

CHAPTER IV

The Baroness Ingersdorf was a passionate admirer of the arts; and her mornings were usually passed in a magnificent salon, denominated her workroom, to which she admitted only select friends, while she plied the modelling sticks or, the chisel, with equal vileness.

Nothing could be more surprising, than to see her there, surrounded by antique statues of infinite beauty; to hear her descant upon proportion, grace, expression, form; to observe her judging accurately of others performances, even at the time in which she was shaping some hideous mass, out of clay or marble, calling it a bust, and looking at it, with exultation.

Charles pretended to no skill in modelling; but he drew like a master; and his spirited sketches, were often made in the workroom of the Baroness. It was her passion to have him drawing near her, while she was engaged on some piece of sculpture, and Demetrius singing or reading by snatches, as the momentary humour dictated.

It is notorious, that a female artist, speaks to a man of his person with the greatest freedom: the Baroness therefore had assured Charles a thousand times, that he had indisputably "The finest head in the world." — "The most noble contour", she had modelled his bust, alternately for an Apollo, a Scipio, a Cyrus; and was now condemning him again to fresh torture, having just discovered that he, his brother, and her niece, would make a glorious group of Hector, Andromache, and Paris.

"I had rather sit on your knee for Astyanax," muttered Demetrius to Adelaide, in a tone of mingled mirth and pique: Demetrius had a bitter contempt for poor Paris: the Baroness overheard him — laughed, and persevered. — Whenever the brothers were not on duty, or engaged in study, they went to Baron Ingersdorf's: perfect liberty was allowed to every one thus domesticated; and if one of them, would but "sit" to the Baroness, the other might converse with Adelaide, while she worked or practised the harp.

So familiarized, Demetrius saw a multitude of charms in Mam'selle de Ingersdorf, which her first impression, had not led him to expect. She was indeed made up of all the gentle elements; and naturally cheerful, displayed a sportive ease in her discourses with him, which she never ventured with Charles. Demetrius admired her so much, that Charles at length felt strangely alarmed and warned him of her engagements: the other jested him on this fear; for he was heartwhole.

The birthday of Adelaide was celebrated by her relations, with great splendour. On the day which made her twenty, all the beauty and fashion of Vienna, were collected to offer congratulations.

The Hungarian brothers, were among the first who entered these gay salons, which were laid out, to represent the gardens of Armida. Bowers of rose and almond trees, groves of orange and myrtle, sheets of mirror so contrived as to appear like water flowing through woody banks and at last lost among their windings, marble fountains, mossy glades, starry lights twinkling through thick foliage, music- breathing from the flutes of unseen performers, distracted admiration, till the Ballroom absorbed every sense.

It was formed into one stupendous grotto, almost blinding the gazer, with its glittering spars, crystals, corals, and alabaster: a choir like that which mens' feeble imagination supposes in Heaven, sang beneath its lofty arch; while perfumes sweet and refreshing, alternately grew and faded upon the air.

For some days before, the brothers had taken no inconsiderable share in assisting the lovely Adelaide to create this scene of enchantment; they consequently, contemplated its effect, with peculiar pleasure: but it was annihilated to Charles, when advancing to Mam'selle de Ingersdorf, he saw on her bosom a miniature of her father, which he had recently copied from a large portrait, and surprised her with, in the morning. This compliment was the more flattering, as it was the only ornament out of many withwhich she had been then presented, that she chose to wear. For a long time, after entering the ballroom nothing was to be heard, save bursts of admiration from the company, which began to crowd the apartments at length Charles and Demetrius (who were talking together among some thick laurels) unintentionally overheard the following sentences.

“And pray tell me, my deargirl who the young officer is, that was disentangling your dress, from a bush, just as I entered? — I never saw so handsome a creature in my life — what love-lighted eyes!”

“Yes, he is very handsome: but surely not so much so as his brother? It was Count Demetrius of Leopoldstat.” The brothers were equally confused at these remarks: each, wandered in his discourse; each, grew scarlet; and each with an agitated heart, moved abruptly away. As Charles did not turn round to discover the speakers, Demetrius dared not: but Charles, knew the voice that had praised him, too well, to require the aid of his eyes; and the first strong pulse of vanity, beating violently in the breast of Demetrius, made him fearful that Charles would discover it, and despise him.

It happened, that as they emerged from the shade, they met the fair speakers. Mam'selle de Ingersdorf introduced Demetrius to Madame de Fontainville, in a manner which showed her unconscious of what she was doing: for certain that she must have been overheard, she now talked as much incoherent nonsense, as the brothers had done, a moment before. Charles was so absorbed in wondering at, and detesting the vanity, to which he attributed his present delirium, that he neglected to observe Demetrius, when he first beheld the Beauty of Vienna; and poor Demetrius, was already “Gone ages in love.” —

A Mussulman might have been excused, had he taken Madame de Fontainville for one of the Houries — Her skin was of a dazzling whiteness, which gradually kindled into a rich crimson upon her cheek: her large, soft, black eyes, were half closed beneath brows of the finest arch; and her small, vermilion mouth, lost itself in dimples. To this was added a figure, which had attained that luxuriant perfection of shape and fullness, scarcely desirable at three and twenty ; for even the admirers of dimpled hands and shoulders, must foresee, that such beauty, (like a rose prematurely blown which scatters its leaves, as quickly as it expanded them) will shortly lose its exquisiteness. A robe of black velvet, and a profusion of very rich pearls amongst her silken hair, seemed purposely chosen, as if the wearer meant at once to contrast and match her own delicate whiteness.

