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A WORD, ONLY A WORD

By Georg Ebers

Volume 3.

CHAPTER XIV.

For the first time in his life Ulrich had witnessed the death of a human being.

How often he had laughed at the fool, or thought his words absurd and wicked;—but the dead man inspired him with respect, and the thought of the old jester's corpse exerted a far deeper and more lasting influence upon him, than his father's supposed death. Hitherto he had only been able to imagine him as he had looked in life, but now the vision of him stretched at full length, stark and pale like the dead Pellicanus, often rose before his mind.

The artist was a silent man, and understood how to think and speak in lines and colors, better than in words. He only became eloquent and animated, when the conversation turned upon subjects connected with his art.

At Toulouse he purchased three new horses, and engaged the same number of French servants, then went to a jeweller and bought many articles. At the inn he put the chains and rings he had obtained, into pretty little boxes, and wrote on them in neat Gothic characters with special care: "Helena, Anna, Minerva, Europa and Lucia;" one name on each.

Ulrich watched him and remarked that those were not his children's names.

Moor looked up, and answered smiling: "These are only young artists, six sisters, each one of whom is as dear to me as if she were my own daughter. I hope we shall find them in Madrid, one of them, Sophonisba, at any rate."

"But there are only five boxes," observed the boy, "and you haven't written Sophonisba on any of them."

"She is to have something better," replied his patron smiling. "My portrait, which I began to paint yesterday, will be finished here. Hand me the mirror, the maul-stick, and the colors."

The picture was a superb likeness, absolutely faultless. The pure brow curved in lofty arches at the temples, the small eyes looked as clear and bright as they did in the mirror, the firm mouth shaded by a thin moustache, seemed as if it were just parting to utter a friendly word. The close-shaven beard on the cheeks and chin rested closely upon the white ruff, which seemed to have just come from under the laundresses' smoothing-iron.

How rapidly and firmly the master guided his brush! And Sophonisba, whom Moor distinguished by such a gift, how was he to imagine her? The other five sisters too! For their sakes he first anticipated with pleasure the arrival at Madrid.

In Bayonne the artist left the baggage-wagon behind. His luggage was put on mules, and when the party of travellers started, it formed an imposing caravan.

Ulrich expressed his surprise at such expenditure, and Moor answered kindly: "Pellicanus says: 'Among fools one must be a fool.' We enter Spain as the king's guests, and courtiers have weak eyes, and only notice people who give themselves airs."

At Fuenterrabia, the first Spanish city they reached, the artist received many honors, and a splendid troop of cavalry escorted him thence to Madrid.

Moor came as a guest to King Philip's capital for the third time, and was received there with all the tokens of respect usually paid only to great noblemen.

His old quarters in the treasury of the Alcazar, the palace of the kings of Castile, were again assigned to him. They consisted of a studio and suite of apartments, which by the monarch's special command, had been fitted up for him with royal magnificence.

Ulrich could not control his amazement. How poor and petty everything that a short time before, at Castle Rappolstein, had awakened his wonder and admiration now appeared.

During the first few days the artist's reception-room resembled a bee-hive; for aristocratic men and women, civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries passed in and out, pages and lackeys brought flowers, baskets of fruits, and other gifts. Every one attached to the court knew in what high favor the artist was held by His Majesty, and therefore hastened to win his good-will by attentions and presents. Every hour there was something new and astonishing to be seen, but the artist himself most awakened the boy's surprise.

The unassuming man, who on the journey had associated as familiarly with the poor invalids he had picked up by the wayside, the tavern-keepers, and soldiers of his escort, as if he were one of themselves, now seemed a very different person. True, he still dressed in black, but instead of cloth and silk, he wore velvet and satin, while two gold chains glittered beneath his ruff. He treated the greatest nobles as if he were doing them a favor by receiving them, and he himself were a person of unapproachable rank.

On the first day Philip and his queen Isabella of Valois, had sent for him and adorned him with a costly new chain.

On this occasion Ulrich saw the king. Dressed as a page he followed Moor, carrying the picture the latter intended for a gift to his royal host.

At the time of their entrance into the great reception-hall, the monarch was sitting motionless, gazing into vacancy, as if all the persons gathered around him had no existence for him. His head was thrown far back, pressing down the stiff ruff, on which it seemed to rest as if it were a platter. The fair-haired man's well-cut features wore the rigid, lifeless expression of a mask. The mouth and nostrils were slightly contracted, as if they shrank from breathing the same air with other human beings.

The monarch's face remained unmoved, while receiving the Pope's legates and the ambassadors from

the republic of Venice. When Moor was led before him, a faint smile was visible beneath the soft, drooping moustache and close-shaven beard on the cheeks and chin; the prince's dull eyes also gained some little animation.

The day after the reception a bell rang in the studio, which was cleared of all present as quickly as possible, for it announced the approach of the king, who appeared entirely alone and spent two whole hours with Moor.

All these marks of distinction might have turned a weaker brain, but Moor received them calmly, and as soon as he was alone with Ulrich or Sophonisba, appeared no less unassuming and kindly, than at Emmendingen and on the journey through France.

A week after taking possession of the apartments in the treasury, the servants received orders to refuse admittance to every one, without distinction of rank or person, informing them that the artist was engaged in working for His Majesty.

Sophonisba Anguisciola was the only person whom Moor never refused to see. He had greeted the strange girl on his arrival, as a father meets his child.

Ulrich had been present when the artist gave her his portrait, and saw her, overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, cover her face with her hands and burst into loud sobs.

During Moor's first visit to Madrid, the young girl had come from Cremona to the king's court with her father and five sisters, and since then the task of supporting all six had rested on her shoulders.

Old Cavaliere Anguisciola was a nobleman of aristocratic family, who had squandered his large patrimony, and now, as he was fond of saying, lived day by day "by trusting God." A large portion of his oldest daughter's earnings he wasted at the gaming table with dissolute nobles, relying with happy confidence upon the talent displayed also by his younger children, and on what he called "trust in God." The gay, clever Italian was everywhere a welcome guest, and while Sophonisba toiled early and late, often without knowing how she was to obtain suitable food and clothing for her sisters and herself, his life was a series of banquets and festivals. Yet the noble girl retained the joyous courage inherited from her father, nay, more—even in necessity she did not cease to take a lofty view of art, and never permitted anything to leave her studio till she considered it finished.

At first Moor watched her silently, then he invited her to work in his studio, and avail herself of his advice and assistance.

So she had become his pupil, his friend.

Soon the young girl had no secrets from him, and the glimpses of her domestic life thus afforded touched him and brought her nearer and nearer to his heart.

The old Cavaliere praised the lucky accident, and was ready to show himself obliging, when Moor offered to let him and his daughters occupy a house he had purchased, that it might be kept in a habitable condition, and when the artist had induced the king to grant Sophonisba a larger annual salary, the father instantly bought a second horse.

The young girl, in return for so many benefits, was gratefully devoted to the artist, but she would have loved him even without them. His society was her greatest pleasure. To be allowed to stay and paint with him, become absorbed in conversation about art, its problems, means and purposes, afforded her the highest, purest happiness.

When she had discharged the duties imposed upon her by her attendance upon the queen, her heart drew her to the man she loved and honored. When she left him, it always seemed as if she had been in church, as if her soul had been steeped in purity and was effulgent. Moor had hoped to find her sisters with her in Madrid, but the old Cavaliere had taken them away with him to Italy. His "trust in God" was rewarded, for he had inherited a large fortune. What should he do longer in Madrid! To entertain the stiff, grave Spaniards and move them to laughter, was a far less pleasing occupation than to make merry with gay companions and be entertained himself at home.

Sophonisba was provided for, and the beautiful, gay, famous maid of honor would have no lack of suitors. Against his daughter's wish, he had given to the richest and most aristocratic among them, the Sicilian baron Don Fabrizio di Moncada, the hope of gaining her hand. "Conquer the fortress! When it yields—you can hold it," were his last words; but the citadel remained impregnable, though the besieger could bring into the field as allies a knightly, aristocratic bearing, an unsullied character, a handsome, manly figure, winning manners, and great wealth.

Ulrich felt a little disappointed not to find the five young girls, of whom he had dreamed, in Madrid; it would have been pleasant to have some pretty companions in the work now to begin.

Adjoining the studio was a smaller apartment, separated from the former room by a corridor, that could be closed, and by a heavy curtain. Here a table, at which the five girls might easily have found room, was placed in a favorable light for Ulrich. He was to draw from plastic models, and there was no lack of these in the Alcazar, for here rose a high, three-story wing, to which when wearied by the intrigues of statecraft and the restraints of court etiquette, King Philip gladly retired, yielding himself to the only genial impulse of his gloomy soul, and enjoyed the noble forms of art.

In the round hall on the lower floor countless plans, sketches, drawings and works of art were kept in walnut chests of excellent workmanship. Above this beautifully ornamented apartment—was the library, and in the third story the large hall containing the masterpieces of Titian.

The restless statesman, Philip, was no less eager to collect and obtain new and beautiful works by the great Venetian, than to defend and increase his own power and that of the Church. But these treasures were kept jealously guarded, accessible to no human being except himself and his artists.

Philip was all and all to himself; caring nothing for others, he did not deem it necessary, that they should share his pleasures. If anything outside the Church occupied a place in his regard, it was the artist, and therefore he did not grudge him what he denied to others.

Not only in the upper story, but in the lower ones also antique and modern busts and statues were arranged in appropriate places, and Moor was at liberty to choose from among them, for the king permitted him to do what was granted to no one else.

He often summoned him to the Titian Hall, and still more frequently rang the bell and entered the connecting corridor, accessible to himself alone, which led from the rooms devoted to art and science to the treasury and studio, where he spent hours with Moor. Ulrich eagerly devoted himself to the work, and his master watched his labor like an attentive, strict, and faithful teacher; meantime he carefully guarded against overtaxing the boy, allowed him to accompany him on many a ride, and advised him to look about the city. At first the lad liked to stroll through the streets and watch the long, brilliant processions, or timidly shrink back when closely-muffled men, their figures wholly invisible except the eyes and feet, bore a corpse along, or glided on mysterious missions through the streets. The bull-fights might have bewitched him, but he loved horses, and it grieved him to see the noble animal, wounded and killed.

He soon wearied of the civil and religious ceremonies, that might be witnessed nearly every day, and which always exerted the same power of attraction to the inhabitants of Madrid. Priests swarmed in the Alcazar, and soldiers belonging to every branch of military service, daily guarded or marched by the palace.

On the journey he had met plenty of mules with gay plumes and tassels, oddly-dressed peasants and citizens. Gentlemen in brilliant court uniforms, princes and princesses he saw daily in the court-yards, on the stairs, and in the park of the palace.

At Toulouse and in other cities, through which he had passed, life had been far more busy, active, and gay than in quiet Madrid, where everything went on as if people were on their way to church, where a cheerful face was rarely seen, and men and women knew of no sight more beautiful and attractive, than seeing poor Jews and heretics burned.

Ulrich did not need the city; the Alcazar was a world in itself, and offered him everything he desired.

He liked to linger in the stables, for there he could distinguish himself; but it was also delightful to work, for Moor chose models and designs that pleased the lad, and Sophonisba Anguisciola, who often painted for hours in the studio by the master's side, came to Ulrich in the intervals, looked at what he had finished, helped, praised, or scolded him, and never left him without a jest on her lips.

True, he was often left to himself; for the king sometimes summoned the artist and then quitted the palace with him for several days, to visit secluded country houses, and there—the old Hollander had told the lad— painted under Moor's instructions.

On the whole, there were new, strange, and surprising things enough, to keep the sensation of "Fortune," alive in Ulrich's heart. Only it was vexatious that he found it so hard to make himself intelligible to people, but this too was soon to be remedied, for the pupil obtained two companions.

CHAPTER XV.

Alonzo Sanchez Coello, a very distinguished Spanish artist, had his studio in the upper story of the treasury. The king was very friendly to him, and often took him also on his excursions. The gay, lively artist clung without envy, and with ardent reverence, to Moor, whose fellow-pupil he had been in Florence and Venice. During the Netherlander's first visit to Madrid, he had not disdained to seek counsel and instruction from his senior, and even now frequently visited his studio, bringing with him his children Sanchez and Isabella as pupils, and watched the Master closely while he painted.

At first Ulrich was not specially pleased with his new companions, for in the strangely visionary life he led, he had depended solely upon himself and "Fortune," and the figures living in his imagination were the most enjoyable society to him.

Formerly he had drawn eagerly in the morning, joyously anticipated Sophonisba's visit, and then gazed out over his paper and dreamed. How delightful it had been to let his thoughts wander to his heart's content. This could now be done no longer.

