied, among the roses in any sense, for the green branches that festooned the lattice were flowerless until the later summer, and her face appeared fading into a mist of green. The delicate leaves framed her as a picture of melancholy that has attired itself in mirth, which mirth but served to fling out the shadow by contrast and betray the source. Clara sat on one side, I on the other, and presently we went in to tea. But I did not hear the voice I longed for that evening, nor was the pianoforte opened that I so well remembered standing in its "dark corner."

CHAPTER XI.

I determined not to let a day pass without calling on Miss Lawrence, for I had obtained her 208
address before I left the cottage, and I set forth the following morning. It was in the midst of a desert of West-end houses, none of which have any peculiar characteristic, or suggest any peculiar notion. When I reached the door, I knocked, and it being opened, gave in my card to the footman, who showed me into a dining-room void of inhabitants, and there left me.

It seemed strange enough to my perception, after I could sit down to breathe, that a lady should live all by herself in such an immense place; but I corrected myself by remembering she might possibly not live by herself, but have brothers, sisters, nay, any number of relations or dependants. She certainly did not dine in that great room, at that long table polished as a looking-glass, where half a regiment might have messed for change. There were heavy curtains, striped blue and crimson, and a noble sideboard framed in an arch of yellow marble.

The walls were decorated with deep-toned pictures on a ground almost gold color; and I was fastened upon one I could not mistake as a Murillo, when the footman returned, but only to show me out, for Miss Lawrence was engaged. I was a little crestfallen, not conceitedly so, but simply feeling I had better not have taken her at her word, and retreated in some confusion. Returning 209
very leisurely to my two apartments near the Strand, and stopping very often on the way at music or print shops, I did not arrive there for at least an hour, and was amazed on my entrance to find a note, directed to myself, lying upon the parlor table-cloth.

I appealed to my landlady from the top of the kitchen stairs, and she said a man in livery had left it, and was to call for an answer. I read the same on the spot; it had no seal to break, but was twisted backwards and forwards, and had this merit, that it was very difficult to open. It was from Miss Lawrence, without any comment on my call, but requesting my company that very evening to dinner, at the awful hour of seven. Never having dined at seven o'clock in my existence, nor

even at six, I was lost in the prospect, and almost desired to decline, but that I had no excuse of any kind on hand; and therefore compelled myself to frame a polite assent, which I despatched, and then sat down to practise.

I made out to myself that she would certainly be alone, as she was the very person to have fashionable habits on her own account, or at least that she would be surrounded merely by the people belonging to her in her home. But I was still unconfessedly nervous when I drew the door after me and issued into the streets, precisely as the quarter chimes had struck for seven, and while the streets still streamed with daylight, and all was defined as at noon.

When I entered the square so large and still, with its broad roads and tranquil centre-piece of green, I was appalled to observe a carriage or two, and flattered myself they were at another door; but they had drawn up at the very front, alas! that I had visited in the morning. I was compelled to advance, after having stood aside to permit a lady in purple satin, and two younger 210
ladies in white, to illustrate the doorway in making their procession first. Then I came on, and was rather surprised to find myself so well treated; for a gentleman out of livery, in neater black clothes than a clergyman, deprived me of my hat and showed me upstairs directly. It struck me very forcibly that it was a very good thing my hair had the habit of staying upon my forehead as it should do, and that I was not anxious to tie my neck-handkerchief over again, as I was to be admitted into the drawing-room *in statu quo*.

I ascended. It was a well-staircase, whose great height was easy of attainment from the exceeding lowness of the steps; stone, with a narrow crimson centre-strip soft as thick-piled velvet. On the landing-place was a brilliant globe of humming-birds, interspersed with gem-like spars and many a moss-wreath. The drawing-room door was opened for me before I had done looking; I walked straight in, and by instinct straight up to the lady of the house, who as instantly met me with a frank familiarity that differs from all other, and supersedes the rarest courtesy.

I had a vague idea that Miss Lawrence must have been married since I saw her, so completely was she mistress of herself, and so easy was her deportment,—not to speak of her dress, which was black lace, with a single feather in her hair of the most vivid green; but unstudied as very few costumes are, even of married women. She was still Miss Lawrence, though, for some one addressed her by name,—a broad-featured man behind her,—and she turned her head alone, and answered him over her shoulder.

She dismissed him very shortly, or sent him to some one else; for she led me—as a queen might lead one of her knights, by her finger-tips, small as a Spaniard's, upon the tips of my gloves, while 211
she held her own gloves in her other hand—to a gentleman upon the rug, a real gentleman of the old school, to whom she introduced me simply as to her father; and then she brought me back again to a low easy-chair, out of a group of easy-chairs close by the piano, and herself sat down quite near me, on the extreme corner of an immense embroidered ottoman.

"You see how it is, my dear Mr. Auchester," she began in her genial voice,—"a dinner, which I should not have dreamed to annoy you with, but for one party we expect. You have seen Seraphael, of course, and the little Burney? Or perhaps not; they have been in town only two days."

I was about to express something rather beyond surprise, when a fresh appearance at the door carried her away, and I could only watch the green plume in despair as it waved away from me. To stifle my sensations, I just glanced round the room; it was very large, but so high and so apportioned that one felt no space to spare.

The draperies, withdrawn for the sunset smile to enter, were of palest sky-color, the walls of the palest blush, the tables in corners, the chairs in clusters, the cabinets in niches, gilt and carven, were of the deepest blue and crimson, upon a carpet of all imaginable hues, like dashed flower-petals. Luxurious as was the furniture, in nothing it offended even the calmest taste, and the choicest must have lavished upon it a prodigal leisure.

The pianoforte was a grand one, of dark and lustrous polish; its stools were velvet; a large lamp, unlighted, with gold tracery over its moon-like globe, issued from a branch in the wall
immediately over it, and harmonized with a circle of those same lamps above the centre ottoman, 212
and with the same upon the mantelshelf guarding a beautiful French clock, and reflected in a sheet of perfect glass sweeping to the ceiling.

There were about five and twenty persons present, who seemed multiplied, by their manner and their dresses, into thrice as many, and who would have presented a formidable aspect but for the hopes roused within me to a tremendous anticipation. Still I had time, during the hum and peculiar rustle, to scrutinize the faces present. There were none worth carrying away, except that shaded by the emerald plume, and I followed it from chair to chair, fondly hoping it would return to mine. It did not; and it was evident we were waiting for some one.

There was a general lull; two minutes by my watch (as I ascertained, very improperly) it lasted, and two minutes seems very long before a set dinner. Suddenly, while I was yet gazing after our hostess, the door flew open, and I heard a voice repeat,—

"The Chevalier Seraphael and Mr. Burney!"

They entered calmly, as I could hear,—not see, for my eyes seemed to turn in my head, and I involuntarily looked away. The former approached the hostess, who had advanced almost to the

door to meet him, and apologized, but very slightly, for his late appearance, adding a few words in a lower tone which I could not catch. He was still holding his companion by the hand, and, before they had time to part, the dinner was announced with state.

I lost sight of him long before I obeyed the summons, leading a lady assigned to me, a head taller than myself, who held a handkerchief in her hand that looked like a lace veil, and shook it in my face as we walked down the stairs. I can never sympathize with the abuse heaped upon these 213
dinner-parties, as I have heard, since I recall that especial occasion, not only grateful, but with a sense of its Arabian Night-like charm,—the long table, glistering with damask too white for the eye to endure, the shining silver, the flashing crystal, the blaze and mitigated brightness, the pyramid of flowers, the fragrance, and the picture quiet.

As we passed in noiselessly and sat down one by one, I saw that the genius, apart from these, was seated by Miss Lawrence at the top of the table, and I was at the very bottom, though certainly opposite. Starwood was on my own side, but far above me. I was constrained to talk with the lady I had seated next me, and as she did not disdain to respond at length, to listen while she answered; but I was not constrained to look upon her, nor did I, nor anything but that face so long removed, so suddenly and inexplicably restored.

It is impossible to describe the nameless change that had crept upon those faultless features, nor how it touched me, clove to my heart within. Seraphael had entirely lost the flitting healthful bloom of his very early youth: a perfect paleness toned his face, as if with purity out-shadowed,—such pearly clearness flinging into relief the starry distance of his full, deep-colored eyes; the forehead more bare, more arched, was distinctly veined, and the temples were of chiselled keenness; the cheek was thinner, the Hebrew contour more defined; the countenance had gained in apparent calm, but when meeting his gaze you could peer into those orbs so evening-blue, their starlight was passionately restless.

He was talking to Miss Lawrence; he scarcely ceased, but his conversation was evidently not that which imported anything to himself,—not the least shade of change thwarted the paleness I have mentioned, which was that of watchfulness or of intense fatigue. She to whom he spoke, on the 214
contrary, seemed passed into another form; she brightened more and more, she flashed, not only from her splendid eyes, but from her glowing cheek, her brilliant smile: she was on fire with joy that would not be extinguished; it assuredly was the time of "all her wealth," and had her mood possessed no other charm, it would have excited my furious taste by its interesting contrast with his pale aspect and indrawn expression.

It was during dessert, when the converse had sprung up like a sudden air in a calm, when politeness quickened and elegance unconsciously thawed, that—as I watched the little hands I so loved gleaming in the purple of the grapes which the light fingers separated one by one—I passed insensibly to the countenance. It was smiling, and for me: a sudden light broke through the lips, which folded themselves again instantly, as if never to smile again; but not until I had known the dawn of the old living expression, that, though it had slept, I felt now was able to awaken, and with more thankfulness than I can put into words. He was of those who stood at the door when the ladies withdrew, and after their retreat he began to speak to me across the table, serving me, with a skill I could not appreciate too delicately, to the merest trivialities, and making a sign to Starwood to take the chair now empty next me.

This was exactly what I wanted, for I had not seen him in the least,—not that I was afraid he had altered, but that I was anxious to encounter him the same. Although still a little one, he had grown more than I expected; his blue eye was the same, the same shrinking lip,—but a great power seemed called out of both. He was exceedingly well formed, muscular, though delicate; his 215
voice was that which I remembered, but he had caught Seraphael's accent, and quite slightly his style,—only not his manner, which no one could approach or imitate. I learned from Starwood, as we sipped our single glass of wine, that the Chevalier had been to Miss Lawrence's that very morning.

"He told me where he was going, and left me at the hotel; when he came back he said we were invited for to-night. Miss Lawrence had asked him to spend one evening, and he was engaged for every one but this. She was very sorry, she said, that her father had a party to-day. The Chevalier, however, did not mind, he told her, and should be very happy to come anyhow."

"But how does it happen that he is so constantly engaged? It cannot be to concerts every evening?"

"Carl, you have no idea how much he is engaged; the rehearsals are to be every other day, and the rest of the evenings he has been worried into accepting invitations. I wish to goodness people would let him alone; if they knew what I know they would."

"What, my dear boy?"

"That for every evening he spends in company, he sits up half the night. I know it, for I have watched that light under his door, and can hear him make the least little stir when all is so quiet,—at least, I could at Stralenfeld, where he stayed last, for my room was across the landing-place; and since we came to London, he told me he has not slept."

"I should think you might entreat him to do otherwise, Starwood, or at least request his friends to do so."

"He might have no friends, so far as any influence they have goes. Just try yourself, Carl; and when you see his face, you will not be inclined to do so any more." 216

"You spoke of rehearsals, Star,—what may these be? I have not heard anything."

"I only know that he has brought with him two symphonies, three or four quartets, and a great roll of organ fugues, besides the score of his oratorio."

"I had no idea of such a thing. An oratorio?"

"It is what he wrote in Italy some time ago, and only lately went over and prepared. It is in manuscript."

"Shall we hear it?"

"It is for the third or fourth week in June, but has been kept very quiet."

"How did Miss Lawrence come to know him? She did not use to know him."

"She seems to know everybody, and to get her own way in everything. You might ask her; she would tell you, and there would be no fear of her being angry."

At last we rose. The lamps were lighted when we returned to the drawing-room; it was nearly ten o'clock, but all was brilliant, festive. I had scarcely found a seat when Seraphael touched my shoulder.

"I want very much to go, Charles. Will you come home with me? I have all sorts of favors to ask you, and that is the first."

"But, sir, Miss Lawrence is going to the piano: will not you play first?"

"Not at all to-night; we agreed. There are many here who would rather be excused from music; they can get it at the opera."

He laughed, and so did I. He then placed his other hand on Starwood, still touching my shoulder, when Miss Lawrence approached,—

"Sir, you know what you said, nor can I ask you to retract it. But may I say how sorry I am to have been so exacting this morning? It was a demand upon your time I would not have made had I known what I now know." 217

"What is that? Pray have the goodness to tell me, for I cannot imagine."

"That you have brought with you what calls upon every one to beware how he or she engages you with trifles, lest they suffer from that repentance which comes too late. I hear of your great work, and shall rely upon you to allow me to assist you, if it be at all possible I can, in the very least and lowest degree."

She spoke earnestly, with an eager trouble in her air. He smiled serenely.

"Oh! you quite mistake my motive, Miss Lawrence; it had not to do with music. It was because I have had no sleep that I wished to retire early; and you must permit me to make amends for my awkwardness. If it will not exhaust your guests, as I see you were about to play, let me make the opening, and oblige me by choosing what you like best."

"Sir, I cannot refuse, selfish as I am, to permit myself such exquisite pleasure. There is another thirsty soul here who will be all the better for a taste of heavenly things."

She turned to me elated. I looked into his face; he moved to the piano, made no gesture either of impatience or satisfaction, but drew the stool to him, and when seated, glanced to Miss Lawrence, who stood beside him and whispered something. I drew, with Starwood, behind, where I could watch his hands.

He played for perhaps twenty minutes,—an *andante* from Beethoven, an *allegro* from Mozart, an *aria* from Weber, cathedral-echoes from Purcell, fugue-points from Bach; and mixing them like gathered flowers, bound them together with a wild, delicious *scherzo finale*, his own. But though 218
that playing was indeed unto me as heaven in forecast, and though it filled the heart up to the brim, it was extremely cold, and I do not remember ever feeling that he was separable from his playing before. When he arose so quietly, lifting his awful forehead from the curls that had fallen over it as he bent his face, he was unflushed as calm, and he instantly shook hands with Miss Lawrence, only leaving her to leave the room. I followed him naturally, remembering his request; but she detained me a moment to say,—

"You must come and see me on Thursday, and must also come to breakfast. I shall be alone, and have something to show you. You are going along with him, I find,—so much the better; take care of him, and good night."

Starwood had followed Seraphael implicitly; they were both below. We got into a carriage at the door, and were driven I knew not whither; but it was enough to be with him, even in that silent mood.

With the same absent grace he ordered another bed-room when we stayed at his hotel. I could no more have remonstrated with him than with a monarch when we found ourselves in the stately

sitting-room.

"A pair of candles for the chamber," was his next command; and when they were brought, he said to us: "The waiter will show you to your rooms, dear children; you must not wait a moment."

I could not, so I felt, object, nor entreat him himself to sleep. Starwood and I departed; and whether it was from the novelty of the circumstances, or my own transcending happiness, or whether it was because I put myself into one of Starwood's dresses in default of my own, I do not conjecture, but I certainly could not sleep, and was forced to leave it alone. 219

I sat upright for an hour or two, and then rolled amongst the great hot pillows; I examined the register of the grate; I looked into the tall glass at my own double: but all would not exhaust me, and towards the very morning I left my bed and made a sally upon the landing-place. I knew the number of Seraphael's door, for Starwood had pointed it out to me as we passed along, and I felt drawn, as by odyllic force, to that very metal lock.

There was no crack, but a key-hole, and the key-hole was bright as any star; I peeped in also, and shall never forget my delight, yet dread, to behold that outline of a figure, which decided me to make an entrance into untried regions, upon inexperienced moods. Without any hesitation, I knocked; but recalling to myself his temperament, I spoke simultaneously,—

"Dear sir, may I come in?"

Though I waited not for his reply, and opened the door quite innocent of the ghostly apparel I wore—and how very strange must have been my appearance!—never shall I forget the look that came home to me as I advanced more near him,—that indrawn, awful aspect, that sweetness without a smile.

The table was loaded with papers, but there was no strew,—that "spirit" ever moulded to harmony its slightest "motion;" one delicate hand was outspread over a sheet, a pen was in the other: he did not seem surprised, scarcely aroused. I rushed up to him precipitately.

"Dear, dearest sir, I would not have been so rude, but I could not bear to think you might be sitting up, and I came to see. I pray you, for God's sake, do go to bed!"

"Carl, very Carl, little Carl, great Carl!" he answered, with the utmost gentleness, but still unsmiling, "why should I go to bed? and why shouldest thou come out of thine?" 220

"Sir, if it is anything, I cannot sleep while you are not sleeping, and while you ought to be besides."

"Is that it? How very kind, how good! I do not wake wilfully, but if I am awake I must work,—thou knowest that. In truth, Carl, hadst thou not been so weary, I should have asked thee this very night what I must ask thee to-morrow morning."

"Ask me now, sir, for, if you remember, it *is* to-morrow morning already."

"Go get into your bed, then."

"No, sir, certainly not while you are sitting there."

A frown, like the shadow of a butterfly, floated over his forehead.

"If thou wilt have it so, I will even go to this naughty bed, but not to sleep. The fact is, Carl, I cannot sleep in London. I think that something in the air distresses my brain; it will *not* shut itself up. I was about to ask thee whether there is no country, nothing green, no pure wind, to be had within four miles?"

"Sir, you have hit upon a prodigious providence. There is, as I can assure you experimentally, fresh green, pure country air of Heaven's own distilling within that distance; and there is also much more,—there is something you would like even better."

"What is that, Carlomein?"

"I will not tell you, sir, unless you sleep to-night."

"To be sly becomes thee, precisely because thou art not a fox. I will lie down; but sleep is God's best gift, next to love, and he has deprived me of both."

"If I be sly, sir, you are bitter. But there is not too much sleight, nor bitterness either, where they can be expressed from words. So, sir, come to bed." 221

"Well spoken, Carlomein; I am coming,—sleep thou!"

But I would not, and I did not leave him until I had seen his head laid low in all the bareness of its beauty, had seen his large eyelids fall, and had drawn his curtains in their softest gloom around the burdened pillow. Then I, too, went back to bed, and I slept delectably and dreamless.

CHAPTER XII.

Very late I slept, and before I had finished dressing, Starwood came for me. Seraphael had been down some time, he told me. I was very sorry, but relieved to discover how much more of his old bright self he wore than on the previous evening. 222

"Now, Carlomein," he began immediately, "we are going on a pilgrimage directly after breakfast."