While every gazer did homage to such a world of perfection, the heart of Charles secretly worshipped that very bashfulness which obscured the lovely Adelaide. Her soft olive complexion, though warm with native bloom, was less dazzling than if it had been fair; and her uncommonly brilliant eyes, timidly cast upon the ground, lost the advantage of their brightness. A gentle confusion closed those lips, which never parted but to reveal snow-white teeth; and wearing nothing peculiar, drapery simple, yet graceful, she moved under a thin floating veil, without many persons observing that her figure was admirable. Her's were the touching charms of twilight; Madame de Fontainville's, the blaze of day.

It would be vain to describe all the enchanting pleasures which were this night varied to infinity, under the roof of Baron Ingersdorf: everyone seemed to have put on their best humour with their best attire ; and smiling eyes, dimpling cheeks, cheerful voices, united with taste and wealth to leave nothing imperfect.

The supper consisted solely of rare wines, fruits, and delicacies, so shaded by flowers, or formed into such deceptive shapes by moulds of jelly, that nothing gross enough for mortals, was discoverable by the eye: the crystal dishes were made to represent icicles; and the table was spread in a circular room carpeted with green velvet, and transformed by the magic pencil of Charles, into the panorama of an extensive landscape.

During the time of waltzing, Count Leopoldstat saw, with some disquiet, that Demetrius had Madame de Fontainville for a partner, and that the countenances of each were lighted up with unusual animation. When others changed partners, they still danced together: this was observed to him, with great levity, by a young foreigner, and it prompted him to whisper his brother, that it was improper to dance the whole evening with the same lady. Demetrius soon afterwards selected another.

Mam'selle de Ingersdorf had danced only twice; first with one of the Archdukes, and then with Charles: the latter now sat down beside her, to make observations on the company.

“Though I have seen the beautiful De Fontainville, as she is termed, a hundred times,” said he, “I have never asked whether she be wife or widow, German or French: pray, which is she?”

“All of them, I think,” replied Adelaide: “her father is a Frenchman; he was envoy at this court many years, during which he married a Saxon lady, who died in giving birth to their daughter.”

“Well?”

“Well!” re-echoed Adelaide, turning her brilliant eyes with a little archness on him; so, you can find me nothing better to do, in a ballroom, than to give you a history of the prettiest woman in it? However, I’ll satisfy you.

“When her father returned to France, Zaire de Liancour married Monsieur de Fontainville, who, I fear, was never very agreeable to her; for he was a man of violent passions and a narrow mind: he took an active share in the Revolution, and the murder of its august victim; after which, she immediately parted from him. She and her father emigrated in ninety two, and now live here in very good style, upon an estate of her mother’s.”

Charles would scarcely allow Mam’ selle de Ingersdorf to finish this detail; he pleaded her implied rebuke of his want of gallantry, as a reason why she should give him her hand in another dance; protesting that if she had not attributed his forbearance to respectful timidity, she had wronged him so grievously, as to be compelled by justice to make him reparation.

“Well, well,” she replied, (blushing at his earnestness, yet with an increasing gaiety, which spoke increasing pleasure), “if you’ll suffer me to rest awhile, I will repair my fault.”

She then proceeded to inquire the Count’s opinion of Madame de Fontainville’s person.

“I should have admired it a vast deal more,” he said, “had I seen less of it. You smile incredulously — believe me, I don’t say this to compliment you upon a style of dress so opposite; though if I were to say all that I think upon that subject —”

“You shall say nothing about me,” interrupted Adelaide.

Charles smiled and bowed.

“Well then — I think Madame de Fontainville *perfectly beautiful*: but though I confess she does not in the least look as if she were destitute of sense and sensibility, still she does not appear as if she had much of either quality; beauty, faultless beauty, is all that she impresses on one’s mind. I long to see those melting eyes sometimes change their character — to see them look as if she were thinking; to observe her complexion vary a little, awakening that tender

interest which bloom, assailable by sickness and sadness, rouses in the breast of man. I am not to be captivated by mere externals: I prefer eyes that make one forget their brightness in the brighter intellect transmitted through them; cheeks, that grow lovelier while gazed on; and a shape, whose chief graces are displayed by accident. In fact, I am grown so old I believe, as to prefer moral beauty before every other species; and to think no woman lovely, whose countenance does not appear to me 'the transparent covering' of amiable and admirable qualities."

"Ah, then, you would be pleased with Princess Constantia," exclaimed Adelaide. "I hope she will be here to night! So youthful, so pretty, so playful, so endearing, yet so intelligent! Had it not been my fortunate lot to possess her friendship from infancy, I should have desired it passionately, the very first moment I beheld her"

"I have often heard you speak of this charming Princess," observed Charles, "and with such enthusiasm as to thaw a little of my usual indifference to strangers. You expect her tonight, then? I thought she was still in Italy"

"She arrived this morning. But, come!" Adelaide added (with a persuasive smile), "I must not suffer you to retain an unjust opinion of Madame de Fontainville: it is true, I know very little of her; but quite enough to authorise me in chiding your severity. By the way, let me tell you, my worthy friend, that your determined hostility to beauty is a very heinous fault; and that if you continue thus to look at pretty women, with a resolution to find them disagreeable, you will frighten them into being so."

