

wood-path. and could now discern, through one of its bowery archways, the sparkling of the little fountain that played before one of the three entrances to the pavilion, and another turn of the sylvan puzzle would have brought him to the spot; but in his impatience he lost the well-known clue, and in a moment found himself at the back, instead of the front of the small temple. The corner would have been rounded at three steps; but at that critical moment, a word spoken by the most vehement of the fair colloquists—spoken at the highest key of a voice, whose powers Walter was now for the first time fully aware of—arrested his steps as by art magic. His own name was uttered, associated with words of such strange import, that Walter's astonishment, overpowering his reflective faculties, made him excusable in remaining, as he did, rooted to the spot, a listener to what passed within.

That strange colloquy consisted, on one side, of taunts, and accusations, and menaces. On the other, of a few deprecating words—a sigh or two—and something like a suppressed sob—and lastly, of an assurance, uttered with a trembling voice, that the speaker “never had harboured the slightest thought of betraying the secret she was privy to, or entertained any hope less humble than to be permitted to stay unnoticed and unremembered in her own home”—where she “would be equally uncared for,” was probably her heart's muttered conclusion, for the word *home* trembled on her tongue, and she burst into an agony of tears.

Neither the gentle appeal, nor the gush of distressful feeling in which it terminated, seemed to teach the heartless person it was addressed to, for there was no softening in the voice with which, as she quitted the pavilion, she issued her commands, that on her return some half-hour hence, “the letter should be finished, and not more stupidly than usual, or it would be *à refaire*.” And so departed the imperious task-mistress, and as her steps died away, and the angry rustling of her robes, the tinkling of the little fountain was again heard chiming with the stock-doves' murmurs, and within the temple all was profoundly still, except at intervals a smothered sob, and then a deep and heart-relieving sigh, the last audible token of subsiding passion. And Walter was still rooted, spell-bound—immovable in the same spot. Lost in a confusion of thoughts, that left him scarcely conscious of his own identity, of the reality of the scene around him, or of the strange circumstances in which he found himself so suddenly involved—more than a few moments it required to restore to him the power of clear perception and comprehension, but not one, when that was regained, to decide on the course he should pursue.

Quickly and lightly he stepped round the angle of the building to the side entrance (like the two others, an open archway), through which his eye glanced over the whole interior, till it rested on the one living object of interest. At some little distance, with her back towards him, sat la petite Madelaine, one elbow resting on the table before her, her head disconsolately bowed on the supporting hand, which half concealed her face; the other, with a pen held nervously by the small fingers, lay idle beside the half-finished letter outspread before her. Once she languidly raised her head and looked upon it, with a seeming effort dipped her pen in the ink, and held it a moment suspended over the line to be filled up. But the task seemed too painful to her, and with a heavy sigh she suffered her head to drop aside into its position, and her hand, still loosely holding the inactive pen, to fall listlessly upon the paper. During this short pantomime, Walter had stolen noiselessly across the matted floor, to the back of Madelaine's chair, and knowing *all he now knew*, felt no conscientious scruple about the propriety of reading over her shoulder the contents of the unfinished letter. They were but what he was prepared to see, and yet his trance of amazement was for a moment renewed by the ocular demonstration to the truth of what had been hitherto revealed to one of his senses only. The letter was to himself—the reply to his last, addressed to Mlle. de St. Hilaire—the continuation of that delightful series he had for the last twelve-month nearly been in the blissful habit of receiving from his adored Adrienne. Here was the same autograph—the same tournure de phrase—the same tone of thought and feeling (though less lively and unembarrassed than in her earlier letters)—and yet the hand that traced, the mind that guided, and the heart that dictated, were the hand and mind and heart of Madelaine du Résnel!

