

to your triumphs! Count not on that! Count not on that!"

And she drew away her arm from her young friend.

Ebba could not restrain her tears.

"Pardon me," resumed Therese, "pardon me, beloved child. Yes, I will go with you," said she, with firmness; and, after a moment's silence, during which she armed herself with resolution, "I will go with Ebba; God, to whom I have just prayed, as I have not prayed in a long time, will give me strength to do so. No, Ebba, I will not leave you."

Therese kept her word. She not only conducted her to the theatre, assisted her with her costume, but followed her to the stage and encouraged her to the last moment. Then, her face concealed in a large veil, she sank down, almost fainting, covered her face with both hands, and did not appear conscious until the *debutante* returned to her, followed by the enthusiastic bravoës of the public, and the cries that recalled her from all sides. Dresden had never admired a more exquisite creature, had never heard a sweeter voice, a more accomplished cantatrice.

Every one hurried round her with congratulations. Hoffman threw himself on her neck. Weber, his eyes filled with tears, exclaimed:

"You restore me to health. I am going to finish *Obéron*!"

Jean Paul flung himself at her feet, and, with a sort of frenzy, said:

"You have transported me to heaven, from whence you came."

There were nobles, artists, a wondering and excited crowd, who hastened to salute and felicitate the intoxicated Ebba. In the midst of this triumph she felt an icy hand press hers!

It was that of Therese; Therese, pale as Leonardo when her ghostly betrothed hurried her away on his black steed shouting—"Hurrah! the dead go quick!"

"Take care, Ebba," said she, with a sarcastic smile, "take care, for if the clearness of your voice alters, all these flatterers, who adore you now as a divinity, will turn away from you with indifference! Take care!"

She then threw her own shawl over Ebba's shoulders, and drew her into her box, where they found Stina still praying, unable to be a listener to her young mistress's trial.

"He has not deceived me," cried Ebba, flinging herself on her neck. "Success and glory is ours! God inspired my poor mother when he gave her the thought to send me on the stage."

"Stina," interrupted Therese, "take care of the

intoxication of this young girl; watch over her, for the hour of peril has come!"

At this moment they recalled Ebba on the stage, where the public received her with more admiration than ever.

"You can remain in your garret no longer," said Hoffman, after it was ended; Hoffman, always the friend of the marvellous and fantastic. "I am going to conduct you home; change your dress, I will wait in the theatre for you."

Ebba wished to put on her simple dress, but in its place was substituted a robe of rich stuff—a cachemire replaced her woollen shawl.

Hoffman, without making any explanations, or even answering the questions she asked, hurried her along, made her get into a handsome carriage, and conducted her to a magnificent apartment.

"Where am I?" cried the dazzled girl.

"At home, dear *prima donna*."

"At home!" replied she, astonished.

"Yes, this all belongs to you, and I only ask you one thing in exchange."

"What is it?"

"Your signature to this engagement for three years; this engagement, which ensures you a thousand ducats a month."

He went off, leaving Ebba in the ecstasy of a delightful dream.

The renown of the *prima donna* increased from day to day; to hear her sing they came from all parts of Germany to Dresden. Ebba soon became habituated to her new position, and it seemed as if she had never known days of trial and hardship, so familiarly did she use fortune and renown. On the days when she did not appear on the stage, Hoffman escorted to her house the *élite* of the city of Dresden. Her mind and elegance of manners were soon extolled as much as her celestial voice and dramatic talent.

Surrounded with all this happiness, the *prima donna* did not forget her friend Therese. She wished to give her a chamber in her hotel next her own, but the Italian steadily refused it. She showed the same wish to avoid the brilliant throng who filled the saloons of the cantatrice. She visited her only in the morning, when Ebba received no one but herself. She counselled her young friend about the new *roles* she was to take, made observations on the manner in which she played the night before, and, above all, tried to discover, by adroit and well turned questions, whether Ebba's heart remained free in the midst of the brilliant seductions that surrounded her on all sides. One morning, as Therese entered, the cantatrice hurriedly concealed the billet she was reading under the cushions of the ottoman. Therese, touched with lively sympathy, took her hand.

"Ebba," said she, "Ebba, may your mother in heaven watch over you! You have never had greater need of her protection."

With a gesture of impatience, she replied:

"My secrets are my own."

"Poor child!" said Therese, "my heart feels