"No such thing, sweet Adelaide," replied Charles, apprehensively hesitating, "the most charming woman I know, is also the most beautiful"

There was an expression in his voice and countenance, as he timidly uttered this heartfelt compliment, which forced Adelaide to apply it properly : she affected to treat it with levity, laughed, and cried, "Excellent!" while her cheeks burnt, and her eyes sunk under his.

"Since I came to Vienna," she hastily resumed, "Madame de Fontainville sat to my aunt for a head of Cleopatra (that unfortunate bust which your laughter-loving brother quizzed so violently); and in these quiet visits displayed a very great portion of sensibility: almost too much, I fear, for her own comfort. Excessive tenderness, unaccustomed to restraint, unused to leave the choice of its objects to reason, is, in my opinion, the heaviest misfortune, that —" Adelaide stopped abruptly, exclaiming "Here comes Constantia!"

Leopolstat now turned his observation upon a fair creature of seventeen, who entered from the gardens. She was delicately attired in white satin, which, by its soft folds, faintly shadowed out the form of her finely-rounded limbs: except a white Provence rose that was scarcely to be distinguished from the panting bosom on which it rested, and a garland of the same flowers, binding up her auburn hair, she was destitute of ornament.

Advancing with the apprehensive lightness of a fawn, she addressed Adelaide; and her sweet youthful voice convinced Charles she was destined to be beloved.

Princess Constantia was not perfectly beautiful; but her lovely shape was a promise of future excellence, and its thousand graces prevented all criticism. She had blue eyes that alternately expressed the tenderest of hearts, and the most intelligent of minds; and an ingenuous smile which changed admiration into affection.

When the friends had exhausted congratulations, Charles was presented to the Princess. At the sound of his name, her cheeks took a brighter red, she darted on him a quick glance of inquiry and pleasure, repeating in a delighted tone, "Count Leopold! — I am very happy to see you at last, after so long wishing —" She stopped abruptly, blushed, cast down her eyes, and a sweet fearfulness banished her gaiety.

For a single instant, Charles lost himself in the suspicion that she was his incognita. Captivated by her unaffected loveliness, his brain grew giddy, and he had not power to dissemble the feeling which suddenly animated all his features; but while his eye devoured every expression of her face, he met an amazed look from Adelaide, which recalled his senses, and the illusion vanished. Constantia was a girl of seventeen, and his incognita had written to him during five years: the thing, therefore, was impossible.

He smiled at his own folly; resumed his tranquillity; and marvelled how he could have embraced the error with such warmth.

The princess having been lately ill, was not suffered by her aunt to dance; so that Adelaide excused herself to Charles, at the same time inviting him to be of their party in a walk through the salons. During this promenade, his graceful gentleness so entirely restored Constantia to ease and sprightliness, that she turned every object they passed, into subjects for pleasantries: yet this was done with such innocent mirth, that no one could find in it a particle of ill-nature.

The young Princess of Nuremberg was indeed a rare creature. There was a little girlish simplicity in her manner, which preventing fools from being awed by the occasional penetration of her look, made her equally amiable to the wise and unwise: without intending it, she always charmed, by her desire to make others do so; for, possessing an instinct, as it were, of whatever would be most consonant to the tastes or feelings of her associates, she immediately fell in with their humour, and made it her aim to draw forth their best endowments. Naturally playful, but never excessively lively, she amused unceasingly, and delighted instead of fatiguing; it was her happy destiny to endear, even while she entertained: indeed, her archness had ever a softness in it, which flattered the person to whom it was directed, with this idea, that she had their pleasure for her object, rather than her own gratification.

Leopolstat, as he slowly turned his admiring eyes from her to Mam'selle de Ingersdorf, and remembered Madame de Fontainville (for she was in another part of the assembly), secretly commented on the whimsical chance which had thus showed to him in one evening, three specimens of beauty, so perfect, yet so different. He then thought of Demetrius, whom he had not seen for some time, and sincerely wished that he might not be still with Madame de Fontainville.

Princess Constantia retired before supper with her aunt. Just as she was giving Charles her hand to conduct her to her carriage, a smile moved her blooming cheeks, "like roses, when their leaves are gently stirred with the wind" and she whispered him — "I know young men are apt to be abominably vain, and to construe every silly action into an offering to their conceit; so I must explain to you, Count, why I longed to see you (which confession, to be sure, slipped out of my lips without my intending it); why I blushed when I *did* see you, and looked so prodigiously silly. I longed to see you, first, because my brother has told me as many wonders of your achieving, as were ever done by the English Guy of Warwick; and secondly, because numbers of folks told me, I was as like Count Leopolstat as a sister. Now I always colour whenever I am taken by a pleasant surprise; no wonder then, that I should do so when you were introduced to me."

A graceful bow prefaced Charles's answer.

"I am afraid your Highness has chosen the worst way imaginable for laying my vanity. This flattering solicitude to be understood, makes me believe — I hope not presumptuously — that Princess Constantia is willing I should respect and admire her"

"She would willingly deserve to be respected and admired by all men like Count Leopolstat" was her gracious reply.

Charles bowed again, and a deeper colour glowed through his brown cheek: yet was there no undue explanation given by his thoughts to Princess Constantia's ingenuous speech.

"I suppose it is my brother, who has the honour of being considered like your Highness," said Charles, as they approached the grand staircase.