I could tell he was excited, for he ate nothing, and was every moment at the window. To Starwood his abstinence seemed a matter of course; I was afraid, indeed, that it was no new thing. I could not remonstrate, however, having done quite enough in that line for the present. It was not half-past ten when we found ourselves in an open carriage, into which the Chevalier sprang last, and in springing said to me: "Give your own orders, Carlomein." I was for an instant lost, but recovered myself quite in time to direct, before we drove from the hotel, to the exact locality of Clara's cottage, unknowing whether I did well or ill, but determined to direct to no other place. As we passed from London and met the breeze from fields and gardens, miles and miles of flower-land, I could observe a clearing of Seraphael's countenance: its wan shadow melted, he seemed actually abandoned to enjoyment; though he was certainly in his silent mood, and only called out for my sympathy by his impressive glances as he stood up in the carriage with his hat off and swaying to and fro. And when we reached, after a rapid, exhilarating drive, the 223 winding road with its summer trees in youngest leaf, he only began to speak,—he had not before spoken.

"How refreshing!" he exclaimed, "and what a lovely shade! I will surely not go on a step farther, but remain here and make my bed. It will be very unfortunate for me if all those pretty houses that I see are full, and how can we get at them?"

"I am nearly sure, sir, that you can live here if you like, or close upon this place; but if you will allow me, I will go on first and announce your arrival to a friend of mine, who will be rather surprised at our all coming together, though she would be more happy than I could express for her to welcome you at her house."

"It is, then, *that* I was brought to see,—a friend of thine; thou hast not the assurance to tell me that any friend of thine will be glad to welcome another! But go, Carlomein,"—and he opened the carriage-door,—"go and get over thy meeting first; we will give thee time. Oh, Carlomein! I little thought what a man thou hadst grown when I saw thee so tall! Get out, and go quickly; I would not keep thee now for all the cedars of Lebanon!"

I could tell his mood now very accurately, but it made no difference; I knew what I was about, or I thought I knew, and did not remain to answer. I ran along the road, I turned the corner; the white gate shone upon me, and again I stopped to breathe. More roses, more narcissus lambent as lilies, more sweetness, and still more rest! The grass had been cut that morning, and lay in its little heaps all over the sunny lawn. The gravel was warm to my feet as I walked to the door, and long before the door was opened I heard a voice. 224

So ardent did my desire expand to identify it with its owner that I begged the servant not to announce me, nor to disturb Miss Benette if singing. Thoné took the cue, gave me a kind of smile, and preceded me with a noiseless march to the very back parlor; I advanced on tiptoe and crouching forwards. Laura, too, was there, sitting at the table. She neither read nor worked, nor had anything in her hands; but with more tact than I should have expected from her, only bowed, and did not move her lips. In the morning light my angel sat, and her notes, full orbed and star-like, descended upon my brain. Few notes I heard,—she was just concluding,—the strain ebbed as the memory of a kiss itself dissolving; but I heard enough to know that her voice was, indeed, the realization of all her ideal promise. I addressed her as she arose, and told her, in very few words, my errand. She was perturbless as usual, and only looked enchanted, the enchantment betraying itself in the eye, not in any tremble or the faintest flush.

"Do bring them, sir," she said; "and as you say this gentleman has eaten nothing, I will try what I can do to make him eat. It is so important that I wonder you could allow him to come out until he had breakfasted,"—for I had told her of his impatience; "afterwards, if he likes, he can go to see the houses. There are several, I do believe, if they have not been taken since yesterday."

I went back to the carriage, and it was brought on to the gate, I walking beside it. Thoné was waiting, and held it open,—the sweet hay scented every breath.

"Oh, how delicious!" said Seraphael, as he alighted, standing still and looking around.

The meadows, the hedges, the secluded ways first attracted him; and then the garden, which I thought he would never have overpassed, then the porch, in which he stood. 225

"And this is England!" he exclaimed; "it is strange how unlike it is to that wild dream-country I went to when last I came to London. This is more like heaven,—quiet and full of life!"

These words recalled me to Clara. He had put his head into the very midst of those roses that showered over the porch.

"Oh! I must gather one rose of all these,—there are so many; she will never miss it." And then he laughed. A soft, soft echo of his laugh was heard,—it startled me by its softness, it was so like an infant's. I looked over my shoulder, and there, in the shadow of the hall, I beheld her, her very self. It was she, indeed, who laughed, and her eye yet smiled. Without waiting for my

introduction, she courtesied with a profound but easy air, and while, to match this singular greeting, Seraphael made his regal bow, she said, looking at him,—

"You shall have all the roses, sir, and all my flowers, if you will let my servant gather them; for I believe you might prick your fingers, there being also thorns. But while Thoné is at that work, perhaps you will like to walk in out of the sun, which is too hot for you, I am sure." She led us to the parlor where she had been singing, the piano still stood open.

"But," said Seraphael, taking the first chair as if it were his own, "we disturb you! What were you doing, you and Carl? I ask his pardon,—Mr. Auchester."

"We two did nothing, sir; I was only singing. But that can very well be put off till after breakfast, which will be ready in a few minutes."

"Breakfast?" I thought, but Clara's face told no tales,—her loveliness was unruffled. The clear 226
blue eye, the divine mouth, were evidently studies for Seraphael; he sat and watched her eagerly, even while he answered her.

"You look as if you had had breakfast."

"Indeed, I am very hungry, and so is my friend Mr. Auchester."

"He always looks so, Mademoiselle!" replied the Chevalier, mirthfully, "but I do really think he might be elegant enough to tell me your name: he has forgotten to do so in his embarrassment. I cannot guess whether it be English, French, or German,—Italian, Greek, or Hebrew."

"I am called Clara Benette, sir; that is my name."

"It is not Benette,—La Benetta benedetta! Carlomein, why hast thou so forgotten? Allow me to congratulate you, Mademoiselle, on possessing the right to be so named. And for this do I give you joy,—that not for your gifts it has been bestowed, nor for that genius which is alone of the possessor, but for that goodness which I now experience, and feel to have been truly ascribed to you."

He stood to her and held out his hand; calmly she gave hers to it, and gravely smiled.

"Sir, I thank you the more because I *know* your name. I hope you will excuse me for keeping you so long without your breakfast."

He laughed again, and again sat down; but his manner, though of that playful courtliness, was quite drawn out to her. He scarcely looked at Laura; I did not even believe that he was aware of her presence, nor was *I* aware of the power of his own upon her. After ten minutes Thoné entered and went up to Clara. She motioned to us all then, and we arose; but as she looked at Seraphael first, he took her out and into the dining-room. The table was snowed with damask; flowers were 227
heaped up in the centre,—a bowl of honeysuckles and heartsease; the dishes here were white bread, brown bread, golden butter, new-laid eggs in a nest of moss, the freshest cream, the earliest strawberries; and before the chair which Clara took, stood a silver chocolate-jug foaming, and coffee above a day-pale spirit-lamp. On the sideboard were garnished meat, and poultry already carved, the decanters, and still more flowers; it was a feast raised as if by magic, and unutterably tempting at that hour of the day. Clara asked no questions of her chief guest, but pouring out both chocolate and coffee, offered them both; he accepted the former, nor refused the wing of a chicken which Thoné brought, nor the bread which Clara asked me to cut. I was perfectly astounded; she had helped herself also, and was eating so quietly, after administering her delicious cups all round, that no one thought of speaking. At last Starwood, by one of those unfortunate chances that befall timid people, spoke, and instantly turned scarlet, dropping his eyes forthwith, though he only said, "I never saw the Chevalier eat so much." Clara answered, with her fork in her dimpled hand, "That is because you gentlemen have had a long drive; it always raises the appetite to come out of London into the country. You cannot eat too much here."

"Do you think I shall find a house that will hold me and my younger son," said Seraphael presently, pointing at Starwood his slight finger, "and a servant or two?"

"If you like to send my servant, sir, she will find out for you."

"No, perhaps you will not dislike to drive a little way with us. I know Carl will be so glad!" 228

"We shall be most pleased, sir," she answered, quite quietly, though there was that in his expression which might easily have fluttered her. I could not at all account for this eflish mood, though I had been witness to freaks and fantasies in my boy days. Never had I seen his presence affect any one so little as Clara. Had she not been of a loveliness so peculiarly genial, I should have called her cold; as it was, I felt he had never made himself more at home with any one in my sight. While, having graciously deferred to her the proposal for an instant search, he sauntered out into the little front garden, she went for her bonnet, and came down in it,—a white straw, with a white-satin ribbon and lining, and a little white veil of her own work, as I could tell directly I caught her face through its wavering and web-like tracery. Seraphael placed her in the carriage, and then looked back.

"Oh, Laura—that is, Miss Lemark—is not coming," observed Miss Benette; this did not strike me except as a rather agreeable arrangement, and off we drove. Fritz, Seraphael's own man, was on the box,—a perfect German, of very reserved deportment, who, however, one could see, would

have allowed Seraphael to walk upon him. His heavy demonstrations about situations and suitabilities made even Clara laugh, as they were met by Seraphael's wayward answers and skittish sallies. We had a very long round, and then went back to dinner with our lady; but Seraphael, by the time the moon had risen, fell into May-evening ecstasies with a very old-fashioned tenement built of black wood and girded by a quickset hedge, because it suddenly, in the silver shine, reminded him of his own house in Germany, as he said. It was so near the cottage that two persons might even whisper together over the low and moss-greened garden-wall. 229

The invitation of Miss Lawrence I could not forget, even through the intenser fascination spread about me. I returned with Seraphael to town again, and again to the country; he having thither removed his whole effects,—so important, though of so slight bulk, they consisting almost entirely of scored and other compositions, which were safely deposited in a little empty room of the rambling house he had chosen. This room he and Starwood and I soon made fit to be seen and inhabited, by our distribution of all odd furniture over it, and all the conveniences of the story. Three large country scented bed-rooms, with beds big enough for three chevaliers in each, and two drawing-rooms, were all that we cared for besides. Seraphael was only like a child that night that is preparing for a whole holiday: he wandered from room to room; he shut himself into pantry, wine-cellar, and china-closet; he danced like a day-beam through the low-ceiled sitting-chambers, and almost threw himself into the garden when he saw it out of the window. It was the wildest place,—the walks all sown with grass, an orchard on a bank all moss, forests of fruit-trees and moss-rose bushes, and the great white lilies in ranks all round the close-fringed lawn; all old-fashioned flowers in their favorite soils, a fountain and a grotto, and no end of weeping-ashes, arbors bent from willows, and arcades of nut and filbert trees. The back of the house was veiled with a spreading vine—too luxuriant—that shut out all but fresh green light from the upper bed-rooms; but Seraphael would not have a spray cut off, nor did he express the slightest dissatisfaction at being overlooked by the chimneys and roof-hung windows of Clara's little cottage, which peeped above the hedge. The late inhabitant and present owner of the house, an eccentric gentlewoman who abjured all innovation, had desired that no change should pass upon 230
her tenement during her absence for a sea-side summer; even the enormous mastiff, chained in the yard to his own house, was to remain barking or baying as he listed; and we were rather alarmed, Starwood and I, to discover that Seraphael had let him loose, in spite of the warnings of the housekeeper, who rustled her scant black-silk skirts against the doorstep in anger and in dread. I was about to make some slight movement in deprecation, for the dog was fiercely strong and of a tremendous expression indeed, but he only lay down before the Chevalier and licked the leather of his boots, afterwards following him over the whole place until darkness came, when he howled on being tied up again until Seraphael carried him a bone from our supper-table. Our gentle master retired to rest, and his candle-flame was lost in the moonlight long before I could bring myself to go to bed. I can never describe the satisfaction, if not the calm, of lying between two poles of such excitement as the cottage and that haunted mansion.

CHAPTER XIII.

Seraphael had desired me to stay with him, therefore the next morning I intended to give up my 231
London lodgings on the road to Miss Lawrence's square, or rather out of the road. When I came downstairs into the sun-lit breakfast-room, I found Starwood alone and writing to his father, but no Chevalier. Nor was he in his own room, for the sun was streaming through the vine-shade on the tossed bed-clothes, and the door and window were both open as I descended. Starwood said that he had gone to walk in the garden, and that we were not to wait for him. "What! without his breakfast?" said I. But Starwood smiled such a meaning smile that I was astonished, and could only sit down.

We ate and drank, but neither of us spoke. I was anxious to be off, and Star to finish his letter; though as we both arose and were still alone, he yet looked naughty. I would not pretend to understand him, for if he has a fault, that darling friend of mine, it is that he sees through people rather too soon, construing their intentions before they inform experience.

I could not make up my mind to ride, but set off on foot along the sun-glittering road, through emerald shades, past gold-flecked meadows, till through the mediant chaos of brick-fields and dust-heaps I entered the dense halo surrounding London,—"smoke the tiara of commerce," as a pearl of poets has called it. The square looked positively lifeless when I came there. I almost 232
shrank from my expedition, not because of any fear I had on my own account, but because all the inhabitants might have been asleep behind the glaze of their many windows.

I was admitted noiselessly and as if expected, shown into the drawing-room, so large, so light and splendid in the early sun. All was noiseless, too, within; an air of affluent calm pervaded as an atmosphere itself the rich-grouped furniture, the piano closed, the stools withdrawn. I was not kept two minutes; Miss Lawrence entered, in the act of holding out her hand. I was instantly at home with her, though she was one of the grandest persons I ever saw. She accepted my arm, and, not speaking, took me to a landing higher, and to a room which appeared to form one of a suite; for a curtain extended across one whole side,—a curtain as before an oratory in a dwelling-

house.

Breakfast was outspread here; on the walls, a pale sea-green, shone delectable pictures in dead-gold frames,—pictures even to an inexperienced eye pure relics of art. The windows had no curtains, only a broad gold cornice; the chairs were damask, white and green; the carpet oak-leaves, on a lighter ground. It was evidently a retreat of the lesser art,—it could not be called a boudoir; neither ornament nor mirror, vase nor book-stand, broke the prevalent array. I said I had breakfasted, but she made me sit by her and told me,—

"I have not, and I am sure you will excuse me. One must eat, and I am not so capable to exist upon little as you are. Yet you shall not sit, if you would rather see the pictures, because there are not too many to tire you in walking round. Too many together is a worse mistake than too few."

I arose immediately, but I took opportunity to examine my entertainer in pauses as I moved from 233
picture to picture. She wore black brocaded silk this morning, with a Venetian chain and her watch, and a collar all lace; her hair, the blackest I had ever seen except Maria's, was coiled in snake-like wreaths to her head so small behind while it arched so broadly and benevolently over her noble eyes. She was older than I had imagined, and may have been forty at that time; the only observation one could retain about the fact being that her gathered years had but served to soften every crudity of an extremely decided organization, and to crown wisdom with refinement.

She soon pushed back her cup and plate, and came to my side. She looked suddenly, a little anxiously at me.

"You must be rather curious to know why I asked you to come to me to-day; and were you not a gentleman, you would have been also curious, I fancy, to know why I could not see you on Tuesday. I want you to come this way."

I followed; she slid the curtain along its rings, and we entered the oratory. I know not that it was so far unlike such precinct, for from thence art reared her consecrated offerings to the presence of every beauty. I felt this, and that the artist was pure in heart, even before her entire character faced my own. The walls here, of the same soft marine shade, were also lighted by pictures,—the strangest, the wildest, the least assorted, yet all according.

A peculiar and unique style was theirs; each to each presented the atmosphere of one imagination. Dark and sombrous woods, moon-pierced, gleamed duskly from a chair where they were standing frameless; resting against them, a crowd of baby faces clustered in a giant flower- 234
chalice; a great lotus was the hieroglyph of a third. On the walls faces smiled or frowned,—huge profiles; dank pillars mirrored in rushy pools; fragments of heathen temples; domes of diaphanous distance in a violet sky; awful palms; dread oceans, with the last ghost-shadow of a wandering wreck. I stood lost, unaccustomed either to the freaks or the triumphs of pictorial art; I could only say in my amaze, "Are these all yours? How wonderful!" She smiled very carelessly.

"I did not intend you to look at those, except askance, if you were kind enough. I keep them to advertise my own deficiencies and to compare the present with the past. The present is very aspiring, and *for* the present devours my future. I hope it will dedicate itself thereunto. I wish you to come here, to this light."

She was placed before an immense easel to the right of a large-paned window, where the best London day streamed above the lower dimness. An immense sheet of canvas was turned away from us upon the easel; but in a moment she had placed it before us, and fell back in the same moment, a little from me.

Nor shall I ever forget that moment's issue. I forgot it was a picture, and all I could feel was a trance-like presence brought unto me in a day-dream of immutable satisfaction. On either side, the clouds, light golden and lucid crimson, passed into a central sphere of the perfect blue. And reared into that, as it were the empyrean of the azure, gleamed in full relief the head, life-sized, of Seraphael. The bosom white-vested, the regal throat, shone as the transparent depths of the moon, not moonlight, against the blue unshadowed. The clouds deeper, heavier, and of a dense violet, were rolled upon the rest of the form; the bases of those clouds as livid as the storm, but 235
their edges, where they flowed into the virgin raiment, sun-fringed, glittering. The visage was raised, the head thrown back into the ether; but the eyes were drooping, the snow-sealed lips at rest. The mouth faint crimson, thrilling, spiritual, appalled by its utter reminiscence; the smile so fiery-soft just touched the lips unparted. No symbol strewed the cloudy calm below, neither lyre, laurel-wreathed, nor flowery chaplet; but on either side, where the clouds disparted in wavering flushes and golden pallors, two hands of light, long, lambent, life-like, but not earthly, held over the brow a crown.

Passing my eye among the cloud-lights,—for I cannot call them shadows,—I could just gather with an eager vision, as one gathers the thready moon-crescent in a mid-day sky, that on either side a visage gleamed, veiled and drenched also in the rose-golden mist.

One countenance was dread and glorious, of sharp-toned ecstasy that cut through the quivering medium,—a self-sheathed seraph; the other was mild and awful, informed with steadfast beauty, a shining cherub. They were Beethoven and Bach, as they might be known in heaven; but who, except the musician, would have known them for themselves on earth? It was not for me to speak their names,—I could not utter them; my heart was dry,—I was thirsty for the realization of that picture promise.

The crown they uplifted in those soft, shining hands was a circle of stars gathered to each other out of that heavenly silence, and into the azure vague arose that brow over which the conqueror's sign, suspended, shook its silver terrors. For such awful fancies shivered through the brain upon its contemplation that I can but call it *transcendental*,—beyond expression; the feeling, the fear, 236
the mystery of starlight pressed upon the spirit and gave new pulses to the heart. The luminous essence from the large white points seemed rained upon that forehead and upon the deep tints of the god-like locks; they turned all clear upon their orbed clusters, they melted into the radiant halo which flooded, yet as with a glory one could not penetrate, the impenetrable elevation of the lineaments.