So it happened, that at first he could feel no real confidence in Sanchez, who was three years his senior, for the latter's thin limbs and close-cut dark hair made him look exactly like dark-browed Xaver. Therefore his relations with Isabella were all the more friendly.

She was scarcely fourteen, a dear little creature, with awkward limbs, and a face so wonderfully changeful in expression, that it could not fail to be by turns pretty and repellent. She always had beautiful eyes; all her other features were unformed, and might grow charming or exactly the reverse. When her work engrossed her attention, she bit her protruded tongue, and her raven-black hair, usually remarkably smooth, often became so oddly dishevelled, that she looked like a kobold; when, on the other hand, she talked pleasantly or jested, no one could help being pleased.

The child was rarely gifted, and her method of working was an exact contrast to that of the German lad. She progressed slowly, but finally accomplished something admirable; what Ulrich impetuously began had a showy, promising aspect, but in the execution the great idea shrivelled, and the work diminished in merit instead of increasing.

Sanchez Coello remained far behind the other two, but to make amends, he knew many things of which Ulrich's uncorrupted soul had no suspicion.

Little Isabella had been given by her mother, for a duenna, a watchful, ill-tempered widow, Senora Catalina, who never left the girl while she remained with Moor's pupils.

Receiving instruction with others urged Ulrich to rivalry, and also improved his knowledge of Spanish. But he soon became familiar with the language in another way, for one day, as he came out of the stables, a thin man in black, priestly robes, advanced towards him, looked searchingly into his face, then greeted him as a countryman, declaring that it made him happy to speak his dear native tongue again. Finally, he invited the "artist" to visit him. His name was Magister Kochel and he lodged with the king's almoner, for whom he was acting as clerk.

The pallid man with the withered face, deep-set eyes and peculiar grin, which always showed the bluish-red gums above the teeth, did not please the boy, but the thought of being able to talk in his native language attracted him, and he went to the German's.

He soon thought that by so doing he was accomplishing something good and useful, for the former offered to teach him to write and speak Spanish. Ulrich was glad to have escaped from school, and declined this proposal; but when the German suggested that he should content himself with speaking the language, assuring him that it could be accomplished without any difficulty, Ulrich consented and went daily at twilight to the Magister.

Instruction began at once and was pleasant enough, for Kochel let him translate merry tales and love stories from French and Italian books, which he read aloud in German, never scolded him, and after the first half-hour always laid the volume aside to talk with him.

Moor thought it commendable and right, for Ulrich to take upon himself the labor and constraint of studying a language, and promised, when the lessons were over, to give a fitting payment to the Magister, who seemed to have scanty means of livelihood.

The master ought to have been well disposed towards worthy Kochel, for the latter was an enthusiastic admirer of his works. He ranked the Netherlander above Titian and the other great Italian artists, called him the worthy friend of gods and kings, and encouraged his pupil to imitate him.

"Industry, industry!" cried the Magister. "Only by industry is the summit of wealth and fame gained. To be sure, such success demands sacrifices. How rarely is the good man permitted to enjoy the blessing of mass. When did he go to church last?"

Ulrich answered these and similar questions frankly and truthfully, and when Kochel praised the friendship uniting the artist to the king, calling them Orestes and Pylades, Ulrich, proud of the honor shown his master, told him how often Philip secretly visited the latter.

At every succeeding interview Kochel asked, as if by chance, in the midst of a conversation about other things: "Has the king honored you again?" or "You happy people, it is reported that the king has shown you his face again."

This "you" flattered Ulrich, for it allowed a ray of the royal favor to fall upon him also, so he soon informed his countryman, unasked, of every one of the monarch's visits to the treasury.

Weeks and months elapsed.

Towards the close of his first year's residence in Madrid, Ulrich spoke Spanish with tolerable fluency, and could easily understand his fellow-pupils; nay, he had even begun to study Italian.

Sophonisba Anguisciola still spent all her leisure hours in the studio, painting or conversing with Moor. Various dignitaries and grandees also went in and out of the studio, and among them frequently appeared, indeed usually when Sophonisba was present, her faithful admirer Don Fabrizio di Moncada.

Once Ulrich, without listening, heard Moor through the open door of the school-room, represent to her, that it was unwise to reject a suitor like the baron; he was a noble, high-minded gentleman and his love beyond question.

Her answer was long in coming; at last she rose, saying in an agitated voice: "We know each other, Master; I know your kind intentions. And yet, yet! Let me remain what I am, however insignificant that may be. I like the baron, but what better gifts can marriage bestow, than I already possess? My love belongs to Art, and you—you are my friend.... My sisters are my children. Have I not gained the right to call them so? I shall have no lack of duties towards them, when my father has squandered his inheritance. My noble queen will provide for my future, and I am necessary to her. My heart is filled—filled to the brim; I do what I can, and is it not a beautiful thought, that I am permitted to be something to those I love? Let me remain your Sophonisba, and a free artist."

"Yes, yes, yes! Remain what you are, girl!" Moor exclaimed, and then for a long time silence reigned in the studio.

Even before they could understand each other's language, a friendly intercourse had existed between Isabella and her German fellow-pupil, for in leisure moments they had sketched each other more than once.

These pictures caused much laughter and often occasional harmless scuffles between Ulrich and Sanchez, for the latter liked to lay hands on these portraits and turn them into hideous caricatures.

Isabella often earned the artist's unqualified praise, Ulrich sometimes received encouraging, sometimes reproving, and sometimes even harsh words. The latter Moor always addressed to him in German, but they deeply wounded the lad, haunting him for days.

The "word" still remained obedient to him. Only in matters relating to art, the power of "fortune" seemed to fail, and deny its service.

When the painter set him difficult tasks, which he could not readily accomplish, he called upon the "word;" but the more warmly and fervently he did so, the more surely he receded instead of advancing. When, on the contrary, he became angered against "fortune," reproached, rejected it, and relied wholly on himself, he accomplished the hardest things and won Moor's praise.

He often thought, that he would gladly resign his untroubled, luxurious life, and all the other gifts of Fortune, if he could only succeed in accomplishing what Moor desired him to attain in art. He knew and felt that this was the right goal; but one thing was certain, he could never attain it with pencil and charcoal. What his soul dreamed, what his mental vision beheld was colored. Drawing, perpetual drawing, became burdensome, repulsive, hateful; but with palette and brush in his hand he could not fail to become an artist, perhaps an artist like Titian.

He already used colors in secret; Sanchez Coello had been the cause of his making the first trial.

This precocious youth was suing for a fair girl's favor, and made Ulrich his confidant. One day, when Moor and Sanchez's father had gone with the king to Toledo, he took him to a balcony in the upper story of the treasury, directly opposite to the gate-keeper's lodgings, and only separated by a narrow court-yard from the window, where sat pretty Carmen, the porter's handsome daughter.

The girl was always to be found here, for her father's room was very dark, and she was compelled to embroider priestly robes from morning till night. This pursuit brought in money, which was put to an excellent use by the old man, who offered sacrifices to his own comfort at the cook-shop, and enjoyed fish fried in oil with his Zamora wine. The better her father's appetite was, the more industriously the daughter was obliged to embroider. Only on great festivals, or when an 'Auto-da-fe' was proclaimed, was Carmen permitted to leave the palace with her old aunt; yet she had already found suitors. Nineteen-year-old Sanchez did not indeed care for her hand, but merely for her love, and when it began to grow dusk, he stationed himself on the balcony which he had discovered, made signs to her, and flung flowers or bonbons on her table.

"She is still coy," said the young Spaniard, telling Ulrich to wait at the narrow door, which opened upon the balcony. "There sits the angel! Just look! I gave her the pomegranate blossom in her magnificent hair— did you ever see more beautiful tresses? Take notice! She'll soon melt; I know women!"

Directly after a bouquet of roses fell into the embroiderer's lap. Carmen uttered a low cry, and perceiving Sanchez, motioned him away with her head and hand, finally turning her back upon him.

"She's in a bad humor to-day," said Sanchez; "but I beg you to notice that she'll keep my roses. She'll wear one to-morrow in her hair or on her bosom; what will you wager?"

"That may be," answered Ulrich. "She probably has no money to buy any for herself."

To be sure, the next day at twilight Carmen wore a rose in her hair.

Sanchez exulted, and drew Ulrich out upon the balcony. The beauty glanced at him, blushed, and returned the fair-haired boy's salutation with a slight bend of the head.

The gate-keeper's little daughter was a pretty child, and Ulrich had no fear of doing what Sanchez ventured.

On the third day he again accompanied him to the balcony, and this time, after silently calling upon the "word," pressed his hand upon his heart, just as Carmen looked at him.

The young girl blushed again, waved her fan, and then bent her little head so low, that it almost touched the embroidery.

The next evening she secretly kissed her fingers to Ulrich.

From this time the young lover preferred to seek the balcony without Sanchez. He would gladly have called a few tender words across, or sung to his lute, but that would not do, for people were constantly passing to and fro in the court-yard.

Then the thought occurred to him, that he could speak to the fair one by means of a picture.

A small panel was soon found, he had plenty of brushes and colors to choose from, and in a few minutes, a burning heart, transfixed by an arrow, was completed. But the thing looked horribly red and ugly, so he rejected it, and painted—imitating one of Titian's angels, which specially pleased him—a tiny Cupid, holding a heart in his hand.

He had learned many things from the master, and as the little figure rounded into shape, it afforded him so much pleasure, that he could not leave it, and finished it the third day.

It had not entered his mind to create a completed work of art, but the impetuosity of youth, revelling in good fortune, had guided his brush. The little Cupid bent joyously forward, drawing the right leg back, as if making a bow. Finally Ulrich draped about him a black and yellow scarf, such as he had often seen the young Austrian archduke wear, and besides the pierced heart, placed a rose in the tiny, ill-drawn hand.

He could not help laughing at his "masterpiece" and hurried out on the balcony with the wet painting, to show it to Carmen. She laughed heartily too, answered his salutations with tender greetings, then laid aside her embroidery and went back into the room, but only to immediately reappear at the

window again, holding up a prayer-book and extending towards him the eight fingers of her industrious little hands.

He motioned that he understood her, and at eight o'clock the next morning was kneeling by her side at mass, where he took advantage of a favorable opportunity to whisper: "Beautiful Carmen!"

The young girl blushed, but he vainly awaited an answer. Carmen now rose, and when Ulrich also stood up to permit her to pass, she dropped her prayer-book, as if by accident. He stooped with her to pick it up, and when their heads nearly touched, she whispered hurriedly: "Nine o'clock this evening in the shell grotto; the garden will be open."

Carmen awaited him at the appointed place.

At first Ulrich's heart throbbed so loudly and passionately, that he could find no words; but the young girl helped him, by telling him that he was a handsome fellow, whom it would be easy to love.

Then he remembered the vows of tenderness he had translated at Kochel's, falteringly repeated them, and fell on one knee before her, like all the heroes in adventures and romances.

And behold! Carmen did exactly the same as the young ladies whose acquaintance he had made at his teacher's, begged him to rise, and when he willingly obeyed the command—for he wore thin silk stockings and the grotto was paved with sharp stones—drew him to her heart, and tenderly stroked his hair back from his face with her dainty fingers, while he gladly permitted her to press her soft young lips to his.

All this was delightful, and he had no occasion to speak at all; yet Ulrich felt timid and nervous. It seemed like a deliverance when the footsteps of the guard were heard, and Carmen drew him away through the gate with her into the court-yard.

Before the little door leading into her father's room she again pressed his hand, and then vanished as swiftly as a shadow.

Ulrich remained alone, pacing slowly up and down before the treasury, for he knew that he had done something very wrong, and did not venture to appear before the artist.

When he entered the dark garden, he had again summoned "fortune" to his aid; but now it would have pleased him better, if it had been less willing to come to his assistance.

Candles were burning in the studio, and Moor sat in his arm-chair, holding—Ulrich would fain have bidden himself in the earth—the boy's Cupid in his hands.

The young culprit wanted to slip past his teacher with a low "good night," but the latter called him, and pointing to the picture, smilingly asked: "Did you paint this?"

Ulrich nodded, blushing furiously.

The artist eyed him from top to toe, saying: "Well, well, it is really very pretty. I suppose it is time now for us to begin to paint."

The lad did not know what had happened, for a few weeks before Moor had harshly refused, when he asked the same thing now voluntarily offered.

Scarcely able to control his surprise and joy, he bent over the artist's hand to kiss it, but the latter withdrew it, gazed steadily into his eyes with paternal affection, and said: "We will try, my boy, but we must not give up drawing, for that is the father of our art. Drawing keeps us within the bounds assigned to what is true and beautiful. The morning you must spend as before; after dinner you shall be rewarded by using colors." This plan was followed, and the pupil's first love affair bore still another fruit—it gave a different form to his relations with Sanchez. The feeling that he had stood in his way and abused his confidence sorely disturbed Ulrich, so he did everything in his power to please his companion.