"I hope so," was her gay answer "for I do protest, that though your complexion is vastly becoming for a soldier, it would not be quite so apropos in a court lady"

Charles laughed; so did she ; and her aunt inviting him to the Nuremberg Palace, they were hastening down stairs, when their steps were arrested by the sound of a voice, sweeter than those gales, which flowing over Arabia Felix, waft the perfume of the rose, and the song of the nightingale, mingled together. Princess Constantia's bright eyes, flashing with sudden delight, were riveted on the half open door, from whence these sounds proceeded: she did not therefore

observe the burning glow which gradually spread over the face of Leopold, as he listened with a disturbed heart, to the impassioned voice of his brother. That voice, evidently addressing its seductive language to Madame de Fontainville, seemed breathing the very soul of love into the air which bore it towards Charles. Blushing at its contagious influence, he stood silently attentive to the following stanzas.

I

Turn, turn those eyes, whose dewy light
Spreads tender languor o'er my soul;
Whose orbs, like evening Vesper bright,
Thro' mists of melting softness roll.
Ah! Turn those eyes, for now they dart
Resistless light'ning thro' my heart.

II

Hide, hide those lips, that smiling meet,
Vermeil and warm as sunny fruit;
Thro' which thy breath, ambrosial sweet,
Coldly denies my ardent suit:
Hide, hide those lips, for pity's sake!
They tempt the kiss I dare not take.

Fortunately, both ladies retired from the door, at the song's conclusion, without speaking; for how could they venture to admire a performance, which united passionate tones with passionate words?

Charles saw them into their carriage; and returning upstairs, was about to enter the room where Demetrius was, when an unseasonable commission from the Baroness (who hastily passed him) carried him back to the dancing room. How would his mortification at this have been increased, had he guessed that Demetrius had not merely applied his glowing song to the bewitching Zaire, but rapidly composed it, while another person was singing.

CHAPTER V

When the brothers met the next morning, at breakfast Charles inquired what Demetrius thought of Princess Constantia of Nuremberg.

“I never saw her.”

“You must have seen her: it is impossible for any one to overlook so sweet a creature”

“ Well then, I saw, without knowing her. Was it that fine woman in the Turkish dress? or that Spanish-looking girl that danced with Stzarray?”

“Neither. She was in white satin, with flowers through her hair: and came into the ballroom two hours before supper, but she did not sup.”

“Oh then, I never saw her; for I was not among the dancers all that time.”

“Where were you then?” —

“ With Madame de Fontainville. Charles! She sings more exquisitely than you can conceive; and upon my saying how much I loved music, some one proposed a singing party; so we went into that little cabinet, which leads off the grand staircase towards the back of the palace, and then she sang me all Signora —’s songs in the last opera.”

“ So then, you were the whole evening with Madame de Fontainville! And pray what sort of a companion did you find her? Agreeable?”

Thrown off his guard by the assumed carelessness with which Charles asked this question, Demetrius, burst forth into such a rhapsody of praise and transport, as completely appalled him: Charles was silent awhile; at length regarding the animated Demetrius, with a look made up of pity and fear, he said gently —

“Demetrius! You have more dependence upon your own heart, than I should have on mine, if ever you trust yourself again in so dangerous a situation”

“How do you mean?”

“I mean, that Madame de Fontainville’s beauty is enchanting enough to make a man forget she has a husband; she has French manners also, which too often awaken hopes that ought to be impossible. Take my advice then, avoid her society, as I sincerely believe I should have done, had her avowed admiration, fallen to my share”

“What! Avoid a virtuous woman, merely because she is married and charming? — Why Charles, your virtue is rather that of a monk than a soldier, if it consists in flying from danger instead of resisting it”

“No bad virtue either my dear boy. I know what the passions are at nineteen; I know that you must be superior to all human weakness, if you are not at this very instant delirious with gratitude, admiration and expectation (Charles as he spoke, averted his head, that he might not see the blood plead guilty through the cheek of Demetrius). Madame de Fontainville has decidedly expressed the liveliest praise of your figure; and she has tacitly avowed as much of your manners, by devoting herself to you, the whole of yesterday evening: you think her the loveliest woman in the world: now, if you can stand this first attack, made at once upon your vanity and your senses; if you can drink long draughts of beauty and admiration, without becoming intoxicated; and can drive your warmest passions to the very edge of ruin, and yet there stop them, I pronounce you a greater hero, than Scipio”

“Heavens! my dear Charles, what frightful phantoms do you conjure up, about my talking five or six hours, to a most delightful woman, who probably does not care whether I am at this instant, above or below ground.”

“You don’t suspect her of such in difference; I’ll be sworn you do not.” returned Charles (an encouraging smile tempering the seriousness of his eyes), “come, be sincere with your brother; own to him that you think she distinguished you very particularly; and that it would not terrify you, if she were free at this moment, and doomed to become your wife?”

“I should be shockingly ungallant, if it did.” exclaimed Demetrius laughing, “However, I’ll not dissemble with you Charles: I am certainly abominably vain, for I was last night elevated out of myself, by Madame de Fontainville’s attentions; and thought a heap of silly things: but none, none on my honour, that had the slightest criminality in them. You must allow me a little harmless indulgence of my vanity.”

“What! At the expense of her peace, perhaps?” — interrupted the Count, “After your flatteries, or frequent society, have alienated her heart from its nuptial vow; in short, when you have made her in love with you, you will end your sport, and call it harmless. Fie, fie, Demetrius!”

Demetrius strove to disguise his vexation under the mask of levity; “Pshaw!” he cried, “In love with a boy like me! Ridiculous!”

“Possibly I am too serious,” rejoined Charles, after a pause, “but you must pardon me, brother, in consideration of the experience I have had of what vanity may lead to. You may think these cautions very premature; but I profess myself one of those physicians who deal more in preventives than cures.”

