

something so startling and so deeply pathetic that the heart yields at once to overwhelming emotion. I cannot imagine why it should be dispensed with."

"Because," returned Lablache, "Francilla does as Maria does, and she refuses to sing it. Who knows the reason of a woman's caprice? I beg pardon, Mademoiselle. I believe *you* are above such things. Our friend, you must acknowledge, is silly to be disturbed at it; and now, to make him amends, I will sing him a song; one from his own unfinished work. Ha! how happy I shall be when he will give the thing to our good Parisians!"

With this Lablache stepped to the piano, and with a voice loud and clear, like a martial trumpet, began the allegro to that famous duet from *I Puritani*, "*Suoni la tromba e intrepido*." Bellini's pale cheek flushed; the tears started to his eyes; he joined his voice in the splendid song, and at the close, when Lablache shook him by the hand, and bade him cast disquiet to the winds, and finish *I Puritani* without further delay, the kindling expression of his whole features showed an answering enthusiasm, and he promised he should have the opera in a few weeks.

Before the two friends left her, Henriette contrived to make her request of Lablache in behalf of Basil. He informed her the place was in the gift of the Duc de B——, and promised to devise means of making known to him her opinion of the young man's claims.

It was not quite dusk, and the pretty Francilla was alone, but evidently impatient of being so. Several times she went to the windows; and when the clock struck six she burst into an exclamation of vexation. When, not long after, the door opened, and a young man entered, whose step was well-known to her, Francilla turned her back pettishly, and would not look up, even when he took her hand and raised it to his lips.

"You are vexed, dearest Francilla, because I have not come so soon as I promised, by an hour or so," said the lover.

"Oh no! signor Louis, or Ludovico, I suppose I must say," answered the young lady. "It is true, I named an hour which you have not chosen to keep; now I am occupied, and you may depart whence you came."

"And whence do you suppose I came?" asked Louis mischievously.

"Not from Henriette?" demanded Francilla, looking up.

"You are not jealous of your own chosen friend?"

"Not in the least; and if you come from her, you are welcome."

"I have not seen her to-day. I come from Elodie."

"So I thought. She needs your visits, to console her for the loss of her husband, whom she has for a few weeks pretended to mourn."

"Is it not charitable, then, to console her?"

"Oh yes! and very pleasant, doubtless. Elodie is handsome."

"Beautiful!"

"I wish she were dead!" cried Francilla, stamping her foot.

"And why?"

"You can ask me! Traitor!" And she sat down on the sofa, and covered her eyes with her hand.

The hand was very white and soft, and as Louis, who seated himself beside her, drew it from her face, he pressed it again to his lips.

"My charming little Francilla! my bird of beauty and music! Come, you shall not be jealous of me. Look in my eyes, and tell me if you really think I could admire any one else. Elodie is an ogre to you, pretty one! But you have teased me so often, that you must forgive me for teasing you."

Francilla partly raised her head, wiped a tear from her eyes, and said, "Why, then, did you stay away so long? Was there such pleasure in consoling the pretty widow?"

"You shall not chide me; you know I love none but you."

"How am I to know it? If you loved me, you would do what I wish."

"And what is that, Francilla? Your wishes are always changing."

"No; I have *one* constant wish; that you should love me only; that you should talk of love with no other woman, who is young and handsome; that you——"

"Look you!" interrupted Louis; "you have mentioned *two* wishes already; and the third——"

"For the third, then, I wish that I were as insensible as Henriette."

"Ah! her time is not come yet."

"Nor ever will! Her German birth exempts her from love."

"But you know what Mozart used to say, when Saporitti thought his Don Giovanni, Italian in its passion, not allied to the cold north: 'We Germans are more reserved, but it penetrates our hearts the deeper.' Your friend may feel, though she will not speak what she feels."

"No, she tells me everything; and has often said she deemed herself incapable of love. She