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Hoffmann

Weird tales

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THE CREMONA VIOLIN.

COUNCILLOR KRESPEL was one of the strangest, oddest men I ever met with in my life. When I went to live in H—— for a time the whole town was full of talk about him, as he happened to be just then in the midst of one of the very craziest of his schemes. Krespel had the reputation of being both a clever, learned lawyer and a skilful diplomatist. One of the reigning princes of Germany—not, however, one of the most powerful—had appealed to him for assistance in drawing up a memorial, which he was desirous of presenting at the Imperial Court with the view of furthering his legitimate claims upon a certain strip of territory. The project was crowned with the happiest success; and as Krespel had once complained that he could never find a dwelling sufficiently comfortable to suit him, the prince, to reward him for the memorial, undertook to defray the cost of building a house which Krespel might erect just as he pleased. Moreover, the prince was willing to purchase any site that he should fancy. This offer, however, the Councillor would not accept; he insisted that the house should be built in his garden, situated in a very beautiful neighbourhood outside the town-walls. So he bought all kinds of materials and had them carted out. Then he might have been seen day after day, attired in his curious garments (which he had made himself according to certain fixed

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rules of his own), slacking the lime, riddling the sand, packing up the bricks and stones in regular heaps, and so on. All this he did without once consulting an architect or thinking about a plan. One fine day, however, he went to an experienced builder of the town and requested him to be in his garden at daybreak the next morning, with all his journeymen and apprentices, and a large body of labourers, &c., to build him his house. Naturally the builder asked for the architect's plan, and was not a little astonished when Krespel replied that none was needed, and that things would turn out all right in the end, just as he wanted them. Next morning, when the builder and his men came to the place, they found a trench drawn out in the shape of an exact square; and Krespel said, "Here's where you must lay the foundations; then carry up the walls until I say they are high enough." "Without windows and doors, and without partition walls?" broke in the builder, as if alarmed at Krespel's mad folly. "Do what I tell you, my dear sir," replied the Councillor quite calmly; "leave the rest to me; it will be all right." It was only the promise of high pay that could induce the builder to proceed with the ridiculous building; but none has ever been erected under merrier circumstances. As there was an abundant supply of food and drink, the workmen never left their work; and amidst their continuous laughter the four walls were run up with incredible quickness, until one day Krespel cried, "Stop!" Then the workmen, laying down trowel and hammer, came down from the scaffoldings and gathered round Krespel in a circle, whilst every laughing face was asking, "Well, and what now?" "Make way!" cried Krespel; and then running to one end of the garden, he strode slowly towards the square of brick-work. When he came close to the

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wall he shook his head in a dissatisfied manner, ran to the other end of the garden, again strode slowly towards the brick-work square, and proceeded to act as before. These tactics he pursued several times, until at length, running his sharp nose hard against the wall, he cried, "Come here, come here, men! break me a door in here! Here's where I want a door made!" He gave the exact dimensions in feet and inches, and they did as he bid them. Then he stepped inside the structure, and smiled with satisfaction as the builder remarked that the walls were just the height of a good two-storeyed house. Krespel walked thoughtfully backwards and forwards across the space within, the bricklayers behind him with hammers and picks, and wherever he cried, "Make a window here, six feet high by four feet broad!" "There a little window, three feet by two!" a hole was made in a trice.

It was at this stage of the proceedings that I came to H—— ; and it was highly amusing to see how hundreds of people stood round about the garden and raised a loud shout whenever the stones flew out and a new window appeared where noboby had for a moment expected it. And in the same manner Krespel proceeded with the buildings and fittings of the rest of the house, and with all the work necessary to that end; everything had to be done on the spot in accordance with the instructions which the Councillor gave from time to time. However, the absurdity of the whole business, the growing conviction that things would in the end turn out better than might have been expected, but above all, Krespel's generosity—which indeed cost him nothing—kept them all in good-humour. Thus were the difficulties overcome which necessarily arose out of this eccentric way of building, and in a short time there was a completely finished house, its outside,

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indeed, presenting a most extraordinary appearance, no two windows, &c., being alike, but on the other hand the interior arrangements suggested a peculiar feeling of comfort. All who entered the house bore witness to the truth of this; and I too experienced it myself when I was taken in by Krespel after I had become more intimate with him. For hitherto I had not exchanged a word with this eccentric man; his building had occupied him so much that he had not even once been to Professor M——'s to dinner, as he was in the habit of doing on Tuesdays. Indeed, in reply to a special invitation, he sent word that he should not set foot over the threshold before the house-warming of his new building took place. All his friends and acquaintances, therefore, confidently looked forward to a great banquet; but Krespel invited nobody except the masters, journeymen, apprentices, and labourers who had built the house. He entertained them with the choicest viands: bricklayer's apprentices devoured partridge pies regardless of consequences; young joiners polished off roast pheasants with the greatest success; whilst hungry labourers helped themselves for once to the choicest morsels of *truffes fricassées*. In the evening their wives and daughters came, and there was a great ball. After waltzing a short while with the wives of the masters, Krespel sat down amongst the town-musicians, took a violin in his hand, and directed the orchestra until daylight.