“Yes; but my dear fellow, you would not flay a man alive, with blisters and cataplasms, or physic him to death with pills and boluses, when he is in sound

health? — You would not deny me my dinner, because I *might* eat myself into an apoplexy; would you?”

“You are excellent I know, at the ridiculous, Demetrius, and I never dare enter its lists with you. All I shall now venture to add, is this: keep a watch over your heart: never forget that Madame de Fontainville is married; and that situated as she is, her reputation is more delicate than that of a single girl. Recollect also, that though to make a woman guilty, is the most heinous of crimes, to make her unhappy is a crime also; and that no plea of indulging ‘harmless vanity’ will silence your conscience, when it has to reproach you, either with the loss of her peace, or of her character.”

“Ah! you are so completely master of yourself,” cried Demetrius, with a loud sigh, “so nice a weigher of possibilities and improprieties, and such matters, that I fear — I shall never be like you. Consider my dear, dear Charles, this is the very first time I was ever admired !”

“Not the first time, I am confident” replied Charles, kindly taking the hand that was stretched forth to him, “other women have admired you as much as Madame de Fontainville, I dare say, but were too discreet to express it.”

“Oh! If it’s only a ‘dare say’ ” cried Demetrius, shrugging up his shoulders; “but you shall be satisfied. I was to have met Madame de Fontainville at the opera tonight, and I will not go.”

“The smallest concession from a beloved person, was always sufficient to endanger the wisdom of Charles: his tender heart, overflowing with the belief of this sacrifice, being greater to Demetrius than it really was, would have annihilated all the foregone admonition, had not the fortunate entrance of a servant with a note, put an end to their dialogue. The billet presented, contained these words.

TO COUNT LEOPOLSTAT.

If the brave Charles, will be this night, as the clock strikes twelve, at the great gate of the church of St. Josephine, he will there meet a veiled woman who will conduct him to one, *long interested in his happiness*; one, who has a discovery to make, which she trusts will prove far from unwelcome.’

“Now is your time to impose mortification upon me!” said Charles, holding out the note to his brother, “Retort if it seem right to you, my dear boy, and be assured that I will stifle both vanity and curiosity, the instant you bid me.”

“I would not bid you, for the universe!” exclaimed Demetrius (when he had run over the letter). “It is from your Unknown! Surely, you make no hesitation about going?”

“ If I thought it were indeed my Unknown!” answered the other, half breathless with eagerness; but no — no — I deceive myself: — yet stay; though the hand is not the same — the seal.”

He stopped, and examined the wax attentively. Some impression had evidently been made upon it, which seemed to have been afterwards pressed on, with the finger; yet parts remained, out of which, either Charles’s eye, or his fancy formed fragments of a seal that had always been complete on the letters from his Incognita. He communicated this to his brother, whose sight being spectacted by credulity, soon discovered a whole eagle where Charles only saw the beak of one; and every word of a motto, of which no other human being could have described a single letter.

No sooner had this conjecture ripened by degrees from possibility to probability, and thence, to certainty, than Demetrius began guessing about the lady’s rank, age, beauty, and merit; drew a portrait of her person, as confidently as if he had seen her; and betted boldly, that Charles would be her husband in a month.

“Nay, my dear fellow!” he gaily added, “I’d have you take notable care of yourself; for it would not surprise me at all, if this sweet romantic fair, were to have a Divine in the house, and make sure of you this very evening. Now don’t be too sublime, Charles, forgive a little eccentricity for the sake of much affection; and don’t insist upon the poor girl, loving you with and without reason at the same moment. For my part, Love like Charity covers a multitude of sins; and I only wish, some good kind of body, would take pity upon me, and pick my pocket, of my heart: for I’m confoundedly tired of its heaviness, and desire nothing more fervently, than to get it agreeably off my hands.”

“What a fund of mischief, and misery perhaps, lies under this rattle of yours!” observed Charles. “Ah, Demetrius, Demetrius! You know nothing of what you wish. However, if you are really under such a pressing necessity to disburthen yourself of your heart, come with me, and I’ll show you an object precisely formed to captivate you: the young Princess of Nuremberg”

“A Princess! — Good, i’faith! — I venerate your prudent recommendation, Charles!”

“O thou giddy boy! — You know very well, I would neither have you wretched nor culpable; and of course Princess Constantia is as far removed from you, by the customs of society, as Madame de Fontainville by the law of heaven: I merely wish to mend your taste, by showing you a better species of magic —”

“O your humble servant, sage brother!” cried Demetrius — “I now perceive from what quarter of the globe, your foregone, woeful cautions have been wafted! From the Paphos of sighs and dreams, and wishes, and alarms! — Only two hours in your company, and in that short time to bewitch away such a soul as your’s! A soul so guarded round by triple chains of adamantine prudence! Mercy upon us! What would have be come of me then, whose heart (it seems)

wants nothing but the invitation of a few songs sung after a ball, to lure it for ever and aye, into the first fair bosom, willing to cage it! — Ah well! Chance stood my friend, and by depriving me of the sight of this mortal Venus, saved me from hopeless slavery. As to you, my dear fellow, I haven't a doubt but that this evening will unroll a romance the length of a furlong, and as marvellous as the Legend of St. Dennis — So allons! For a peep at its Heroine.”

