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THE SOUND OF VOICE, OR The Song of the Debardeur.

BY FREDERIC S. COZZENS, AUTHOR OF "THE STARBUCKS PAPERS," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

It had been a brilliant night at the Grand Opera in Paris in 18—.

It was the opening night; the house was crowded, and a more elegant audience had rarely assembled in that city. No wonder! Grisi and Mario, then in the height of their fame, were to appear in "Norma." The performance over, the crowd began to surge from the doors into the brightly-lighted street, and, as carriage after carriage rolled away, three young men still loitered at the foot of the Opera House steps, apparently waiting for some person or persons in the audience who had not yet appeared.

Bill the crowd did not seem to diminish, but kept pouring forth from the Opera doors in a steady stream; still the expected one was not of the numbers, still the young man at the foot of the steps watched and waited. At length a tall, well-dressed gentleman in a Russian uniform, with a trim gray mustache and heavy gray eyebrows, his breast covered with decorations, came forth and leaning upon his arm was a slight feminine form, her head so enveloped in its violet-colored hood that her face was scarcely visible, and but for a pair of wild, mischievous eyes would certainly have escaped notice. A wonderfully compact little figure, and almost as soon as she stepped between the two of the heavier carriage, the door was opened by a groom and the lady and her companion stepped into the carriage and the young man followed them. He looked at the young man at the foot of the steps, and he looked at the young man at the foot of the steps, and he looked at the young man at the foot of the steps.

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