I dared only gaze; had I spoken, I should have wept, and I would not disturb the image by my tears. I soon perceived how awfully the paintress had possessed herself of the inspiration, the melancholy, and the joy. The crown, indeed, was grounded upon rest, and of unbroken splendor; but it beamed upon the aspect of exhaustion and longing strife, upon lips yet thirsty, and imploring patience.

I suppose my silence satisfied the artist; for before I had spoken, or even unriveted my gaze, she said, herself—

"That I have worked upon for a year. I was allowing myself to dream one day—just such a day as this—last spring; and insensibly my vision framed itself into form. The faces came before I knew,—at least those behind the clouds; and having caught them, I conceived the rest. I could not, however, be certain of my impressions about the chief countenance, and I waited with it unfinished enough until the approach of the season, for I knew he was coming now, and before he arrived I sent him a letter to his house in Germany. I had a pretty business to find out the address, and wrote to all kinds of persons; but at last I succeeded, and my suit was also successful. I had asked him to sit to me."

"Then you had not known him before? You did not know him all those years?" 237

"I had seen him often, but never known him. Oh, yes! I had seen his face. You have a tolerable share of courage: could you have asked him such a favor?"

"You see, Miss Lawrence, I have received so many favors from him without asking for them. Had I possessed such genius as yours, I should not only have done the same, but have felt to do it was my duty. It is a portrait for all the ages, not only for men, but for angels."

"Only for angels, if fit at all; for that face is something beyond man's utmost apprehension of the beautiful. It must ever remain a solitary idea to any one who has received it. You will be shocked if I tell you that his beauty prevails more with *me* than his music."

"But is it not the immediate consequence of such musical investment?"

"I believe, on the contrary, that the musical investment, as you charmingly express it, is the direct consequence of the lofty organization."

"That is a new notion for me; I must turn it over before I take it home. I would rather consider the complement of his gifts to be that heavenly heart of his which endows them each and all with what must live forever in unaltered perfection."

"And it pleases me to feel that he is of like passions with us, protected from the infraction of laws celestial by the image of the Creator still conserved to his mortal nature, and stamping it with a character beyond the age. But about his actual advent. He answered my letter in person. I was certainly appalled to hear of his arrival, and that he was downstairs. I was up here muddling with my brushes, without knowing what to be at; up comes my servant—

"'Mr. Seraphael.' 238

"Imagine such an announcement! I descend, we meet,—for the first time in private except, indeed, on the occasion when his shadow was introduced to me, as you may remember. He was in the drawing-room, pale from travelling, full of languor left by sea-sickness, looking like a spirit escaped from prison. I was almost ashamed of my daring, far more so than alarmed. I thought he was about to appoint a day; but no. He said,—

"'I am at your service this morning, if it suits you; but as you did not favor me with your address, I could not arrange beforehand. I went to my music-sellers and asked them about you. I need not tell you that you were known there, and that I am much obliged to them.'

"Actually it was a fact that I had not furnished him with my address; but I was perfectly innocent of my folly. What could I do but not lose a moment? I asked him to take refreshment; no, he had breakfasted, or dined, or something, and we came up here directly. I never saw such behavior. He did not even inquire what I was about, but sat, like a god in marble, just where I had placed him,—out there. You perceive that I have lost the eyes, or at least have rendered them up to mystery. Well, when, having caught the outline of the forehead, and touched the temples, I descended to those eyes, and saw they were full upon me, I could do nothing with them. I cannot paint light, only its ghost; nor fire, only its shade. His eyes are at once fire and light,—I know not of which the most; or, at least, that which is the light of fire. Even the streaming lashes scarcely tempered the radiance there. I let them fall, and veiled what one scarcely dares to meet,—at least I. He sat to me for hours; but though I knew not how the time went, and may be forgiven for 239
inconsideration, I had no idea that he was going straight to the committee of the choir-day on the

top of that sitting. I kept him long enough for what I wanted, and as he did not ask to see the picture, I did not show it him. He shall see it when it is finished."

"What finish does it require? I see no change that it can need to carry out the likeness, which is all we want."

"Oh, yes! more depth in the darkness, and more glory in the light; less electric expression, more ideal serenity,—above all, more pain above the forehead, more peace about the crown. Moonlight without a moon, sunshine without the solar rays,—the day of heaven."

"I can only say, Miss Lawrence, that you deserve to be able to do as you have done, and to feel that no one else could have done it."

"Very exclusive, that feeling, but perhaps necessary. I have it, but my deserts will only be transcended if Seraphael himself shall approve. And now for another question,—Will you go with me to this choir-day?"

"I am trying to imagine what you mean. I have not heard the name until you spoke it. Is it in the North?"

"Certainly not; though even York Minster would not be a bad notion—that is to say, it would suit our Beethoven exactly; but this is another hierarch. What do you think of an oratorio in Westminster Abbey, the conductor our own, the whole affair of his? No wonder you have heard nothing; it has been kept very snug, and was only arranged by the interposition of various individuals whose influence is more of mammon than of art,—the objection at first being chiefly on the part of the profession; but that is overruled by their being pretty nearly every one included 240
in the orchestra. Such a thing is never likely to occur again. Say that you will go with me. If it be anything to you, I shall give you one of the best seats, in the very centre, where you will see and hear better than most people. Imagine the music in that place of tombs,—it is a melancholy but glorious project; may we realize it!"

I could not at present,—it was out of the question; nor could I bear to stay,—there was nothing for it but to make haste out, where the air made solitude. I bade the paintress good morning, and quitted her. I believe she understood my frame.

CHAPTER XIV.

I walked home also, and was tolerably tired. Entering the house as one at home there, I found 241
nobody at home, no Starwood,—no Chevalier. I lay upon the sofa in a day-dream or two, and when rested, went out into the garden. I searched every corner, too, in vain; but wandering past the dividing hedge, a voice floated articulately over the still afternoon.

All was calm and warm. The slightest sound made way, and I hesitated not to scale the green barrier, nowhere too high for me to leap it, and to approach the parlor of the cottage in that unwonted fashion. I was in for pictures this while, I suppose; for when I reached the glass doors that swept the lawn wide open, and could peep through them without disturbing foot on that soft soil, I saw, indeed, another, a less impressive, not less expressive, view. Clara sat at her piano, her side-face was in the light. His own, which I was sure to find there, in profile also, was immediately behind her; but as he stood, the shade had veiled him, the shade from the trembling leaves without, through which one sunbeam shot, and upon the carpet kissed his feet. She was singing, as I could hear, scarcely see, for her lips opened not more than for a kiss, to sing. The strains moulded themselves imperceptibly, or as a warble shaken in the throat of a careless nightingale that knew no listener. 242

Seraphael, as he stood apart drinking in the notes with such eagerness that his lips were also parted, had never appeared to me so borne out of himself, so cradled in a second nature. I could scarcely have believed that the face I knew so well had yet an expression hidden I knew not of; but it was so: kindled at another fire than that which his genius had stolen from above, his eye was charged, his cheek flushed.

So exquisitely beautiful they looked together,—he in that soft shadow, she in that tremulous light, —that at first I noticed not a third figure, now brought before me. Behind them both, but sitting so that she could see his face, was Laura,—or rather she half lay; some antique figures carved in statuary have an attitude as listless, that bend on monuments, or crouch in relievo. She had both her arms outspread upon the little work-table, hanging over the edge, the hands just clasped together, as reckless in repose; her face all colorless, her eyes all clear, but with scarcely more tinting, were fixed, rapt, upon Seraphael.

I could not tell whether she was feeding upon his eye, his cheek, or his beauteous hair; all her life came forth from her glance, but it spent itself without expression. Still, that deep, that feeding gaze was enough for me; there was in it neither look of hope nor of despair, as I could have interpreted it. I did not like to advance, and waited till my feet were stiff; but neither could I retire.

I waited while Clara, without comment on her part or request of his, glided from song to *scena*, from the romance of a wilderness to the simplest troll. Her fingers just touched the keys as we touch them for the violin solo,—supporting, but unnoticeable. At last, when afraid to be caught,—for the face of the Chevalier in its new expression I rather dreaded,—I went back, like a thief, the way I came, and still more like a thief in that I carried away a treasure of remembrance from those who knew not they had lost it. 243

I found Starwood yet out, and roved very impatiently all over the house until, at perhaps five o'clock, Seraphael came in for something. The dog in the yard barked out; but I was in no humor to let him loose, and ran straight into the hall.

"Carlomein," said the Chevalier, "I thought you were in London. Is it possible, my child, that you have not dined?" and he gave orders for an instant preparation. "I am truly vexed that I did not know it, but Stern is gone to his father, and will stay till the last coach to-night. I thought you would be absent also."

"And so, sir, I suppose you had determined to go without your dinner?"

He smiled.

"Not at all, Carlomein. The fact is, I *have* dined. I could not resist La Benetta benedetta. I never knew what young potatoes were until I tasted them over there."

"I daresay not," I thought; but I was wise enough to hold my tongue.

"Then, sir, I shall dine alone; and very much I shall enjoy it. There is nothing I like so well as dining alone, except to dine alone with you."

"Carl! Carl! hadst thou been in that devil when he tempted Eve! Pardon, but I have come home for a few things, and have promised to return."

"Sir, if you will not think it rude, I must say that for once in your life you are enjoying what you confer upon others. I am so glad!"

"I thought it says, 'It is better to give than to receive.' I do like receiving; but perhaps that is because I cannot give this which I now receive. Carlomein, there is a spell upon thee; there is a charm about thee, that makes thee lead all thou lovest to all they love! It is a thing I cannot comprehend, but am too content to feel." 244

He ran into his study, and returning, just glanced into the room with an air of *allegresse* to bid me adieu; but what had he in his arms, if it were not the score of his oratorio? I knew its name by this time; I saw it in that nervous writing which I could read at any earthly distance,—what was to be done with it, and what then? Was he going to the rehearsal, or a rehearsal of his own?

I had not been half an hour quiet, playing to myself, having unpacked my fiddle for the first time since I came to London, when the lady of the scanty silk arrived at my door and aroused me. Some gentlemen had called to see the Chevalier, and as he was supposed to be absent, must see me. I went down into a great, dampish dining-room we had not lived in at all, and found three or four worthies, a deputation from the band and chorus, who had helplessly assembled two hours ago in London, and were at present waiting for the conductor.

It was no pleasant task to infringe the fragrant privacy of the cottage, but I had to do it. I went to the front gate this time, and sent up a message, that I might not render myself more intrusive than necessary. He came down as upon the wings of the wind, with his hat half falling from his curls, and flew to the deputation without a syllable to me; they carried him off in triumph so immediately that I could only fancy he looked annoyed, and may have been about that matter mistaken. 245

Certainly Clara was not annoyed, whom I went in-doors to see; Laura had vanished, and she herself was alone in the room, answering my first notes of admiration merely, "Yes, I have sung to him a good while." I was, however, so struck with the change, not in manner, but in her mien, that I would stay on to watch, at the risk of being in the way more than ever in my days. Since I had entered, she had not once looked up; but an unusual flush was upon her face, she appeared serious, but intent,—something seemed to occupy her. At last, after turning about the music-sheets that strewed the chamber everywhere, and placing them by in silence,—and a very long time she took,—she raised her eyes. Their lustre was indeed quickened; never saw I so much excitement in them; they were still not so grave as significant,—full of unwonted suggestions. I ventured to say then,—

"And now, Miss Benette, I may ask you what you feel about the personality of this hero?"

I could not put it better; she replied not directly, but came and sat beside me on the sofa, by the window. She laid her little hands in her lap, and her glance followed after them. I could see she was inexpressibly burdened with some inward revelation. I could not for a moment believe she trembled, but certainly there was a quiver of her lips; her silken curls, so calm, did not hide the pulsation, infantinely rapid, of those temples where the harebell-azure veins pencilled the rose-flower skin. After a few moments' pause, during which she evidently collected herself, she addressed me, her own sweet voice as clear as ever, but the same trouble in it that touched her gaze.

"Sir, I am going to tell you something, and to ask your advice besides." 246

"I am all attention!" indeed, I was in an agony to attend and learn.

"I have had a strange visitor this morning,—very sudden, and I was not prepared. You will think me very foolish when you hear what is the matter with me, that I have not written to Mr. Davy; but I prefer to ask you. You are more enlightened, though you are so young."

"Miss Benette, I know your visitor; for on returning home next door, I missed my master, and I knew he could be only here. What has he done that could possibly raise a difficulty, or said that could create a question? He is my unerring faith, and should be yours."

"I do not wonder; but I have not known him so long, you see, and contemplate him differently. I had been telling him, as he requested to know my plans, of the treatment I had received at the opera, and how I had not quite settled whether to come out now or next year as an actress. He answered,—

"'Do neither.'

"I inquired why?

"'You must not accept any engagement for the stage in England, and pray do not hold out to them any idea that you will.'

"Now, what does he mean? Am I to give up my only chance of being able to live in England? For I wish to live here. And am I to act unconscientiously? For my conscience tells me that the pure-hearted should always follow their impulses. Now, I know very few persons; but I am born to be known of many,—at least I suppose so, or why was I gifted with this voice, my only gift?"

"Miss Benette, you cannot suppose the Chevalier desires your voice to be lost. Has he not been 247
informing and interpenetrating himself with it the whole morning? He has a higher range in view for you, be assured, or he had not persuaded you, *I* am certain, to annul your present privileges. He has the right to will what he pleases."

"And are we all to obey him?"

"Certainly; and only him,—in matters musical. If you knew him as I do, you would feel this."

"But is it like a musician to draw me away from my duty?"

"Not obviously; but there may be no duty here. You do not know how completely, in the case of dramatic, and indeed of all other art, the foundations are out of course."

"You mean they do not fulfil their first intentions. But then nothing does, except, certainly, as it was first created. We have lost that long."

"Music, Miss Benette, it appears to me, so long as it preserves its purity, may consecrate all the forms of art by raising them into its own atmosphere,—govern them as the soul the body. But where music is itself degraded, its very type defaced, its worship rendered ridiculous, its nature mere name, by its own master the rest falls. I know not much about it, but I know how little the drama depends on music in this country, and how completely, in the first place, one must lend one's self to its meanest effect in order to fulfil the purpose of the writer. All writers for the stage have become profane, and dramatic writers whom we still confess to, are banished from the stage in proportion to the elevation of their works. I even go so far as to think an artist does worse who lends an incomparable organ to such service than an unheeded player (myself, for example), who should form one in the ranks of such an orchestra as that of our opera-houses, 248
where the bare notion or outline of harmony is all that is provided for us. While the idea of the highest prevails with us, our artist-life must harmonize, or Art will suffer,—and it suffers enough now. I have said too long a say, and perhaps I am very ignorant; but this is what I think."

"You cannot speak too much, sir, and you know a great deal more than I do. My feeling was that I could perhaps have shown the world that simplicity of life is not interfered with by a public career, and that those who love what is beautiful must also love what is good, and endeavor to live up to it besides. I have spoken to several musicians abroad, who came to me on purpose; they all extolled my voice, and entreated me to sing upon the stage. I did so then because I was poor and had several things I wished to do; but I cannot say I felt at home with music on the stage in Italy. The gentleman who was here to-day was the first who disturbed my ideas and dissuaded me. I was astonished, not because I am piqued,—for you do not know how much I should prefer to live a quiet life,—but because everybody else had told me a different story. I do not like to think I shall only be able to sing in concerts, for there are very few concerts that content me, and I do so love an orchestra. Am I to give it all up? If this gentleman had said, 'Only sing in this opera or that,' I could have made up my mind. But am I never to sing in any? Am I to waste my voice that God gave me as he gives to others a free hand or a great imagination? You cannot think so, with all your industry and all your true enthusiasm."

"Miss Benette, you must not be shocked at what I shall now say, because I mean it with all
reverence. I could no more call in question the decision of such genius than I could that of 249
Providence if it sent me death—sickness or took away my friends. I am certain that the motive, which you cannot make clear just yet, is that you would approve of."

"And you also, sir?"

"And I also, though it is as dark to me as to you. Let it stand over, then; but for all our sakes do

not thwart him,—-he has suffered too much to be thwarted."

"Has he suffered? I did not know that."

"Can such a one live and not suffer? A nature which is all love,—-an imagination all music?"

"I thought that he looked delicate, but very happy,—-happy as a child or an angel. I have seen your smile turn bitter, sir,—-pardon,—-but never his. I am sure, if it matters to him that I should accede, I will do so, and I cannot thank you enough for telling me."

"Miss Benette, if you are destined to do anything great for music, it may be in one way as well as in another; that is, if you befriend the greatest musician, it is as much as if you befriended music. Now you cannot but befriend him if you do exactly as he requests you."

"In all instances, you recommend?"

"*I*, at least, could refuse him nothing. The nourishment such a spirit requires is not just the same as our own, perhaps, but it must not the less be supplied. If I could, now, clean his boots better than any one else, or if he liked my cookery, I would give up what I am about and take a place in his service."

"What! you would give up your violin, your career, your place among the choir of ages?"

"I would; for in rendering a single hour of his existence on earth unfretted,—-in preserving to him 250
one day of ease and comfort,—-I should be doing more for all people, all time, at least for the ideal, who will be few in every age, but many in all the ages, and who I believe leaven society better than a priesthood. I would not say so except to a person who perfectly understands me; for as I hold laws to be necessary, I would infringe no social or religious *régime* by one heterodox utterance to the ear of the uninitiated: still, having said it, I keep to my text, that you must do exactly as he pleases. He has not set a seal upon your throat at present, if you have been singing all the morning."

"I have been singing from his new great work. There is a contralto solo, 'Art Thou not from Everlasting?' which spoiled my voice; I could not keep the tears down, it was so beautiful and entreating. He was a little angry at me; at least he said, 'You must not do that.' There is also a very long piece which I scarcely tried, we had been so long over the other, which he made me sing again and again until I composed myself. What a mercy Mr. Davy taught us to read so fast! I have found it help me ever since. Do you mean to go to this oratorio?"

"I am to go with Miss Lawrence. How noble, how glorious she is!"

"Your eyes sparkle when you speak of her. I knew you would there find a friend."

"I hope you, too, will hear it, Miss Benette. I shall speak to the Chevalier about it."

"I pray you not to do so; there will not be any reason, for I find out all about those affairs. Take care of yourself, Mr. Auchester, or rather make Miss Lawrence take care of you; she will like to have to do so." 251

"I must go home, if it is not to be just yet, and return on purpose for the day."

"But that will fatigue you very much,—-cannot you prevent it? One ought to be quiet before a great excitement."

"Oh! you have found that. I cannot be quiet until afterwards."

"I have never had a great excitement," said Clara, innocently; "and I hope I never may. It suits me to be still."