He did not see the fair Carmen again, and in a few weeks the appointment was forgotten, for painting under Moor's instruction absorbed him as nothing in his life had ever done before, and few things did after.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ulrich was now seventeen, and had been allowed to paint for four months.

Sanchez Coello rarely appeared in the studio, for he had gone to study with the architect, Herrera; Isabella vied with Ulrich, but was speedily outstripped by the German.

It seemed as if he had been born with the power to use the brush, and the young girl watched his progress with unfeigned pleasure. When Moor harshly condemned his drawing, her kind eyes grew dim with tears; if the master looked at his studies with an approving smile, and showed them to Sophonisba with words of praise, she was as glad as if they had been bestowed upon herself.

The Italian came daily to the treasury as usual, to paint, talk or play chess with Moor; she rejoiced at Ulrich's progress, and gave him many a useful suggestion.

When the young artist once complained that he had no good models, she gaily offered to sit to him. This was a new and unexpected piece of good fortune. Day and night he thought only of Sophonisba. The sittings began.

The Italian wore a red dress, trimmed with gold embroidery, and a high white lace ruff, that almost touched her cheeks. Her wavy brown hair clung closely to the beautiful oval head, its heavy braids covering the back of the neck; tiny curls fluttered around her ears and harmonized admirably with the lovely, mischievous expression of the mouth, that won all hearts. To paint the intelligent brown eyes was no easy matter, and she requested Ulrich to be careful about her small, rather prominent chin, which was anything but beautiful, and not make her unusually high, broad forehead too conspicuous; she had only put on the pearl diadem to relieve it.

The young artist set about this task with fiery impetuosity, and the first sketch surpassed all expectations.

Don Fabrizio thought the picture "startlingly" like the original. Moor was not dissatisfied, but feared that in the execution his pupil's work would lose the bold freshness, which lent it a certain charm in his eyes, and was therefore glad when the bell rang, and soon after the king appeared, to whom he intended to show Ulrich's work.

Philip had not been in the studio for a long time, but the artist had reason to expect him; for yesterday the monarch must have received his letter, requesting that he would graciously grant him permission to leave Madrid.

Moor had remained in Spain long enough, and his wife and child were urging his return. Yet departure was hard for him on Sophonisba's account; but precisely because he felt that she was more to him than a beloved pupil and daughter, he had resolved to hasten his leave-taking.

All present were quickly dismissed, the bolts were drawn and Philip appeared.

He looked paler than usual, worn and weary.

Moor greeted him respectfully, saying: "It is long since Your Majesty has visited the treasury."

"Not 'Your Majesty;' to you I am Philip," replied the king. "And you wish to leave me, Antonio! Recall your letter! You must not go now."

The sovereign, without waiting for a reply, now burst into complaints about the tiresome, oppressive duties of his office, the incapacity of the magistrates, the selfishness, malice and baseness of men. He lamented that Moor was a Netherlander, and not a Spaniard, called him the only friend he possessed among the rebellious crew in Holland and Flanders, and stopped him when he tried to intercede for his countrymen, though repeatedly assuring him that he found in his society his best pleasure, his only real recreation; Moor must stay, out of friendship, compassion for him, a slave in the royal purple.

After the artist had promised not to speak of departure during the next few days, Philip began to paint a saint, which Moor had sketched, but at the end of half an hour he threw down his brush. He called himself negligent of duty, because he was following his inclination, instead of using his brain and hands in the service of the State and Church. Duty was his tyrant, his oppressor. When the day-laborer threw his hoe over his shoulder, the poor rascal was rid of toil and anxiety; but they pursued him everywhere, night and day. His son was a monster, his subjects were rebels or cringing hounds. Bands of heretics, like moles or senseless brutes, undermined and assailed the foundation of the throne and safeguard of society: the Church. To crush and vanquish was his profession, hatred his reward on

earth. Then, after a moment's silence, he pointed towards heaven, exclaiming as if in ecstasy: "There, there! with Him, with Her, with the Saints, for whom I fight!"

The king had rarely come to the treasury in such a mood. He seemed to feel this too, and after recovering his self-control, said:

"It pursues me even here, I cannot succeed in getting the right coloring to-day. Have you finished anything new?"

Moor now pointed out to the king a picture by his own hand, and after Philip had gazed at it long and appreciatively, criticising it with excellent judgment, the artist led him to Ulrich's portrait of Sophonisba, and asked, not without anxiety: "What does Your Majesty say to this attempt?"

"Hm!" observed the monarch. "A little of Moor, something borrowed from Titian, yet a great deal that is original. The bluish-grey leaden tone comes from your shop. The thing is a wretched likeness! Sophonisba resembles a gardener's boy. Who made it?"

"My pupil, Ulrich Navarrete."

"How long has he been painting?"

"For several months, Sire."

"And you think he will be an artist of note?"

"Perhaps so. In many respects he surpasses my expectations, in others he falls below them. He is a strange fellow."

"He is ambitious, at any rate."

"No small matter for the future artist. What he eagerly begins has a very grand and promising aspect; but it shrinks in the execution. His mind seizes and appropriates what he desires to represent, at a single hasty grasp...."

"Rather too vehement, I should think."

"No fault at his age. What he possesses makes me less anxious, than what he lacks. I cannot yet discover the thoughtful artist-spirit in him."

"You mean the spirit, that refines what it has once taken, and in quiet meditation arranges lines, and assigns each color to its proper place, in short your own art-spirit."

"And yours also, Sire. If you had begun to paint early, you would have possessed what Ulrich lacks."

"Perhaps so. Besides, his defect is one of those which will vanish with years. In your school, with zeal and industry...."

"He will obtain, you think, what he lacks. I thought so too! But as I was saying: he is queerly constituted. What you have admitted to me more than once, the point we have started from in a hundred conversations—he cannot grasp: form is not the essence of art to him."

The king shrugged his shoulders and pointed to his forehead; but Moor continued: "Everything he creates must reflect anew, what he experienced at the first sight of the subject. Often the first sketch succeeds, but if it fails, he seeks without regard to truth and accuracy, by means of trivial, strange expedients, to accomplish his purpose. Sentiment, always sentiment! Line and tone are everything; that is our motto. Whoever masters them, can express the grandest things."

"Right, right! Keep him drawing constantly. Give him mouths, eyes, and hands to paint."

"That must be done in Antwerp."

"I'll hear nothing about Antwerp! You will stay, Antonio, you will stay. Your wife and child—all honor to them. I have seen your wife's portrait. Good, nourishing bread! Here you have ambrosia and manna. You know whom I mean; Sophonisba is attached to you; the queen says so."

"And I gratefully feel it. It is hard to leave your gracious Majesty and Sophonisba; but bread, Sire, bread—is necessary to life. I shall leave friends here, dear friends—it will be difficult, very difficult, to find new ones at my age."

"It is the same with me, and for that very reason you will stay, if you are my friend! No more!"

Farewell, Antonio, till we meet again, perhaps to-morrow, in spite of a chaos of business. Happy fellow that you are! In the twinkling of an eye you will be revelling in colors again, while the yoke, the iron yoke, weighs me down."

Moor thought he should be able to work undisturbed after the king had left him, and left the door unbolted. He was standing before the easel after dinner, engaged in painting, when the door of the corridor leading to the treasury was suddenly flung open, without the usual warning, and Philip again entered the studio. This time his cheeks wore a less pallid hue than in the morning, and his gait showed no traces of the solemn gravity, which had become a second nature to him,—on the contrary he was gay and animated.

But the expression did not suit him; it seemed as if he had donned a borrowed, foreign garb, in which he was ill at ease and could not move freely.

Waving a letter in his right hand, he pointed to it with his left, exclaiming:

"They are coming. This time two marvels at once. Our Saviour praying in the garden of Gethsemane, and Diana at the Bath. Look, look! Even this is a treasure. These lines are from Titian's own hand."

"A peerless old man," Moor began; but Philip impetuously interrupted: "Old man, old man? A youth, a man, a vigorous man. How soon he will be ninety, and yet—yet; who will equal him?"

As he uttered the last words, the monarch stopped before Sophonisba's portrait, and pointing to it with the scornful chuckle peculiar to him, continued gaily:

"There the answer meets me directly. That red! The Venetian's laurels seem to have turned your high flown pupil's head. A hideous picture!"

"It doesn't seem so bad to me," replied Moor. "There is even something about it I like."

"You, you?" cried Philip. "Poor Sophonisba!"

"Those carbuncle eyes! And a mouth, that looks as if she could eat nothing but sugar-plums. I don't know what tickles me to-day. Give me the palette. The outlines are tolerably good, the colors fairly shriek. But what boy can understand a woman, a woman like your friend! I'll paint over the monster, and if the picture isn't Sophonisba, it may serve for a naval battle."

The king had snatched the palette from the artist's hand, clipped his brush in the paint, and smiling pleasantly, was about to set to work; but Moor placed himself between the sovereign and the canvas; exclaiming gaily: "Paint me, Philip; but spare the portrait."

"No, no; it will do for the naval battle," chuckled the king, and while he pushed the artist back, the latter, carried away by the monarch's unusual freedom, struck him lightly on the shoulder with the maul-stick.

The sovereign started, his lips grew white, he drew his small but stately figure to its full height. His unconstrained bearing was instantly transformed into one of unapproachable, icy dignity.

Moor felt what was passing in the ruler's mind.

A slight shiver ran through his frame, but his calmness remained unshaken, and before the insulted monarch found time to give vent to his indignation in words, he said quickly, as if the offence he had committed was not worth mentioning:

"Queer things are done among comrades in art. The painter's war is over! Begin the naval battle, Sire, or still better, lend more charm and delicacy to the corners of the mouth. The pupil's worst failure is in the chin; more practised hands might be wrecked on that cliff. Those eyes! Perhaps they sparkled just in that way, but we are agreed in one thing: the portrait ought not to represent the original at a given moment, ruled by a certain feeling or engaged in a special act, but should express the sum of the spiritual, intellectual and personal attributes of the subject—his soul and person, mind and character—feelings and nature. King Philip, pondering over complicated political combinations, would be a fascinating historical painting, but no likeness...."

"Certainly not," said the king in a low voice; "the portrait must reveal the inmost spirit; mine must show how warmly Philip loves art and his artists. Take the palette, I beg. It is for you, the great Master, not for me, the overworked, bungling amateur, to correct the work of talented pupils."

There was a hypocritical sweetness in the tone of these words which had not escaped the artist.

Philip had long been a master in the school of dissimulation, but Moor knew him thoroughly, and

understood the art of reading his heart.

This mode of expression from the king alarmed him more than a passionate outburst of rage. He only spoke in this way when concealing what was seething within. Besides, there was another token. The Netherlander had intentionally commenced a conversation on art, and it was almost unprecedented to find Philip disinclined to enter into one. The blow had been scarcely perceptible, but Majesty will not endure a touch.

Philip did not wish to quarrel with the artist now, but he would remember the incident, and woe betide him, if in some gloomy hour the sovereign should recall the insult offered him here. Even the lightest blow from the paw of this slinking tiger could inflict deep wounds—even death.

These thoughts had darted with the speed of lightning through the artist's mind, and still lingered there as, respectfully declining to take the palette, he replied "I beseech you, Sire, keep the brush and colors, and correct what you dislike."

"That would mean to repaint the whole picture, and my time is limited," answered Philip. "You are responsible for your pupils' faults, as well as for your own offences. Every one is granted, allowed, offered, what is his due; is it not so, dear master? Another time, then, you shall hear from me!" In the doorway the monarch kissed his hand to the artist, then disappeared.

CHAPTER XVII.

Moor remained alone in the studio. How could he have played such a boyish prank!

He was gazing anxiously at the floor, for he had good reason to be troubled, though the reflection that he had been alone with the king, and the unprecedented act had occurred without witnesses, somewhat soothed him. He could not know that a third person, Ulrich, had beheld the reckless, fateful contest.

The boy had been drawing in the adjoining room, when loud voices were heard in the studio. He cherished a boundless reverence, bordering upon idolatry, for his first model, the beautiful Sophonisba, and supposing that it was she, discussing works of art with Moor, as often happened, he opened the door, pushed back the curtain, and saw the artist tap the chuckling king on the arm.

The scene was a merry one, yet a thrill of fear ran through his limbs, and he went back to his plaster model more rapidly than he had come.

At nightfall Moor sought Sophonisba. He had been invited to a ball given by the queen, and knew that he should find the maid of honor among Isabella's attendants.