“Madelaine! dear Madelaine!” were the first whispered words by which Walter ventured to make his presence known to her. But low as was the whisper—gentle as were the accents—a thunder-clap could not have produced an effect more electric. Starting from her seat with a half shriek, she would have fallen to the ground from excess of agitation and surprise, but for Walter's supporting arm, and it required a world of soothing and affectionate gentleness to restore her to any degree of self-possession. Her first impulse, on regaining it, was the honourable one of endeavouring to remove from Walter's observation the letter that had been designed for his perusal under circumstances so different; but quietly laying his hand upon the outspread paper, as she turned to snatch it from the table, with the other arm he gently drew her from it to himself, and with a smile in which there was more of tender than bitter feeling, said—“It is too late, Madelaine—I know all—who could have thought you such a little impostor!” Poor little Madelaine! never was mortal maiden so utterly confounded, so bewildered as she, by the detection, and by her own hurried and almost unintelligible attempts to deprecate what, in the simplicity of her heart, she fancied must be the high indignation of Walter at her share of the imposition so long practised on him.

Whether it was that, in the course of her agitated pleading, she spied relenting in the eyes to which hers were raised so imploringly, or a *something* even more encouraging in their expression, or in the pressure of the hands which clasped hers, upraised in the vehemence of supplication, certain it is that she stopped short in the middle of a sentence—with a tear in her eye and a blush on her cheek, and something like a dawning smile on the lip that still quivered with emotion, and that “Le bon Walter” magnanimously illustrated by his conduct the hackneyed maxim, that

“Forgiveness to the injured doth belong,”—

and that plenary absolution, and perfect reconciliation, were granted and effected, may be fairly inferred from the testimony of the miller's wife, who, still lingering at the threshold when the grey twilight was brightening into cloudless moonlight, spied Walter and Madelaine advancing slowly down the dark chestnut avenue, so intent in earnest conversation (doubtless on grave and weighty

matters), that they passed through the gate, and by the door where she stood, without once looking to the right or left, or, in consequence, observing their old friend as she stepped forward to exchange the evening salutation. The same deponent, moreover, testified, that (from no motive of curiosity, but motherly concern for the safety of Madelaine, should Walter strike off into the road to Caen, leave her at that late hour to pursue her solitary way through the Manoir) she took heed to their further progress, and ascertained, to her entire satisfaction, that so far from unknighly desertion of his fair charge, Walter (seemingly inclined to protect his guardianship to the last possible moment) accompanied her through her home domain till quite within sight of the Chateau, and even there lingered so long in his farewell, that it might have tired out the patience of the miller's wife, if the supper-bell had not sounded from the mansion, and broken short as kind a leave-taking as ever preceded the separation of dearest friends.

(To be continued.)

MUSICAL.

THE BERLIN CONCERT—A PREFACE FROM PUNCH.

The night was dark; only a far-off gleam on the horizon gave faint and doubtful promise of a better day. The low rumbling of recent thunder rolled in the distance. Flashes of lightning ever and anon told of an atmosphere still charged with electricity, even if this had not been proclaimed by the sulphurous and stifling air.

But what is this discord that bursts upon the darkness?

Squeakings and shriekings, groanings and gaspings, grumbings in veiled *basso profundo* alternating with squeals in agonizing *alto*, confusion worse confounded of sharps and flats, dominants and subdominants, crotchets and quavers, diplomatic semitones and undiplomatic protests—mingled squawkings as of strings pulled many ways, blarings as of brass, wallings as of wind—

Never did more horrible *charivari* make night more hideous.

“Confound the cats!” murmured Punch, as he turned uneasily on his hot and rumpled pillow.

“Not cats, master,” growled Toby, from his post of guard at the bedside; only the Berlin Orchestra tuning for the European Concert.”

It was hard to believe that the long-promised concert was coming off at last. But Punch can trust his watchdog.

The master was wide-awake at once, up and dressed, and deep in the list of principal performers which Toby had handed to him.

Beaconsfield and Bismarck to alternate the duties of conductor and first fiddle; Salisbury for Beaconsfield's second fiddle; Schouvaloff, big drum and leader of the Russian Horn Band; Andrassy, ophicleide; Waddington, flute and French cor de chasse; Corti, viol da gamba; Mehemet, cymbals, tambourine and Turkish crescent; Roumanian Guzla, Greek lyre, Jew's-harp and other minor instruments incidental to the concerts by Messrs. Bratiano, Delyannis, the leaders of the Israelitish Alliance, and others.