On the Tuesday after this festival, which exhibited Councillor Krespel in the character of a friend of the people, I at length saw him appear, to my no little joy, at Professor M——'s. Anything more strange and fantastic than Krespel's behaviour it would be impossible to find. He was so stiff and awkward in his movements, that he looked every moment as if he would run up against something or do some damage. But he

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did not ; and the lady of the house seemed to be well aware that he would not, for she did not grow a shade paler when he rushed with heavy steps round a table crowded with beautiful cups, or when he manœuvred near a large mirror that reached down to the floor, or even when he seized a flower-pot of beautifully painted porcelain and swung it round in the air as if desirous of making its colours play. Moreover, before dinner he subjected everything in the Professor's room to a most minute examination ; he also took down a picture from the wall and hung it up again, standing on one of the cushioned chairs to do so. At the same time he talked a good deal and vehemently ; at one time his thoughts kept leaping, as it were, from one subject to another (this was most conspicuous during dinner) ; at another, he was unable to have done with an idea ; seizing upon it again and again, he gave it all sorts of wonderful twists and turns, and couldn't get back into the ordinary track until something else took hold of his fancy. Sometimes his voice was rough and harsh and screeching, and sometimes it was low and drawling and singing ; but at no time did it harmonize with what he was talking about. Music was the subject of conversation ; the praises of a new composer were being sung, when Krespel, smiling, said in his low singing tones, "I wish the devil with his pitchfork would hurl that atrocious garbler of music millions of fathoms down to the bottomless pit of hell!" Then he burst out passionately and wildly, "She is an angel of heaven, nothing but pure God-given music!—the paragon and queen of song!"—and tears stood in his eyes. To understand this, we had to go back to a celebrated *artiste*, who had been the subject of conversation an hour before.

Just at this time a roast hare was on the table ; I

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noticed that Krespel carefully removed every particle of meat from the bones on his plate, and was most particular in his inquiries after the hare's feet; these the Professor's little five-year-old daughter now brought to him with a very pretty smile. Besides, the children had cast many friendly glances towards Krespel during dinner; now they rose and drew nearer to him, but not without signs of timorous awe. What's the meaning of that? thought I to myself. Dessert was brought in; then the Councillor took a little box from his pocket, in which he had a miniature lathe of steel. This he immediately screwed fast to the table, and turning the bones with incredible skill and rapidity, he made all sorts of little fancy boxes and balls, which the children received with cries of delight. Just as we were rising from table, the Professor's niece asked, "And what is our Antonia doing?" Krespel's face was like that of one who has bitten of a sour orange and wants to look as if it were a sweet one; but this expression soon changed into the likeness of a hideous mask, whilst he laughed behind it with downright bitter, fierce, and as it seemed to me, satanic scorn. "Our Antonia? our dear Antonia?" he asked in his drawling, disagreeable singing way. The Professor hastened to intervene; in the reproving glance which he gave his niece I read that she had touched a point likely to stir up unpleasant memories in Krespel's heart. "How are you getting on with your violins?" interposed the Professor in a jovial manner, taking the Councillor by both hands. Then Krespel's countenance cleared up, and with a firm voice he replied, "Capitally, Professor; you recollect my telling you of the lucky chance which threw that splendid Amati[1]

[1] The Amati were a celebrated family of violin-makers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, belonging to Cremona in Italy.

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into my hands. Well, I've only cut it open to-day—not before to-day. I hope Antonia has carefully taken the rest of it to pieces." "Antonia is a good child," remarked the Professor. "Yes, indeed, that she is," cried the Councillor, whisking himself round; then, seizing his hat and stick, he hastily rushed out of the room. I saw in the mirror how that tears were standing in his eyes.

As soon as the Councillor was gone, I at once urged the Professor to explain to me what Krespel had to do with violins, and particularly with Antonia. "Well," replied the Professor, "not only is the Councillor a remarkably eccentric fellow altogether, but he practises violin-making in his own crack-brained way." "Violin-making!" I exclaimed, perfectly astonished. "Yes," continued the Professor, "according to the judgment of men who understand the thing, Krespel makes the very best violins that can be found nowadays; formerly he would frequently let other people play on those in which he had been especially successful, but that's been all over and done with now for a long time. As soon as he has finished a violin he plays on it himself for one or two hours, with very remarkable power and with the most exquisite expression, then he hangs it up beside the rest, and never touches it again or suffers anybody else to touch it. If a violin by any of the eminent old masters is hunted up anywhere, the Councillor buys it immediately, no matter what the price put upon it. But he plays it as he does his own violins, only once; then he takes it to pieces in order to examine closely its inner structure, and should he fancy he hasn't found exactly what he sought for, he in a pet throws the pieces into a big chest, which is already full of the

They form the connecting-link between the Brescian school of makers and the greatest of all makers, Straduarius and Guarnerius.