The magnificent apartments were made as light as day by thousands of wax-candles in silver and bronze candelabra; costly Gobelin tapestry and purple Flanders hangings covered the walls, and the bright hues of the paintings were reflected from the polished floors, flooded with brilliant light.

No dancing had ever been permitted at the court before Philip's marriage with the French princess, who had been accustomed to greater freedom of manners; now a ball was sometimes given in the Alcazar. The first person who had ventured to dance the gaillarde before the eyes of the monarch and his horrified courtiers, was Sophonisba—her partner was Duke Gonzaga. Strangely enough, the gayest lady at the court was the very person, who gave the gossips the least occasion for scandal.

A gavotte was just over, as Moor entered the superb rooms. In the first rank of the brilliant circle of distinguished ecclesiastics, ambassadors and grandees, who surrounded the queen, stood the Austrian archdukes, and the handsome, youthful figures of Alexander of Parma and of Don Juan, the half-brother of King Philip.

Don Carlos, the deformed heir to the throne, was annoying with his coarse jests some ladies of the court, who were holding their fans before their faces, yet did not venture to make the sovereign's son feel their displeasure.

Velvet, silk and jewels glittered, delicate laces rose and drooped around the necks and hands of the ladies and gentlemen. Floating curls, sparkling eyes, noble and attractive features enslaved the eye, but the necks, throats and arms of the court dames were closely concealed under high ruffs and lace

frills, stiff bodices and puffed sleeves.

A subtle perfume filled the illuminated air of these festal halls; amidst the flirting of light fans, laughter, gay conversation, and slander reigned supreme. In an adjoining room golden zechins fell rattling and ringing on the gaming-table.

The morose, bigoted court, hampered by rigid formality, had been invaded by worldly pleasure, which disported itself unabashed by the presence of the distinguished prelates in violet and scarlet robes, who paced with dignified bearing through the apartments, greeting the more prominent ladies and grandees.

A flourish of trumpets was borne on the air, and Philip appeared. The cavaliers, bowing very low, suddenly stepped back from the fair dames, and the ladies curtsied to the floor. Perfect silence followed.

It seemed as if an icy wind had passed over the flower-beds and bent all the blossoms at once.

After a few minutes the gentlemen stood erect, and the ladies rose again, but even the oldest duchesses were not allowed the privilege of sitting in their sovereign's presence.

Gayety was stifled, conversation was carried on in whispers.

The young people vainly waited for the signal to dance.

It was long since Philip had been so proudly contemptuous, so morose as he was to-night. Experienced courtiers noticed that His Majesty held his head higher than usual, and kept out of his way. He walked as if engaged in scrutinizing the frescos on the ceiling, but nothing that he wished to see escaped his notice, and when he perceived Moor, he nodded graciously and smiled pleasantly upon him for a moment, but did not, as usual, beckon him to approach.

This did not escape the artist or Sophonisba, whom Moor had informed of what had occurred.

He trusted her as he did himself, and she deserved his confidence.

The clever Italian had shared his anxiety, and as soon as the king entered another apartment, she beckoned to Moor and held a long conversation with him in a window-recess. She advised him to keep everything in readiness for departure, and she undertook to watch and give him timely warning.

It was long after midnight, when Moor returned to his rooms. He sent the sleepy servant to rest, and paced anxiously to and fro for a short time; then he pushed Ulrich's portrait of Sophonisba nearer the mantel-piece, where countless candles were burning in lofty sconces.

This was his friend, and yet it was not. The thing lacking—yes, the king was right—was incomprehensible to a boy.

We cannot represent, what we are unable to feel. Yet Philip's censure had been too severe. With a few strokes of the brush Moor expected to make this picture a soul mirror of the beloved girl, from whom it was hard, unspeakably hard for him to part.

"More than fifty!" he thought, a melancholy smile hovering around his mouth.—"More than fifty, an old husband and father, and yet—yet—good nourishing bread at home—God bless it, Heaven preserve it! It only this girl were my daughter! How long the human heart retains its functional power! Perhaps love is the pith of life—when it dries, the tree withers too!"

Still absorbed in thought, Moor had seized his palette, and at intervals added a few short, almost imperceptible strokes to the mouth, eyes, and delicate nostrils of the portrait, before which he sat—but these few strokes lent charm and intellectual expression to his pupil's work.

When he at last rose and looked at what he had done, he could not help smiling, and asking himself how it was possible to imitate, with such trivial materials, the noblest possessions of man: mind and soul. Both now spoke to the spectator from these features. The right words were easy to the master, and with them he had given the clumsy sentence meaning and significance.

The next morning Ulrich found Moor before Sophonisba's portrait. The pupil's sleep had been no less restless than the master's, for the former had done something which lay heavy on his heart.

After being an involuntary witness of the scene in the studio the day before he had taken a ride with Sanchez and had afterwards gone to Kochel's to take a lesson. True, he now spoke Spanish with tolerable fluency and knew something of Italian, but Kochel entertained him so well, that he still visited him several times a week.

On this occasion, there was no translating. The German first kindly upbraided him for his long absence, and then, after the conversation had turned upon his painting and Moor, sympathizingly asked what truth there was in the rumor, that the king had not visited the artist for a long time and had withdrawn his favor from him.

"Withdrawn his favor!" Ulrich joyously exclaimed. "They are like two brothers! They wrestled together to-day, and the master, in all friendship, struck His Majesty a blow with the maul-stick....But—for Heaven's sake!—you will swear—fool, that I am—you will swear not to speak of it!"

"Of course I will!" Kochel exclaimed with a loud laugh. "My hand upon it Navarrete. I'll keep silence, but you! Don't gossip about that! Not on any account! The jesting blow might do the master harm. Excuse me for to-day; there is a great deal of writing to be done for the almoner."

Ulrich went directly back to the studio. The conviction that he had committed a folly, nay, a crime, had taken possession of him directly after the last word escaped his lips, and now tortured him more and more. If Kochel, who was a very ordinary man, should not keep the secret, what might not Moor suffer from his treachery! The lad was usually no prattler, yet now, merely to boast of his master's familiar intercourse with the king, he had forgotten all caution.

After a restless night, his first thought had been to look at his portrait of Sophonisba. The picture lured, bewitched, enthralled him with an irresistible spell.

Was this really his work?

He recognized every stroke of the brush. And yet! Those thoughtful eyes, the light on the lofty brow, the delicate lips, which seemed about parting to utter some wise or witty word—he had not painted them, never, never could he have accomplished such a masterpiece. He became very anxious. Had "Fortune," which usually left him in the lurch when creating, aided him on this occasion? Last evening, before he went to bed, the picture had been very different. Moor rarely painted by candlelight and he had heard him come home late, yet now—now.....

He was roused from these thoughts by the artist, who had been feasting his eyes a long time on the handsome lad, now rapidly developing into a youth, as he stood before the canvas as if spellbound. He felt what was passing in the awakening artist-soul, for a similar incident had happened to himself, when studying with his old master, Schorel.

"What is the matter?" asked Moor as quietly as usual, laying his hand upon the arm of his embarrassed pupil. "Your work seems to please you remarkably."

"It is—I don't know"—stammered Ulrich. "It seems as if in the night..."

"That often happens," interrupted the master. "If a man devotes himself earnestly to his profession, and says to himself: 'Art shall be everything to me, all else trivial interruptions,' invisible powers aid him, and when he sees in the morning what he has created the day before, he imagines a miracle has happened."

At these words Ulrich grew red and pale by turns. At last, shaking his head, he murmured in an undertone: "Yes, but those shadows at the corners of the mouth—do you see?—that light on the brow, and there—just look at the nostrils—I certainly did not paint those."

"I don't think them so much amiss," replied Moor. "Whatever friendly spirits now work for you at night, you must learn in Antwerp to paint in broad day at any hour."

"In Antwerp?"

"We shall prepare for departure this very day. It must be done with the utmost privacy. When Isabella has gone, pack your best clothes in the little knapsack. Perhaps we shall leave secretly; we have remained in Madrid long enough. Keep yourself always in readiness. No one, do you hear, no human being, not even the servants, must suspect what is going on. I know you; you are no babbler."

The artist suddenly paused and turned pale, for men's loud, angry voices were heard outside the door of the studio.

Ulrich too was startled.

The master's intention of leaving Madrid had pleased him, for it would withdraw the former from the danger that might result from his own imprudence. But as the strife in the anteroom grew louder, he already saw the alguazils forcing their way into the studio.

Moor went towards the door, but it was thrown wide open ere he reached it, and a bearded lansquenet crossed the threshold.

Laughing scornfully, he shouted a few derisive words at the French servants who had tried to stop him, then turning to the artist, and throwing back his broad chest, he held out his arms towards Moor, with passionate ardor, exclaiming: "These French flunkies—the varlets, tried to keep me from waiting upon my benefactor, my friend, the great Moor, to show my reverence for him. How you stare at me, Master! Have you forgotten Christmas-day at Emmendingen, and Hans Eitelfritz from Colln on the Spree?"

Every trace of anxiety instantly vanished from the face of the artist, who certainly had not recognized in this braggart the modest companion of those days.

Eitelfritz was strangely attired, so gaily and oddly dressed, that he could not fail to be conspicuous even among his comrades. One leg of his breeches, striped with red and blue, reached far below his knee, while the other, striped with yellow and green, enclosed the upper part of the limb, like a full muff. Then how many puffs, slashes and ribbons adorned his doublet! What gay plumes decked the pointed edge of his cap.

Moor gave the faithful fellow a friendly welcome, and expressed his pleasure at meeting him so handsomely equipped. He held his head higher now, than he used to do under the wagon-tilt and in quarters, and doubtless he had earned a right to do so.

"The fact is," replied Hans Eitelfritz, "I've received double pay for the past nine months, and take a different view of life from that of a poor devil of a man-at-arms who goes fighting through the country. You know the ditty:

"'There is one misery on earth,
Well, well for him, who knows it not!
With beggar's staff to wander forth,
Imploring alms from spot to spot.'

"And the last verse:

"'And shall we never receive our due?
Will our sore trials never end?
Leader to victory, be true,
Come quickly, death, beloved friend.'

"I often sang it in those days; but now: What does the world cost? A thousand zechins is not too much for me to pay for it!"

"Have you gained booty, Hans?"

"Better must come; but I'm faring tolerably well. Nothing but feasting! Three of us came here from Venice through Lombardy, by ship from Genoa to Barcelona, and thence through this barren, stony country here to Madrid."

"To take service?"

"No, indeed. I'm satisfied with my company and regiment. We brought some pictures here, painted by the great master, Titian, whose fame must surely have reached you. See this little purse! hear its jingle—it's all gold! If any one calls King Philip a niggard again, I'll knock his teeth down his throat."

"Good tidings, good reward!" laughed Moor. "Have you had board and lodging too?"

"A bed fit for the Roman Emperor,—and as for the rest?—I told you, nothing but feasting. Unluckily, the fun will be all over to-night, but to go without paying my respects to you.....Zounds! is that the little fellow—the Hop-o'my-Thumb-who pressed forward to the muster-table at Emmendingen?"

"Certainly, certainly."

"Zounds, he has grown. We'll gladly enlist you now, young sir. Can you remember me?"

"Of course I do," replied Ulrich. "You sang the song about 'good fortune'"

"Have you recollected that?" asked the lansquenet. "Foolish stuff! Believe it or not, I composed the merry little thing when in great sorrow and poverty, just to warm my heart. Now I'm prosperous, and can rarely succeed in writing a verse. Fires are not needed in summer."

"Where have you been lodged?"

"Here in the 'old cat.' That's a good name for this Goliath's palace."

When Eitelfritz had enquired about the jester and drunk a goblet of wine with Moor and Ulrich, he took leave of them both, and soon after the artist went to the city alone.

At the usual hour Isabella Coello came with her duenna to the studio, and instantly noticed the change Sophonisba's portrait had undergone.

Ulrich stood beside her before the easel, while she examined his work.

The young girl gazed at it a long, long time, without a word, only once pausing in her scrutiny to ask: "And you, you painted this—without the master?"

Ulrich shook his head, saying, in an undertone: "I suppose he thinks it is my own work; and yet—I can't understand it."

"But I can," she eagerly exclaimed, still gazing intently at the portrait.

At last, turning her round, pleasant flee towards him, she looked at him with tears in her eyes, saying so affectionately that the innermost depths of Ulrich's heart were stirred: "How glad I am! I could never accomplish such a work. You will become a great artist, a very distinguished one, like Moor. Take notice, you surely will. How beautiful that is!—I can find no words to express my admiration."