"May that calm remain in you and for you with which you never fail to heal the soul within your power, Miss Benette!"

"I should indeed be proud, Mr. Auchester, to keep you quiet; but that you will never be until it is forever."

"In that sense no one could, for who could ever desire to awaken from that rest? And from all rest here it is but to awaken."

I felt I ought to go, or that I might even remain too long. It was harder at that moment to leave her than it had ever been before; but I had a prescience that for that very reason it was better to depart. Starwood had returned, I found, and was waiting about in the evening, before the candles came.

We both watched the golden shade that bound the sunset to its crimson glow, and then the violet dark, as it melted downwards to embrace the earth. We were both silent, Starwood from habit (I have never seen such power of abstraction), I by choice. An agitated knock came suddenly, about nine, and into the room bounced the big dog, tearing the carpet up with his capers. Seraphael followed, silent at first as we; he stole after us to the window, and looked softly forth. I could tell even in the uncertain silver darkness of that thinnest shell of a moon that his face was alight with 252
happiness, an ineffable gentleness,—-not the dread alien air of heaven, soothing the passion of his countenance. He laid for long his tiny hand upon my shoulder, his arm crept round my neck, and drawing closer still, he sighed rather than said, after a thrilling pause,—

"Carlomein, wilt thou come into my room? I have a secret for thee; it will not take long to tell."

"The longer the better, sir."

We went out through the dark drawing-room, we came to his writing-chamber; here the white sheets shone like ghosts in the bluish blackness, for we were behind the sunset.

"We will have no candles, because we shall return so soon. And I love secrets told in the dark, or between the dark and light. I have prevented that child from taking her own way. It was very naughty, and I want to be shriven. Shrive me, Charles."

"In all good part, sir, instantly."

"I have been quarrelling with the manager. He was very angry, and his whiskers stood out like the bristles of a cat; for I had snatched the mouse from under his paw, you see."

"The mouse must have been glad enough to get away, sir. And you have drawn a line through her engagement? She has told me something of it, and we are grateful."

"I have cancelled her engagement! Well, this one,—but I am going to give her another. She does not know it, but she will sing for me at another time. Art thou angry, Carl? Thou art rather a dread confessor."

"I could not do anything but rejoice, sir. How little she expects to bear such a part! She is alone fitted for it; an angel, if he came into her heart, could not find one stain upon his habitation." 253

"The reason you take home to you, then, Carlomein?"

"Sir, I imagine that you consider her wanting in dramatic power; or that as a dramatic songstress under the present dispensation she would but disappoint herself, and perhaps ourselves; or that she is too delicately organized,—which is no new notion to me."

"All of these reasons, and yet not one,—not even because, Carlomein, in all my efforts I have not written directly for the stage, nor because a lingering recollection ever forbids profane endeavor. There is yet a reason, obvious to myself, but which I can scarcely make clear to you. Though I would have you know, and learn as truth, that there is nothing I take from this child I will not restore to her again, nor shall she have the lesson to be taught to feel that in heaven alone is happiness."

He made a long, long pause. I was in no mood to reply, and it was not until I was ashamed of my own silence that I spoke; then my own accents startled me. I told Seraphael I must return on the morrow to my own place if I were to enjoy at length what Miss Lawrence had set before me. He replied that I must come back to him when I came, and that he would write to me meantime.

"If I can, Carlomein; but I cannot always write even, my child, to thee. There is one thing more between us,—a little end of business."

He lit with a waxen match a waxen taper, which was coiled into a brazen cup; he brought it from the mantelshelf to the table; he took a slip of paper and a pen. The tiny flame threw out his hand, of a brilliant ivory, while his head remained in flickering shadow,—I could trace a shadow smile. 254

"Now, Carlomein, this brother of yours. His name is David, I think?"

"Lenhart Davy, sir."

"Has he many musical friends?"

"Only his wife particularly so,—the class are all neophytes."

"Well, he can do as he pleases. Here is an order."

He held out the paper in a regal attitude, and in the other hand brought near the tremulous taper, that I so might read. It was,—

ABBEY CHOIR, WESTMINSTER.

Admit Mr. Lenhart Davy and party 21st June.

SERAPHAEL.

I could say nothing, nor even essay to thank him,—indeed he would not permit it, as I could perceive. We returned directly to the drawing-room, and roused Starwood from a blue study, as the Chevalier expressed it.

"I am ready, and Miss Lemark is tired of waiting for both of us," said Miss Lawrence, as she entered that crown of days, the studio; "I have left her in the drawing-room. And, by the way, though it is nothing to the purpose, she has dressed herself very prettily."

"I do not think it is nothing to the purpose,—people dress to go to church, and why not, then, to honor music? You have certainly succeeded also, Miss Lawrence, if it is not impertinent that I say so."

"It is not impertinent. You will draw out the colors of that bit of canvas, if you gaze so ardently."

It was not so easy to refrain. That morning the pictured presence had been restored to its easel,

framed and ready for inspection. I had indeed lost myself in that contemplation; it was hard to tear myself from it even for the embrace of the reality. The border, dead gold, of great breadth and thickness, was studded thickly with raised bright stars, polished and glittering as points of steel. The effect thus seemed conserved and carried out where in general it abates. I cannot express the picture; it was finished to that high degree which conceals its own design, and mantles mechanism with pure suggestion. I turned at length and followed the paintress; my prospects more immediate rushed upon me. 255

Our party, small and select as the most seclusive spirit could ask for, consisted of Miss Lawrence and her father,—a quiet but genuine amateur he,—of Miss Lemark, whom my friend had included without a question, with Starwood and myself. We had met at Miss Lawrence's, and went together in her carriage. She wore a deep blue muslin dress,—blue as that summer heaven; her scarf was gossamer, the hue of the yellow butterfly, and her bonnet was crested with feathers drooping like golden hair. Laura was just in white; her Leghorn hat lined with grass-green gauze; a green silk scarf waved around her. Both ladies carried flowers. Geraniums and July's proud roses were in Miss Lawrence's careless hand, and Laura's bouquet was of myrtle and yellow jasmine.

We drove in that quiet mood which best prepares the heart. We passed so street by street, until at length, and long before we reached it, the gray Abbey towers beckoned us from beyond the houses, seeming to grow distant as we approached, as shapes of unstable shadow, rather than time-fast masonry.

Into the precinct we passed, we stayed at the mist-hung door. It was the strangest feeling—mere physical sensation—to enter from that searching heat, those hot blue heavens, into the cool, the dream of dimness, where the shady marbles clustered, and the foot fell dead and awfully, where hints more awful pondered, and for our coming waited. Yea, as if from far and very far, as if 256 beyond the grave descending, fell wondrous unwonted echoes from the tuning choir unseen. Involuntarily we paused to listen, and many others paused,—those of the quick hand or melodious forehead, those of the alien aspect who ever draw after music. Now the strings yearned fitfully,—a sea of softest dissonances; the wind awoke and moaned; the drum detonated and was still; past all the organ swept, a thundering calm.

Entering, still hushed and awful, the centre of the nave, we caught sight of the transept already crowded with hungering, thirsting faces; still they too, and all there hushed and awful. The vision of the choir itself, as it is still preserved to me, is as a picture of heaven to infancy. What more like one's idea of heaven than that height, that aspiring form,—the arches whose sun-kissed summits glowed in distance, whose vista stretched its boundaries from the light of rainbows at one end, on the other to the organ, music's archetype? Not less powerful, predominating, this idea of our other home, because no earthly flowers nor withering garlands made the thoughts recoil on death and destiny,—the only flowers there, the rays transfused through sun-pierced windows; the blue mist strewing aisle and wreathing arch, the only garlands. Nor less because for once an assembly gathered of all the fraternities of music, had the unmixed element of pure enthusiasm thrilled through the "electric chain" from heart to heart. Below the organ stood Seraphael's desk, as yet unhaunted; the orchestra; the chorus, as a cloud-hung company, with starlike faces in the lofty front.

I knew not much about London orchestras, and was taking a particular stare, when Miss Lawrence whispered in a manner that only aroused, not disturbed me: "There is our old friend 257 Santonio. Do look and see how little he is altered!"

I caught his countenance instantly,—as fine, as handsome, a little worn at its edges, but rather refined by that process than otherwise. "I did not ask about him, because I did not know he was in London. He is, then, settled here; and is he very popular?"

"You need not ask the question; he is too true to himself. No, Santonio will never be rich, though he is certainly not poor."

Then she pointed to me one head and another crowned with fame; but I could only spare for them a glance,—Santonio interested me still. He was reminding me especially of himself as I remembered him, by laying his head, as he had used to do, upon the only thing he ever really loved,—his violin,—when, so quietly as to take us by surprise, Seraphael entered, I may almost say rose upon us, as some new-sprung star or sun.

Down the nave the welcome rolled, across the transept it overflowed the echoes; for a few moments nothing else could be felt, but there was, as it were, a tender shadow upon the very reverberating jubilance,—it was subdued as only the musical subdue their proud emotions; it was subdued for the sake of one whose beauty, lifted over us, appeared descending, hovering from some late-left heaven, ready to depart again, but not without a sign, for which we waited. Immediately, and while he yet stood with his eyes of power upon the whole front of faces, the solo-singers entered also and took their seats all calmly.

There were others besides Clara, but besides her I saw nothing, except that they were in colors, while she wore black, as ever; but never had I really known her loveliness until it shone in 258 contrast with that which was not so lovely. More I could not perceive, for now the entering bar of silence riveted; we held our breath for the coming of the overture.[8]

It opened like the first dawn of lightening, yet scarce yet lightened morning, its vast subject

introduced with strings alone in that joyous key which so often served him, yet as in the extreme of vaulting distance; but soon the first trombone blazed out, the second and third responding with their stupendous tones, as the amplifications of fugue involved and spread themselves more and more, until, like glory filling up and flooding the height of heaven from the heaven of heavens itself, broke in the organ, and brimmed the brain with the calm of an utter and forceful expression, realized by tone. In sympathy with each instrument, it was alike with none, even as the white and boundless ray of which all beams, all color-tones are born. The perfect form, the distinct conception of this unbrothered work, left our spirits as the sublime fulfilment confronted them. For once had genius, upon the wings of aspiration, that alone are pure, found all it rose to seek, and mastered without a struggle all that it desired to embrace; for the pervading purpose of that creation was the passioned quietude with which it wrought its way. The vibrating harmonies, pulse-like, clung to our pulses, then drew up, drew out each heart, deep-beating and undistracted, to adore at the throne above from whence all beauty springs. And opening and spreading thus, too intricately, too transcendentally for criticism, we do not essay, even feebly, to portray that immortal work of a music-veiled immortal.

Inextricable holiness, precious as the old Hebrew psalm of all that hath life and breath,[9] exhaled 259
from every modulation, each dropped celestial fragrances, the freshness of everlasting spring. Suggestive,—our oratorio suggested nothing here, nothing that we find or feel; all that we seek and yearn to clasp, but rest in our restlessness to discover is beyond us! In nothing that form of music reminded of our forms of worship,—in the day of Paradise it might have been dreamed of, an antepast of earth's last night, and of eternity at hand,—or it might be the dream of heaven that haunts the loving one's last slumber.

I can no more describe the hush that hung above and seemed to spiritualize the listeners until, like a very cloud of mingling souls, they seemed congregated to wait for the coming of a Messiah who had left them long, promising to return; nor how, as chorus after chorus, built up, sustained, and self-supported, gathered to the stricken brain, the cloud of spirits sank, as in slumber sweeter than any dreamful stir, upon the alternating strains and songs, all softness,—all dread soothing, as the fire that burned upon the strings seemed suddenly quenched in tears. Faint supplications wafted now, now deep acclaims of joy; but all, all surcharged the spirit alike with the mysterious thrall and tenderness of that uncreate and unpronounceable Name, whose eternal love is all we need to assure us of eternal life.

It was with one of those alternate strains that Clara rose to sing, amidst silence yet unbroken, and the more impressive because of the milder symphony that stole from the violoncello, its meandering pathos asking to support and serve her voice. Herself penetrated so deeply with the 260
wisdom of genius, she failed to remind us of herself; even her soft brow and violet eyes—violet in the dense glory of the Abbey afternoon light—were but as outward signs and vivid shadows of the spirit that touched her voice. Deeper, stiller than the violoncello notes, hers seemed as those articulated, surcharged with a revelation beyond all sound.

Calm as deep, clear as still, they were yet not passionless; though they clung and moulded themselves strictly to the passion of the music, lent not a pulse of their own; nor disturbed it the rapt serenity of her singing to gaze upon her angel-face. No child could have seemed less sensitive to the surrounding throng, nor have confided more implicitly in the father of its heart, than she leaned upon Seraphael's power.

I made this observation afterwards, when I had time to think; at present I could only feel, and feeling know, that the intellect is but the servant of the soul. When at length those two hours, concentrating such an eternity in their perfection of all sensation, had reached their climax, or rather when, brightening into the final chorus, unimprisoned harmonies burst down from stormy-hearted organ, from strings all shivering alike, from blasting, rending tubes, and thus bound fast the Alleluia,—it was as if the multitude had sunk upon their knees, so profound was the passion-cradling calm. The blue-golden lustre, dim and tremulous, still crowned the unwavering arches,—tender and overwrought was laid that vast and fluctuating mind. So many tears are not often shed as fell in that silent while,—dew-stilly they dropped and quickened; but still not all had wept.

Many wept then who had never wept before; many who had wept before could not weep now,—
among them I. Our party were as if lost to me; as I hid my face my companion did not disturb me, 261
—she was too far herself in my own case. I do not know whether I heard, but I was aware of a stretching and breathing; the old bones stirring underneath the pavement would have shaken me less, but could not have been less to my liking; the rush, however soft, the rustle, however subdued, were agony, were torment: I could only feel, "Oh that I were in heaven! that I might never return to earth!" But then it came upon me, to that end we must all be changed. This was sad, but of a sadness peculiarly soothing; for could we be content to remain forever as we are here, even in our holiest, our strongest moments?

During the last reverberations of that unimaginable Alleluia I had not looked up at all; now I forced myself to do so, lest I should lose my sight of *him*,—his seal upon all that glory. As Seraphael had risen to depart, the applause, stifled and trembling, but not the less by heartfuls, rose for him.

He turned his face a moment,—the heavenly half-smile was there; then at that very moment the summer sun, that, falling downwards in its piercing glare, glowed gorgeous against the flower-leaf windows, flung its burning bloom, its flushing gold upon that countenance. We all saw it, we

all felt it,—the seraph-strength, the mortal beauty,—and that it was pale as the cheek of the quick and living changed in death,—that his mien was of no earthly triumph!

CHAPTER XV.

To that last phase of an unworldly morning succeeded the usual contrasts both of state and mood. Pushing out all among the marbles in a graceless disorder, finding in the sacred gloom of the precinct the flashing carriages, the crested panels; a rattle, a real noise, real things, real people,—these were as one might expect; and yet I was very ungrateful, for I desired especially to avoid my dear brother and dearest sister, who had come from the country that very day, though I yet had failed to recognize or seek for them. Davy could generally express what he *felt* about music, and I did not know how it might be. 262

I was thankful to be with Miss Lawrence, who behaved exactly as I wished; that is to say, when we were fairly seated she began to talk to her father, not to me, and upon indifferent or adverse matters. Of Laura I had not even thought until now. She was upon my side, though not just next me; she leaned back, and was so slight that nothing could be seen of her, except her crushed-up dress. While, as an amusing point of idiosyncrasy, I may remark that Miss Lawrence's dress was as superb as ever; she also carried her flowers, not one decayed. Laura has lost hers altogether.

Poor Starwood had closed his eyes, and was pretending to be asleep; he had one of those headaches of his that rendered silence a necessity, although they are "only nervous," and do not signify in the least. I had no headache; I never was better in my life, and I never felt so forcibly how much life is beyond *living*. 263

We drove home soon enough; I was Miss Lawrence's guest, and I knew that with her generous goodness she had invited Millicent and Davy. We had scarcely entered the drawing-room, where everything was utterly unreal to me, before Davy's little quick knock came.

Miss Lawrence then approached me, and putting her bonnet quite over my face, said, in a knowing whisper:

"You just go along upstairs; I know you cannot bear it. I am not made quite of your stuff, and shall be happy to entertain your people. Your brother and sister are no such awful persons to me, I assure you."

I obeyed,—perhaps selfishly; but I should have been poor company indeed,—and went to my large bed-room. Large and luxuriously furnished, it even looked romantic. I liked it; I passed to the window, and was disturbed a moment afterwards by a servant who bore a tray of eatables, with wine, sent by Miss Lawrence, of course, whose moments counted themselves out in deeds of kindness. I took the tray, delivered it to the charge of the first chair next the door, and returned to my own at the window-seat.

The blue sky, so intense and clear, so deep piercing, was all I needed to gaze on; and I was far gone in revery when I heard a knock at the door of my room. It was a strange, short beat, almost as weird as "Jeffrey," but at least it startled me to rise. I arose, and opened it. I beheld Laura. I was scarcely surprised; yet I should indeed have been surprised but for my immediate terror, almost awe, at her unformal aspect.

I never saw a living creature look so far like death. There was no gleam of life in her wan face, so fallen, agonized; no mortal, spending sickness could have so reduced her! She fixed upon me her wild eyes, clear as tearless; but at first she could not speak. She tried again and again, but at last she staggered, and I put her, I know not how, exactly, into a chair at hand. She was light almost as a child of five years old, but so listless that I was afraid of hurting her; and immediately she sat down she fainted. It was a real, unmitigated faint, and no mistake; I could see she had not herself expected it. I was accustomed to this kind of thing, however, for Lydia at home was fond of fainting away in church, or on the threshold of the door; also Fred's wife made a point of fainting at regular intervals. But I never saw any one faint as Laura: she turned to marble in a moment; there was a rigid fixing of her features that would have alarmed me had I loved her, and that rendered my very anxiety for her a grief. I could not lift her then, for light as she was, she leaned upon me, and I could only stretch my arm to reach the decanter from its stand. The wine was, however, of no use at present; I had to put the glass upon the floor after filling it with unmentionable exertion. But after ten minutes or so, as I expected from a relaxation of her countenance, she awoke as out of a breathless sleep. She looked at me, up into my face; she was again the little Laura whom I had known at Davy's class. 264

"I only wanted to ask you to let me lie upon your bed, for I am going back to-night, and have not a room here; and I did not like to ask Miss Lawrence. I hope you do not mind it. I should not have done so, if I had not felt so very ill."

The humility of her manner here, so unlike what I had seen in the little I had seen of her, made me ashamed, and it also touched me seriously. I said I was sorry, very sorry, that she should be ill, but that it was what any very delicate or feeling person might expect after so much 265

excitement; and as I spoke, I would have assisted her, but she assisted herself, and lay down upon the bed directly.

