

ESPIRITU SANTO

By Henrietta Dana Skinner.

CHAPTER I.

"Veni, lumen cordium."—Whit Sunday Prose. It was the feast of Pentecost. Paris was flooded with June sunshine, and its streets were gay with life.

Not for all, however, had the church-going been disposed of early. At 11 o'clock the pomp and ceremony of High Mass began in those edifices that are the glory of Christian Paris.

Two figures stepped aside into one of the many chapels of the aisle to let the crowd pass on before them. The man of middle age and height, olive-skinned and black-eyed, leaned against the sculptured tomb of a great cardinal-statesman and watched the retreating multitude with lazy interest.

"Well, my little girl, you have had a beautiful feast-day and the very angels seemed to be singing to you of the Holy Spirit whose name you bear. Have the angels wearied you, my Espritito Santo?"

"Oh, no, papa, it isn't that I'm tired, but I have an idea," and she peeped into her basket and then looked up eagerly. "O papa, I should so love to give one of my flowers, the flowers of the Holy Ghost, to the dear little boy who sang so beautifully. Papa, may I not give it to him, give him the Espritito Santo?"

"The father took the basket from the child's hands and glanced at the flowers lying there, white and pure as if cut in wax, and enclosing in their petals the dove-shaped figure from which they take their name.

"Well, well, child, there can be no harm in your giving it to him, but where do you expect to find this angel? Do you think he lives perched up by the altar there, like one of the carved cherubs in the choir, or will you address it to him in a note—Paradise, l'este restante?"

"Do not tease me, papa! I thought you would know where to find him. You know everything?"

spended the deep-toned choir, and then the two voices, the soaring, ringing treble of the boy and the deep, rich sweetness of the man's, blended in exquisite harmony. "Lava quod est sordidum, regere quod est devium." "Cleanse our guilty stains, guide our erring footsteps, drop down dew upon the dry land, bend our stubborn wills, warm our frozen hearts. Be our strength, the support of our exile, till thou art our joy in Paradise forever, Alleluia. Amen. O Veni, Veni!"

Joyously, triumphantly rang out the alleluias, the dramatic intensity of the man's voice, the gay jubilation of the child's, piercing, it would seem, the very heavens to unite with the voices of the heavenly choir before the Crystal Throne.

And those who had come, perhaps in curiosity, perhaps in incredulity, felt themselves stirred to long-hidden depths, their eyes full of tears and their hearts repeating: "O sweetest Comforter, immortal Light, guide us through this weary exile to the joys of Paradise. Amen!"

It was another hour before the Mass, with the sermon of the eloquent Par Preacher, the elaborate music, and the stately ceremonial, was over, and still the tones of the "Veni, Sancte Spiritus" lingered in every heart. The vast congregation turned slowly and reverently to depart.

"He spoke in Spanish, and the child, clinging to his hand, answered in the same language.

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young man since he took his very first singing-lesson six years ago in Florence and I have always said that he had a voice that would rule the world. But wait till you hear him in opera! I have sung with him myself at La Scala, at Vienna, at Nice, and I know whereof I speak. Ah, Senor Disdier!" she broke off, catching sight of the Spaniard. "Then you took my advice and came here to-day instead of going to La Madeleine. Well, do you feel rewarded?"

"It was as one would imagine the archangel Michael singing. 'Who is like unto God?' replied Disdier, courteously. "But it is not the archangel that we have come to pay homage to, but to the lesser angel. My little girl, whose birthday this is, wishes to thank the lad who sang so beautifully of the Holy Spirit, to Whom she is dedicated."

"It is all the same; they are brothers, and they are both wonderful," said Madame Delepoule. "The man sings like the archangel Michael, but the boy has the voice of the angel Israel, the sweetest singer of heaven. Theodore!" she called. "Theodore, my child, come here!"

"I have this moment sent Theodore home," said a young man, coming forward from a group of gentlemen.