At these words the blood mounted to Ulrich's brain, and either the fiery wine he had drunk, or the delighted girl's prophetic words, or both, fairly intoxicated him. Scarcely knowing what he said or did, he seized Isabella's little hand, impetuously raised his curly head, and enthusiastically exclaimed: "Hear me! your prophecy shall be fulfilled, Belica; I will be an artist. Art, Art alone! The master said everything else is vain—trivial. Yes, I feel, I am certain, that the master is right."

"Yes, yes," cried Isabella; "you must become a great artist."

"And if I don't succeed, if I accomplish nothing more than this...."

Here Ulrich suddenly paused, for he remembered that he was going away, perhaps to-morrow, so he continued sadly, in a calmer tone: "Rely upon it; I will do what I can, and whatever happens, you will rejoice, will you not, if I succeed—and if it should be otherwise...."

"No, no," she eagerly exclaimed. "You can accomplish everything, and I—I; you don't know how happy it makes me that you can do more than I!"

Again he held out his hand, and as Isabella warmly clasped it, the watchful duenna's harsh voice cried:

"What does this mean, Senorita? To work, I beg of you. Your father says time is precious."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Time is precious! Magister Kochel had also doubtless said this to himself, as soon as Ulrich left him the day before. He had been hired by a secret power, with which however he was well acquainted, to watch the Netherland artist and collect evidence for a charge—a gravamen—against him.

The spying and informing, which he had zealously pursued for years in the service of the Holy Inquisition, he called "serving the Church," and hoped, sooner or later, to be rewarded with a benefice; but even if this escaped him, informing brought him as large an income as he required, and had become the greatest pleasure, indeed, a necessity of life to him.

He had commenced his career in Cologne as a Dominican friar, and remained in communication with some of his old brethren of the Order.

The monks, Sutor and Stubenrauch, whom Moor had hospitably received in his wagon at the last Advent season but one, sometimes answered Kochel's letters of enquiry.

The latter had long known that the unusual favor the king showed the artist was an abomination, not only to the heads of the Holy Inquisition, but also to the ambassadors and court dignitaries, yet Moor's quiet, stainless life afforded no handle for attack. Soon, however, unexpected aid came to him from a distance.

A letter arrived, dictated by Sutor, and written by Stubenrauch in the fluent bad Latin used by him and those of his ilk. Among other things it contained an account of a journey, in which much was said about Moor, whom the noble pair accused of having a heretical and evil mind. Instead of taking them to the goal of the journey, as he had promised, he had deserted them in a miserable tavern by the way-side, among rough, godless lansquenets, as the mother of Moses abandoned her babe. And such a man as this, they had heard with amazement at Cologne, was permitted to boast of the favor of His Most Catholic Majesty, King Philip. Kochel must take heed, that this leprous soul did not infect the whole flock, like a mangy sheep, or even turn the shepherd from the true pasture.

This letter had induced Kochel to lure Ulrich into the snare. The monstrous thing learned from the lad that day, capped the climax of all he had heard, and might serve as a foundation for the charge, that the heretical Netherlander—and people were disposed to regard all Netherlanders as heretics—had deluded the king's mind with magic arts, enslaved his soul and bound him with fetters forged by the Prince of Evil.

His pen was swift, and that very evening he went to the palace of the Inquisition, with the documents and indictment, but was detained there a long time the following day, to have his verbal deposition recorded. When he left the gloomy building, he was animated with the joyous conviction that he had not toiled in vain, and that the Netherlander was a lost man.

Preparations for departure were secretly made in the painter's rooms in the Alcazar during the afternoon. Moor was full of anxiety, for one of the royal lackeys, who was greatly devoted to him, had told him that a disguised emissary of the Dominicans—he knew him well—had come to the door of the studio, and talked there with one of the French servants. This meant as imminent peril as fire under the roof, water rising in the hold of a ship, or the plague in the house.

Sophonisba had told him that he would hear from her that day, but the sun was already low in the heavens, and neither she herself nor any message had arrived.

He tried to paint, and finding the attempt useless, gazed into the garden and at the distant chain of the Guadarrama mountains; but to-day he remained unmoved by the delicate violet-blue mist that floated around the bare, naked peaks of the chain.

It was wrath and impatience, mingled with bitter disappointment, that roused the tumult in his soul, not merely the dread of torture and death.

There had been hours when his heart had throbbed with gratitude to Philip, and he had believed in his friendship. And now? The king cared for nothing about him, except his brush.

He was still standing at the window, lost in gloomy thoughts, when Sophonisba was finally announced.

She did not come alone, but leaning on the arm of Don Fabrizio di Moncada. During the last hours of the ball the night before she had voluntarily given the Sicilian her hand, and rewarded his faithful wooing by accepting his suit.

Moor was rejoiced—yes, really glad at heart, and expressed his pleasure; nevertheless he felt a sharp pang, and when the baron, in his simple, aristocratic manner, thanked him for the faithful friendship he had always shown Sophonisba and her sisters, and then related how graciously the queen had joined their hands, he only listened with partial attention, for many doubts and suspicions beset him.

Had Sophonisba's heart uttered the "yes," or had she made a heavy sacrifice for him and his safety? Perhaps she would find true happiness by the side of this worthy noble, but why had she given herself to him now, just now? Then the thought darted through his mind, that the widowed Marquesa Romero, the all-powerful friend of the Grand Inquisitor was Don Fabrizio's sister.

Sophonisba had left the conversation to her betrothed husband; but when the doors of the brightly-lighted reception-room were opened, and the candles in the studio lighted, the girl could no longer endure the restraint she had hitherto imposed upon herself, and whispered hurriedly, in broken accents:

"Dismiss the servants, lock the studio, and follow us."

Moor did as he was requested, and, with the baron, obeyed her request to search the anterooms, to see that no unbidden visitor remained. She herself raised the curtains and looked up the chimney.

Moor had rarely seen her so pale. Unable to control the muscles of her face, shoulders and hands, she went into the middle of the room, beckoned the men to come close to her, raised her fan to her face, and whispered:

"Don Fabrizio and I are now one. God hears me! You, Master, are in great peril and surrounded by spies. Some one witnessed yesterday's incident, and it is now the talk of the town. Don Fabrizio has made inquiries. There is an accusation against you, and the Inquisition will act upon it. The informers call you a heretic, a sorcerer, who has bewitched the king. They will seize you to-morrow, or the day after. The king is in a terrible mood. The Nuncio openly asked him whether it was true, that he had been offered an atrocious insult in your studio. Is everything ready? Can you fly?"

Moor bent his head in assent.

"Well then," said the baron, interrupting Sophonisba; "I beg you to listen to me. I have obtained leave of absence, to go to Sicily to ask my father's blessing. It will be no easy matter for me to leave my happiness, at the moment my most ardent wish is fulfilled—but Sophonisba commands and I obey. I obey gladly too, for if I succeed in saving you, a new and beautiful star will adorn the heaven of my memory."

"Quick, quick!" pleaded Sophonisba, clenching the back of a chair firmly with her hand. "You will yield, Master; I beseech you, I command you!"

Moor bowed, and Don Fabrizio continued: "We will start at four o'clock in the morning. Instead of exchanging vows of love, we held a council of war. Everything is arranged. In an hour my servants will come and ask for the portrait of my betrothed bride; instead of the picture, you will put your baggage in the chest. Before midnight you will come to my apartments. I have passports for myself, six servants, the equerry, and a chaplain. Father Clement will remain safely concealed at my sister's, and you will accompany me in priestly costume. May we rely upon your consent?"

"With all the gratitude of a thankful heart, but...."

"But?"

"There is my old servant—and my pupil Ulrich Navarrete."

"The old man is taciturn, Don Fabrizio!" said Sophonisba. "If he is forbidden to speak at all.... He is necessary to the Master."

"Then he can accompany you," said the baron. "As for your pupil, he must help us secure your flight, and lead the pursuers on a false trail. The king has honored you with a travelling-carriage.—At half-past eleven order horses to be put to it and leave the Alcazar. When you arrive before our palace, stop it, alight, and remain with me. Ulrich, whom everybody knows—who has not noticed the handsome, fair-haired lad in his gay clothes—will stay with the carriage and accompany it along the road towards Burgos, as far as it goes. A better decoy than he cannot be imagined, and besides he is nimble and an excellent horseman. Give him your own steed, the white Andalusian. If the blood-hounds should overtake him...."

Here Moor interrupted the baron, saying gravely and firmly: "My grey head will be too dearly purchased at the cost of this young life. Change this part of your plan, I entreat you."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Sicilian. "We have few hours at our command, and if they don't follow him, they will pursue us, and you will be lost."

"Yet...." Moor began; but Sophonisba, scarcely able to command her voice, interrupted: "He owes everything to—you. I know him. Where is he?"

"Let us maintain our self-control!" cried the Netherlander. "I do not rely upon the king's mercy, but perhaps in the decisive hour, he will remember what we have been to each other; if Ulrich, on the contrary, robs the irritated lion of his prey and is seized...."

"My sister shall watch over him," said the baron but Sophonisba tore open the door, rushed into the studio, and called as loudly as she could: "Ulrich, Ulrich! Ulrich!"

The men followed her, but scarcely had they crossed the threshold, when they heard her rap violently at the door of the school-room, and Ulrich asking: "What is it?"

"Open the door!"

Soon after, with pallid face and throbbing heart, he was standing before the others, asking: "What am I to do?"

"Save your master!" cried Sophonisba. "Are you a contemptible Wight, or does a true artist's heart beat in your breast? Would you fear to go, perhaps to your death, for this imperilled man?"

"No, no!" cried the youth as joyously as if a hundred-pound weight had been lifted from his breast. "If it costs my life, so much the better! Here I am! Post me where you please, do with me as you will! He has given me everything, and I—I have betrayed him. I must confess, even if you kill me! I gossiped, babbled—like a fool, a child—about what I accidentally saw here yesterday. It is my fault, mine, if they pursue him. Forgive me, master, forgive me! Do with me what you will. Beat me, slay me, and I will bless you."

As he uttered the last words, the young artist, raising his clasped hands imploringly, fell on his knees before his beloved teacher. Moor bent towards him, saying with grave kindness:

"Rise, poor lad. I am not angry with you."

When Ulrich again stood before him, he kissed his forehead and continued:

"I have not been mistaken in you. Do you, Don Fabrizio, recommend Navarrete to the Marquesa's protection, and tell him what we desire. It would scarcely redound to his happiness, if the deed, for which my imprudence and his thoughtlessness are to blame, should be revenged on me. It comforts us to atone for a wrong. Whether you save me, Ulrich, or I perish—no matter; you are and always will be, my dear, faithful friend."

Ulrich threw himself sobbing on the artist's breast, and when he learned what was required of him, fairly glowed with delight and eagerness for action; he thought no greater joy could befall him than to die for the Master.

As the bell of the palace-chapel was ringing for evening service, Sophonisba was obliged to leave her friend; for it was her duty to attend the nocturnus with the queen.

Don Fabrizio turned away, while she bade Moor farewell.

"If you desire my happiness, make him happy," the artist whispered; but she could find no words to reply, and only nodded silently.

He drew her gently towards him, kissed her brow, and said: "There is a hard and yet a consoling word Love is divine; but still more divine is sacrifice. To-day I am both your friend and father. Remember me to your sisters. God bless you, child!"

"And you, you!" sobbed the girl.

Never had any human being prayed so fervently for another's welfare in the magnificent chapel of the Alcazar, as did Sophonisba Anguisciola on this evening. Don Fabrizio's betrothed bride also pleaded for peace and calmness in her own heart, for power to forget and to do her duty.

CHAPTER XIX.

Half an hour before midnight Moor entered the calash, and Ulrich Navarrete mounted the white Andalusian.

The artist, deeply agitated, had already taken leave of his protege in the studio, had given him a purse of gold for his travelling-expenses and any other wants, and told him that he would always find with him in Flanders a home, a father, love, and instruction in his art.

The painter alighted before Don Fabrizio's palace; a short time after Ulrich noisily drew the leather curtain before the partition of the calash, and then called to the coachman, who had often driven Moor when he was unexpectedly summoned to one of the king's pleasure-palaces at night: "Go ahead!"

They were stopped at the gate, but the guards knew the favorite's calash and fair-haired pupil, and

granted the latter the escort he asked for his master. So they went forward; at first rapidly, then at a pace easy for the horses. He told the coachman that Moor had alighted at the second station, and would ride with His Majesty to Avila, where he wished to find the carriage.

During the whole way, Ulrich thought little of himself, and all the more of the master. If the pursuers had set out the morning after the departure, and followed him instead of Don Fabrizio's party, Moor might now be safe. He knew the names of the towns on the road to Valencia and thought: "Now he may be here, now he may be there, now he must be approaching Tarancon."