"If you please, sit in the window away from me, and go on with your thoughts. Do not trouble yourself about me, or I shall go away again."

"I will keep quiet, certainly, because you yourself should keep so."

And then I gave her the wine, and covered her with the quilt to the throat; for although it was so warm, she had begun to shake and tremble as she lay. I held the wine to her lips, for she could not hold the glass; and while I did so, before she tasted, she said, with an emphasis I am very unlikely ever to forget,—

"I wish it could be poison."

I saw there was something the matter then, and as being responsible at that instant, I mechanically uttered the reply,—

"Will you not tell me why you wish it? I *can* mix poison; but I should be very sorry to give it to any one, and above all to you."

"Why to *me*? You would be doing more good than by going to hear all that music."

I gazed at her for one moment; a suspicion (which, had it been a certainty, would have failed to turn me from her) thwarted my simple pity. I gazed, and it was enough; I felt there was nothing I needed fear to know,—that child had never sinned against her soul. I therefore said, more carelessly than just then I felt:

"Miss Lemark, because you are gifted, because you are good, because you are innocent. It is not everybody who is either of these, and very few indeed are all the three. I will not have you talk just now, unless, indeed, you can tell me that I can do nothing for you. You know how slight my resources are, but you need not fear to trust me." 266

"If you did let me talk, what should I say? But you have told a lie,—or rather, I made you tell it. I am *not* gifted,—at least, my gifts are such as nobody really cares for. I am innocent? I am *not* innocent; and for the other word you used, I do not think I ought to speak it,—it no more belongs to me than beauty or than happiness."

"All that is beautiful belongs to all who love it, thank God, Miss Lemark, or I should be very poor indeed in that respect. But why are you so angry with yourself because, having gone through too much happiness, you are no longer happy? It must be so for all of us, and I do not regret, though I have felt it."

"*You* regret it,—you to regret anything!" said Laura, haughtily, her hauteur striking through her paleness reproachfully. "You—a man! I would sell my soul, if I have a soul, to be a man, to be able to live to myself, to be delivered from the torment of being and feeling what nobody cares for."

"If we live to ourselves, we men,—if I may call myself a man,—we are not less tormented, and not less because men are expected to bear up, and may not give themselves relief in softer sorrow. My dear Miss Lemark, it appears to me that if we allow ourselves to sink, either for grief or joy, it matters not which, we are very much to blame, and more to be pitied. There is ever a hope, even for the hopeless, as they think themselves; how much more for those who need not and must not despair! And those who are born with the most hopeful temper find that they cannot exist without faith." 267

"That is the way the people always talk who have everything the world can give them,—who have more than everything they wish for; who have all their love cared for; who may express it without being mocked, and worship without being trampled on. You are the most enviable person in the whole world except one, and I do not envy her, but I do envy you."

"Very amiable, Miss Lemark!" and I felt my old wrath rising, yet smiled it down. "You see all this is a conjecture on your part; you cannot know what I feel, nor is it for you to say that because I am a man I can have exactly what I please. Very possibly, precisely because I am a man, I cannot. But anyhow, I shall not betray myself, nor is it ever safe to betray ourselves, unless we cannot help it."

"I do not care about betraying myself; I am miserable, and I *will* have comfort,—comfort is for the miserable!"

"Not the comfort a human heart can bring you, however soft it may chance to be."

"I should hate a soft heart's comfort; I would not take it. It is because you are not soft-hearted I want yours."

"I would willingly bestow it upon you if I knew how; but you know that Keble says: "Whom oil and balsams kill, what salve can cure?'"

"I do not know Keble."

"Then you ought to cultivate his acquaintance, Miss Lemark, as a poet, at least, if not as a gentleman."

I wished at once to twist the subject aside and to make her laugh; a laugh dispels more mental

trouble than any tears at times. But, contrary to expectation on my part, my recipe failed here; she broke into a tremendous weeping, without warning, nor did she hide her face, as those for 268
the most part do who must shed their tears. She sobbed openly, aloud; and yet her sorrow did not inspire me with contempt, for it was as unsophisticated as any child's. It was evident she had not been accustomed to suffering, and knew not how to restrain its expression, neither that it ought to be restrained. I moved a few feet from her, and waited; I did right,—in the rain the storm exhaled. She wiped away her tears, but they yet pearled the long, pale lashes as she resumed,—

"I am much obliged to you for telling me I ought not to say these things; but it would be better if you could prevent my feeling them."

"No one can prevent that, Miss Lemark; and perhaps it does not signify what you feel, if you can prevent its interfering with your duty to others and to yourself."

"You to talk of duty,—you, who possess every delight that the earth contains, and with whom I would rather change places than with the angels!"

"I have many delights; but if I had no duties to myself, the delights would fail. An artist, I consider, Miss Lemark, has the especial duty imposed upon him or her to let it be seen that art is the nearest thing in the universe to God, after nature; and his life must be tolerably pure for that."

"That is just it. But it is easy enough to do right when you have all that your heart wants and your mind asks for. I have nothing."

"Miss Lemark, you are an artist."

"You know very well how you despise such art as mine, even if I did my duty by that; but I do not, and that is what I want comfort for. You did not think I should tell you anything else!"

"I would have you tell me nothing that you are not obliged to say; it is dangerous,—at least, I 269
should find it so."

"You have not suffered; or if you have, you have never offended. I have done what would make you spurn me. But that would not matter to me; anything is better than to seem what I am not."

"What is the matter, then? I never spurned a living creature, God knows; and for every feeling of antipathy to some persons, I have felt a proportionate wish for their good. There are different ranks of spirits, Miss Lemark, and it is not because we are in one that we do not sympathize quite as much as is necessary with the rest. Albeit, you and I are of one creed, you know,—both artists, and both, I believe, desirous to serve art as we best may; thus we meet on equal grounds, and whatever you say I shall hear as if it were my sister who spoke to me."

"If you meant that, it would be very kind, for I have no brother; I have none of my blood, and I can expect no one else to love me. I do not care to be loved, even; but every one must grow to something. You know Clara? I see you do; you always felt for her as you could not help. No one could feel for her as she deserves. I wish I could die for Clara, and now I cannot die even for myself, for I feel, oh! I feel that to die is not to die,—that music made me feel it; but I have never felt it before,—I have been a heathen. I cannot say I wish I had not heard it, for anything is better than to be so shut out as I was. You remember how, when I was a little girl, I loved to dance. I always liked it until I grew up; but I cannot tell you how at last, when I came out in Paris, and after the first few nights,—which were most beautiful to me,—I wearied. Night after night, in the same steps, to the same music—music—Is it music? You do not look as if you called it so. I did not 270
know I danced,—I dreamed; I am not sure now, sometimes, that I was ever awake those nights. I was lazy, and grew indolent; and when Clara came to Paris, I went along with her. Would you believe it? I have done nothing ever since." She paused a long minute; I did not reply. "You are not shocked?"

"No. I think not."

"You don't scorn me, and point your face at me? Then you ought, for I lived upon her and by her, and made no effort, while she took no rest, working hard and always. But with it all she kept her health, like the angels in heaven, and I grew ill and weak. I could not dance then. I felt it to be impossible, though sometimes it came upon me that I could; and then the remembrance of those nights, all alike, night after night—I could not. Pray tell me now whether I am not worthless. But I have no beauty; I am lost."

"Miss Lemark, if you were really lost, and had no beauty, it appears to me that you would not complain about it; people do not, I assure you, who are ugly or in despair. You are overdone, and you overrate your little girlish follies; everything is touched by the color of your thought, but is not really what it seems. Believe me,—as I cannot but believe,—that your inaction arose from morbid feeling and not too strong health; not from true want of energy or courage. You are young, a great deal too young, to trust all you fancy, or even feel; and you ought to be thankful there is nothing more for you to regret than that weighing down your spirit. You will do everything we expect and wish, when you become stronger,—a strong woman, I hope; for remember, you are only a girl. Nor will you find that you are less likely to succeed then because 271
of this little voluntary of *idlesse*."

"You are only speaking so because it is troublesome to you to be addressed at all. You do not mean it; you are all music."

"There is only one who is all music, Miss Lemark."

She hid her face for many minutes; at last she looked up, and said with more softness, a smile almost sweet:

"Mr. Auchester, I feel I am detaining you; let me beg you to sit down."

I just got up on the side of the bed.

"That will do beautifully. And now, Miss Lemark, if I am to be your doctor, you must go to sleep."

"Because I shall not talk? But I will not go to sleep, and I will talk. What should you do if you were in my place, feeling as I do?"

"I do not know all."

"You may if you like."

"Then I may guess; at least, I may imagine all that I might feel if I were in your place,—a delicate young lady who has been fainting for the love of music."

"You are sneering; I do not mind that. I have seen such an expression upon a face I admire more than yours. Suppose you felt you had seen—"

"What I could never forget, nor cease to love," I answered, fast and eagerly; I *could* not let her say it, or anything just there,—"I should earnestly learn his nature, should fill myself to the brim with his beauty, just as with his music. I should feel that in keeping my heart pure, above all from envy, and my life most like his life, I should be approaching nearer than any earthly tie could lead me, should become worthy of his celestial communion, of his immortal, his heavenly tendencies. Nor should I regret to suffer,—to suffer for his sake." 272

I used these last words—themselves so well remembered—without remembering who said them for me first, till I had fairly spoken; then I, too, longed to weep: Maria's voice was trembling in my brain, a ghostly music. As Laura answered, the ghostly music passed, even as a wind shaken and scattered upon the sea. It was earth again, as vague, scarcely less lonely!

"A worldly man would mock. You do not a much wiser thing, but you do it for the best. I will try to hide it forever, for there is, indeed, no hope."

Half imploring, this was hardly a question; yet I answered,—

"I do believe none."

"You are cold, not cruel. I would rather know the truth. Yes! I would hide it forever; I will not even speak of it to you."

"Even from yourself hide it, if it must be hidden at all. And yet, I always think that a hidden sorrow is the best companion we can have."

"I am very selfish. I know that if Miss Lawrence finds out I am with you, you will not like it. You had better let me go downstairs."

"I will go myself, if you prefer to be alone; but you must not move."

"I must move,—I will not be found here; I had quite forgotten that. I will go this moment."

I did not dream of her actually departing; but before I could remonstrate further, she had planted herself lightly upon the carpet, and looked as well as usual: it was nothing extraordinary to see her pale. She smoothed her long hair at my glass, and arranged her dress; she shook hands with me afterwards also, and then she left the room.

CHAPTER XVI.

I was really alone now, but had a variety of worrying thoughts, hunting each other to death, but reproducing each other by thousands. I was irate with Laura, though I felt very sad, but of all most vexed that such an incident should have befallen my experience on that crown of days. The awful power of a single soul struggled, in my apprehension, with the vain weakness of a single heart. But more overpowering than either was the sensation connecting the two. It was a remembrance that I, too, might be called to suffer. 273

At last Miss Lawrence sent to know whether I chose my dinner. Her own hour was six, and just at hand; but I felt so extremely disinclined to eat that I thought I would refuse, and take a walk another way. Miss Lawrence was one of those persons—gladdening souls are they!—who mean exactly what they say, and expect you to say exactly what you mean; thus I had no difficulty in explaining that I preferred to take this walk, though it was not, after all, a walk *semplice*, for I was bound to the cottage, and desired to reach it as soon as possible.

I met Miss Lawrence on the stairs, and she charged me to take care of Laura. I could not refuse,

of course, and we drove in one of those delightful cabs that so effectually debar from connected conversation. I was glad for once, though I need not have troubled myself to descant, for Laura, in a great green veil, opened not her lips twice, nor once looked towards me. 274

We dismissed the conveyance at the entrance of the hamlet, and walked up together, still silent. It was about half-past seven then, and vivid as at morning the atmosphere, if not the light. Unclouded sunshine swept the clustered leaves of the intense June foliage, heavy-tressed laburnum wore it instead of blossoms; but from the secluded shade of the wayside gardens pierced the universal scent of roses above all other fragrance except the limes, which hung their golden bells out here and there, dropping their singular perfume all lights alike.

I saw Seraphael's house first, and returned to it after leaving Laura at that other white gate. All our windows were open, the breeze blew over a desert of flowers,—all was "fairy-land forlorn." I felt certain no one could be at home. I was right here. I could not enter. I was drawn to that other gate,—I entered. Thoné opened the door, looking quite as eastern in the western beams.

"Is Miss Benette at home?"

"I will see." For Thoné could spell out a little English now. She went and saw.

"Yes, sir, to you; and she wishes to see you."

It was the first time Thoné had ever called me "sir," and I felt very grand. A strange, subtile fancy, sweeter than the sweetest hope, sprang daringly within me. But a crushing fear uprose, it swelled and darkened,—my butterfly was broken upon that wheel; those rooms so bright and festal, the air and sunshine falling upon clustered flowers, upon evening freshness as at morning, were not, could not be, for me! I advanced to the open piano, its glittering sheets outspread, its smiling keys. 275

Hardly had I felt myself alone before one other entered. Alas, I was still alone! Clara herself approached me, less calm than I had ever seen her; her little hand was chilled as if by the rough kisses of an eastern wind, though the south air fanned our summer; there was agitation in her whole air, but more excitement. I had never seen her excited; I had not been aware how strangely I should feel to see her touched so deeply.

"Mr. Auchester, it must have been Heaven who sent you here to-night, for I wanted to see you more than anybody, and was expecting some one else. I never thought I should see you first; I wished it so very much."

"Miss Benette, if it were in my power I would give you all you wish, for the sake only of hearing you wish but once. I am grateful to be able to fulfil your wishes in the very least degree. What is it now?"—for her lip quivered like an infant's, and one tear stood in each of her blue eyes. She wiped away those dew-drops that I would have caught upon my heart, and answered, her voice of music all quiet now,—

"I have had a strange letter from the gentleman you love so well. I do not feel equal to what he asks,—that is, I am not deserving; but still I must answer it; and after what you said to me last time you were so kind as to talk to me, I do not think it right to overlook it."

"I may not see the letter? I do not desire it; but suffer me to understand clearly what it is about exactly, if you do not think me too young, Miss Benette."

"Sir, I always feel as if you were older, and I rely upon you. I will do as you please; I wish to do so only. This letter is to ask me to marry him. Oh! how differently I felt when I was asked to marry Mr. Davy!" 276

"Yes, I rather suppose so. You are ready to reply?"

"Not quite. I had not considered such a thing, and should have thought first of marrying a king or an angel."

"He is above all kings, Miss Benette; and if he loves you, no angel's happiness could be like your own. But is it so wholly unexpected?"

"I never imagined it, sir, for one single moment; nor could any woman think he would prefer her. Of course, as he is above all others, he has only to choose where he pleases."

I could not look at her as she spoke; I dared not trust myself,—the most thrilling irony pointed her delicate, lovesome tones. I know not that she knew it, but I did; it cut me far deeper than to the heart, and through and through my spirit the wound made way. No tampering, however, with "oil and balsams" here!

"Wherever he pleases, I should say. No one he could choose could fail (I should imagine) in pleasing him to please herself."

She retorted, more tenderly: "I think it awful to remember that I may not be worthy, that I may make him less happy than he now is, instead of more so."

"Only love him!"

"But such a great difference! He will not always walk upon the earth. I cannot be with him when he is up so high."

"I only say the same. He needs a companion for his earthly hours; then only is it he is alone. His hours of elevation require no sympathy to fill them; they are not solitude."

"I will do as you please, sir, for it must be right. Do you not wish you were in my place?" She smiled softly upon me, just lifting her lovely eyes. 277

"Miss Benette, I know no one but yourself who could fill those hours I spoke of, nor any one but that beloved and glorious one who is worthy to fill your heart *all* hours. More I cannot say, for the whole affair has taken me by surprise."

I had, indeed, been stricken by shock upon shock that day; but the last remained to me when the wailings of misfortune, the echoes of my bosom-music, alike had left my brain. I could not speak, and we both sat silent, side by side, until the sun in setting streamed into the room. Then, as I rose to lower the blind, and was absent from her at the window, I heard a knock,—I had, or ought to have, expected it; yet it turned me from head to foot, it thrilled me through and through. I well knew the hand that had raised the echoes like a salute of fairy cannon. I well knew the step that danced into the hall. I was gone through the open window, not even looking back. I ran to the bottom of the garden; I made for the Queen's highway; I walked straight back to London.

There was a great party in Miss Lawrence's, I knew it from the corner of the square; and I had to leave the lustrous darkness, the sleepy stars and great suffusing moonshine, the very streets filled full and overflowing with waftures of fragrances from the country, dim yet so delicious, for that terrible drawing-room. I took advantage of the excitement, however, that distressed me as it never burned before, to plunge instantly into a duet for violin and piano; Miss Lawrence calling me to her by the white spell of her waving hand the very moment I entered at the drawing-room door. My duet, her noble playing, made me myself, *as ever music saves her own*, and I conducted myself rather less like a nightmare than I felt. The party consisted of first-rate amateurs, the 278
flower of the morning festival, both from orchestra and audience,—all enchanted, all wordy, except my precious Davy, who was very pale, and Starwood, whose eyes almost went into his head with pain.

We all did our best, though. Starwood played most beautifully, and in a style which made me glory over him. Davy sang, though his voice was rather nervous. A great many people came up to me, but they got nothing out of me. I could not descant upon my religion. When at length they descended to supper,—a miscellaneous meal, which Miss Lawrence always provided in great state,—I thought I might be permitted to retire. Will it be believed that, half an hour afterwards, hearing my sister and Davy come up leisurely to bed, and peeping out to see them, I heard Millicent distinctly say, "I hope baby is asleep"? I was to return with them on the morrow; but directly after breakfast Miss Lawrence made me one of her signs, and led me thereby, without controlling me hand or foot, out of the breakfast-room. We were soon alone together in the studio.

"I thought you would like to be here this morning, for Seraphael has promised to come and see it. I think myself that he will be rather surprised."

I could not help smiling at her tone, it was so unaffectedly satisfied.

"I should think he will, Miss Lawrence."

"I don't mean as to the merits of the picture, but because he does not know it is—what shall I say?—historical, biographical, allegorical."

"You mean hieroglyphic?"

"Exactly."

"But he will not be likely to say anything about that part of it, will he? Is he not too modest or too proud?" 279

"Why, one never can know what he can say or do. I should not wonder the least in the world if he took the brushes up and put the eyes in open."

I laughed. "Does he paint, though?"