"He was a tall, broad-shouldered young man, erect and shapely. He held his head well thrown back, looking down at the shorter world beneath him with eyes that glanced pleasantly and merrily out from under their long, shading lashes. He did not wear a scarlet uniform, neither did he carry a battle-axe, yet even in the presence of the massive Swiss he held his own bravely, and looked quite big and imposing.

"The young man looked down at the child, and his handsome mouth parted in a charming, cordial smile. Kneeling on one knee before her, to bring himself nearer her level, he took her small hand kindly and said, 'Can I not take Theodore some message from you? What would you like to say to him?'"

"The young man rose to his feet, and Disdier, bowing politely right and left, turned away from the group and led his little daughter off. As they passed the Swiss, Espritito looked up to thank him, and Disdier slipped a coin into the big hand.

"I, too, have four little girls," said the Spaniard; and the Swiss smiled back gratefully, and watched father and child as they disappeared through the side-door of the church into the Rue du Bac, turning towards the river.

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respect. What else can I do than let her friends have it?"

But Madame Valorge had misgivings, and Madame Delepoule felt that she must plead with her personally if she wished to secure the lease for her young friends. The two ladies were near an age, both being turned fifty, but nothing could have been in greater contrast than the personal appearance of each—the black-eyed, black-haired Frenchwoman, slender in figure, dainty in dress, with the type of feature that is called aristocratic, an air of high breeding and refinement in every movement and expression, and the large, partly Belgian, her reddish-brown hair streaked with gray, her heavy-featured countenance plain and commonplace in repose. One read in it few signs of the superb artistic intelligence, the noble vocalism and extraordinary histrionic power that had electrified two generations of opera-lovers.

In her blunt, straightforward, open-hearted manner, Madame Delepoule plunged at once into the subject of the proposed tenancy. With equal frankness Madame Valorge urged her objections in her well-bred, pleasantly modulated tones.

"I do not think you have anything to fear," explained Hortense Delepoule. "These young men are busy fellows, and they will come and go so quietly you will know little of their presence in the house. Young Daretti is to sing at the Opera this coming year, and he wishes to educate himself at home for his young orphan brother. I have known and loved these lads from childhood, and their mother before them. I may be stupid and conceited, perhaps, but I hope to have some little influence with the young fellows, alone in a big, wicked city, if I can succeed in making them feel at home with me, can make them come to me as to a friend and mother. You know what young men are. If they are in the same house with me and pass my door every day they will drop in as a matter of course. But if they are just across the street, and must put on hat and coat and fetch their stick, and make a special errand of it, I am as well be in New Caledonia for all I shall see of them, for all I can hope to do for them. Madame Valorge, you are a mother, and have brought up motherless children; help me then to be kind to another mother's orphan lads."

Hortense Delepoule's face was eloquent enough now, her eyes darkening with fear of emotion. Madame Valorge responded to her appeal with a warm pressure of the hand.

"Ah, Madame, you are an able strategist and have attacked me at my weakest point. Indeed, indeed, they shall come! I only wish that I might join with you in trying to give them sweet home influences in their lonely lives. With the little boy I will gladly do it, but you understand that with the older one I must be more circumspect. My Catalina is devoted to music and is just at a susceptible age. It would be a pity to have any sentimental notions enter into her head just when she should be doing her most earnest work."

"If you are able to keep sentimental notions out of the head of a seventeen-year-old girl, you will be one of the first to succeed!"

Madame Valorge laughed good-naturedly. "Indeed, if I were to bring into my house a young musician of the personal charm of young Daretti, as Ramon describes him to me, I admit I should be very hopeless of success. But, seriously, they may come, with the assurance that I welcome them and shall be glad to do all that I and Ramon can do to make it homelike for them."

Hortense Delepoule took both Madame Valorge's hands in hers and pressed them warmly. "There were tears in her honest eyes. 'I thank you a thousand times for your kind heart, and allow me to add, your good sense. And, dear friend, let us know each other even better after this. Let me see more of you and of your little charges, the sweet little one that I saw yesterday especially. Has she, too, a talent for music, and how did she come by her unusual name?'"

to be the comfort and solace of your hearts."