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remains of broken violins." "But who and what is Antonia?" I inquired, hastily and impetuously. "Well, now, that," continued the Professor, "that is a thing which might very well make me conceive an unconquerable aversion to the Councillor, were I not convinced that there is some peculiar secret behind it, for he is such a good-natured fellow at bottom as to be sometimes guilty of weakness. When he came to H——, several years ago, he led the life of an anchorite, along with an old housekeeper, in —— Street. Soon, by his oddities, he excited the curiosity of his neighbours; and immediately he became aware of this, he sought and made acquaintances. Not only in my house but everywhere we became so accustomed to him that he grew to be indispensable. In spite of his rude exterior, even the children liked him, without ever proving a nuisance to him; for notwithstanding all their friendly passages together, they always retained a certain timorous awe of him, which secured him against all over-familiarity. You have to-day had an example of the way in which he wins their hearts by his ready skill in various things. We all took him at first for a crusty old bachelor, and he never contradicted us. After he had been living here some time, he went away, nobody knew where, and returned at the end of some months. The evening following his return his windows were lit up to an unusual extent! this alone was sufficient to arouse his neighbours' attention, and they soon heard the surpassingly beautiful voice of a female singing to the accompaniment of a piano. Then the music of a violin was heard chiming in and entering upon a keen ardent contest with the voice. They knew at once that the player was the Councillor. I myself mixed in the large crowd which had gathered in front of his house to listen to this extraordinary

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concert; and I must confess that, beside this voice and the peculiar, deep, soul-stirring impression which the execution made upon me, the singing of the most celebrated *artistes* whom I had ever heard seemed to me feeble and void of expression. Until then I had had no conception of such long-sustained notes, of such nightingale trills, of such undulations of musical sound, of such swelling up to the strength of organ-notes, of such dying away to the faintest whisper. There was not one whom the sweet witchery did not enthral; and when the singer ceased, nothing but soft sighs broke the impressive silence. Somewhere about midnight the Councillor was heard talking violently, and another male voice seemed, to judge from the tones, to be reproaching him, whilst at intervals the broken words of a sobbing girl could be detected. The Councillor continued to shout with increasing violence, until he fell into that drawling, singing way that you know. He was interrupted by a loud scream from the girl, and then all was as still as death. Suddenly a loud racket was heard on the stairs; a young man rushed out sobbing, threw himself into a post-chaise which stood below, and drove rapidly away. The next day the Councillor was very cheerful, and nobody had the courage to question him about the events of the previous night. But on inquiring of the housekeeper, we gathered that the Councillor had brought home with him an extraordinarily pretty young lady whom he called Antonia, and she it was who had sung so beautifully. A young man also had come along with them; he had treated Antonia very tenderly, and must evidently have been her betrothed. But he, since the Councillor peremptorily insisted on it, had had to go away again in a hurry. What the relations between Antonia and the Councillor are has remained

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until now a secret, but this much is certain, that he tyrannises over the poor girl in the most hateful fashion. He watches her as Doctor Bartholo watches his ward in the *Barber of Seville;* she hardly dare show herself at the window; and if, yielding now and again to her earnest entreaties, he takes her into society, he follows her with Argus' eyes, and will on no account suffer a musical note to be sounded, far less let Antonia sing—indeed, she is not permitted to sing in his own house. Antonia's singing on that memorable night, has, therefore, come to be regarded by the townspeople in the light of a tradition of some marvellous wonder that suffices to stir the heart and the fancy; and even those who did not hear it often exclaim, whenever any other singer attempts to display her powers in the place, 'What sort of a wretched squeaking do you call that? Nobody but Antonia knows how to sing.'"

Having a singular weakness for such like fantastic histories, I found it necessary, as may easily be imagined, to make Antonia's acquaintance. I had myself often enough heard the popular sayings about her singing, but had never imagined that that exquisite *artiste* was living in the place, held a captive in the bonds of this eccentric Krespel like the victim of a tyrannous sorcerer. Naturally enough I heard in my dreams on the following night Antonia's marvellous voice, and as she besought me in the most touching manner in a glorious *adagio* movement (very ridiculously it seemed to me, as if I had composed it myself) to save her, I soon resolved, like a second Astolpho,[1] to penetrate into Krespel's house, as if into another Alcina's magic castle,

[1] A reference to Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso.* Astolpho, an English cousin of Orlando, was a great boaster, but generous, courteous, gay, and remarkably handsome; he was carried to Alcina's island on the back of a whale.