Demetrius was all spirits at this moment; he laughed at his brother's serious defence; forgot the preceding lecture; remembered only that Madame de Fontainville had sighed when they parted; that his feelings were ecstatic; and Charles's Incognita interesting. He therefore set out for the Nuremberg palace with no sensation which was not pleasureable.

The amiable Princess whom the brothers sought, having been early deprived of her mother, was educated in Bavaria at the same convent with Mam' selle de Ingersdorf; where the tenderest friendships grew between them.

Upon the death of her father, Constantia willingly hastened to relinquish even her friend for the task of soothing the forlorn hours of her maternal grand mother; who now childless, and enfeebled rather by sickness than age, earnestly longed for her society. After a residence of two years in Italy, with this venerated relative, Constantia was prevailed upon to visit Germany with her uncle's wife; but a paralytic stroke suddenly seizing the duchess, induced her physician to recall the Princess long ere her intended short absence should have terminated.

Inclination led the brothers to make their first call at Baron Ingersdorf's, where they learned the mortifying tidings of Princess Constantia's departure. A courier had that morning summoned her back to Italy, and she had hurried from the capital with all the expedition of terrified affection.

How heavily to Charles, passed the hours of this day! Fluctuating between the hope of finding his Incognita amiable, and the fear that she would be otherwise; now dreading that he was deluded, and now scrutinizing with uneasiness the strange character which prompted such strange conduct; alternately suspecting her blameably imprudent, or constructing for her a marvellous romance capable of solving every mystery, and sanctioning the most erratic actions; — he nearly agitated himself into a fever. But for all this, he certainly wished more fervently to find her an old woman, than a young one; one, who would adopt him for a son, instead of seeking to make him her husband. — His chief restlessness, arose from a dislike to be thus left wandering in conjecture: for he had no ambition like Demetrius (who secretly indulged the most extravagant expectations) and no heart like him to give away to a phantom.

It had been determined by the brothers, that they should appear together at the opera (for Charles would not suffer Demetrius to break a promise made even to Madame de Fontainville), and then repair to the church of St. Josephine,

where Demetrius was to stay with him till the veiled lady should arrive. This plan was followed.

Madame de Fontainville piqued at the late entrance of her young admirer, received him with extreme coldness, bestowed all her attention, for a short time, on a party of Englishmen who were with her, and then suddenly left the theatre. Demetrius showed such visible mortification and resentment at this, that Charles refrained from overpowering him by any observation; he hoped to see him disgusted by her seeming caprice, and suffering him therefore, to gnaw the corner of his hat, stayed the conclusion of the piece, and then as the clock approached twelve, trod the road to St. Josephine's.

Charles took the precaution to arm himself; and he was not sorry that he had done so, when Demetrius accidentally suggested the possibility of this note being a contrivance of Wurtzburg's to entrap and perhaps murder him — Leopoldstat smiled at the latter surmise; but admitted the likelihood of Wurtzburg's malice having prompted the poor trick of cheating a sensible man into the folly of thus traversing the suburbs to meet nobody. Impressed with this idea, he heard the clock chime a quarter after the hour, and was just leaving the place, when a female figure in an ordinary dress, yet closely veiled, advanced from behind the portico of the church, and softly pronounced his name: he started forward; caught a hasty benediction from Demetrius; then following the woman down a flight of steps, was soon lost amid the obscurity of the night.

Left thus alone, Demetrius thought of nothing but his brother. While the adventure was in perspective, it appeared the gayest thing imaginable; it was all delightful mystery, animating interest; but now that he approached this specious pageant, he thrilled with vague apprehension; beheld visions of horror, where he had fancied elysiums of delight; and saw hatred and death, instead of tenderness and beauty.

Hour after hour, lingered by, and he counted the heavy strokes of the ponderous clock, with a far heavier heart. The moon that had awhile struggled through the gathering clouds, became now completely obscured; a fierce wind roared among the pillars and round the angles of St. Josephine's; and the rising tempest seemed mocking the agonized watchfulness of Demetrius: No one was to be heard in the distant streets, but the patrols, whose dismal voices, mingling with the hoarse roar of the Danube, came on the blast like the cry of ill-omened birds. A violent shower of piercing sleet soon began to fall, and driven by the furious wind, beat in through the open collonade; but Demetrius retreated not; his whole soul was with his brother, and he walked wildly to and fro, sometimes uttering a hasty prayer, sometimes execrating his own folly, for having suffered Charles to be thus entrapped.

Where to seek him he knew not: yet to seek him, to share his fate, whatever that might be, was now his resolution. The clock at that moment struck four, and rushing down the steps, he encountered a person advancing with as much rapidity as himself.

“Charles! Charles! Is it you?” he exclaimed eagerly. His brother’s voice, speaking in reply, came on his senses like the first gale of spring; he could no longer support himself, but falling on his neck, overcome with joy, faintly uttered,

“My dear brother !” Charles did not see the grateful tear which sprang to the eyes of Demetrius, but he felt the agitated grasp of his hand, and clasping him for an instant to his heart, he took him by the arm, whispering, “ Let us begone.” Demetrius quickly recovering himself, obeyed in silence.