"She is indeed a benediction to us, God bless her, our little dove, our Holy Ghost flower, our Espritito Santo!"

"He wears the rose of youth upon him."—Antony and Cleopatra. Madame Valorge was most sincere in promising Madame Delepoule that the young Italians should be welcome in her house, yet they had been established many weeks on the fourth floor before she even knew them by sight. "They would not care for the society of an old woman like me," she said to herself, "and it is as well they should not be falling in love with Catalina or she with them. They are at home with Madame Delepoule, and the society of her salon is just what would be congenial to them. When the children come home from their summer in the country it will be time enough to do something for the little boy."

In the meanwhile the new tenants came and went quietly about their different occupations, and so solidly are the Parisian houses built that she was hardly aware that the apartment above was occupied, although between the grand-piano, the violin, and robust men's voices, the fourth floor was ringing with music from morning till night. She passed the young men occasionally on the staircase, and they were certainly well-mannered. They always stood still with bare heads while she passed them, flattening themselves against the wall and holding their hats in their hands. She fancied that the burly, brown-bearded one with the kind, brown eyes, was the Swiss professor of mathematics. The slender, blond lad with the poetic face was probably the violinist, and the tall, broad-shouldered young man, with erect, spirited bearing and laughing, coquetish eyes, the young opera-singer. Other figures passed, but she had never seen among them the little boy Madame Delepoule had spoken of. He was apparently non-existent. In the autumn, however, the fates, which seemed at first to have set themselves against any intimacy, began to relent.

One evening sounds of a highly hilarious character were floated through the air from the fourth floor to the occupants of the third. They penetrated even the solid brick and cement walls and tiled floors of as well built a house as that in the Boulevard Malesherbes. The sounds of laughter, shouting, and singing, and other sounds that seemed to betoken the tramp of many feet and the circulation of heavy pieces of furniture made Madame Valorge sit in anxious trembling until the small hours of the morning. Disdier was out late that night, and on his return he found Madame Valorge still up, looking very white and disturbed. The noise, however, ceased at that moment, and they decided to do nothing till morning, when they would investigate into its cause. At an early hour the next morning, while they were still over their coffee, there was a ring at the door and the maid brought in two visiting-cards for Madame Valorge and Senor Disdier. The gentlemen were waiting in the anteroom, she said. The cards announced Adriano dei Conti Daretti-Mannfeld, and Saverio Agostini, member of the Conservatory orchestra. The young men were invited into the salon, where, with some severity of manner, Madame Valorge and her son-in-law awaited them. It was impossible, however, not to be disarmed by the many courtesy of bearing and the look of boyish sincerity in the faces of the two youths. They entered, hat and gloves in hand, made deep, polite bows, and standing up together, began their apology at once.

"We feel deeply ashamed, Madame Valorge," another bow, "and you, Senor Disdier," another bow, "to think how much we must have disturbed you last evening. We were most inexcusably thoughtless, and beg you will forgive us."

"Pray be seated, gentlemen, and lay down your hats," said Madame Valorge, graciously, already mollified by their appearance. "We do not often hear from you, but last evening seems to have been a merry one."

"It was, indeed," explained Daretti, "but there was nothing amiss, I beg you to believe; nothing that you would have wished your own sons to do. You see, moving his chair a little nearer to Madame Valorge and looking confidentially at her out of irresistible eyes, "Agostini and I had both yesterday signed contracts which assure us a fortune and a future. The first barytone of the Opera is to retire after Easter and make a concert tour through England and the United States. Agostini will go with him as solo violinist, and will get the chance of making an international reputation, while I have been engaged to take the first barytone roles at the highest salary they have ever paid. Isn't it delightful, and do you wonder that our heads were turned?"