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and deliver the queen of song from her ignominious fetters.

It all came about in a different way from what I had expected ; I had seen the Councillor scarcely more than two or three times, and eagerly discussed with him the best method of constructing violins, when he invited me to call and see him. I did so ; and he showed me his treasures of violins. There were fully thirty of them hanging up in a closet ; one amongst them bore conspicuously all the marks of great antiquity (a carved lion's head, &c.), and, hung up higher than the rest and surmounted by a crown of flowers, it seemed to exercise a queenly supremacy over them. "This violin," said Krespel, on my making some inquiry relative to it, "this violin is a very remarkable and curious specimen of the work of some unknown master, probably of Tartini's [1] age. I am perfectly convinced that there is something especially exceptional in its inner construction, and that, if I took it to pieces, a secret would be revealed to me which I have long been seeking to discover, but—laugh at me if you like—this senseless thing which only gives signs of life and sound as I make it, often speaks to me in a strange way of itself. The first time I played upon it I somehow fancied that I was only the magnetiser who has the power of moving his subject to reveal of his own accord in words the visions of his inner nature. Don't go away with the belief that I am such a fool as to attach even the slightest importance to such fantastic notions, and yet it's certainly strange that I could

[1] Giuseppe Tartini, born in 1692, died in 1770 ; was one of the most celebrated violinists of the eighteenth century, and the discoverer (in 1714) of "resultant tones," or "Tartini's tones" as they are frequently called. Most of his life was spent at Padua. He did much to advance the art of the violinist, both by his compositions for that instrument as well as by his treatise on its capabilities.

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never prevail upon myself to cut open that dumb lifeless thing there. I am very pleased now that I have not cut it open, for since Antonia has been with me I sometimes play to her upon this violin. For Antonia is fond of it—very fond of it." As the Councillor uttered these words with visible signs of emotion, I felt encouraged to hazard the question, "Will you not play it to me, Councillor." Krespel made a wry face, and falling into his drawling, singing way, said, "No, my good sir!" and that was an end of the matter. Then I had to look at all sorts of rare curiosities, the greater part of them childish trifles; at last thrusting his arm into a chest, he brought out a folded piece of paper, which he pressed into my hand, adding solemnly, "You are a lover of art; take this present as a priceless memento, which you must value at all times above everything else." Therewith he took me by the shoulders and gently pushed me towards the door, embracing me on the threshold. That is to say, I was in a symbolical manner virtually kicked out of doors. Unfolding the paper, I found a piece of a first string of a violin about an eighth of an inch in length, with the words, "A piece of the treble string with which the deceased Stamitz[1] strung his violin for the last concert at which he ever played."

This summary dismissal at mention of Antonia's name led me to infer that I should never see her; but I was mistaken, for on my second visit to the Councillor's I found her in his room, assisting him to put a violin together. At first sight Antonia did not make a strong impression; but soon I found it impossible to

[1] This was the name of a well-known musical family from Bohemia. Karl Stamitz is the one here possibly meant, since he died about eighteen or twenty years previous to the publication of this tale.

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tear myself away from her blue eyes, her sweet rosy lips, her uncommonly graceful, lovely form. She was very pale; but a shrewd remark or a merry sally would call up a winning smile on her face and suffuse her cheeks with a deep burning flush, which, however, soon faded away to a faint rosy glow. My conversation with her was quite unconstrained, and yet I saw nothing whatever of the Argus-like watchings on Krespel's part which the Professor had imputed to him; on the contrary, his behaviour moved along the customary lines, nay, he even seemed to approve of my conversation with Antonia. So I often stepped in to see the Councillor; and as we became accustomed to each other's society, a singular feeling of homeliness, taking possession of our little circle of three, filled our hearts with inward happiness. I still continued to derive exquisite enjoyment from the Councillor's strange crotchets and oddities; but it was of course Antonia's irresistible charms alone which attracted me, and led me to put up with a good deal which I should otherwise, in the frame of mind in which I then was, have impatiently shunned. For it only too often happened that in the Councillor's characteristic extravagance there was mingled much that was dull and tiresome; and it was in a special degree irritating to me that, as often as I turned the conversation upon music, and particularly upon singing, he was sure to interrupt me, with that sardonic smile upon his face and those repulsive singing tones of his, by some remark of a quite opposite tendency, very often of a commonplace character. From the great distress which at such times Antonia's glances betrayed, I perceived that he only did it to deprive me of a pretext for calling upon her for a song. But I didn't relinquish my design. The hindrances which the Councillor threw in my way only strengthened my resolution

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to overcome them; I *must* hear Antonia sing if I was not to pine away in reveries and dim aspirations for want of hearing her.

