

(ORIGINAL.)

JOSEPHA OF AUSTRIA.

Come, beautiful betrothed ! the bitter sting
Of hope deferr'd, can reach no bosom here.

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Come, stainless spouse. Ye gates of peace receive the Bride.

CROLY.

ON a fine September evening in the year 1767, the gay city of Vienna, exhibited even unusual marks of joy and festivity. The imperial palace, where the Empress-Queen Marie Theresa, then held her court, was brilliantly illuminated, from its spacious gardens came the sound of mirth and music, and its lighted halls were thronged with the great, the beautiful, and the highborn of the land. They had met to do honour to one of the fairest daughters of the illustrious House of Austria.—the pride of the court, the beloved of every heart, the young and lovely Archduchess Josepha—who on that day had been publicly betrothed to Ferdinand, King of Naples.

Already was she hailed as Queen, and a circle, waiting to do homage to her rank and beauty, gathered around her wherever she moved. And never did a brighter or more attractive object claim the love, or awaken the admiration of the heart—still in the earliest bloom of youth, for her fifteenth year had not yet flown, she was tall and striking in her person, exquisitely formed, and with a face full of expression, that varied with every changing thought, and told without disguise each emotion of joy or sorrow, that swelled or saddened her young heart. Her manner was animated and playful almost to childishness ; yet chastened by a gentle grace, that might have belonged to more mature years. Like her illustrious mother, she was simple in her tastes ; and so passionately attached to her family, that the bare idea of a separation from them filled her with grief. Her very being seemed entwined with that of her sisters—her brothers were her idols, and her mother, next to her God, the object of her profoundest love and veneration.

Endowed with such warm affections, and still scarcely past the bounds of childhood, it is not strange that the young Josepha should shrink with dread from this union with a stranger and a foreigner—one whom as yet she had never seen, and who,

her heart told her, could never supply to her the place of those dear relatives, she was soon to quit, perhaps forever. One beloved sister had already been affianced to Ferdinand, but before her vows could be ratified, the grave had taken the fair child to its bosom, and she was the reluctant victim destined to fill the place of her lost Joanna. Vain were her supplications and entreaties—Marie Theresa saw but the caprice of a petted child in her daughter's struggles : and as she considered but their permanent good, and the extension of her own power, by the princely alliances she formed for her children, she refused to listen to her prayers ; but by mingled persuasions and commands, obliged the young archduchess to yield an unwilling consent to this dreaded marriage with the Neapolitan King.

And now, attired as a royal bride, Josepha stood to receive the congratulations of the imperial court, and of that princely deputation, who came in the name of the King their master, to demand her as their Queen. But no glad smile repaid their courtly greeting, and those who watched her, as she joined, through courtesy, the dance, read no joy in her languid step—no queenly triumph on her fair and youthful brow, though circled by a diadem—but saw in the frequent changes of her transparent cheek, and in the tearful glances of her deep blue eye, the anguish of a soul casting a fearful look into the unknown future that lay dim and distant before her. The Empress watched through this long and anxious evening, the troubled countenance of her daughter, nor could she stifle the secret upbraiding voice, which from the depths of her soul whispered that she was sacrificing her innocent child to the rapacious demon of ambition, who had ever exercised a sway too unbounded, even over her wise and beneficent heart ; glad was she when the dances at length ended, the music ceased, the blaze of lights was quenched—when silence reigned in those princely