

halls, and she was left alone to commune with heaven and herself—and to justify by those false and specious pretexts, of which the great and powerful are so prone to avail themselves, the course she had pursued.

But to the unhappy victim of her policy, came no ray of hope or comfort to irradiate the darkness of her fate—though long past the hour of midnight, yet from one apartment of the palace streamed the rays of a lamp that burned before an image of the Virgin; and at the foot of that consecrated shrine, knelt the young Queen of Naples, her face buried in her hands, and her long fair hair falling like a rich veil over her neck and arms. The gorgeous robes which had decked her for her bridal, were lying near, where her attendants had left them, and on her toilet sparkled the jewels, and the diamond tiara, which on that evening had lent to her beauty the adornments of royalty. How worthless seemed these gauds to the sorrowful princess, compared to those rich treasures of the heart, which she was compelled to cast away for the idle pomp and burdensome caresses of sovereignty. Bitter thoughts like these forced themselves upon her, even in the midst of her devotions, and with them came fresh bursts of tears, and impassioned words poured forth in agony from her lips.

"Pitying Mother, save and support me!" she audibly exclaimed, "thou knowest the wretchedness of my heart—its horror at this fate—its hatred of this idle pomp. Holy Mother, take me to thy arms, safe from the snares and miseries that haunt my youth."

A fresh burst of tears and sobs interrupted her supplications, and, before she could again recover herself, a light step approached, a soft arm was thrown around her, and a lovely form knelt by her side, and joined audibly in her devotions—entreating for her firmness and composure, and imploring that heavenly joys, and the richest of earthly gifts might unite to crown and bless her.

Josepha knew the voice of her sister Christina, the beautiful and gifted wife of Prince Albert of Saxony, and casting herself into her arms, she gave way to her grief and tenderness without restraint. Christina clasped her weeping sister to her heart, and passionately kissed her lips and brow, while her own tears rained down upon the lovely face that rested on her bosom.

"Be comforted, my sister," she at length said, and her low sweet voice trembled with emotion—

"God smiles on your filial obedience, and he will not suffer it to go unrewarded."

"Ah, my Christina," sobbed the young Josepha, "needed there this dreadful sacrifice to test its strength. God knows I would have laid down my life to have proved the depth and fervour of my filial love—but this living death, this endless exile to which I am condemned—is it not fearful?"

"Nay, my love," said Christina, with increasing firmness; "there seems to me nothing so frightful in this exile, as you term it. Think of the delicious climate in which you are to dwell—the fair realm over which you are to reign, and the splendour and power which await you as its Queen, and then tell me, my royal sister," she added with a smile, "what there is in all these delights which thus terrifies your young imagination!"

"Your lips may well wear a smile, Christina," said Josepha sadly, "for you are wedded to a man you love, and with whom, whenever inclination prompts, you may come to dwell amid the joys of your early home—but to me, the thought of quitting all I love brings with it the bitterness of death—sisters and brothers, and my tender mother—cruel though she has been in this act—for one whom I know not, who receives me without affection, and whose love I may never win—nay, whose hatred may perchance by my bitter portion, in that stranger land where my heart can never find a home."

"And why, my Josepha," asked the Princess, "should it not find a home, and a blessed one, in that lovely land of beauty and bloom; and happiness in the new ties which will there soon link it to dear and tender objects of affection?"

"Ah, my sister, seek not to flatter me with false hopes, answered Josepha mournfully,—“look at that miniature of my affianced husband, and no longer marvel at my grief. Already have those stupid and inexpressive features inspired me with disgust which I strive in vain to conquer—and to the anguish of quitting all I hold dear on earth, is added still another pang, in the certainty that I go to link my fate with one whom I can never learn to love.”

"A picture is but an imperfect, and often a faulty representation of its original," said Christina—"it may be so, nay I think it is in this instance—at all events, though we have never learned that Ferdinand is great or warlike, report bespeaks him amiable and beneficent, and these qualities will go much farther to promote your happiness, than if by his valour he gained a thousand battles, or by his genius outwitted all the courts of Europe."

"And if such reasoning could have availed with you, Christina," replied the young Queen with some bitterness, "the Duke de Chablais had long since won his bride, and Prince Albert of Saxony might now have been the husband of another."

"I loved Prince Albert," said Christina earnestly, "and I saw no sufficient reason of state policy to forbid the gift of my hand where my affections had been long concentrated; my mother too favoured my wishes, or I might not have had the courage to persist in my choice; for, as the children of a great sovereign, we are bound to consult the interests of the realm, rather than our private inclinations, in the alliances we may form; yet, my Josepha, if you loved