"Between ourselves, Mr. Auchester, there is nothing he cannot do,—no accomplishment in which he does not excel. He can paint, can design, can model, can harmonize all languages into a language of his own. All mysteries, all knowledge, all wisdom, we know too well,—too well, indeed!—dwell with him, are of him. I am always afraid when I consider these things. What a blessing to us and to all men if he would only marry! We should keep him a little longer then."

"Do you think so? I am fearful it would make no real difference. There is a point where all sympathy ceases."

Miss Lawrence shook her head, a lull came over the animation of her manner; she hastened to arrange her scenery, now unique. She had placed before the picture a velvet screen, deep emerald and grass-like in its shade; this veil stood out alone, for she had cleared away all signs of picture, sketch, or other frame besides. Nothing was in the room but the picture on its lofty easel, and the loftier velvet shade. I appreciated to the full the artist tact of the veil itself, and said so.

"I think," was her reply, "it will be more likely to please him if I keep him waiting a little bit, and his curiosity is touched a moment."

And then we went downstairs. Davy, who always had occupation on hand, and would not have been destitute of duty on the shore of a desert island, was absent in the city; Millicent, who had taken her work to a window, was stitching the most delicate wristband in Europe, inside the heavy satin curtain, as comfortably as in her tiny home. Miss Lawrence went and stood by her, 280
entertained her enchantingly, eternally reminding her of her bliss by Mrs. Davying till I could but laugh; but still my honored hostess was very impetuously excited, for her eyes sparkled as most eyes only light by candle-shine or the setting sun. She twisted the tassel of the blind, too, till I thought the silk cord would have snapped; but Millicent only looked up gratefully at her, without the slightest sign of astonishment or mystification.

"Charles!" exclaimed my sister at length, when Miss Lawrence, fairly exhausted with talking, was gathering up her gown into folds and extempore plaits plaits—"Charles! you will be ready at two o'clock, and we shall get home to tea."

I could not be angry with her for thinking of her baby, her little house, her heaven of home; but there was a going back to winter for me in the idea of going away. The music seemed dead, not slumbering, that I had heard the day before. But is this strange? For there is a slumber we call death. About half-past ten a footman fetched Miss Lawrence. She touched my arm, apologizing to Millicent, though not explaining, and we left the room together. She sent me onwards to the studio, and went downstairs alone. I soon heard them coming up,—indeed, I expected them directly; for Seraphael never waited for anything, and never lost a moment. They were talking, and when he entered he did not at first perceive me. His face was exquisite. A charm softened the Hebrew keenness, that was not awful, like the passion music stirring the hectic, or spreading its white light. He was flushed, but more as a child that has been playing until it is weary; his eyes, dilated, were of softer kindness than the brain gives birth to,—his happy yet wayward smile, 281
as if he rejoiced because self-willing to rejoice. His clear gaze, his eager footstep, reminded me of other days when he trembled on the verge of manhood; it was, indeed, as a man that he shone before me that morning, and had never shone before. They stood now before the screen, and I was astonished at the utter self-possession of the paintress; she only watched his face, and seemed to await his wishes.

"That screen is very beautiful velvet, and very beautifully made. Am I never to look at anything else? Is nothing hidden behind it? I have been very good, Miss Lawrence, and I waited very patiently; I do not think I can wait any longer. May I pull it away?"

"Sir, most certainly. It is for you to do so at your pleasure. I am not afraid either, though you will think me not over-modest."

Seraphael touched the screen,—it was massive, and resisted his little hand; he became impatient. Miss Lawrence only laughed, but I rushed out of my corner to help him. Before he looked at the picture he gave me that little hand and a smile of his very own.

"Look, dearest sir!" I cried, "pray look now!"

And indeed he looked; and indeed, I shall not forget it. It was so strange to turn from the living lineaments—the eye of the sun and starlight, the brilliant paleness, the changeful glow, the look of intense and concentrated vitality upon temple and lip and skin—to the still, immortal visage, the aspect of glory beyond the grave, the lustre unearthly, but not of death, that struck from those breathless lips, those snow-sealed eyes; and, above all, to see that the light seemed not to descend from the crown upon the forehead, but to aspire from the forehead to the crown,—so the rays were mixed and fused into the idea of that eternity in which there shall be a new earth 282
besides another heaven! That transcending picture, how would it affect him? I little knew; for as he stood and gazed, he grew more like it. The smile faded, the deep melancholy I had seldom seen, and never without a shudder, swept back; as the sun goes into a cloud his face assumed a darklier paleness, he appeared to suffer, but did not speak. In some minutes still, he started, turned to Miss Lawrence, and sighing gently, as gently said,—

"I wish I were more like it! I wish I were as that is! But we may not dream dreams, though we may paint pictures. I should like to deserve your idea, but I do not at present. Happy for us all who build upon the future as you have done in that painting,—I mean entirely as to the perfection of the work."

"Have I your permission to keep it, sir?"

"What else, madam, would you do with it?"

"Oh! if you had not approved, I should have slashed it into pieces with a carving-knife or my father's razor. I shall keep it, with your permission; it will be very valuable and precious, and I have to thank you for the inestimable privilege of possessing it."

This cool treatment of Miss Lawrence's delighted me,—it was the only one to restore our Chevalier. He, indeed, returned unto his rest, for he left the house that moment. Nor could I have desired him to remain,—there was only one presence in which I cared to imagine him....

CHAPTER XVII

The day had come and gone when Clara, for the first time, dressed in white. The sun-grain of 283
August had kissed the corn, the golden-drooping sheaves waved through the land fresh cut, and the latest roses mixed pale amidst the lilies beneath the bounteous harvest-moon when she left us,—but not alone. It was like dying twice over to part with them that once, and therefore it will not be believed how soon I could recover the farewell and feed upon Clara's letters, which never failed me once a month. For a year they more sustained me than anything else could have done; for they told of a life secluded as any who loved *him* could desire for him, and not more free from pain than care. Of herself she never spoke, except to breathe sweet wishes for her friends; but her whole soul seemed bent upon his existence, and her descriptions were almost a diary. I could not be astonished at her influence, for it had governed my best days; but that she should be able to secure such a boon to us as a year of unmitigated repose for him, was precisely what I had not anticipated, nor dared to expect. Meanwhile, and during that year, our work was harder than ever. Davy and I were quite unconscious of progressing, yet were perfectly happy, and as ever determined,—indeed, nothing like a slight contumacy on the part of the pupils kept Davy up to the mark. From Starwood, who had returned to Germany, I also received accounts; but he was no letter-writer, except when there was anything very particular to say. He was still a student, and 284
still under Seraphael's roof. Strange and Arabian dreams were those I had of that house in the heart of a country so far away, for the Chevalier had moved nearer the Rhine, and nothing in his idiosyncrasy so betokened the Oriental tincture of his blood as his restless fondness for making many homes while he was actually at home in none.

We lived very happily, as I said. It was, perhaps, not extraordinary that to my violin I grew more infinitely attached, was one with it, and could scarcely divide myself from it. I lived at home still,—that is, I slept at home, and usually ate there; but Davy's house was also home,—it had grown dearer to me than ever, and was now fairer. The summer after our friends had left us was brilliant as the last, and now the shell was almost hidden by the clinging of the loveliest creepers; the dahlias in the garden had given place to standard rose-trees, and though Carlotta could not reach them, she had learned to say, "Rose!" and to put up her pretty hand for me to pluck her one. With a flower she would sit and play an entire morning, and we never had any trouble with her. Millicent worked and studied as conveniently as though she had never been born; for it was Davy's supreme wish to educate his daughter at home, and her mamma had very elaborate ideas of self-culture in anticipation. During that autumn we found ourselves making some slight way. Davy took it into his head to give utterance, for the first time, to a public concert; and I will not say I was myself averse. We had a great deal of conversation and a great many sessions on the subject, not exactly able to settle whether we would undertake a selection or some entire work. 285
Our people were rather revived out of utter darkness concerning music; but its light was little diffused, and seemed condensed in our class-room as a focus. The band and chorus, of course, made great demonstrations in favor of the "Messiah;" and my mother, who had taken an extraordinary interest in the affair, said, innocently enough,—

"Then why, my dears, not represent the 'Messiah'? It will be at Christmas time, and very suitable."

This was not the point, for Davy had reminded me of the fact that the festival for the approaching year at the centre of the town would open with that work,—unless, indeed, the committee departed from their precedent on all former occasions. My idea would have been a performance all Bach, Beethoven, and Seraphael, with Handel's Ode for a commencement, on the 22d of November; but Davy shook his head at me,—"That would be for Germany, not for England;" and I obliged myself to believe him. At length we accepted the "Messiah,"—to the great delight of the chorus and band.

It was a pressing time all through that autumn. I do not suppose I ever thought of anything but fiddles, fiddles, fiddles, from morning till night. They edged my dreams with music, and sometimes with that which was very much the reverse of music; for we had our difficulties. Prejudice is best destroyed by passion, which as yet we had not kindled. Davy met with little support, and no sympathy, except from his own,—this mattered little either, so long as his own were concerned; but now, in prospect of our illustration, it was necessary to secure certain instrumental assistance.

I undertook to do this. Besides my own strings, we had brass and wind, but not sufficient. I shall not forget the difficulty of thawing the players I visited—I will not call them artists—into anything 286
like genial participation. Their engagement was not sufficiently formal, nor did they like me,—I suppose they owed a grudge against my youth; for youth is unpardonable and inadmissible, except in the case of genius. Neither did they thaw, any more than the weather, on Christmas Eve,—it was on Christmas Eve we were to perform. It was an eve of ice, not snow,—the blue sky silvery, the earth bound fast in sleep. We had hired a ball-room at the chief hotel,—an elegant and rather rare room; it was warmed by three wide fire-places; and the crimson curtains closed, with the chairs instead of benches, gave a social and unusual charm to the whole proceeding.

If our audience entered aghast, looked frozen, rolled in furs and contempts, they could not help smiling upon the fires, the roseate glow; though they also could not help being disconcerted to find themselves treated all alike, for Davy would have no roseate seats, nor any exclusiveness on this occasion. As he intended, besides, to restore the work exactly as it was first written, we expected a little cold and a few black looks. No modern listeners can receive an oratorio as orthodox without an organ of Titan-build in the very middle that takes care to sound.

The overture, beautifully played, was taken down with chill politeness; but my own party were so pleased with themselves, and made such ecstatic motions with their features that it was quite enough for me. The first chorus was lightly, delicately shown up, not extinguished by the orchestra—and, indeed, chorus after chorus found no more favor; still, no one could help feeling the perfect training here. I knew as well as Davy envy or pride alone kept back the free confession. The exquisite shading in the chorus, the public's darling, "Unto us a child is born," 287
and the grandeur of the final effect, subdued them a little. They cheered, and Davy gave me a glance over his shoulder which I understood to say, "One must come in for certain disadvantages if one is well received;" for Davy abhorred a noise as much as I did. When we waited between the parts, some one fetched Davy away in an immense hurry; he did not return immediately, and I grew alarmed. I peeped into the concert-room: there sat Millicent most composedly, and Lydia with her lord, and Clo in her dove-colored silk and spectacles, and my mother in her black satin and white-kid gloves, looking crowned with happiness; it was evident that nothing was the matter at home. But having a few minutes, I went to speak to them; and then my mother, in her surmises about Davy, whom she loved as her own son—and Clo, whose principles were flattered, not shocked, in her approval—took up so much time that I was at last obliged to fly to my little band, who were assembled again, and tuning by fits. Still, Davy was not there. But presently, and just at the moment when it was necessary to begin, he appeared, so looking that I was sure either something very dread or very joyous had befallen him. His eye gazed brightly out to the whole room as he faced instead of turning from it. He could not help smiling, and his voice quivered as he spoke. He said in those fond accents,—

"I have the pleasure to announce that the Chevalier Seraphael, having just arrived from Germany on a visit to myself, has consented to conduct the second part himself."

I had been sure the Chevalier was in him before he spoke, but I little thought how it would come about. Immediately he finished speaking, the curtain above us divided, and that heavenly inspired 288
one stood before us.

There was that in his apparition which stirred the slowest and burned upon the coldest pulses. All rose and shouted with an enthusiasm, when elicited from English hearts perhaps more real and touching than any other; a quickening change, like sudden summer, swept the room; the music became infinitely at home there; we all felt as if, watching over the dead, we had seen the dead alive again; the "old familiar strains" untired us, and none either wearied among the listeners. I could not, in the trances of my own playing, forbear to worship the gentle knowledge that had led the hierarch to that humble shrine, to consecrate and ennoble it forever. But the event told even sooner than I expected; for lo! at the end, when the Chevalier turned his kingly head and bowed to the reiterated applaudings, and had passed out, those plaudits continued, and would not cease till Davy was recalled himself; the pent-up reverence, restored to its proper channel, eddied in streams around him.

What an evening we spent, or rather what a night we made that night!—in that little parlor of Davy's the little green-house thrown open, and lighted by Millicent with Carlotta's Christmas-candles; the supper, where there was hardly room for us all at the table, and hardly room upon the table for all the good things my mother sent for from her pantry and larder and store-closet; the decoration of the house with green wreaths and holly-bunches, the swept and garnished air of the entire tiny premises standing us in such good stead to welcome the Christmas visitant with Christmas festivity; the punch Davy mixed in Carlotta's christening-bowl, my mother's present, she perfectly radiant, and staring with satisfaction in the arm-chair, where Seraphael himself had 289
placed her as we closed around the fire; the Christmas music never wanting, for in the midst of our joyous talk a sudden celestial serenade, a deep-voiced carol, burst from beyond the garden, and looking out there, we beheld, through rimed and frost-glazed windows, a clustered throng, whose voices were not uncultured,—the warmest-hearted members of Davy's own. They were still singing when Carlotta awoke and cried, had to be brought down stairs, and was hushed, listening, in Seraphael's arms.

So, after all, we did not go to bed that night, for it was quite two o'clock when I escorted my mother and sisters home, having left the little room I usually occupied when I slept at my brother's house for Seraphael, whom no one would suffer to sleep at the hotel. I might remind myself of the next day, too, and I surely may,—of our all going to church together after a night of snow, over the sheeted white beneath a cloudless heaven; of our all sitting together in that large pew of ours, and the excitement prevailing among the congregation afterwards as they assured themselves of our guest; of the chimes swelling high from the tower as we returned, and my walk alone with Seraphael to show him where Clara's house had stood. When we were, indeed, alone together, I asked more especially after her, and listened to his tender voice when it told of her that she was not then strong enough to cross the sea, but that though he could only leave her for a week, it was her latest request that he would come to see us all himself, nor return without having done so. And then he spoke of the affairs that had brought him over,—an entreaty from the committee of our own town festival that he would direct that of the coming year, and compose exclusively for it. 290

It made me very indignant at first that they should have kept Davy so entirely in the dark as to their intentions, because he had been forewarned on all previous occasions, before his influence was so strong in his own circle. But when I expressed a little my indignation, Seraphael only laughed, and said,—

"It was what every one must expect who was such a purist, unless he would also condescend to

amuse the people at times and seasons, or unless he were not *poor*."

My obligation to accede here made me yet more indignant, until I remembered how Seraphael had introduced himself, and so taken Davy by the hand that it would not be likely for him ever again to be thrust back into obscurity afterwards, were it only because Seraphael himself was *rich*.

"And will you come to us, sir?" I asked, scarcely able to frame a wish upon the subject.

"If I live, Carlomein. And I do hope to live—till then, at least. I have also been rather idle lately, and must work. Indeed, I have brought nothing with me, except a psalm or two for your brother. We may write music to psalms, I suppose, Carlomein?"

"You may, sir, and, indeed, anybody may; for whatever is worthless will be forgotten, and whatever is worthy will live forever."

"It is not that anything we offer can be worthy of the feet at which we lay it, it is not that anything is sweet or sufficient for our love's expression, but every little word of love and smile of love is precious to us, and must be so to Love itself, I think. Only in music now does God reveal himself as in the days of old; and I do believe, Carlomein, that he, dwelling not in temples made with hands, yet dwelleth there. I suppose it may be that as we make the music that issues from the orchestra, or from the organ where all musics mingle, so he makes the love that religion 291
burns to utter, but that music, for the musical, alone makes manifest. All worship is sacred, but that is unutterably holy. How holy should the heart of the musician be!"

"Dearest sir, forgive me! If you had not spoken so, I could not have presumed to ask you. But do you, therefore, object to write for the stage, in its present promiscuous position among the arts?"

"Carlomein, the drama is my greatest delight. The dramatic genius I would ever accept as a guide and standard; but from youth upwards, I have ever abstained from writing for the stage. It does not suit me; it is in some respects beyond me,—that is, as it ought to exist. But my days are numbered,—I have lately known it; and to give forth opera after opera would reduce my short span to a mere holiday task. I am too happy, Carlomein, and to you I will say it,—too blest in that I feel I can best express what others left to me because expression failed them."

"Oh, dearest sir, it is so, and not alone in music, but in everything you touch or tell us! Yet you are ours for years and years. I feel it,—there is so much to be done, and you only can do it; so much to learn yet of what you only can teach us. You cannot, you will not, and are not going to leave us! I know it; I could not be so if I did not know and feel it. You are looking better than when even first I saw you—all those years ago."

"I am well, Carlomein,—I have never been ill. I do not know sickness, though I have known sorrow,—thank God for that inexpressible mystery in which his light is hidden! But, Carlomein, you speak as if it were of all things the saddest thing to die! I know not that sensation; I believe it 292
to be mere sensation. Neither is this earth a wilderness,—no weariness! There is not an air of spring that does not make me long for death; the burdening gladness is too much for life, and summer and winter call me. Eternity without years is ever present with me, and the poor music they love so well, they love because it comes to me from beyond the grave."

I could not hear him speak so; it killed me to all but a ravishment of fear. I could not help saying, though I fear it was out of place,—

"There is one you must not leave; she cannot live without you."

"Carlomein, any one can live who is to live, and whoever is decreed must die. There is no death for me,—I do not call it so; nor do I believe that death could touch me. I mean I should not know it, for I could not bear it; and I fear it not, for nothing we cannot bear is given us to endure."

"Sir, if I did not revere too much every word you utter, I should say that a morbid presentiment clouds your enthusiasm, and that you know not what you say."

"Do I look morbid, Carlomein? That is an ugly word, and you deserve it as much as I do, pale-face."

He laughed out joyously. I looked at him again. How his eyes radiated their splendors, as an eastern starlight in a northern sky! How the blossom-blushes rose upon his cheek! Health, joy, vitality, all the flowers of manhood, the fairest laurels of an unsullied fame, shone visionary about him. He seemed no earthling "born to die." I could not but smile; still, it was at his beauty, not his mirth.

"Sir, you don't look much like a martyr now."