When the brothers found themselves safely enjoying the comforts of a warm room, in their own quarters, they were equally solicitous to converse about the events of the night. Charles was tempted to sum up his adventure in a very few words; but knowing his brother’s taste was averse to the laconic style, he related it thus:

“When I parted from you, my conductress led me down a narrow street, at the end of which, a small gate let us into a garden, which we traversed silently; then entered a tolerably fine house, where she showed me into a room, and there left me. Nothing could be more elegant than the decorations of this apartment; luxury and wealth seemed to have exhausted themselves in the task of constructing it; but my expectations with regard to its fair possessor were considerably abated, when I observed the ceiling painted with designs and figures, which a modest woman would blush to remember, having once seen: a canopy of purple silk, half shading a Grecian couch, was so impregnated with a languishing sort of perfume, that whenever the lightest air moved its curtains, the whole apartment became lusciously sweet; before this, stood a table covered with a sumptuous collation, imperfectly beheld, by reason of the lamps, which were so contrived as to produce the effect of moonlight.

“I was beginning to suspect the truth, and was in twenty minds whether or not to make good my retreat, when the door of an inner salon opened, and a lady magnificently attired, appeared at the entrance. My eyes seemed to mock me, as they fixed on the figure and features of Madame de Fontainville.”

“Madame de Fontainville!” repeated Demetrius, suddenly turning pale.

“It was not really Madame de Fontainville,” resumed Charles, “but a woman so like her, dressed so precisely in her taste, that at the distance, and under the doubt fulllight I saw her by, even the most intimate of her friends would have been deceived. She approached me with the most alluring gracefulness, and addressed me in a voice sweeter than silver — never did I hear such a voice!

“For the honour of the sex, you must allow me to pass over all the pro’s and con’s of our dialogue: suffice it, the substance was this. She announced herself as the celebrated Signora Albertina, who so long has been the melodious wonder of Europe, and is now engaged for the opera here. She professed a violent passion for your amazed brother; confessed that it was sufficiently strong to prevent her denying him any happiness in her power to bestow; and to avoid the possibility

of being misunderstood, assured him, she was so far from having a mercenary end in view, that she vowed never to accept from him the humblest present: to this she added, a boast of being settled in complete affluence by the generosity of Colonel Wurtzburg, 'her present protector, by whom she was brought to Vienna.' ”

“Astonishing! Well, Charles, and how did you act in such a perplexing dilemma?”

“As you, no doubt, would have done — awkwardly thanked the lady for her intended kindness; professed my inability to return so sudden a passion; hoped it would not be very injurious to her peace (having arisen merely from seeing me two or three times on duty); bowed, moved towards the door, and tried to escape: but all this was vain ; she flew to me, acted for two hours, I believe, amost pathetic scene of rage, tenderness, and intreaty; displayed to great advantage, beautiful arms, trembling with either real or feigned agitation, and the loveliest of mouths, breathing nothing but sighs.

“ I was not to be wrought upon by conduct so gross: for if it were possible for me to become a libertine, I am sure no avowed wanton could disorder my brain. So inseparable in my mind are decent restraint and modesty from the character of women, that no one without them could affect even my senses.

“ The Signora defeated in this attack, changed her plan; railed at me, ridiculed my 'sanctity', contrasted me with other men; and exerted a wit so keen and biting, that if I had been of a temper to be bantered out of principle, she might have boasted the glory of doing it.

“As she had taken the keys out of the doors, I was forced to lean quietly against the hangings, during her alternate batteries of invective and supplication; but not a word did she extract from me. At length she snatched a lute, and touching it exquisitely, accompanied it with that seducing voice, which almost transported me into the madness of exclaiming

“ Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
“And with these warblings moves the vocal air,
“To testify its hidden residence!”

“Nay, her very countenance assumed a divine expression, which pleaded for Wurtzburg's frailty. The rapt attention with which I listened, inspired her with the hope of having overcome my stubborn virtue (as she termed it); she re doubled her blandishments, invited me to partake of the collation before us; and, at last, saying she knew Wurtzburg had formerly been my enemy, insinuated, that she now gave me ample means of revenge.

“At this instant, the creature became hideous in my eyes; I said, I know not what; and bursting from her arms (in which she forcibly twined me), I sent the door through with my foot, took the flight of stairs at a leap, and was over the garden wall, and by your side, long ere the Signora, doubtless, had recovered from her astonishment.”

“ And this profligate wretch is like Madame de Fontainville!” exclaimed Demetrius, indignantly: “impossible Charles!”

“ You will acknowledge the likeness when you see her on the stage,” returned his brother: “ whether she has, in reality, further resemblance than shape and feature, I know not; but her complexion was either naturally or artificially, as celestial a compound of white and red.”

“I renounce Lavater,” said Demetrius, sullenly.

“ And I hope, at the same time, you’ll renounce your skill indrawing my horoscope, “ said Charles, laughing; “your trick of foreseeing, and knack at discocovering the complete impression of seals. O brother, brother ! What idiots do not men make of themselves, when they surrender up their reason to their imagination, as we lately did.”

The brothers now separated, to obtain an hour’s rest.

A few days after Count Leopoldstat’s interview with Signora Albertina, he was surprised by a visit from Colonel Wurtzburg: not doubting but that his errand was a hostile one, originating in her misrepresentations, he advanced to meet him with the calmness of integrity. Wurtzburg offered his hand; Charles took it, and introduced his brother: the usual commonplace compliments were then succeeded by a silence, which was first broken by the Colonel.

“ I know not what you will think of the motives which have prompted this unrequested visit,” said he, “ when I acknowledge them to be a sincere desire to renew our former acquaintance, and a hearty wish to obtain your pardon for former incivility. Many men would shrink from such a confession; and I certainly should, if it were to make to any other man than Count Leopoldstat: but my days of competition and mortification are over, and have left me leisure to reflect upon the injustice and folly of such feelings.”