One evening Krespel was in an uncommonly good humour; he had been taking an old Cremona violin to pieces, and had discovered that the sound-post was fixed half a line more obliquely than usual—an important discovery! one of incalculable advantage in the practical work of making violins! I succeeded in setting him off at full speed on his hobby of the true art of violin-playing. Mention of the way in which the old masters picked up their dexterity in execution from really great singers (which was what Krespel happened just then to be expatiating upon), naturally paved the way for the remark that now the practice was the exact opposite of this, the vocal score erroneously following the affected and abrupt transitions and rapid scaling of the instrumentalists. "What is more nonsensical," I cried, leaping from my chair, running to the piano, and opening it quickly, "what is more nonsensical than such an execrable style as this, which, far from being music, is much more like the noise of peas rolling across the floor?" At the same time I sang several of the modern *fermatas*, which rush up and down and hum like a well-spun peg-top, striking a few villanous chords by way of accompaniment. Krespel laughed outrageously and screamed, "Ha! ha! methinks I hear our German-Italians or our Italian-Germans struggling with an aria from Pucitta,[1] or Portogallo,[2] or some

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[1] Vincenzo Pucitta (1778–1861) was an Italian opera composer, whose music "shows great facility, but no invention." He also wrote several songs.

[2] Il Portogallo was the Italian sobriquet of a Portuguese musician named Mark Anthony Simão (1763–1829). He lived alternately in Italy and Portugal, and wrote several operas.

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other *Maestro di capella*, or rather *schiavo d'un primo uomo*."[1] Now, thought I, now's the time; so turning to Antonia, I remarked, "Antonia knows nothing of such singing as that, I believe?" At the same time I struck up one of old Leonardo Leo's[2] beautiful soul-stirring songs. Then Antonia's cheeks glowed; heavenly radiance sparkled in her eyes, which grew full of reawakened inspiration; she hastened to the piano; she opened her lips; but at that very moment Krespel pushed her away, grasped me by the shoulders, and with a shriek that rose up to a tenor pitch, cried, "My son—my son—my son!" And then he immediately went on, singing very softly, and grasping my hand with a bow that was the pink of politeness, "In very truth, my esteemed and honourable student-friend, in very truth it would be a violation of the codes of social intercourse, as well as of all good manners, were I to express aloud and in a stirring way my wish that here, on this very spot, the devil from hell would softly break your neck with his burning claws, and so in a sense make short work of you; but, setting that aside, you must acknowledge, my dearest friend, that it is rapidly growing dark, and there are no lamps burning to-night so that, even though I did not kick you downstairs at once, your darling limbs might still run a risk of suffering damage. Go home by all means; and cherish a kind remembrance of your faithful friend, if it should happen that you never,—pray, understand me,—if you

[1] Literally, "The slave of a *primo uomo*," *primo uomo* being the masculine form corresponding to *prima donna*, that is, a singer of hero's parts in operatic music. At one time also female parts were sung and acted by men or boys.

[2] Leonardo Leo, the chief Neapolitan representative of Italian music in the first part of the eighteenth century, and author of more than forty operas and nearly one hundred compositions for the Church.

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should never see him in his own house again." Therewith he embraced me, and, still keeping fast hold of me, turned with me slowly towards the door, so that I could not get another single look at Antonia. Of course it is plain enough that in my position I couldn't thrash the Councillor, though that is what he really deserved. The Professor enjoyed a good laugh at my expense, and assured me that I had ruined for ever all hopes of retaining the Councillor's friendship. Antonia was too dear to me, I might say too holy, for me to go and play the part of the languishing lover and stand gazing up at her window, or to fill the *rôle* of the love-sick adventurer. Completely upset, I went away from H——; but, as is usual in such cases, the brilliant colours of the picture of my fancy faded, and the recollection of Antonia, as well as of Antonia's singing (which I had never heard), often fell upon my heart like a soft faint trembling light, comforting me.

Two years afterwards I received an appointment in B——, and set out on a journey to the south of Germany. The towers of H—— rose before me in the red vaporous glow of the evening; the nearer I came the more was I oppressed by an indescribable feeling of the most agonising distress; it lay upon me like a heavy burden; I could not breathe; I was obliged to get out of my carriage into the open air. But my anguish continued to increase until it became actual physical pain. Soon I seemed to hear the strains of a solemn chorale floating in the air; the sounds continued to grow more distinct; I realised the fact that they were men's voices chanting a church chorale. "What's that? what's that?" I cried, a burning stab darting as it were through my breast. "Don't you see?" replied the coachman, who was driving along beside me, "why, don't you see? they're burying