In the evening the calash reached the famous stronghold of Avila where, according to the agreement, Ulrich was to leave the carriage and try to make his own escape. The road led through the town, which was surrounded by high walls and deep ditches. There was no possibility of going round it, yet the drawbridges were already raised and the gates locked, so he boldly called the warder and showed his passport.

An officer asked to see the artist. Ulrich said that he would follow him; but the soldier was not satisfied, and ordered him to alight and accompany him to the commandant.

Ulrich struck his spurs into the Andalusian's flanks and tried to go back over the road by which he had come; but the horse had scarcely begun to gallop, when a shot was fired, that stretched it on the ground. The rider was dragged into the guard-house as a prisoner, and subjected to a severe examination.

He was suspected of having murdered Moor and of having stolen his money, for a purse filled with ducats was found on his person. While he was being fettered, the pursuers reached Avila.

A new examination began, and now trial followed trial, torture, torture.

Even at Avila a sack was thrown over his head, and only opened, when to keep him alive, he was fed with bread and water. Firmly bound in a two-wheeled cart, drawn by mules, he was dragged over stock and stones to Madrid.

Often, in the darkness, oppressed for breath, jolted, bruised, unable to control his thoughts, or even his voice, he expected to perish; yet no fainting-fit, no moment of utter unconsciousness pityingly came to his relief, far less did any human heart have compassion on his suffering.

At last, at last he was unbound, and led, still with his head covered, into a small, dark room.

Here he was released from the sack, but again loaded with chains.

When he was left alone and had regained the capacity to think, he felt convinced that he was in one of the dungeons of the Inquisition. Here were the damp walls, the wooden bench, the window in the ceiling, of which he had heard. He was soon to learn that he had judged correctly.

His body was granted a week's rest, but during this horrible week he did not cease to upbraid himself as a traitor, and execrate the fate which had used him a second time to hurl a friend and benefactor into ruin. He cursed himself, and when he thought of the "word" "fortune, fortune!" he gnashed his teeth scornfully and clenched his fist.

His young soul was darkened, embittered, thrown off its balance. He saw no deliverance, no hope, no consolation. He tried to pray, to God, to Jesus Christ, to the Virgin, to the Saints; but they all stood before him, in a vision, with lifeless features and paralyzed arms. For him, who had relied on "Fortune," and behaved like a fool, they felt no pity, no compassion, they would not lend their aid.

But soon his former energy returned and with it the power to lift his soul in prayer. He regained them during the torture, on the rack.

Weeks, months elapsed. Ulrich still remained in the gloomy cell, loaded with chains, scantily fed on bread and water, constantly looking death in the face; but a fresh, beautiful spirit of defiance and firm determination to live animated the youth, who was now at peace with himself. On the rack he had regained the right to respect himself, and striven to win the master's praise, the approval of the living and his beloved dead.

The wounds on his poor, crushed, mangled hands and feet still burned. The physician had seen them, and when they healed, shook his head in amazement.

Ulrich rejoiced in his scars, for on the rack and in the Spanish boot, on nails, and the pointed bench, in the iron necklace and with the stifling helmet on his head, he had resolutely refused to betray through whom and whither the master had escaped.

They might come back, burn and spear him; but through him they should surely learn nothing, nothing at all. He was scarcely aware that he had a right to forgiveness; yet he felt he had atoned.

Now he could think of the past again. The Holy Virgin once more wore his lost mother's features; his father, Ruth, Pellicanus, Moor looked kindly at him. But the brightest light shone into his soul through the darkness of the dungeon, when he thought of art and his last work. It stood before him distinctly in brilliant hues, feature for feature, as on the canvas; he esteemed himself happy in having painted it, and would willingly have gone to the rack once, twice, thrice, if he could merely have obtained the certainty of creating other pictures like this, and perhaps still nobler, more beautiful ones.

Art! Art! Perhaps this was the "word," and if not, it was the highest, most exquisite, most precious thing in life, beside which everything else seemed small, pitiful and insipid. With what other word could God have created the world, human beings, animals, and plants? The doctor had often called every flower, every beetle, a work of art, and Ulrich now understood his meaning, and could imagine how the Almighty, with the thirst for creation and plastic hand of the greatest of all artists had formed the gigantic bodies of the stars, had given the sky its glittering blue, had indented and rounded the mountains, had bestowed form and color on everything that runs, creeps, flies, buds and blossoms, and had fashioned man—created in His own image—in the most majestic form of all.

How wonderful the works of God appeared to him in the solitude of the dark dungeon—and if the world was beautiful, was it not the work of His Divine Art!

Heaven and earth knew no word greater, more powerful, more mighty in creating beauty than: Art. What, compared with its gifts, were the miserable, delusive ones of Fortune: gay clothes, spiced dishes, magnificent rooms, and friendly glances from beautiful eyes, that smile on every one who pleases them! He would blow them all into the air, for the assistance of Art in joyous creating. Rather, a thousand times rather, would he beg his bread, and attain great things in Art, than riot and revel in good-fortune.

Colors, colors, canvas, a model like Sophonisba, and success in the realm of Art! It was for these things he longed, these things made him yearn with such passionate eagerness for deliverance, liberty.

Months glided by, maturing Ulrich's mind as rapidly as if they had been years; but his inclination to retire within himself deepened into intense reserve.

At last the day arrived on which, through the influence of the Marquesa Romero, the doors of his dungeon opened.

It was soon after receiving a sharp warning to renounce his obstinacy at the next examination, that the youth was suddenly informed that he was free. The jailer took off his fetters, and helped him exchange his prison garb for the dress he had worn when captured; then disguised men threw a sack over his head and led him up and down stairs and across pavements, through dust and grass, into the little court-yard of a deserted house in the suburbs. There they left him, and he soon released his head from its covering.

How delicious God's free air seemed, as his chest heaved with grateful joy! He threw out his arms like a bird stretching its wings to fly, then he clasped his hands over his brow, and at last, as if a second time pursued, rushed out of the court-yard into the street. The passers-by looked after him, shaking their heads, and he certainly presented a singular spectacle, for the dress in which he had fled many months before, had sustained severe injuries on the journey from Avila; his hat was lost on the way, and had not been replaced by a new one. The cuffs and collar, which belonged to his doublet, were missing, and his thick, fair hair hung in dishevelled locks over his neck and temples; his full, rosy cheeks had grown thin, his eyes seemed to have enlarged, and during his imprisonment a soft down had grown on his cheeks and chin.

He was now eighteen, but looked older, and the grave expression on his brow and in his eyes, gave him the appearance of a man.

He had rushed straight forward, without asking himself whither; now he reached a busy street and checked his career. Was he in Madrid? Yes, for there rose the blue peaks of the Guadarrama chain, which he knew well. There were the little trees at which the denizen of the Black Forest had often smiled, but which to-day looked large and stately. Now a toreador, whom he had seen more than once in the arena, strutted past. This was the gate, through which he had ridden out of the city beside the master's calash.

He must go into the town, but what should he do there?

Had they restored the master's gold with the clothes?

He searched the pockets, but instead of the purse, found only a few large silver coins, which he knew he had not possessed at the time of his capture.

In a cook-shop behind the gate he enjoyed some meat and wine after his long deprivation, and after reflecting upon his situation he decided to call on Don Fabrizio.

The porter refused him admittance, but after he had mentioned his name, kindly invited him into the porch, and told him that the baron and his wife were in the country with the Marquesa Romero. They were expected back on Tuesday, and would doubtless receive him then, for they had already asked about him several times. The young gentleman probably came from some foreign country; it was the custom to wear hats in Madrid.

Ulrich now noticed what he lacked, but before leaving, to supply the want, asked the porter, if he knew what had become of Master Moor.

Safe! He was safe! Several weeks before Donna Sophonisba had received a letter sent from Flanders, and Ulrich's companion was well informed, for his wife served the baroness as 'doncella'.

Joyously, almost beside himself with pure, heart-cheering delight, the released prisoner hurried away, bought himself a new cap, and then sought the Alcazar.

Before the treasury, in the place of old Santo, Carmen's father, stood a tall, broad portero, still a young man, who rudely refused him admittance.

"Master Moor has not been here for a long time," said the gate-keeper angrily: "Artists don't wear ragged clothes, and if you don't wish to see the inside of a guard-house—a place you are doubtless familiar with—you had better leave at once."

Ulrich answered the gate-keeper's insulting taunts indignantly and proudly, for he was no longer the yielding boy of former days, and the quarrel soon became serious.

Just then a dainty little woman, neatly dressed for the evening promenade, with the mantilla on her curls, a pomegranate blossom in her hair, and another on her bosom, came out of the Alcazar. Waving her fan, and tripping over the pavement like a wag-tail, she came directly towards the disputants.

Ulrich recognized her instantly; it was Carmen, the pretty embroiderer of the shell-grotto in the park, now the wife of the new porter, who had obtained his dead predecessor's office, as well as his daughter.

"Carmen!" exclaimed Ulrich, as soon as he saw the pretty little woman, then added confidently. "This young lady knows me."

"I?" asked the young wife, turning up her pretty little nose, and looking at the tall youth's shabby costume. "Who are you?"

"Master Moor's pupil, Ulrich Navarrete; don't you remember me?"

"I? You must be mistaken!"

With these words she shut her fan so abruptly, that it snapped loudly, and tripped on.

Ulrich shrugged his shoulders, then turned to the porter more courteously, and this time succeeded in his purpose; for the artist Coello's body-servant came out of the treasury, and willingly announced him to his master, who now, as court-artist, occupied Moor's quarters.

Ulrich followed the friendly Pablo into the palace, where every step he mounted reminded him of his old master and former days.

When he at last stood in the anteroom, and the odor of the fresh oil- colors, which were being ground in an adjoining room, reached his nostrils, he inhaled it no less eagerly than, an hour before, he had breathed the fresh air, of which he had been so long deprived.

What reception could he expect? The court-artist might easily shrink from coming in contact with the pupil of Moor, who had now lost the sovereign's favor. Coello was a very different man from the Master, a child of the moment, varying every day. Sometimes haughty and repellent, on other occasions a gay, merry companion, who had jested with his own children and Ulrich also, as if all were on the same footing. If todayBut Ulrich did not have much time for such reflections; a few minutes after Pablo left, the door was torn open, and the whole Coello family rushed joyously to meet him; Isabella first. Sanchez followed close behind her, then came the artist, next his stout, clumsy wife, whom Ulrich had rarely seen, because she usually spent the whole day lying on a couch with her lap-dog. Last of all

appeared the duenna Catalina, a would-be sweet smile hovering around her lips.

The reception given him by the others was all the more joyous and cordial.

Isabella laid her hands on his arm, as if she wanted to feel that it was really he; and yet, when she looked at him more closely, she shook her head as if there was something strange in his appearance. Sanchez embraced him, whirling him round and round, Coello shook hands, murmuring many kind words, and the mother turned to the duenna, exclaiming:

"Holy Virgin! what has happened to the pretty boy? How famished he looks! Go to the kitchen instantly, Catalina, and tell Diego to bring him food—food and drink."

At last they all pulled and pushed him into the sitting-room, where the mother immediately threw herself on the couch again; then the others questioned him, making him tell them how he had fared, whence he came, and many other particulars.

He was no longer hungry, but Senora Petra insisted upon his seating himself near her couch and eating a capon, while he told his story.

Every face expressed sympathy, approval, pity, and at last Coello said:

"Remain here, Navarrete. The king longs for Moor, and you will be as safe with us, as if you were in Abraham's lap. We have plenty for you to do. You come to me as opportunely, as if you had dropped from the skies. I was just going to write to Venice for an assistant. Holy Jacob! You can't stay so, but thanks to the Madonna and Moor, you are not poor. We have ample means, my young sir. Donna Sophonisba gave me a hundred zechins for you; they are lying in yonder chest, and thank Heaven, haven't grown impatient by waiting. They are at your disposal. Your master, my master, the noble master of all portrait-painters, our beloved Moor arranged it. You won't go about the streets in this way any longer. Look, Isabella; this sleeve is hanging by two strings, and the elbow is peering out of the window. Such a dress is airy enough, certainly. Take him to the tailor's at once, Sanchez, Oliverio, or..... but no, no; we'll all stay together to-day. Herrera is coming from the Escorial. You will endure the dress for the sake of the wearer, won't you, ladies? Besides, who is to choose the velvet and cut for this young dandy? He always wore something unusual. I can still see the master's smile, provoked by some of the lad's new contrivances in puffs and slashes. It is pleasant to have you here, my boy! I ought to slay a calf, as the father did for the prodigal son; but we live in miniature. Instead of neat-cattle, only a capon!...."