He paused: — Charles eyed him steadily; and with so distinct an expression of incredulity, as to make Wurtzburg reply to it.

“ I have no right to be piqued at this doubtfulness,” he observed, “you shall hear what excuse I have to offer, for past coldness, and may then decide”

Charles bowed.

“When you and I first met,” resumed the Colonel, “I had just emerged from the house of a father, who educated me in idleness, pampered all my passions, restrained none of my evil habits, indulged the most extravagant of my wishes, and perpetually prophecied that I should attain the heights of military glory. He died intestate just as I entered the army ; leaving my fate in the hands of a rich severe uncle, who was too morose to reform my folly, by gentleness; and whose constant reproofs therefore, only exasperated me into rage. This uncle thought

it well to let me remain some time a subaltern, and to limit my allowance: I had expected such rapid promotion (from the connections of my family) and had been used to such unlimited expense, that I grew half frantic with resentment; saw everything and everybody in a hateful light; abhorred the whole world, and was in short, as you know, a very disagreeable fellow.

“Further than a little envying of your renown, and rude repulsing of your friendliness, my ill humour never went: heaven is my witness, that it did not! No, though you were destined at Mantua, to blight my tenderest hopes — forgive me,” he added (seeing the colour fluctuate on the cheek of Charles) “ I ought not to touch on so sad a subject.”

He cast down his eyes as he spoke, evidently much agitated, himself.

“To continue silent now,” said Leopoldstat, after a pause, “ would be ungrateful or stupid. I will be very candid with you, Colonel Wurtzburg, and confess that not a month ago, I spoke of you, to my brother here, as the only man whom I felt certain, wished me ill. If I wronged you by saying so, accept my unfeigned regret.”

“You did wrong me, Count!” replied the other. “ I own that my manners were forbidding enough to authorize such a belief! And I know very well that when once the mind takes up an unfavourable opinion of another, it is too apt to convert suspicions into certainties. You had enemies in Italy, but they were smiling enemies; men you never suspected; while I, doubtless, appeared the person most likely to thwart your advancement. My sincerity may admit of this proof.

“If I were your enemy in Italy, because you were admired, praised, and promoted, why should I not continue so (nay, increase in malice), since you are now far more praised, honoured, and promoted, than before ? You are not yet powerful enough to assist me — nay, I am now removed from the possibility of wishing it. What interest can I have in humbling myself to one I am supposed to hate, when fate has placed me at the summit of my desires? — My uncle is no more; I have at last procured the military rank which I had a right to expect, and am master of an ample fortune. Does this statement seem fair to you?”

“So fair,” replied Charles, “that I blush to have pressed a man, capable of such a frank avowal, into so painful a task. I am sure no one can have interested views in seeking my friendship; you, less than all men; and I therefore heartily exchange the olive; pledging myself not to suffer a single prejudice to interfere with our future intercourse.

“But remember this, Colonel, I am as nice in friendship as in love; and I may live in the constant interchange of good offices with you, or any other worthy man, for years, without finding him or you so intimately dear to me, as to privilege me in bestowing on you, the comprehensive title of friend. You see I am dreadfully blunt, Colonel: does it displease you?”

“Not in the least, Count; I accept your terms: confident that your nature is too generous not to repay me amply, for the little injustice you have mentally done me. When you shall find that I have really nothing so much at heart as acquiring a title to your esteem, I know you will add to that a more cordial sentiment: till then, I rest satisfied; and now request that you and your brother will do me the honour of meeting Field Marshal —, at dinner at my house tomorrow.”

This invitation was gracefully accepted; and a general conversation followed, in which Wurtzburg bore his part with some degree of credit: the fluctuating measures of the Austrian cabinet, and the probability of renewed hostilities, were the theme of discourse; after amply discussing which, they separated with mutual assurances of goodwill. So extraordinary an interview, gave rise to much speculation between the brothers. Demetrius gloried in such an honourable instance of self-imposed mortification; protested he hated himself, for having so heartily hated Wurtzburg; and adverted with enthusiasm, to the honest confidence with which the Colonel had said, he relied on Leopoldstat’s generous nature for amply repaying the injustice he had mentally done him

In this expression, Demetrius discovered the sign of as generous a spirit; a spirit, which by conceiving the nobleness of another’s, proved its own right to respect.

Charles was less certain, and therefore less voluble: the longer he reflected on the Colonel’s character, and past conduct, the more reason did he find for doubting the reality of his disinterestedness, and the greater was the struggle in his breast, between reliance and caution. Yet he canvassed the subject again and again; viewed it in every light, and found nothing to warrant his suspicions.

“But this self-abasement, this frank avowal of unamiableness,” he said to himself, “ is so great, so magnanimous! It is so unlikely for such a disposition as —”

Here he stopped, glowing with shame to find a prejudice thus rooted, which he had so lately declared should be for ever annihilated.

“How can I be such a wretch,” he exclaimed, “ as to refuse belief to this man’s sincerity, for no other reason than because, if he be sincere, he is one of the noblest-minded of men! — Away with such odious scepticism, such worldly wisdom!”

Charles then reverted with pleasure to his escape from the allurements of Signora Albertina; to which if he had yielded, he would now have felt himself inferior in every way to Wurtzburg; but while he thought of her, his ardour cooled again; and he could not help acknowledging to his brother, that although Wurtzburg was most probably capable of much good, his character sullied by a gross attachment to a profligate woman, must have some points from which that of Charles would eternally revolt.