"Carlomein. I should rather be a martyr than a saint. The saints are robed in glory, but the glory streams from heaven upon the martyr's face." (Oh, he could feel no pain, with that light there; I 293
know he felt none.) "The saints wear lilies, or they dream so; and dream they not the martyrs wear the roses,—have not the thorns pierced through them? They are thornless roses there, for passion is made perfect."

"Sir, but I do think that the musician, if duteous, is meet for a starry crown."

"And I could only think, when I saw that picture, that the crown was not mine own; but I dreamed within myself that it should not be in vain I desire to deserve the crown which I should wear, but

not that star-crown. Poetry may be forgiven for hiding sorrow in bliss, but it is only music that hides bliss with sorrow. And see, Carlomein (for we are in a tale of dreams just now, and both alone), there have been martyrs for all faiths,—for love, for poetry, for patriotism, for religion. Oh! for what cause, where passion strikes and stirs, have there not been martyrs? But I think music has not many, and those were discrowned of that glory by the other crown of Fame. Shall I die young, and not be believed to have died for music? For that end must the music be rapt and purified,—stolen from itself; its pleasures must be strong to pain, its exercises sharper than agony. I know of none other choice for myself than to press forwards to fulfil the call I have heard since music spoke to me, and was as the voice of God. There is so much to undo in very doing, while those who were not called, but have only chosen music, defile her mysteries, that the few who are called must surely witness for her. We will not speak again so, Carlomein. I have made your young face careful, and I would rather see scorn work upon it than such woe. I am now going to a shop. Are there any shops here, Carlomein?" 294

"Plenty, sir, but they are closed; still, I am certain you can get anything you want, no matter what."

"I have something to make to-night which is most important, and I must have nuts, apples, and sugar-plums."

We went to a large confectioner's whose windows were but semi-shuttered. Here the Chevalier quite lost himself in the treasures of those glass magazines. I should scarcely have known him as he had been. He chose very selectly, nathless, securing only the most delicate and rare of the wonders spread about him, and which excited his *naïveté* to the utmost. His choice comprised all crisp white comfits and red-rose ones, almond-eggs, the most ravishing French bonbons, all sorts of chocolate, myriad sugar millions, like rain from fairy rainbows, twisted green angelica, golden strips of crystallized orange-peal, not to speak of rout-cakes like fish and frogs and mice and birds' nests. Nor did these suffice; off we walked to the toy-shop. Our town was of world renown for its toys. Here it was not so easy to effect an entrance; but it *was* effected the moment the Chevalier showed his face. To this hour I believe they took him in there for some extraordinary little boy,—he certainly behaved like nothing else. He bought now beads of all colors, and spangles and shining leaf, and of all things the most exquisite doll, small-featured, waxen, dressed already in long white robes, and lying in a cradle about a foot long, perfectly finished. And next, besides this baby's baby, he snatched at a box of letters, then at a gilt watch, and finally at a magic-lantern. We so loaded ourselves with all these baubles that we could scarcely get along; for, with his wonted impetuosity on the least occasions, he would not suffer anything to be sent, lest it should not arrive in time. And then, though I reminded him of the dinner-hour at hand, there was to be no rest yet, but I must take him to some garden or nursery of winter-plants. 295 Fortunately, a great friend of Davy's in that line lived very near him; for Davy was a great flower-fancier. This was convenient; for had it been two miles off, Seraphael would have run there, being in his uttermost wayward mood. He chose a gem of a fir-tree, and though both the florist and I remonstrated with our whole hearts, would carry it himself,—happily not very far. I was reminded of dear old Aronach's story about his child-days as I saw him clasp it in his delicate arms so nerved with power, and caught his brilliant face through the spires of the foliage. Thus we approached Davy's house, and I reminded the Chevalier that we were expected to dine at my mother's, not there. In fact, poor Millicent, in her bonnet, looked out anxiously from the door; the Chevalier called to her as she ran to open the gate, "See, Mrs. Davy, see! Here's 'Birnam Wood come to Dunisnane.' Make way!"

"You are very naughty," said Davy, stepping forth. "Our beloved mamma will be coming after us."

"It is very rude, I know; but I am going to dine with your daughter."

"My daughter is coming too. Did you think we should leave her behind?"

Millicent was about, in fact, to mount the stairs for the baby; but Seraphael rushed past her.

"Pardon! but I don't wish to be seen at present;" and we both bore our burdens into the parlor, and laid them on the table.

"Now, Carlomein, the moment dinner is over, we two shall come back and lock ourselves in here."

"I should like it of all things, sir, selfish wretch that I am! but I don't think they will." 296

"Oh, yes, I will make them!"

When at last we descended ready, Carlotta, in her white beaver bonnet, my own present, looked as soft as any snowdrop,—too soft almost to be kissed. She held out her arms to Seraphael so very pertinaciously that he was obliged to carry her; nor would he give her up until we reached my mother's door. It was quite the same at dinner also; she would sit next him, would stick her tiny fork into his face, with a morsel of turkey at the end of it, would poke crumbs into his mouth with her finger, would put up her lips to kiss him, would say, every moment, "I like you much-much!" with all Davy's earnestness, though with just so much of her mother's modesty as made her turn pink and shy, and put herself completely over her chair into Seraphael's lap, when he laughed at her. He was in ecstasies, and every now and then a shade so tender stole upon his air that I knew he could only be adverting to the tenderest of all human probabilities,—the dream of his next year's offspring.

After dinner, Miss was to retire. She was carried upstairs by Margareth, of whom I can only say she loved Carlotta better than she had loved Carl. Seraphael then arose, and gracefully, gleefully, despite the solicitations on all hands exhibited, declared he must also go, that he had to meet the Lord Chancellor, and could not keep him waiting. There was no more prayer wasted after this announcement, everybody laughed too much. Taking a handful of nuts from a dish, and throwing a glance of inexpressible elfishness at my mother, he said, "Carl and the Lord Chancellor and I are going to crack them in a corner. Come, Carlomein! we must not keep so grand a person waiting." I know not what blank he left behind him, but I know what a world he carried with him. We had such an afternoon! But we had to be really very busy; I never worked so hard in a small 297
way. When all was finished, the guilt fruit hung, the necklaces festooned, the glitter ordered with that miraculous rapidity in which he surpassed all others, and that fairy craft of his by which he was enabled to re-create all Arabian, mystical, he placed the cradle in the shade.

"You see, Carlomein, I could not have a Christ-child up there at the top, because your brother is rather particular, and might not choose to approve. It will never occur to him about the manger, if we don't tell him; but you perceive all the same that it is here, being made of straw, and very orthodox."

"It appears to me, sir, that you have learned English customs to some purpose, as well as German."

He replied by dancing round the tree, and twisting in the tapers red and green.

"Now, you go, Carlomein, and fetch them all, and when I hear your voices, I will light the candles. Begone, Carlomeinus!" and he snapped his fingers.

They came immediately, all rather mystified, but very curious. I carried Carlotta, who talked the whole way home about the stars. But after clustering a few moments in the dark passage, and her little whispered "ohs!" and wondering sighs, when the door was opened, and the arch musician for all ages, seated at the piano, played a measure only meet for child or fairy ears, her ecstasy became quite painful. She shuddered and shivered, and at last screamed outright; and then, even then, only Seraphael had power to soothe her, leading her to the fairy earth-lights as he led us to the lights of heaven.

Glorious hours that dye deep our memories in beauty, music that passes into echo and is silent, alike are conserved forever. Often and often in the months that passed when he had left us, after 298
a visit so exquisite that it might have been diffused millenniums and yet have kept its fragrance, did my thoughts take such a form as this enunciation bears; I was so unutterably grateful for what had happened that it helped me to bear what was yet before me. The growing, glowing fame, heralded from land to land, in praise of that young genius and purest youth, had certainly reached its culmination; neither envy withered nor scandal darkened the spell of his perfect name. All grades of artists, all ranks of critics,—the old and calm, the impertinent but impetuous young,—bowed as in heart before him. It was so in every city, I believe; but in ours it was peculiar, as well as universal. An odor of heavenly altars had swept our temple; we were fitter to receive him than we had been. In no instance was this shown more clearly than on the fortunate occasion when Davy was treated with, and requested very humbly to add his vocal regiment to the festival chorus. One day just afterwards, in early April, he came running to me with a letter, anxious for me to open it, as he was in a fit of fright about the parts which ought to have arrived, and had not. It was only a line or two, addressed to me by Seraphael's hand, to tell us that Clara had borne him twin sons.

Davy's astonishment amused me; it appeared that he had formed no idea of their having been likely to come at all, until this moment. I was glad, indeed, to be alone, to think of that fairest friend of mine, now so singularly blest. I thought of her in bed with her babies, I thought of the babies being his, and she no less his own, until I was not fit company for any one,—and it was long before I became so. I could hardly believe it, and more especially because they were all four 299
so far away; for I am not of the opinion of those fortunate transcendentalists, who aver we can better realize that which is away from us than that which is at hand. Time and space must remain to us our eternity and our freedom, till freedom and eternity shall be our own.

CHAPTER XVIII

We were extremely busy, for a little while, in preparing a box of presents, and when it was 300
despatched we began seriously to anticipate our awful, glorious festival; we began to have leisure to contemplate it. It was a delightful dream, amidst that dream, to reflect that we should see them all then, for Seraphael sent us word, in his grateful reply to our enclosures, that both his children and their mother would accompany him. Meantime, I was very anxious to spread the news abroad, and most extraordinary appointments were made by all kinds of people to secure places. I began to think, and had I been in Germany should, of course, have settled to my own

satisfaction, that the performances must be in the open air, after all, such crowds demanded admittance so early as early in June. It was for the last week in July that our triple day was fixed, and in the second week of June the long-expected treasure, the exclusive compositions, arrived from Lilienstadt. Davy was one of the committee called immediately, and I awaited, in unuttered longing, his return, to hear our glorious doom.

He came back almost wild. I was quite alarmed, and told him so.

"Charles," he said, "there is almost reason; so am I, myself, in fact. Just listen to the contents of the parcel received,—an oratorio for the first morning (such a subject, 'Heaven and Earth'!); a cantata for a double choir; an organ symphony, with interludes for voices only; a sonata for the violin; a group of songs and fancies. The last are for the evenings; but otherwise the evenings are to be filled with Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Handel,—the programmes already made out. How is it possible, Charles, that such progress can have been condensed into a few mere months? Think of the excitement, the unmitigated stress of such an industry! Three completed works in less than a quarter of a year, not to speak of the lesser wonders!" 301

It seemed to affect Davy's brain; as for me, I felt sure the works had stirred,—as the Spirit moving upon the face of the waters, before the intermomentary light, long ages, as we reckon in this world's computation, before they framed themselves into form. Nor was this conviction lessened when I first became acquainted with the new-born glories of an imagination on fire of heaven.

Seraphael came to England, and of course northwards, to superintend the earliest rehearsals; it was his own wish to do so, and every one felt it necessary to be introduced by him alone to what came alone of him. Those were strange times,—I do not seem to have lived them, though in fact I was bodily present in that hall, consecrated by the passion of a child. But they were wild hours; all tempest-tossed was my spirit amidst the rush of a manifold enthusiasm.

Seraphael was so anxious to be at his home again that the rehearsals were conducted daily. He was to return again, having departed, for their ultimate fulfilment. It appeared very remarkable that he should not have taken the whole affair at once, have brought his family over then, and there remained; but upon the subject he was unapproachable, only saying, with relation to his arduous life just then and then to be, that he could not be too much occupied to please himself. 302

He did not stay in our house this time; we could not press him to do so, for he was evidently in that state to which the claims of friendship may become a burden instead of a beguiling joy. He was alone greatly at his hotel, though I can for myself say that in his intercourse with me, his gentleness towards me was so sweet that I dare not remind myself of it. Still, in all he said and did there was something seeming to be that was not; an indescribable want of interest in the charms of existence which he had ever drawn into his bosom,—a constant endeavor to rouse from a manifest abstraction. Notwithstanding, he still wore the air of the most perfect health, nor did I construe those signs, except into the fact of his being absent from his new-found, his endeared and delighted home. He left us so suddenly that I was only just in time to see him off. He would not permit me to accompany him to London, from whence he should instantly embark; but it was a letter from Clara that really hastened his departure,—his babes were ill. I could not gain from him the least idea of their affection, nor whether there was cause for fear; his face expressed alarm, but had an unutterable look besides,—a look which certainly astonished me, for it might have bespoken indifference, as it might bespeak despair. One smile I caught as he departed, that was neither indifferent nor desolate; it wrung my heart with happiness to reflect that smile had been for me.

The feeling I had for those unknown babies was inexplicable after he was fairly gone. That I should have loved them, though unseen, was scarcely strange, for they were the offspring of the two I loved best on earth; but I longed and languished for one glimpse of their baby faces just in proportion to the haunting certainty which clutched me that those baby faces I should never see. Their beauty had been Seraphael's only inspiration when, in conversation with me, he had fully seemed himself: the one so light and clear, with eyes as the blue of midnight,—his brow, her eyes; the other soft and roseate, with her angel forehead and his own star-like gaze,—her smile upon them both, and the features both of him. As one who reads of the slaughtered darlings in the days of Herod, as one who pores on chronicles of the cradle plague-smitten, I felt for them; they seemed never to have been born, to me. 303

Oh, that they had never been born, indeed! At least, there was one while I thought so. We had a heart-rending letter from Clara one fortnight after her lord returned to her: the twins were both dead, and by that time both buried in the same grave. With her pure self-forgetfulness where another suffered, she spoke no word of her own sorrow, but she could not conceal from us how fearfully the blow had fallen upon him. The little she said made us all draw close together and tremble with an emotion we could not confess. But the letter concluded with an assurance of his supreme and undaunted intention, undisturbed by the shocks and agonies of unexpected woe, to undertake the conductorship of the festival. The sorrow that now shadowed expectations which had been too bright, tempered also our joy, too keen till then. But after a week or two, when we received no further tidings, we began absolutely to expect him, and with a stronger anticipation—infatuation—than ever, built upon a future which no man may dare to call his own, either for good or evil. The hottest summer I had ever known interfered not with the industry alike of band and chorus. The intense beauty of the music and its marvellous embodiments had fascinated the very country far and wide; it was as if art stood still and waited even for him who had magnified her above the trumpery standards of her precedented progress. 304

We were daily expecting a significant assurance that he was on our very shores. I was myself beginning to tremble in the air of sorrow that must necessarily surround them both, himself and his companion, when, one morning,—I forget the date; may I never remember it!—I was reflecting upon the contents of a paper which Davy took in every week,—a chronicle of musical events, which I ransacked conscientiously, though it was seldom much to the purpose. Strangely enough, I had been reading of the success of another friend of mine,—even Laura, who had not denied herself the privilege of artist-masonry after all, for she was dancing amidst flowers and fairy elements, and I was determining I would, at the first opportunity, go to see her. Then I considered I should like her to come to the festival, and was making up a letter of requests to my ever-generous friend, Miss Lawrence, that she might bring Laura, as I knew she would be willing, when a letter came for me, was brought by an unconscious servant and laid between my hands. It was in Clara's writing, once again. I was coward enough to spare myself a few moments. There was no one in the room; I was just on the wing to my band, but I could not help still sparing myself a little, and a very little, longer. I believe I knew as well what was in the letter as if I had opened it before I broke the seal. I believe terror and intense presentiment lent me that stillness and steadiness of perception which are the very empyrean of sorrow. Enough! I opened it at last, and found it exactly as I had expected,—Seraphael himself was ill. The hurry and trouble of the 305
letter induced me to believe there was more behind her words than in them, mournful and unsatisfactory as they were. He was, as he believed himself to be, overwrought; and though he considered himself in no peril, he must have quiet. This struck me most; it was all over if he felt he must have quiet. But the stunning point was that he deputed his friend Lenhart Davy to the conductorship of his own works,—the concerts all being arranged by himself in preparation, and nothing but a director being required. Clara concluded by asking me to come to her if I could. She did not say he wished to see me, but I knew she wished to see me herself; and even for his sake that call was enough for me.

My duties, my intentions, all lay in the dust. I considered but how to make way thither with the speed that one fain would change to wind, to lightning, or yoke to them as steeds. I packed up nothing, nor did I leave a single trace of myself behind, except Clara's letter and a postscript, in pencil, of my own. I was in my mother's house when the letter came upon me; and flying past Davy's on my way to the railroad, I saw Millicent with Carlotta looking out of one of the windows, all framed in roses. It was a sight I merely recall as we recall touches of pathos to medicine us for deeper sorrow. Two days and nights I travelled incessantly, without information or help, solitary as a pilgrim who is wandering from home to heaven; it could be nothing else, I knew. The burning, glowing summer, the tossing forests, the corn-fields yet unravished, the glory on the crested lime-trees, the vines smothering rock and wall and terrace with fruit of life,—all these I saw, and many other dreams, as a dream myself I passed. I only know I seemed taking the whole 306
world. So wide the scattered sensations spread themselves that I dared not call home to myself; for they did but minister to the perfect appreciation that what I dreamed was true, and what I yearned to clasp as truth a dream.

The city of his home was before me,—but how can I call it a city? It was a nest itself in a nest of hills. Below the river rushed, its music ever in a sleep, and its blue waves softened hyaline by distance. In the last sunset smile I saw the river and the valley, the vines at hand crawled over it, and there was not a house around that was not veiled in flowers. When I entered the valley from below, the purple evening had drowned the sunset as with a sea, there was no mist nor cloud, the starlight was all pure, it brightened moment by moment. And having hurried all along till now, at length I rested. For now I felt that of all I had ever endured, the approaching crisis was the consummation. Had I dared, I would have returned; for I even desired not to advance. My own utter impotence, my unavailing presence, weighed me down, and the might of my passion ensphered me as did that distant starlight,—I was as nothing to itself. I had shed no tears. Tears I have ever found the springs of gladness, and grief most dry. But who could weep in that breathless expectation? who would not, when he cannot, rejoice to weep? Brighter than I had ever seen them, the stars shone on me; and brighter and brighter they seemed to burn through the crystal clarity of my perception: my ear felt open, I heard sounds born of silence which, indeed, were no sounds, but *themselves* silence. I saw the unknown which, indeed, could not be seen; and thus I waited, suspended in the midst of time, yearning for some heaven to open and take me in. Whatever air stirred was soft as the pulse of sleep; whatever sigh it carried was a 307
sigh of flowers, late summer sweetness, first autumn sadness, poured into faint embrace. I saw the church-tower in the valley, it reached me as a dream. All was a dream round about,—the dark shade of the terraced houses, the shadier trees; and I myself the dreamer, to whom those stars above, those heights so unimaginable, were the only waking day. At midnight I had not moved, and at midnight I dreamed another dream, still standing there.