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somebody up yonder in yon churchyard." And indeed we were near the churchyard; I saw a circle of men clothed in black standing round a grave, which was on the point of being closed. Tears started to my eyes; I somehow fancied they were burying there all the joy and all the happiness of life. Moving on rapidly down the hill, I was no longer able to see into the churchyard; the chorale came to an end, and I perceived not far distant from the gate some of the mourners returning from the funeral. The Professor, with his niece on his arm, both in deep mourning, went close past me without noticing me. The young lady had her handkerchief pressed close to her eyes, and was weeping bitterly. In the frame of mind in which I then was I could not possibly go into the town, so I sent on my servant with the carriage to the hotel where I usually put up, whilst I took a turn in the familiar neighbourhood, to get rid of a mood that was possibly only due to physical causes, such as heating on the journey, &c. On arriving at a well-known avenue, which leads to a pleasure resort, I came upon a most extraordinary spectacle. Councillor Krespel was being conducted by two mourners, from whom he appeared to be endeavouring to make his escape by all sorts of strange twists and turns. As usual, he was dressed in his own curious home-made grey coat; but from his little cocked-hat, which he wore perched over one ear in military fashion, a long narrow ribbon of black crape fluttered backwards and forwards in the wind. Around his waist he had buckled a black sword-belt; but instead of a sword he had stuck a long fiddle-bow into it. A creepy shudder ran through my limbs: "He's insane," thought I, as I slowly followed them. The Councillor's companions led him as far as his house, where he embraced them, laughing loudly. They left him; and then his

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glance fell upon me, for I now stood near him. He stared at me fixedly for some time ; then he cried in a hollow voice, "Welcome, my student-friend ! you also understand it !" Therewith he took me by the arm and pulled me into the house, up the steps, into the room where the violins hung. They were all draped in black crape ; the violin of the old master was missing ; in its place was a cypress wreath. I knew what had happened. "Antonia ! Antonia !" I cried in inconsolable grief. The Councillor, with his arms crossed on his breast, stood beside me, as if turned into stone. I pointed to the cypress wreath. "When she died," said he in a very hoarse solemn voice, "when she died, the soundpost of that violin broke into pieces with a ringing crack, and the sound-board was split from end to end. The faithful instrument could only live with her and in her ; it lies beside her in the coffin, it has been buried with her." Deeply agitated, I sank down upon a chair, whilst the Councillór began to sing a gay song in a husky voice ; it was truly horrible to see him hopping about on one foot, and the crape strings (he still had his hat on) flying about the room and up to the violins hanging on the walls. Indeed, I could not repress a loud cry that rose to my lips when, on the Councillor making an abrupt turn, the crape came all over me ; I fancied he wanted to envelop me in it and drag me down into the horrible dark depths of insanity. Suddenly he stood still and addressed me in his singing way, "My son ! my son ! why do you call out ? Have you espied the angel of death ? That always precedes the ceremony." Stepping into the middle of the room, he took the violin-bow out of his sword-belt and, holding it over his head with both hands, broke it into a thousand pieces. Then, with a loud laugh, he cried, "Now you imagine my sentence is pronounced,

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don't you, my son? but it's nothing of the kind—not at all! not at all! Now I'm free—free—free—hurrah! I'm free! Now I shall make no more violins—no more violins—Hurrah! no more violins!" This he sang to a horrible mirthful tune, again spinning round on one foot. Perfectly aghast, I was making the best of my way to the door, when he held me fast, saying quite calmly, "Stay, my student friend, pray don't think from this outbreak of grief, which is torturing me as if with the agonies of death, that I am insane; I only do it because a short time ago I made myself a dressing-gown in which I wanted to look like Fate or like God!" The Councillor then went on with a medley of silly and awful rubbish, until he fell down utterly exhausted; I called up the old housekeeper, and was very pleased to find myself in the open air again.

I never doubted for a moment that Krespel had become insane; the Professor, however, asserted the contrary. "There are men," he remarked, "from whom nature or a special destiny has taken away the cover behind which the mad folly of the rest of us runs its course unobserved. They are like thin-skinned insects, which, as we watch the restless play of their muscles, seem to be misshapen, while nevertheless everything soon comes back into its proper form again. All that with us remains thought, passes over with Krespel into action. That bitter scorn which the spirit that is wrapped up in the doings and dealings of the earth often has at hand, Krespel gives vent to in outrageous gestures and agile caprioles. But these are his lightning conductor. What comes up out of the earth he gives again to the earth, but what is divine, that he keeps; and so I believe that his inner consciousness, in spite of the apparent madness which springs from it to

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the surface, is as right as a trivet. To be sure, Antonia's sudden death grieves him sore, but I warrant that to-morrow will see him going along in his old jog-trot way as usual." And the Professor's prediction was almost literally filled. Next day the Councillor appeared to be just as he formerly was, only he averred that he would never make another violin, nor yet ever play on another. And, as I learned later, he kept his word.

