

exquisite voice, had, from her first appearance in Kleinstein, attracted universal attention; but the most skillfully contrived attempts at making her acquaintance always resulted in exasperating failure. Her mother's timid suspicions, Miss Ormerod's own calm, maidenly dignity, were strong safeguards against intrusion, and a year of artful scheming had produced no effect, for not one of their number had established even a bowing acquaintance with the object of their admiration, and the artists were obliged to own themselves defeated. She was haughty—she was cold as stone—she was devoted solely to her art—she was English, which accounted for all her eccentricities, they protested hotly, as they discussed the matter together.

'Tiens, Mademoiselle must really be the eldest daughter of Madame la Marquise de Carabas,' shouted, with a burst of laughter, a young Frenchman, a new arrival, as he listened to an animated recital of his friends' complaints. So, partly in derision, partly in playful malice, they fell into the habit of calling her Mademoiselle de Carabas, and the name clung to her until many of those who met her daily knew her by no other title. The Maestro declared that never had pupil of his equalled Miss Ormerod, not only in the strength, beauty and richness of her voice, but also in docility, perseverance and untiring industry; and he had certainly some claims to be considered a judge, as he had already trained several singers whose enchanting strains had charmed the world. He prophesied a glorious future for the girl, and as she listened to his words in silence, for she was singularly undemonstrative in manner, her cheek flushed and her eyes glowed with a soft fire, which, for the moment, rendered her radiantly beautiful. Few could have guessed that this quiet, reserved girl, with her statuesque face and stately air, was consumed by an ambition as ardent as any which ever inspired a hero or a

conqueror. What mattered it that her fare was plain, her garments worn and shabby, that with unwearied energy she toiled from early morning until late at night? By the power of that divine gift of song, she was destined to rise from obscurity—she was eventually to reign like a queen over an enchanted kingdom, to achieve vague heights of grandeur, which imagination refused to paint in definite colours.

Mrs. Ormerod and her daughter, who always went about together, and appeared to be all in all to each other, came to be very well known by sight to the inhabitants of Kleinstein during their four years' sojourn in the little town, and every fact of their secluded existence was familiar to everyone in the small community. They passed about the streets, never exchanging a word with any one except upon business, the little woman hanging confidently upon the arm of her tall daughter; the girl silent and impassive, the mother, who was nervous, fidgetty and garrulous, always chattering volubly. Noting Mrs. Ormerod's petulant insistence, a stranger would have concluded that hers was the governing spirit; in reality it was Berenice, who originated all their plans, leaving to her mother only the trifling details of execution. The older woman waited upon her as though she were a child, and the girl simply accepted all without question, as unconscious of the care and tenderness lavished upon her as though they did not exist. All her senses were absorbed by the passion which held possession of her; she was unconscious of the charms of affection, the joys of youth, the delights of nature. Her self-confidence was as perfect as her self-control; yet so strong was the habit of reserve that, even to her mother, she never shaped her thoughts in words. It was Mrs. Ormerod who erected airy castles and never wearied of dwelling upon her child's future splendour, yet she was sometimes disturbed by pangs of soul-crushing doubt