The midnight hour had struck, and died along the valley into the quiet, when a sudden gathering gleam behind a distant rock rose like a red moonlight and tinged the very sky. But there was no moon, and I felt afraid and child-like. I was obliged to watch to ascertain. It grew into a glare, that gleam,—the glare of fire; and slowly, stilly as even in a dream indeed, wound about the rock and passed down along the valley a dark procession, bearing torches, with a darker in the midst of them than they.

Down the valley to the church they came: I knew they were for resting there. No bell caught up the silence, I heard no tramp of feet, they might have been spirits for all the sound they made; and when at last they paused beneath me in the night, the torches streamed all steadily, and rained their flaming smiles upon the imagery in the midst.

That bier was carried proudly, as of a warrior called from deadly strife to death's own sleep. But not as warrior's its ornaments, its crown. The velvet folds passed beneath into the dark grass as they paused, as storm-clouds rolling softly, as gloom itself at rest. But above, from the face of the bier, the darkness fled away,—it was covered with a mask of flowers. Wreath within wreath lay 308
there, hue within hue, from virgin white and hopeful azure to the youngest blush of love. And in the very midst, next the pale roses and their tender green, a garland of the deepest crimson glowed, leafless, brilliant, vivid; the full petals, the orb-like glory, gave out such splendors to the flame-light that the fresh first youth's blood of a dauntless heart was alone the suggestion of its symbol. Keenly in the distance the clear vision, the blaze of softness, reached me. I stirred not, I rushed not forwards; I joined in the dread feast afar. I stood as between the living and the dead, —the dead below, the living with the stars above,—and the plague of my heart was stayed.

I waited until the bier, bare of its gentle burden, stood lonely by the grave. I waited until the wreaths, flung in, covered the treasure with their kisses that was a jewel for earth to hide. I saw the torches thrown into the abyss, quenched by the kisses of the flowers, even as the earthly joy, the beauty, had been quenched in that abyss of light which to us is only darkness. I watched the black shadows draw closer round the grave; one suffocating cry arose, as if all hearts were broken in that spasm, or as if Music herself had given up the ghost. *But Music never dies.* In reply to that sickening shout, as if, indeed, a heaven opened to receive me, a burst, a peal, a shock of transcendent music fell from some distant height. I saw no sign the while I heard, nor was it a mourning strain. Triumphant, jubilant, sublime in seraph sweetness, joy immortal, it mingled into the arms of Night. While yet its echoes rang, another strain made way, came forth to meet it, and melted into its embrace, as jubilant as blissful, but farther, fainter, more ineffable. Again it yielded to the echoes; but above those echoes swelled another, a softer, and yet another 309
and a softer voice, that was but the mingling of many voices, now far and far away. Distantly, dyingly, till death drank distance up, the music wandered. And at length, when the mystic spell was broken, and I could hear no more, I could only believe it still went on and on, sounding through all the earth, beyond my ear, and rising up to heaven from shores of lands untraversed as that country beyond the grave! All peace came there upon me; as a waveless deep it welled up and upwards from my spirit, till I dared no longer sorrow: my love was dispossessed of fear, and the demon Despair, exorcised, fled as one who wept and fain would hide his weeping. And yet that hope, if hope it could be, that cooled my heart and cheered my spirit, was not a hope of earth. My faith had fleeted as an angel into the light, and that hope alone stayed by me.

It was not until the next morning, and then not early, that I visited that house and the spirit now within it whose living voice had called me thither. No longer timidly, if most tenderly, I advanced along the valley, past the church which guarded now the spot on all this earth the most like heaven, and found the mansion, now untenanted, that Heaven itself had robbed. Quiet stillness—not as of death, but most like new-born wonder—possessed that house. The overhanging balconies, the sunburst on the garden, the fresh carnations, the carved gateway, the shaded window, and over all the cloudless sky, and around, all that breathed and lived,—it was a lay beyond all poetry, and such a melancholy may never music utter. Thoné took me in, and I believe she had waited for me at the door. She spoke not, and I spoke not; she led me only forwards with the air of one who feels all words are lost between those who understand but cannot benefit each other. She led me to a room in which she left me; but I was not to be alone. I saw Clara instantly, 310
—she came to meet me from the window, unchanged as the summer-land without by the tension or the touch of trouble. I could not possibly believe, as I saw her, and seeing her felt my courage flow back, my life resume its current, that she had ever really suffered. Her face so calm was not pale; her eye so clear was tearless. Nor was there that writhing smile about her lovely lips that is more agonizing than any tears. It was entirely in vain I tried to speak,—had she required comfort, my words would have thronged at my will; but if any there required comfort, it could not be herself. Seeing my fearful agitation, which would work through all my silence, her sweet voice startled me; I listened as to an angel, or as to an angel I should never have listened.

"If I had known how it would be, I would never have been so rash as to send for you. But he was so strange—for he did not suffer—that I could not think he was going to die. I do not call it dying, nor would you if you had seen it. I wish I could make that darling feel such death was better than to live."

I put a constraint upon myself which no other presence could have brought me to exhibit.

"What darling, then?" said I; for I could only think of one who was darling as well as king.

"Poor Starwood! But you will be able to comfort him,—you are the only person who could."

"Perhaps it would not be kind to comfort him; perhaps he would rather suffer. But I will do my best to please you. Where is he now?"

"I will bring him;" and she left the room.

In another moment, all through the sunny light that despite the shaded windows streamed through the very shade, she entered again with Starwood. He flew at me and sank upon the 311
ground. I have seen women—many—weep, and some few men; but I have never seen, and may I never see! such weeping as he wept. Tears—as if tropic rains should drench our Northern gardens—seemed dissolving with his very life his gentle temperament. I could not rouse nor raise him. His sodden hair, his hands as damp as death, his dreadful sobs, his moans of misery, his very crushed and helpless attitude, appealed to me not in vain; for I felt at once it was the only thing to do for him that he should be suffered to weep till he was satisfied, or till he could weep

no more. And yet his tears provoked not mine, but rather drove them inwards and froze them to my heart. Nor did Clara weep; but I could not absolutely say whether she had already wept or not,—for where other eyes grow dim, hers grew only brighter; and weeping—had she wept—had only cleared her heaven. We sat for hours in that room together,—that fair but dreadful room, its brilliant furniture unworn, its frescos delicate as any dream, its busts, its pictures, crowding calm lights and glorious colors, all fresh as the face of Nature, with home upon its every look; save only where the organ towered, and muffling in dark velvet its keys and pipes, reminded us that music had left home for heaven, and we might no more find it there!

And again it was longed-for evening,—the twilight tarried not. It crept, it came, it fell upon the death-struck, woful valley. O blessed hour,—the repose alike of passion and of grief! O blessed heaven! to have softened the mystic change from day to darkness so that we can bear them both, —never so blessed as when the broken-hearted seek thy twilights and find refreshment in thy 312
shades! At that hour we two alone stood together by the glorious grave. For the first time, as the sun descended, Starwood had left off weeping. I had myself put him in his bed, and rested beside him till he was asleep; then I had returned to Clara. She was wrapped in black, waiting for me. We went together without speaking, without signifying our intentions to each other; but we both took the same way, and stood, where I have said, together; and when we had kissed the ground she spoke. She had not spoken all the day,—most grave and serious had been her air; she yet looked more as a child that had lost its father than a widowed wife,—as if she had never been married, she struck me: an almost virgin air possessed her, an unserene reserve, for now her accents faltered.

"I could not say to you till we were alone," she said,—"and we could not be alone to-day,—how much I thank you for coming; so many persons are to be here in a day or two, and I wish to consult with you."

"I will see them all for you, I will arrange everything; but you are not going away?"

"Going away? And you to say so, too! I will never leave this place until I die!"

"You love him, then, thank God!"

"Love him! Shall I tell you how? You know best what it was to love him, for you loved him best,—better than I did; and yet I loved him with all love. Do I look older, and more like this world, or less?"

She smiled a sweet significance,—a smile she had learned from him.

"I have been thinking how young you look,—too young, almost. You are so fresh, so child-like, and —may I say it?—so fair." 313

"You may say anything. I think I have grown fairer myself. Very strange to confess, is it? But you are my friend,—to you I should confess anything. I have been with a spirit-angel,—no wonder I am fresh. I have been in heaven,—no wonder I am fair. I felt myself grow better hour by hour. After I left you with him, when his arms were round me, when he kissed me, when his tenderness oppressed me,—I felt raised to God. No heart ever was so pure, so overflowing with the light of heaven. I can only believe I have been in heaven, and have fallen here,—not that he has left me, and I must follow him to find him. I will not follow yet, my friend! I have much to do that he has left me."

"Thank God, you will not leave us,—but more, because you love him, and made him happy!"

"You do not, perhaps, know that he was never anything but happy. When I think of discontent and envy and hatred and anger and care, and see them painted upon other faces, I feel that he must have tasted heaven to have made himself so happy here. I can fancy a single taste of heaven, sir, lasting a whole life long."

She was his taste of heaven, as a foretaste even to me! But had she, indeed, never learned the secret of his memory, or had she turned, indeed, its darkness into light?

"I wish to hear about the last."

"You know nearly as much as I do, or as I can tell you. You remember the music you heard last night? It was the last he wrote, and I found it and saved it, and had done with it what you heard."

But I cannot descant on death-beds; it is the only theme which I dare believe, if I were to touch, would scare me at my dying hour. I will not tamper with those scenes, but console myself by 314
reminding that if the time had been, and that, too, lately, when upon that brain fell the light in fever and the sun in fire, the time was over; and sightless, painless, deaf to the farewells of dying music, he, indeed, could not be said to *suffer* death.

Nor did he *know* to suffer it, as he had said. The crown that, piercing with its *fiery thorns* unfelt, had pressed into his brow the death-sting, should also crown with its *star-flowers* the waking unto life.

"You remember what you said, Mr. Auchester, that he needed a 'companion for his earthly hours:' I tried to be his companion,—he allowed me to be so; and one of the last times he spoke he said:

'Thank Carl for giving you to me.'"

That echo reaches me from the summer-night of sadness and still communion, of *passion's slumber by the dead*. It is now some years ago; but never was any love so fresh to the spirit it enchanted, as is the enchantment of this sorrow, still mine own. So be it ever mine, till all shall be forever!

I am in England, and again at home. Great changes have swept the earth; I know of none within myself. Through all convulsions the music whispers to me *that music is*. I ought to believe in its existence, for it is my own life and the life of the living round me. Davy is still at work, but not alone in hope,—sometimes in the midst of triumph. They tell me I shall never grow rich, but with my violin I shall never be poor. I have more than enough for everything, as far as I myself am 315
concerned; and as for those I love, there is not one who prospers not, even by means of music.

Starwood has been three years in London. His name, enfolded in another name, brought the whole force of music to his feet. It is not easy to procure lessons of the young professor, who can only afford twenty minutes to the most exacting pupil. It is still less easy to hear him play in public, for he has a will of his own, and will only play what he likes, and only what he likes to the people he likes; for he is a bit of a cynic, and does not believe, half so much as I do, that music is making way. He married his first feminine pupil,—a girl of almost fabulous beauty. I believe he gave her half-a-dozen lessons before the crisis,—not any afterwards; and I know that he was seventeen and she fifteen years of age at the time they married.[10] His whole nature is spent upon her; but she is kind enough to like me, and thus I sometimes receive an invitation, which I should accept did they reside in the moon.

But I have other London friends. After two seasons, more satisfactory than brilliant, Laura retired from the stage. During the time she danced, her name was scarcely whispered,—I believe she was even feared in her spiritual exaltation of her art; but no sooner had she left the lights than all critics and contemporaries discovered her excellences. She was wooed with the white-flower garlands of the purest honor, with the gold so few despised, to return and resume her career, now certain fame; but she was never won, and I have since made clear to myself that she only 316
danced in public until she had raised a certain capital, for you will only find her now in her graceful drawing-room where London is most secluded, surrounded by the most graceful and loveliest of the children of the peerage. No one but Mademoiselle Lauretta—her stage and professional name—prepares the little rarities for transplantation into the court-garden, or rehearses the quadrille for the Prince of Wales's birthnight-ball. I believe Miss Lemark, as she is known still to me, or even Laura, might have had many homes if she had chosen,—homes where she could not but have felt at home. Clara was even importunate that she should live with her in Germany; Miss Lawrence was excessively indignant at being refused herself; and there have been worthy gentlemen, shades not to be invoked or recognized, who would have been very thankful to be allowed to dream of that pale brow veiled, those clear eyes downcast, those tapering fingers twined in theirs. But Laura, like myself, will *never* marry.

For Miss Lawrence, too, that glorious friend of mine, I must have a little corner. It was Miss Lawrence who carried to Laura the news of Seraphael's death,—herself heart-broken, who bound up that bleeding heart. It is Miss Lawrence whose secretive and peculiar generosity so permeates the heart of music in London that no true musician is actually ever poor. It is Miss Lawrence who, disdaining subscription-lists, steps unseen through every embarrassment where those languish who are too proud or too humble to complain, and leaves that behind her which re-assures and re-establishes by the magic of charity strewn from her artist-hand. It is Miss Lawrence who 317
discerns the temporality of art to be that which is as inevitable as its spiritual necessity; who yet ministers to its uttermost spiritual appreciation by her patronage of the highest only. It is Miss Lawrence you see wherever music is to be heard, with her noble brow and sublimely beneficent eyes, her careless costume, and music-beaming lips; but you cannot know, as I do, what it is to have her for a friend.

Miss Lawrence certainly lost caste by receiving and entertaining, as she did, Mademoiselle Lauretta; for both when Laura was dancing before the public and had done with so dancing, Miss Lawrence would insist upon her appearing at every party or assembly she gave,—whether with her father's sanction or without, nobody knew. To be introduced to a ballet-girl, or even a dancing-lady, at the same table or upon the same carpet with barristers and baronets, with golden-hearted bankers and "earnest" men of letters!—she certainly lost caste by her resolute unconventionalism, did my friend Miss Lawrence. But then, as she said to me, "What in life does it matter about losing caste with people who have no caste to lose?" She writes to me continually, and her house is my home in London. I have never been able to make her confess that she sent me my violin; but I know she did, for her interest in me can only be explained on that ground, and there is that look upon her face, whenever I play, which assures me of something associated in her mind and memory with my playing that is not itself music.

Miss Lawrence also corresponds with Clara, and Clara sees us too; but no one, seeing her, would believe her to be childless and alone. She is more beautiful than ever, and not less calm,—more 318
loving and more beloved.

We had Florimond Anastase a concert-player at our very last festival. He was exactly like the young Anastase who taught me, and I should not have been able to believe him older but for his

companion, a young lady, who sat below him in the audience, and at whom I could only gaze. It was Josephine Cerinthia, no longer a child, but still a prodigy, for she has the finest voice, it is said, in Europe. No one will hear it, however, for Anastase, who adopted her eight years ago, makes her life the life of a princess, or as very few princesses' can be; he works for her, he saves for her, and has already made her rich. They say he will marry her by and by; it may be so, but I do not myself believe it.

Near the house in which Seraphael died, and rising as from the ashes of his tomb, is another house which holds his name, and will ever hold it to be immortal. Sons and daughters of his own are there,—of his land, his race, his genius,—those whom music has "called" and "chosen" from the children of humanity. The grandeur of the institution, its stupendous scale, its intention, its consummation, afford, to the imagination that enshrines him, the only monument that would not insult his name. Nor is that temple without its priestess, that altar without its angel. She who devoted the wealth of his wisdom to that work gave up the treasure of her life besides, and has consecrated herself to its superintendence. At the monumental school she would be adored, but that she is too much loved as children love,—too much at home there to be feared. I hold her as my passion forever; she makes my old years young in memory, and to every new morning of my life her name is Music. With another name—not dearer, but as dear—she is indissolubly connected; and if I preserve my heart's first purity, it is to them I owe it.

I write no more. Had I desired to treat of music specifically, I should not have written at all; for that theme demands a tongue beyond the tongues of men and angels,—a voice that is no more heard. But if one faithful spirit find an echo in my expression, to his beating heart for music, his inward song of praise, it is not in vain that I write, that what I have written is written.

CHARLES AUCHESTER.

THE END

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Wretch.

[2] Brotherhood.

[3] The theory of the correspondence of tones and colors is an old one. Gardner, in his "Music of Nature," traces it in the following manner, which will be interesting as contrasted with the above:—

WIND INSTRUMENTS.

Trombone—deep red.	Flute—sky blue.
Trumpet—scarlet.	Diapason—deeper blue.
Clarinet—orange.	Double diapason—purple.
Oboe—yellow.	Horn—violet.
Bassoon—deep yellow.	

STRINGED INSTRUMENTS.

Violin—pink.	Violoncello—red.
Viola—rose.	Double-bass—crimson.

Laura Bridgman, the blind and deaf mute, it will be remembered, likened the tone of the trumpet to scarlet.

[4] Mendelssohn wrote the "Son and Stranger" in 1829 for the silver wedding of his parents.

[5] The description of the fairy music contained in this chapter evidently refers to the opera of "The Tempest," which Mendelssohn contemplated writing in 1846-47. The composer had agreed to write an opera on this subject for Mr. Lumley, then manager of Her Majesty's Theatre in London, the principal *rôle* to be given to Jenny Lind. After considerable negotiation, M. Scribe, the eminent French adapter, furnished a libretto, and Mr. Lumley suggested the following distribution of parts: Prospero, Signor Lablache; Caliban, Herr Staudigl; Fernando, Signor Gardoni; Miranda, Mademoiselle Lind; Ariel, left unassigned. Mendelssohn, however, was dissatisfied with the libretto, which made serious changes in the character of the story and marred the artistic effects intended by Shakspeare; but M. Scribe would not listen to his protests, and thus the matter fell through. Mendelssohn then turned his attention to the legend of the Loreley as the subject of an opera, but died shortly afterward, leaving it in a fragmentary condition, wherefore Mr. Lumley substituted Verdi's "I Masnadieri" for the long-promised "Tempest." It proved a failure, however. Thus a three-fold fatality attended the "Tempest" episode in the friendly relations of Mendelssohn and Jenny Lind. The reader who may be curious to know the details of these interesting negotiations will find a very complete record of them in the second volume of the Life of Jenny Lind by Mr. Rockstro and Canon Holland, recently published, and there for the first time given to the public from official sources.

[6] The Bacchus of Music.

[7] The blessed Benette.

[8] The Lobgesang, or Hymn of Praise.

[9] The majestic phrase with which the symphony opens, and which also appears in the vocal parts ("All that has life and breath"), is the Intonation to the second tone of the Magnificat.

[10] Sterndale Bennett married Mary Anne, daughter of Captain James Wood, R. N.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CHARLES AUCHESTER, VOLUME 2 (OF 2) ***

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. 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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.