

the Austrian court. Splendid preparations were being made for her departure, and a brilliant retinue formed to escort her to her new dominions; all appeared solicitous to offer homage to the young and lovely Queen, and whenever she appeared, it was to be greeted with enthusiasm by courtiers and people. But all this *éclat* served only to deepen the sadness of Josepha. She looked at every familiar face, at every inanimate object even, with a pang—for the thought that she was soon to quit all, dwelt like an arrow barbed with poison in her heart. Young as she was in years, she was still more youthful in feeling, and the simple and pure joys of childhood, its love of bird and flower, and wild freedom from restraint, had not yet ceased to be precious to her—she loved all that belonged to her own tender years, far better than the burdensome ceremonials of royalty—and the outpouring of affection and delight from young hearts to which hers was linked, was far more grateful to her ear, than the fulsome strains of adulation, uttered by nobles and princes, who hailed her as their Queen. Never, indeed, did a young brow wear its regal honours with so little majesty, or a young heart throb with so little pride at the prospect of dominion, as Josepha's. But her fate was sealed,—and aware that it was so, she remained passive in the hands of others, and ceased to express either hope or fear, with regard to her future destiny.

Things were in this state, when, as she sat alone one morning in her closet, she was startled by a low knock at the door, and immediately the gentle voice of the Empress requested admittance. Josepha was surprised,—for never before, that she recollected, had her mother intruded on those hours devoted to religious exercises—she was too scrupulous an observer of every external form of the church, willingly to interrupt the devotions of her children, and as Josepha hastily unclosed the door, she wondered within herself what urgent occasion could have brought her thither at this unusual hour. The fine countenance of the Empress wore that look of sad and patient resignation, which, since the death of the Emperor, had become almost its habitual expression. Inferior as he had been to her, in every great and noble quality, she yet cherished for him a love deep and intense as the heart of woman ever knew; and his loss, which she unceasingly deplored, wrought in her person and character a change, which no other event had been able to effect—teaching her, though still ambitious, to feel the vanity of earthly aspirations, and the fleeting nature of all joys, save those which have their birth in heaven.

As Marie Theresa entered the little oratory of her daughter, she embraced her with maternal fondness, and then, speaking in her accustomed sweet and subdued voice, "I trust, my child," she said, glancing towards the breviary which still lay open on a cushion, "I trust I have not disturbed your devotions. I

thought the hour past in which you were usually engaged in them, and I wished to speak to you of a duty to be performed before you quit the soil in which your father sleeps."

The voice of the Empress faltered; she paused and covered her face with her handkerchief. Josepha, with childlike simplicity and affection, threw herself upon her mother's bosom, and gently uncovering her face, kissed away the tears that bedewed it.

Tell me, mamma, what you would have me do," she said—"I have caused you so much grief, that I would, if possible, by some act prove to you my love, and glad obedience to your wishes."

"I thank you, my Josepha," said the Empress, "and cherish not a doubt of your zeal in the performance of the sacred duty I shall name. It involves my peace of mind, and as I think, your welfare, temporal and eternal."

"Name it, mamma," said the young Queen, with a slight foreboding of ill, as she marked the more than usual solemnity of her mother's voice and manner.

"Need I remind you, my daughter," she replied, "that this is the eighteenth of the month, a day always consecrated by me to the memory of him we mourn—the best of husbands and of fathers."

"I remembered it, mamma, while on my knees before that altar," returned Josepha, "and I omitted not a fervent petition for the repose of his blessed soul."

"And I, my child," said the Empress with emotion, "have but now returned from that vault within which his precious ashes rest. I have watered his tomb with my tears, and there, where earthly pride and vanity may read their impotence, I have mingled with my prayers for his soul, the deepest and most abasing confessions of my own frailty and imperfections, and asked of God wisdom to rule my people with justice, and to maintain a virtuous sway over the more difficult and rebellious empire of my heart."

Josepha shuddered—the superstition which tinted the strong mind of Marie Theresa was deeply interwoven in her weaker and more youthful one, and the idea of going alone to that sepulchral vault, beneath the dark and gloomy church of the Capuchins, as her mother often did, and always on the eighteenth of every month, the day on which the Emperor died, filled her with dismay.

"My daughter, you are soon to quit the arms of my love," resumed the Empress, "and before your bark is launched upon the broad and stormy ocean, where it is destined, perhaps, to buffet many perils, I entreat that you will seek the tomb of your father, and over his cold remains, dedicate yourself to God—implore his guidance and protection through the devious paths it may be your lot to tread, and invoke the beatified spirit of him who sleeps beneath, to pray for you, and watch over you with the eyes of