Hints which the Professor let fall confirmed my own private conviction that the so carefully guarded secret of the Councillor's relations to Antonia, nay, that even her death, was a crime which must weigh heavily upon him, a crime that could not be atoned for. I determined that I would not leave H—— without taxing him with the offence which I conceived him to be guilty of; I determined to shake his heart down to its very roots, and so compel him to make open confession of the terrible deed. The more I reflected upon the matter the clearer it grew in my own mind that Krespel must be a villain, and in the same proportion did my intended reproach, which assumed of itself the form of a real rhetorical masterpiece, wax more fiery and more impressive. Thus equipped and mightily incensed, I hurried to his house. I found him with a calm smiling countenance making playthings. "How can peace," I burst out, "how can peace find lodgment even for a single moment in your breast, so long as the memory of your horrible deed preys like a serpent upon you?" He gazed at me in amazement, and laid his chisel aside. "What do you mean, my dear sir?" he asked; "pray take a seat." But my indignation chafing me more and more, I went on to accuse him directly of having murdered Antonia, and to threaten him with the vengeance of the Eternal.

Further, as a newly full-fledged lawyer, full of my

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profession, I went so far as to give him to understand that I would leave no stone unturned to get a clue to the business, and so deliver him here in this world into the hands of an earthly judge. I must confess that I was considerably disconcerted when, at the conclusion of my violent and pompous harangue, the Councillor, without answering so much as a single word, calmly fixed his eyes upon me as though expecting me to go on again. And this I did indeed attempt to do, but it sounded so ill-founded and so stupid as well that I soon grew silent again. Krespel gloated over my embarrassment, whilst a malicious ironical smile flitted across his face. Then he grew very grave, and addressed me in solemn tones. "Young man, no doubt you think I am foolish, insane; that I can pardon you, since we are both confined in the same madhouse; and you only blame me for deluding myself with the idea that I am God the Father because you imagine yourself to be God the Son. But how do you dare desire to insinuate yourself into the secrets and lay bare the hidden motives of a life that is strange to you and that must continue so? She has gone and the mystery is solved." He ceased speaking, rose, and traversed the room backwards and forwards several times. I ventured to ask for an explanation; he fixed his eyes upon me, grasped me by the hand, and led me to the window, which he threw wide open. Propping himself upon his arms, he leaned out, and, looking down into the garden, told me the history of his life. When he finished I left him, touched and ashamed.

In a few words, his relations with Antonia rose in the following way. Twenty years before, the Councillor had been led into Italy by his favourite engrossing passion of hunting up and buying the best violins of the old masters. At that time he had not yet begun to

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make them himself, and so of course he had not begun to take to pieces those which he bought. In Venice he heard the celebrated singer Angela ——i, who at that time was playing with splendid success as *prima donna* at St. Benedict's Theatre. His enthusiasm was awakened, not only in her art—which Signora Angela had indeed brought to a high pitch of perfection—but in her angelic beauty as well. He sought her acquaintance; and in spite of all his rugged manners he succeeded in winning her heart, principally through his bold and yet at the same time masterly violin-playing. Close intimacy led in a few weeks to marriage, which, however, was kept a secret, because Angela was unwilling to sever her connection with the theatre, neither did she wish to part with her professional name, that by which she was celebrated, nor to add to it the cacophonous "Krespel." With the most extravagant irony he described to me what a strange life of worry and torture Angela led him as soon as she became his wife. Krespel was of opinion that more capriciousness and waywardness were concentrated in Angela's little person than in all the rest of the *prima donnas* in the world put together. If he now and again presumed to stand up in his own defence, she let loose a whole army of abbots, musical composers, and students upon him, who, ignorant of his true connection with Angela, soundly rated him as a most intolerable, ungallant lover for not submitting to all the Signora's caprices. It was just after one of these stormy scenes that Krespel fled to Angela's country seat to try and forget in playing fantasias on his Cremona violin the annoyances of the day. But he had not been there long before the Signora, who had followed hard after him, stepped into the room. She was in an affectionate humour; she embraced her husband, overwhelmed him with sweet

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and languishing glances, and rested her pretty head on his shoulder. But Krespel, carried away into the world of music, continued to play on until the walls echoed again ; thus he chanced to touch the Signora somewhat ungently with his arm and the fiddle-bow. She leapt back full of fury, shrieking that he was a "German brute," snatched the violin from his hands, and dashed it on the marble table into a thousand pieces. Krespel stood like a statue of stone before her ; but then, as if awakening out of a dream, he seized her with the strength of a giant and threw her out of the window of her own house, and, without troubling himself about anything more, fled back to Venice—to Germany. It was not, however, until some time had elapsed that he had a clear recollection of what he had done ; although he knew that the window was scarcely five feet from the ground, and although he was fully cognisant of the necessity, under the above-mentioned circumstances, of throwing the Signora out of the window, he yet felt troubled by a sense of painful uneasiness, and the more so since she had imparted to him in no ambiguous terms an interesting secret as to her condition. He hardly dared to make inquiries ; and he was not a little surprised about eight months afterwards at receiving a tender letter from his beloved wife, in which she made not the slightest allusion to what had taken place in her country house, only adding to the intelligence that she had been safely delivered of a sweet little daughter the heartfelt prayer that her dear husband and now a happy father would come at once to Venice. That however Krespel did not do ; rather he appealed to a confidential friend for a more circumstantial account of the details, and learned that the Signora had alighted upon the soft grass as lightly as a bird, and that the sole consequences