"But you're not drinking, you're not drinking! Isabella, fill his glass. Look! only see these scars on his hands and neck. It will need a great deal of lace to conceal them. No, no, they are marks of honor, you must show them. Come here, I will kiss this great scar, on your neck, my brave, faithful fellow, and some day a fair one will follow my example. If Antonio were only here! There's a kiss for him, and another, there, there. Art bestows it, Art, for whom you have saved Moor!"

A master's kiss in the name of Art! It was sweeter than the beautiful Carmen's lips!

Coello was himself an artist, a great painter! Where could his peers be found—or those of Moor, and the architect Herrera, who entered soon after. Only those, who consecrated their lives to Art, the word of words, could be so noble, cheerful, kind.

How happy he was when he went to bed! how gratefully he told his beloved dead, in spirit, what had fallen to his lot, and how joyously he could pray!

The next morning he went with a full purse into the city, returning elegantly dressed, and with neatly-arranged locks. The peinador had given his budding moustache a bold twist upward.

He still looked thin and somewhat awkward, but the tall youth promised to become a stately man.

CHAPTER XX.

Towards noon Coello called Ulrich into Moor's former studio; the youth could not fail to observe its altered appearance.

Long cartoons, containing sketches of figures, large paintings, just commenced or half-finished, leaned against the easels; mannikins, movable wooden horse's heads, and plaster-models stood on the floor, the tables, and in the windows. Stuffs, garments, tapestries, weapons hung over the backs of the chairs, or lay on chests, tables and the stone-floor. Withered laurel-wreaths, tied with long ribbons, fluttered over the mantel-piece; one had fallen, dropped over the bald head of Julius Caesar, and rested on the breast.

The artist's six cats glided about among the easels, or stretched their limbs on costly velvet and Arabian carpets.

In one corner stood a small bed with silk curtains—the nursery of the master's pets. A magnificent white cat was suckling her kittens in it.

Two blue and yellow cockatoos and several parrots swung screaming in brass hoops before the open window, and Coello's coal-black negro crept about, cleaning the floor of the spacious apartment, though it was already noon. While engaged in this occupation, he constantly shook his woolly head, displaying his teeth, for his master was singing loudly at his work, and the gaily-clad African loved music.

What a transformation had taken place in the Netherlander's quiet, orderly, scrupulously neat studio! But, even amid this confusion, admirable works were created; nay, the Spaniard possessed a much more vivid imagination, and painted pictures, containing a larger number of figures and far more spirited than Moor's, though they certainly were not pervaded by the depth and earnestness, the marvellous fidelity to nature, that characterized those of Ulrich's beloved master.

Coello called the youth to the easel, and pointing to the sketches in color, containing numerous figures, on which he was painting, said:

"Look here, my son. This is to be a battle of the Centaurs, these are Parthian horsemen;—Saint George and the Dragon, and the Crusaders are not yet finished. The king wants the Apocalyptic riders too. Deuce take it! But it must be done. I shall commence them to-morrow. They are intended for the walls and ceiling of the new winter riding-school. One person gets along slowly with all this stuff, and I—I....The orders oppress me. If a man could only double, quadruple himself! Diana of Ephesus had many breasts, and Cerberus three heads, but only two hands have grown on my wrists. I need help, and you are just the person to give it. You have had nothing to do with horses yet, Isabella tells me; but you are half a Centaur yourself. Set to work on the steeds now, and when you have progressed far enough, you shall transfer these sketches to the ceiling and walls of the riding-school. I will help you perfect the thing, and give it the finishing touch."

This invitation aroused more perplexity than pleasure in Ulrich's mind, for it was not in accordance with Moor's opinions. Fear of his fellow-men no longer restrained him, so he frankly said that he would rather sketch industriously from nature, and perhaps would do well to seek Moor in Flanders. Besides, he was afraid that Coello greatly overrated his powers.

But the Spaniard eagerly cut him short:

"I have seen your portrait of Sophonisba. You are no longer a pupil, but a rising artist. Moor is a peerless portrait-painter, and you have profited greatly by his teaching. But Art has still higher aims. Every living thing belongs to her. The Venus, the horse....which of those two pictures won Apelles the greater fame? Not only copying, but creating original ideas, leads to the pinnacle of art. Moor praised your vivid imagination. We must use what we possess. Remember Buonarrotti, Raphael! Their compositions and frescos, have raised their names above all others. Antonio has tormented you sufficiently with drawing lifeless things. When you transfer these sketches, many times enlarged, to a broad surface, you will learn more than in years of copying plaster-casts. A man must have talent, courage and industry; everything else comes of its own accord, and thank Heaven, you're a lucky fellow! Look at my horses— they are not so bad, yet I never sketched a living one in my life till I was commissioned to paint His Majesty on horseback. You shall have a better chance. Go to the stables and the old riding-school to-morrow. First try noble animals, then visit the market and shambles, and see how the knackers look. If you make good speed, you shall soon see the first ducats you yourself have earned." The golden reward possessed little temptation for Ulrich, but he allowed himself to be persuaded by his senior, and drew and painted horses and mares with pleasure and success, working with Isabella and Coello's pupil, Felice de Liano, when they sketched and painted from living models. When the scaffolding was erected in the winter riding-school, he went there under the court-artist's direction, to measure, arrange and finally transfer the painter's sketches to the wide surfaces.

He did this with increasing satisfaction, for though Coello's sketches possessed a certain hardness, they were boldly devised and pleased him.

The farther he progressed, the more passionately interested he became in his work. To create on a grand scale delighted him, and the fully occupied life, as well as the slight fatigue after his work was done, which was sweetened by the joy of labor accomplished, were all beautiful, enjoyable things; yet Ulrich felt that this was not exactly the right course, that a steeper, more toilsome path must lead to the height he desired to attain.

He lacked the sharp spurring to do better and better, the censure of a master, who was greatly his superior. Praise for things, which did not satisfy himself, vexed him and roused his distrust.

Isabella, and—after his return—Sophonisba, were his confidantes.

The former had long felt what he now expressed. Her young heart clung to him, but she loved in him the future great artist as much as the man. It was certainly no light matter for her to be deprived of Ulrich's society, yet she unselfishly admitted that her father, in the vast works he had undertaken, could not be a teacher like Moor, and it would probably be best for him to seek his old master in Flanders, as soon as his task in the riding-school was completed.

She said this, because she believed it to be her duty, though sadly and anxiously; but he joyously agreed with her, for Sophonisba had handed him a letter from the master, in which the latter cordially invited him to come to Antwerp.

Don Fabrizio's wife summoned him to her palace, and Ulrich found her as kind and sympathizing as when she had been a girl, but her gay, playful manner had given place to a more quiet dignity.

She wished to be told in detail all he had suffered for Moor, how he employed himself, what he intended to do in the future; and she even sought him more than once in the riding-school, watched him at his work, and examined his drawings and sketches.

Once she induced him to tell her the story of his youth.

This was a boon to Ulrich; for, although we keep our best treasures most closely concealed, yet our happiest hours are those in which, with the certainty of being understood, we are permitted to display them.

The youth could show this noble woman, this favorite of the Master, this artist, what he would not have confided to any man, so he permuted her to behold his childhood, and gaze deep into his soul.

He did not even hide what he knew about the "word"—that he believed he had found the right one in the dungeon, and that Art would remain his guiding star, as long as he lived.

Sophonisba's cheeks flushed deeper and deeper, and never had he seen her so passionately excited, so earnest and enthusiastic, as now when she exclaimed:

"Yes, Ulrich, yes! You have found the right word!

"It is Art, and no other. Whoever knows it, whoever serves it, whoever impresses it deeply on his soul and only breathes and moves in it, no longer has any taint of baseness; he soars high above the earth, and knows nothing of misery and death. It is with Art the Divinity bridges space and descends to man, to draw him up ward to brighter worlds. This word transfigures everything, and brings fresh green shoots even from the dry wood of souls defrauded of love and hope. Life is a thorny rose-bush, and Art its flower. Here Mirth is melancholy—Joy is sorrowful and Liberty is dead. Here Art withers and—like an exotic—is prevented perishing outright only by artificial culture. But there is a land, I know it well, for it is my home—where Art buds and blossoms and throws its shade over all the highways. Favorite of Antonio, knight of the Word—you must go to Italy!"

Sophonisba had spoken. He must go to Italy. The home of Titian! Raphael! Buonarrotti! where also the Master went to school.

"Oh, Word, Word!" he cried exultingly in his heart. "What other can disclose, even on earth, such a glimpse of the joys of Paradise."

When he left Sophonisba, he felt as if he were intoxicated.

What still detained him in Madrid?

Moor's zechins were not yet exhausted, and he was sure of the assistance of the "word" upon the sacred soil of Italy.

He unfolded his plan to Coello without delay, at first modestly, then firmly and defiantly. But the court-artist would not let him go. He knew how to maintain his composure, and even admitted that

Ulrich must travel, but said it was still too soon. He must first finish the work he had undertaken in the riding-school, then he himself would smooth the way to Italy for him. To leave him, so heavily burdened, in the lurch now, would be treating him ungratefully and basely.

Ulrich was forced to acknowledge this, and continued to paint on the scaffold, but his pleasure in creating was spoiled. He thought of nothing but Italy.

Every hour in Madrid seemed lost. His lofty purposes were unsettled, and he began to seek diversion for his mind, especially at the fencing-school with Sanchez Coello.

His eye was keen, his wrist pliant, and his arm was gaining more and more of his father's strength, so he soon performed extraordinary feats.

His remarkable skill, his reserved nature, and the natural charm of his manner soon awakened esteem and regard among the young Spaniards, with whom he associated.

He was invited to the banquets given by the wealthier ones, and to join the wild pranks, in which they sometimes indulged, but spite of persuasions and entreaties, always in vain.

Ulrich needed no comrades, and his zechins were sacred to him; he was keeping them for Italy.

The others soon thought him an odd, arrogant fellow, with whom no friendly ties could be formed, and left him to his own resources. He wandered about the streets at night alone, serenaded fair ladies, and compelled many gentlemen, who offended him, to meet him in single combat.

No one, not even Sanchez Coello, was permitted to know of these nocturnal adventures; they were his chief pleasure, stirred his blood, and gave him the blissful consciousness of superior strength.

This mode of life increased his self-confidence, and expressed itself in his bearing, which gained a touch of the Spanish air. He was now fully grown, and when he entered his twentieth year, was taller than most Castilians, and carried his head as high as a grandee.

Yet he was dissatisfied with himself, for he made slow progress in his art, and cherished the firm conviction that there was nothing more for him to learn in Madrid; Coello's commissions were robbing him of the most precious time.

The work in the riding-school was at last approaching completion. It had occupied far more than the year in which it was to have been finished, and His Majesty's impatience had become so great, that Coello was compelled to leave everything else, to paint only there, and put his improving touches to Ulrich's labor.

The time for departure was drawing near. The hanging-scaffold, on which he had lain for months, working on the master's pictures, had been removed, but there was still something to be done to the walls.

Suddenly the court-artist was ordered to suspend the work, and have the beams, ladders and boards, which narrowed the space in the picadero,— [Riding School]—removed.

The large enclosure was wanted during the next few days for a special purpose, and there were new things for Coello to do.

Don Juan of Austria, the king's chivalrous half-brother, had commenced his heroic career, and vanquished the rebellious Moors in Granada. A magnificent reception was to be prepared for the young conqueror, and Coello received the commission to adorn a triumphal arch with hastily- sketched, effective pictures.

The designs were speedily completed, and the triumphal arch erected in a court-yard of the Alcazar, for here, within the narrow circle of the court, not publicly, before the whole population, had the suspicious monarch resolved to receive and honor the victor.

Ulrich had again assisted Coello in the execution of his sketches. Everything was finished at the right time, and Don Juan's reception brilliantly carried out with great pomp and dignity, through the whole programme of a Te Deum and three services, processions, bull-fights, a grand 'Auto-da-fe', and a tournament.

After this festival, the king again resigned the riding-school to the artists, who instantly set to work. Everything was finished except the small figures at the bottom of the larger pictures, and these could be executed without scaffolding.

Ulrich was again standing on the ladder, for the first time after this interruption, and Coello had just

followed him into the picadero, when a great bustle was heard outside.

The broad doors flew open, and the manege was soon filled with knights and ladies on foot and horseback.

The most brilliant figures in all the stately throng were Don Juan himself, and his youthful nephew, Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma.

Ulrich feasted his eyes on the splendid train, and the majestic, haughty, yet vivacious manner of the conqueror.

Never in his life, he thought, had he seen a more superb youthful figure. Don Juan stopped directly opposite to him, and bared his head. The thick, fair hair brushed back behind his ears, hung in wonderfully soft, waving locks down to his neck, and his features blended feminine grace with manly vigor.