“Quite a star orchestra,” murmured the master. “What a pity they didn't get it together two years ago! Why should Europe have had to waste her way to her concert through a sea of blood, across a waste of war strewn with hideous wreck of massacre, athwart misery untold—famine and death, and outrage worse than death? And what a discord by way of introduction! But the more trouble in tuning, the more chance, let us hope, of harmony to come.”

So saying, but with a sigh of misgiving, Punch made his way to the concert room through a double row of special correspondents who bowed respectfully as he passed.

Beaconsfield, baton in hand, was at his side in a twinkling—leaving his seat for a moment to Salisbury, his second fiddle, who seemed ill at ease under the new responsibility. Was he thinking of the Conference of Constantinople, and what it came to?

“What can I do for you, my dear and illustrious confrere?” exclaimed Beaconsfield, blandly, as he made a movement to take Punch's hand.

“Let me see your programme,” said Punch, politely waiving the proffered courtesy.

“Of course I have settled it all beforehand with Schouvaloff and Bismarck—but only provisionally,” hastily observed Beaconsfield.

“Somebody must settle,” rejoined the master, “or we should have the music in a nice muddle. But you ought to have taken me into council.”

Beaconsfield, for once, blushed, as he handed Punch a paper.

“You will see it is by no means as Schouvaloff would have had it,” he continued, complacently. “St. Petersburg taste is barbaric. They understand nothing but brass and wind; and their best players are always making false notes. We have modified the Panslav movement very considerably; cut short the Russian March, and altogether suppressed Ignatieff's Overture to the Siege of Constantinople; besides curtailing their Bulgarian symphony, of which there was ridiculously too much. It is true we have given them the ‘Blaué Donau’ Waltz, with the Sofia, Shumla and Varna variations, the Bessarabian *scherso*, and the Batoum *barcarole*, but *en revanche* we have restored the Balkan passages for the Turkish band.”

“But how about the integrity and independence of the Ottoman?”

Beaconsfield shrugged his shoulders. “A mere *façon de parler*. We know what that sort of thing means,” he added with a smile. “All very well for a jingo air at music halls, but in a European concert!”—and he winked, and all but whistled as he put his finger to his nose, with an air of infinite significance. “But there was no alternative. Andrassy has been very troublesome. We all know he has a difficult part to play, but he will play it in his own time and way, no matter at what risk of the general harmony. It is arranged that the Viennese *troupe* are to lead the Bosnian and Herzegovinian concerto. If they don't find themselves in a mess before they have done—but that is their affair. As for England!”

“You will allow me a voice,” interposed Punch, firmly, “when it comes to the English part of the programme. Though I am not precisely a Wagnerian, in the European concert England must go in for the ‘music of the future,’ with peace and progress, justice and national right for her key notes. Ah, if we could only cut down the military bands, German and French, Austrian and Russian, alike! Amidst the overpowering din of big drums and trumpets, trombones, fifes and bugles, the European concert may yet end in a worse *charivari* than this with which it opens.”

“At all events, I hope you'll like my setting of Humpty Dumpty?” anxiously whispered Beaconsfield, “whatever the Turks may have to say to it.”

“The less of that air the better,” said Punch; “at least, without an English conductor for the Turkish instruments, and one whom England can trust. At any rate, you had better let me give you a lead. Here is my music book.”

So saying, Punch placed on the stand his

SEVENTY-FOURTH VOLUME,

and with Beaconsfield still nominally in possession of the baton, but well under Punch's eye, proceeded to Educate the Educator.

Gilmore's Band has lately broken up. A fair success attended their efforts in England and Ireland; but their subsequent visits to France and Germany proved a failure. In the latter country the advance agent absconded with \$500.

The Marie Royal Concert organization will consist of the following:—Madame Pisani, Signor Frapolli and Mr. Carleton, under the management of Colonel Mapleson.

THE ACCIDENT INSURANCE CO. OF CANADA is now issuing Policies and Permits for Travel, covering all accidents by land or water—fatal or non-fatal—at the same rate which had hitherto been charged for Insurances covering *accidental death only* when beyond the limits of Canada. An Insurance of \$5,000 if killed, or \$25 a week if injured, for a three months' trip to Europe, costs now only \$25 in this Company. The Head Offices at 103 St. Francois Xavier Street.—EDWARD RAWLINGS, Manager.—Advt.