

He did not stand up and make obeisance to him; he simply sat smiling, and it was the *impresario* who spoke.

"Are you not—can you be—who are you?" he said, stuttering.

"I am Carl Von Brock," the man replied.

The *impresario* came close to him.

"Will you tell me why, in Heaven's name, you've been twiddling your thumbs over accompaniments when you can play like *that*?" he said, sharply.

The man stopped smiling. "You have come—?" he asked, and paused.

The *impresario* looked about him, with a gesture of impatience.

"About the tragedy, of course," he said. "You know the poor fellow was to have played at my concert this evening. I have been so put out—no one worthy to fill his place. The audience to-night is a critical one. See here, Von Brock, will you play for me? I am impressed by your playing. You have just what he lacked: power; he always was a little disappointing. Or perhaps you are still possessed by some preposterous whim to hide behind the *prima donna*?"

The man hesitated, then, even while his hair stood up with amazement at himself, he said, simply, "If you wish, I will play."

"I thank you—I certainly wish it. Do you know, I never heard that thing you have just played. It is very good, very satisfying."

The man stood up: "At eight to-night," he said, "I will be at the Concert Hall."

The *impresario* took a long breath; he was dismissed, and by an accompanist!

Before the concert began, the *impresario* made a little speech, alluding feelingly to the tragedy, and announcing that the dead boy's dearest friend had consented to put aside private feeling in the service of the public, and bespeaking for the man their kindest reception.

The audience was excited, curious; the man took his place before them in an utter silence, and played what he had played in the studio in the morning.

Floods of pathetic harmony, exquisite, throbbing chords and silvery runs filled the great hall. The audience was in-

terested, touched, vanquished. People looked quickly at each other; the critical ones settled down to enjoyment, the excitable ones leaned forward in their seats, the thoughtless ones felt the strange power of the man and sat silent, ready to burst into applause at the first opportunity. When the man rose and walked quietly away, they gave him an ovation; he came back again and again and bowed his thanks. The *impresario* looked after him respectfully; the *prima donna* softly clapped her hands; the musician's fame was assured.

* * * * *

After that night the man lived much in the studio. He seemed to have dropped into his new life without a tie to sever, so lonely can a man be on God's earth.

He loved to sit in the dead boy's chair, to look at such odds and ends as lay about the place—a half-worn glove, a half-finished score, a half-read book. By and bye he finished the score, read the book, and pitched the glove into the fire; and by and bye there came to him the understanding of what had happened to him. It came in this way:

Often, while he played for the people, and looked down into the sea of faces, all looking up, all intent upon him—he saw one transcending in beauty and expression every other—a pure, wide-browed, peaceful woman-face, which he began to search for among the crowds, and which by and bye he grew to know, until one day he met it, smiling upon him, in a brilliant assembly convened to do him honor. As the months went by, his heart yearned towards this woman, he would have loved her, had not some strange power held him back—some power which drove him from her side, to sit for hours at the piano in the studio, playing such things as he must, he knew not why, but that as he played, her image faded, and as much as was possible, he forgot her.

At last, the man realized that he had two souls, his own—which yearned for love, for the companionship of the beautiful woman, the other, the artist soul, which had thrilled into him, from the body of the dying boy, bearing with it the burden of thought yet unexpressed, of some divine purpose yet to be