As, hat in hand, he swung himself from the saddle, unassisted, to greet the fair duchess of Medina Celi, there was such a charm in his movements, that the young artist felt inclined to believe all the tales related of the successful love affairs of this favorite of fortune, who was the son of the Emperor Charles, by a German washerwoman.

Don Juan graciously requested his companion to retire to the back of the manege, assisted the ladies from their saddles and, offering his hand to the duchess, led her to the dais, then returning to the ring, he issued some orders to the mounted officers in his train, and stood conversing with the ladies, Alexander Farnese, and the grandees near him.

Loud shouts and the tramp of horses hoofs were now heard outside of the picadero, and directly after nine bare-backed horses were led into the ring, all selected animals of the best blood of the Andalusian breed, the pearls of all the horses Don Juan had captured.

Exclamations and cries of delight echoed through the building, growing louder and warmer, when the tenth and last prize, a coal-black young stallion, dragged the sinewy Moors that led him, into the ring, and rearing lifted them into the air with him.

The brown-skinned young fellows resisted bravely; but Don Juan turning to Alexander Farnese, said: "What a superb animal! but alas, alas, he has a devilish temper, so we have called him Satan. He will bear neither saddle nor rider. How dare I venture....there he rears again....It is quite impossible to offer him to His Majesty. Just look at those eyes, those crimson nostrils. A perfect monster!"

"But there cannot be a more beautiful creature!" cried the prince, warmly. "That shining black coat, the small head, the neck, the croup, the carriage of his tail, the fetlocks and hoofs. Oh, oh, that was serious!" The vicious stallion had reared for the third time, pawing wildly with his fore-legs, and in so doing struck one of the Moors. Shrieking and wailing, the latter fell on the ground, and directly after the animal released itself from the second groom, and now dashed freely, with mighty leaps, around the course, rushing hither and thither as if mad, kicking furiously, and hurling sand and dust into the faces of the ladies on the dais. The latter shrieked loudly, and their screams increased the animal's furious excitement. Several gentlemen drew back, and the master of the horse loudly ordered the other barebacked steeds to be led away.

Don Juan and Alexander Farnese stood still; but the former drew his sword, exclaiming, vehemently:

"Santiago! I'll kill the brute!"

He was not satisfied with words, but instantly rushed upon the stallion; the latter avoiding him, bounded now backward, now sideways, at every fresh leap throwing sand upon the dais.

Ulrich could remain on the ladder no longer.

Fully aware of his power over refractory horses, he boldly entered the ring and walked quietly towards the snorting, foaming steed. Driving the animal back, and following him, he watched his opportunity, and as Satan turned, reached his side and boldly seized his nostrils firmly with his hand.

Satan plunged more and more furiously, but the smith's son held him as firmly as if in a vise, breathed into his nostrils, and stroked his head and muzzle, whispering soothing words.

The animal gradually became quieter, tried once more to release himself from his tamer's iron hand, and when he again failed, began to tremble and meekly stood still with his fore legs stretched far apart.

"Bravo! Bravamente!" cried the duchess, and praise from such lips intoxicated Ulrich. The impulse to

make a display, inherited from his mother, urged him to take still greater risks. Carefully winding his left hand in the stallion's mane, he released his nostrils and swung himself on his back. Taken by surprise Satan tried to rid himself of his burden, but the rider sat firm, leaned far over the steed's neck, stroked—his head again, pressed his flanks and, after the lapse of a few minutes, guided him merely by the pressure of his thighs first at a walk, then at a trot over the track. At last springing off, he patted Satan, who pranced peacefully beside him, and led him by the bridle to Don Juan.

The latter measured the tall, brave fellow with a hasty glance, and turning, half to him, half to Alexander Farnese, said:

"An enviable trick, and admirable performance, by my love!"

Then he approached the stallion, stroked and patted his shining neck, and continued:

"I thank you, young man. You have saved my best horse. But for you I should have stabbed him. You are an artist?"

"At your service, Your Highness."

"Your art is beautiful, and you alone know how it suits you. But much honor, perhaps also wealth and fame, can be gained among my troopers. Will you enlist?"

"No, Your Highness," replied Ulrich, with a low bow. "If I were not an artist, I should like best to be a soldier; but I cannot give up my art."

"Right, right! Yet....do you think your cure of Satan will be lasting; or will the dance begin again tomorrow?"

"Perhaps so; but grant me a week, Your Highness, and the swarthy fellows can easily manage him. An hour's training like this every morning, and the work will be accomplished. Satan will scarcely be transformed into an angel, but probably will become a perfectly steady horse."

"If you succeed," replied Don Juan, joyously, "you will greatly oblige me. Come to me next week. If you bring good tidings.... consider meantime, how I can serve you."

Ulrich did not need to consider long. A week would pass swiftly, and then—then the king's brother should send him to Italy. Even his enemies knew that he was liberal and magnanimous.

The week passed away, the horse was tamed and bore the saddle quietly. Don Juan received Ulrich's petition kindly, and invited him to make the journey on the admiral's galley, with the king's ambassador and his secretary, de Soto.

The very same day the happy artist obtained a bill of exchange on a house on the Rialto, and now it was settled, he was going to Italy.

Coello was obliged to submit, and his kind heart again showed itself; for he wrote letters of introduction for Ulrich to his old artist friends in Venice, and induced the king to send the great Titian a present—which the ambassador was to deliver. The court-artist obtained from the latter a promise to present his pupil Navarrete to the grey-haired prince of artists.

Everything was now ready for departure; Ulrich again packed his belongings in the studio, but with very different feelings from the first time.

He was a man, he now knew what the right "word" was, life lay open before him, and the paradise of Art was about to unclose its gates.

The studies he had finished in Madrid aroused his compassion; in Italy he would first really begin to become an artist: there work must bring him what it had here denied: satisfaction, success! Gay as a boy, half frantic with joy, happiness and expectation, he crushed the sketches, which seemed to him too miserable, into the waste-paper basket with a maul-stick.

During this work of destruction, Isabella entered the room.

She was now sixteen. Her figure had developed early, but remained petite. Large, deep, earnest eyes looked forth from the little round face, and the fresh, tiny mouth could not help pleasing everyone. Her head now reached only to Ulrich's breast, and if he had always treated her like a dear, sensible, clever child, her small stature had certainly been somewhat to blame for it. To-day she was paler than usual and her features were so grave, that the young man asked her in surprise, yet full of sympathy:

"What is the matter, little one? Are you not well?"

"Yes, yes," she answered, quickly, "only I must talk with you once more alone."

"Do you wish to hear my confession, Belita?"

"Cease jesting now. I am no longer a child. My heart aches, and I must not conceal the cause."

"Speak, speak! How you look! One might really be alarmed."

"If I only can! No one here tells you the truth; but I—I love you; so I will do it, ere it is too late. Don't interrupt me now, or I shall lose courage, and I will, I must speak."

"My studies lately have not pleased you; nor me either. Your father...."

"He has led you in false paths, and now you are going to Italy, and when you see what the greatest artists have created, you will wish to imitate them immediately and forget Meister Moor's lessons. I know you, Ulrich, I know it! But I also know something else, and it must now be said frankly. If you allow yourself to be led on to paint pictures, if you do not submit to again become a modest pupil, and honestly torment yourself with studying, you will make no progress, you will never again accomplish a portrait like the one in the old days, like your Sophonisba. You will then be no great artist and you can, you must become one."

"I will, Belita, I will!"

"Well, well; but first be a pupil! If I were in your place, I would, for aught I care, go to Venice and look about me, but from there I would ride to Flanders, to Moor, to the master."

"Give up Italy? Can you be in earnest? Your father, himself, told me, that I....well, yes....in portrait-painting, he too thinks I am no blunderer. Where do the Netherlanders go to learn anything new? To Italy, always to Italy! What do they create in Flanders? Portraits, portraits, nothing more. Moor is great, very great in this department, but I take a very different view of art; it has higher aims. My head is full of plans. Wait, only wait! In Italy I shall learn to fly, and when I have finished my Holy Family and my Temple of Art, with all the skill I intend to attain...."

"Then, then, what will happen then?"

"Then you will perhaps change your opinion and cease your tutoring, once for all. This fault-finding, this warning vexes me. It spoils my pleasure, it clouds my fancy. You are poisoning my happiness, you—you....the croaker's voice is disagreeable to me."

Isabella sadly bent her head in silence. Ulrich approached her, saying:

"I do not wish to wound you, Belita; indeed, I do not. You mean well, and you love me, a poor forsaken fellow; do you not, little girl?"

"Yes, Ulrich, and that is just why I have told you what I think. You are rejoicing now in the thought of Italy...."

"Very, very much, unspeakably! There, too, I will remember you, and what a dear, faithful, wise little creature you are. Let us part in friendship, Isabella. Come with me; that would be the best way!"

The young girl flushed deeply, and made no answer except: "How gladly I would!"

The words sounded so affectionate and came so tenderly from the inmost depths of the heart, that they entered his soul. And while she spoke, her eyes gazed so faithfully, lovingly, and yearningly into his, that he saw nothing else. He read in them love, true, self-sacrificing love; not like pretty Carmen's or that given by the ladies, who had thrown flowers to him from their balconies. His heart swelled, and when he saw how the flush on Isabella's dear face deepened under his answering glance, unspeakable gratitude and joy seized upon him, and he could not help clasping her in his arms and drawing her into his embrace.

She permitted it, and when she looked up at him and her soft scarlet lips, from which gleamed two rows of dazzling white teeth, bloomed temptingly near him, he bent his, he knew not how, towards them. They kissed each other again and again, and Isabella flung her little hands around his neck, for she could not reach him with her arms, and said she had always loved him; he assured her in an agitated voice that he believed it, and that there was no better, sweeter, brighter creature on earth than she; only he forgot to say that he loved her. She gave, he received, and it seemed to him natural.

She saw and felt nothing except him and her happiness; he was wholly absorbed by the bliss of being loved and the sweetness of her kiss; so neither noticed that Coello had opened the door and watched them for a minute, with mingled wrath and pleasure, irresolutely shaking his head.

When the court-artist's deep voice exclaimed loudly:

"Why, why, these are strange doings!" they hastily started back.

Startled, sobered, confused, Ulrich sought for words, and at last stammered:

"We have, we wanted...the farewell... Coello found no time to interrupt him, for his daughter had thrown herself on his breast, exclaiming amid tears:

"Forgive us, father-forgive us; he loves me, and I, I love him so dearly, and now that we belong to each other, I am no longer anxious about him, he will not rest, and when he returns..."

"Enough, enough!" interrupted Coello, pressing his hand upon her mouth. "That is why a duenna is kept for the child; and this is my sensible Belita! It is of no importance, that yonder youth has nothing, I myself courted your mother with only three reales in my pocket, but he cannot yet do any really good work, and that alters the case. It is not my way to dun debtors, I have been in debt too often myself for that; but you, Navarrete, have received many favors from me, when you were badly off, and if you are not a scamp, leave the girl in peace and do not see her again before your departure. When you have studied in Italy and become a real artist, the rest will take care of itself. You are already a handsome, well-formed fellow, and my race will not degenerate in you. There are very different women in Italy, from this dear little creature here. Shut your eyes, and beware of breaking her heart. Your promise! Your hand upon it! In a year and a half from to-day come here again, show what you can do, and stand the test. If you have become what I hope, I'll give her to you; if not, you can quietly go your way. You will make no objection to this, you silly little, love-sick thing. Go to your room now, Belita, and you, Navarrete, come with me."

Ulrich followed the artist to his chamber, where the latter opened a chest, in which lay the gold he had earned. He did not know himself, how much it was, for it was neither counted, nor entered in books. Grasping the ducats, he gave Ulrich two handfuls, exclaiming:

"This one is for your work here, the other to relieve you from any care concerning means of living, while pursuing your studies in Venice and Florence. Don't make the child wretched, my lad; if you do, you will be a contemptible, dishonorable rascal, a scoundrel, a... but you don't look like a rogue!"

There was a great deal of bustle in Coello's house that evening. The artist's indolent wife was unusually animated. She could not control her surprise and wrath. Isabella had been from childhood a great favorite of Herrera, the first architect in Spain, who had already expressed his love for the young girl, and now this vagabond pauper, this immature boy, had come to destroy the prosperity of her child's life.

She upbraided Coello with being faithless to his paternal duty, and called him a thoughtless booby. Instead of turning the ungrateful rascal out of the house, he, the dunce, had given him hopes of becoming her poor, dazzled, innocent daughter's husband. During the ensuing weeks, Senora Petra prepared Coello many bad days and still worse nights; but the painter persisted in his resolution to give Isabella to Ulrich, if in a year and a half he returned from Italy a skilful artist.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Among fools one must be a fool

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