

his heavenly, as he once did with those of his earthly love."

A thrill of horror ran through the veins of Josepha, as she listened to these words—she stood like one paralyzed—with fixed eyes, and bloodless cheeks and lips; but Marie Theresa, absorbed by her own emotion, noticed not that of her daughter.

"Prince Kaunnitz will attend you," resumed the Empress, after a momentary pause, "and Father Stephen will himself conduct you to the vault, where—."

"Oh, my mother, spare me!" burst from the lips of the terrified Josepha, as with a look of supplicating agony, she threw herself at the feet of the astonished Empress.

"Spare you the performance of an act of filial piety, Josepha? Is it this you mean?" asked her mother in a tone of reproachful surprise.

"And must then, such a dreadful test of my filial piety and love be required—is it not enough that my tears, my unceasing regrets for my lost father, daily prove how rooted are these sentiments in my heart?" asked Josepha, bursting into a passion of tears, and burying her face in the folds of her mother's robe.

"I understand not these tears, this ill-timed resistance to my rational request," said the Empress, rising with dignity; "surely no physical fears can operate to produce this strong repugnance to an act which should have been voluntary on your part; yes, it should have been a spontaneous wish in the heart of a daughter of the House of Austria, to perform her last act of devotion at the tomb of a father who adored her, before quitting her country perhaps forever."

"Oh, forgive me, my mother," exclaimed the unhappy Princess, still kneeling in humble entreaty at the feet of her imperial mother; "I am very, very wretched, and call me weak and childish if you will—but indeed I cannot, dare not encounter the terrors of that gloomy vault—assign me any other task—vigils or penances, weary and cruel as they may be, I will perform—but this—no—I never can survive a visit to that tomb."

"Josepha arise," said the Empress, in a tone of severe displeasure; "I blush that a child of mine should avow herself the victim of such idle fears; but they can avail you nothing—they are too absurd to be regarded, and I should feel that I did my duty neither as a sovereign, nor a Christian mother, if I consigned my daughter to the arms of a husband, ere she had performed this last sacred act of filial love, deemed by me essential to her peace and happiness; and on the tomb of her dead father, registered her vows to live always for Heaven, and for those over whom she is destined to reign. Prepare yourself to set forth privately, and in an hour Father Stephen will be here, to attend you to the church of the Capuchins."

Accustomed as she was to absolute and unbound-

ed sway, Marie Theresa could ill brook resistance to her will from any, and least of all from her children. Even her son, the Emperor Joseph, whom, after his father's death, she admitted as co-regent of her dominions, was compelled to render her implicit obedience, and yield in all things to her will—so that she was in reality as much the sole sovereign of Austria as she had been during the lifetime of the late nominal Emperor, the passive and unambitious Francis. Aware from bitter experience of this trait in the character of her illustrious mother, the young Queen felt how worse than useless would be all further attempt at resistance, and rising mechanically from her suppliant attitude, she signified her acquiescence in the task required, by a silent gesture, and the faint utterance of the words "I obey," that fell almost inaudibly from her quivering lips.

The Empress was satisfied, and immediately withdrew, when completely subdued by her nervous terrors, which aggravated a thousand-fold the horrors of this dreaded visit, the unhappy Josepha sunk upon a couch, and gave way without restraint to hysterical sobs and tears. The voice of her young sister, Marie Antoinette, singing her joyous carols as she bounded along the corridor, first aroused her to herself, and rising, she wiped her swollen eyes, and went forth to embrace this darling child, the personification of infant grace and beauty. She found her seated on the floor of her apartment, the head of a beautiful greyhound resting passively on her lap, while she twined around his neck a carcanet of pearls, which she had roguishly purloined from the toilet of an elder sister. Happy, unconscious child! little dreamed she who now clasped you to her bosom, of the woes, the miseries that were preparing for your after years—miseries to which those that darkened her lot, bitter as they seemed, were as the summer storm, compared to the fierce and desolating tornado of the tropics.

"Ah, mamma says you must soon leave us, dear Josepha," exclaimed the lovely child, as she showered her fragrant kisses on the cheeks and lips and brow of her weeping sister, "but why do you cry, you are going to be a queen as mamma is, whom every body loves—though Christina says you would rather be an archduchess still, that you might stay here with us in our pleasant home—or go with us sometimes to Schonbrunn or Laxenburg, where we have such delicious fruit, and nice large gardens to play in."

"Indeed, indeed, I would my Marie," said Josepha, as she strained her young sister to her bosom with energy that surprised the child, accustomed as she was to the fervour of her embraces—"God knows how my heart aches to quit you, dear one—yet I must go—but not to be a queen, save as they now call me so—an empty word, for never shall I live to wear a crown," and she hid her face among the golden ringlets of the little archduchess, till