

boast it was that with her voice and figure she could pass for a man when she pleased.

Madame Bonanni greeted her and stopped a moment.

'Please do not think I have only just come to the theatre,' said the Italian. 'I have been listening to her in the house, though I have heard her so often at rehearsals.'

'Well?' asked the elder woman. 'What do you think of it?'

'It is the voice of an angel — and then, she is handsome, too! But ——'

'But what?'

'She is a statue,' answered the contralto in a tone of mingled pity and contempt. 'She has no heart.'

'They say that of most lyric sopranos,' laughed Madame Bonanni.

'I never heard it said of you! You have a heart as big as the world!' The Italian made a circle of her two arms, to convey an idea of the size of the prima donna's heart, while the wholesale upholsterer, who had a good eye, compared the measurement with that lady's waist. 'You bring the tears to my eyes when you sing,' continued the contralto, 'but Cordova is different. She only makes me hate her because she has such a splendid voice!'

'Don't hate her, my dear,' said Madame Bonanni gently. 'She's a friend of mine. And as for the heart, child, it's like a loaf of bread! You must break it to get anything out of it, and if you never break it at all it dries up into a sort of little wooden cannon-ball!'