"I do not wonder, and, indeed, I congratulate you with all my heart, both of you, although I regret," turning politely to Agostini, "that your good fortune should call you away from Paris. But I fear there was something else turned besides your heads. Will you, pray, explain to me what happened to the furniture?"

you look grave, madame. I will spare you the rest."

"And yet you tell me," laughed Madame Valorge, glancing in pretended consternation at the pretty furniture of her salon, "that this is nothing but what I should wish my own sons to do!"

"Madame," said Daretti, gayly, "I see that you have already adopted us and that all is forgiven. I need not say further with my story. From this moment we are your sons, and I trust you will not fail to call upon us for any filial services that we may do you."

"Especially in case of annoyance from our unruly neighbors, I suppose you mean to add," she said, smiling. "Madame Valorge, when there is such perfect sympathy of soul as exists between us it is needless to be explicit."

Ramon Disdier looked at his bright-faced young neighbors with a sense of pleasure. It was many years since he had been a boy, his life had been dull and anxious of late years, and now he felt as if he should enjoy renewing his youth in the companionship of these healthy, lively young fellows that fate had made his tenants. "Decidedly," he said to himself, "I must see more of these boys. I must spend an evening with them once in awhile, and have them come here sometimes. We have a fine piano, and why might we not pass many pleasant hours together?"

"Decidedly," Madame Valorge was thinking, "these young men are dangerous. They appeal even to my withered heart, and, for Catalina's sake, it will not do to let them see me often, unless young girls' hearts are made of dough-stuff from what they were when I was eighteen."

"Decidedly," the two young men were saying to themselves, "We must make friends here. Our landlord is a gentleman, and his mother is delightful, so bright and kindly. We must lose no time in becoming better acquainted."

So the conspirators were three against one, and that one a hospitable, tender-hearted woman. It ended, as one might have foreseen, in the exchange of cordial invitations and ready promises of acceptance.

"And you must really bring me the little brother of yours to see me," Madame Valorge was saying. "He must be good friends with our little girls and feel that this is a home for him. I have not even seen him yet."

shaking himself the piano-stool, sense and look of never been and music all to been such a t Greeks."

"There'll be stay to hear you said Daretti. A decent life so him containat mio," laying vthin's slender fingers rehearsal! And driven?" And, other, they music taking his music they set out for TO BE

WHEN DOO JAMES RAYMOND Mr. Teumishnell velled on a rail often wished the Dr. Erasmus Ev pass on the A. to let Mr. Clay eagerly accepte "The pass is Dr. Evans, "b difference. Jus the conductor's woul'

Mr. Clay took in St. Louis awaited the actor in some to what extent variate skould of the extra- dctor wouldn same time he and did not in should stand in Besides, the sa might be imper weakness or co- sible cross-acti- But when the merely read the pass, returned on leaving M. even the little had had to con a pleasant and an eccitute, on the cushion sleeper; and p chocolate-faced birth, he crawl the rushing tra [J] About midn a voice at the "Doutor" it up! A man in taken sick, and It was the e- cted that the an M. D.

All right, promptness in self." The do when the co- tions are call- night on sleep his pass and p these: it was a and see the n- enough to need him."

Mr. Clay, made his way was conducted commendable man's pulse, chest, and co- then asked to done, he stood contemplative patient. The was pondering wondering why—It—him had seen Dr. lifted the pati his finger-nail "Have you turning to the "Yes, sir, answer.

"Very good, powerful in it, peat the dose haven't my de- fortunately, a I'd like to, as a—"

What sort would prove in in the room for he broke w was sorry he with him; h patient's res had some sor the whiskey with brisk a know."

Back in once more M then sighed he thought, ous. "Docto was dozing he getting w take another "All right cheerfully, I wish," he m- old pass had colled before What the d The man me- I'm no doc- out. There's ward car, si Mr. Clay's friends are and thought sult with y- you think b- "Very w- desire it, I lived and will see the seconds," wonder if it off the train But Mr. chat. He patient was arrived.