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of the fall or shock had been psychic. That is to say, after Krespel's heroic deed she had become completely altered; she never showed a trace of caprice, of her former freaks, or of her teasing habits; and the composer who wrote for the next carnival was the happiest fellow under the sun, since the Signora was willing to sing his music without the scores and hundreds of changes which she at other times had insisted upon. "To be sure," added his friend, "there was every reason for preserving the secret of Angela's cure, else every day would see lady singers flying through windows." The Councillor was not a little excited at this news; he engaged horses; he took his seat in the carriage. "Stop!" he cried suddenly. "Why, there's not a shadow of doubt," he murmured to himself, "that as soon as Angela sets eyes upon me again the evil spirit will recover his power and once more take possession of her. And since I have already thrown her out of the window, what could I do if a similar case were to occur again? What would there be left for me to do?" He got out of the carriage, and wrote an affectionate letter to his wife, making graceful allusion to her tenderness in especially dwelling upon the fact that his tiny daughter had like him a little mole behind the ear, and—remained in Germany. Now ensued an active correspondence between them. Assurances of unchanged affection—invitations—laments over the absence of the beloved one—thwarted wishes—hopes, &c.—flew backwards and forwards from Venice to H——, from H—— to Venice. At length Angela came to Germany, and, as is well known, sang with brilliant success as *prima donna* at the great theatre in F——. Despite the fact that she was no longer young, she won all hearts by the irresistible charm of her wonderfully splendid singing. At that time she had not

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lost her voice in the least degree. Meanwhile, Antonia had been growing up; and her mother never tired of writing to tell her father how that a singer of the first rank was developing in her. Krespel's friends in F—— also confirmed this intelligence, and urged him to come for once to F—— to see and admire this uncommon sight of two such glorious singers. They had not the slightest suspicion of the close relations in which Krespel stood to the pair. Willingly would he have seen with his own eyes the daughter who occupied so large a place in his heart, and who moreover often appeared to him in his dreams; but as often as he thought upon his wife he felt very uncomfortable, and so he remained at home amongst his broken violins.

There was a certain promising young composer, B—— of F——, who was found to have suddenly disappeared, nobody knew where. This young man fell so deeply in love with Antonia that, as she returned his love, he earnestly besought her mother to consent to an immediate union, sanctified as it would further be by art. Angela had nothing to urge against his suit; and the Councillor the more readily gave his consent that the young composer's productions had found favour before his rigorous critical judgment. Krespel was expecting to hear of the consummation of the marriage, when he received instead a black-sealed envelope addressed in a strange hand. Doctor R—— conveyed to the Councillor the sad intelligence that Angela had fallen seriously ill in consequence of a cold caught at the theatre, and that during the night immediately preceding what was to have been Antonia's wedding-day, she had died. To him, the Doctor, Angela had disclosed the fact that she was Krespel's wife, and that Antonia was his daughter; he, Krespel, had better hasten therefore to take charge of the orphan. Not-

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withstanding that the Councillor was a good deal upset by this news of Angela's death, he soon began to feel that an antipathetic, disturbing influence had departed out of his life, and that now for the first time he could begin to breathe freely. The very same day he set out for F——. You could not credit how heartrending was the Councillor's description of the moment when he first saw Antonia. Even in the fantastic oddities of his expression there was such a marvellous power of description that I am unable to give even so much as a faint indication of it. Antonia inherited all her mother's amiability and all her mother's charms, but not the repellent reverse of the medal. There was no chronic moral ulcer, which might break out from time to time. Antonia's betrothed put in an appearance, whilst Antonia herself, fathoming with happy instinct the deeper-lying character of her wonderful father, sang one of old Padre Martini's[1] motets, which, she knew, Krespel in the heyday of his courtship had never grown tired of hearing her mother sing. The tears ran in streams down Krespel's cheeks; even Angela he had never heard sing like that. Antonia's voice was of a very remarkable and altogether peculiar timbre, at one time it was like the sighing of an Æolian harp, at another like the warbled gush of the nightingale. It seemed as if there was not room for such notes in the human breast. Antonia, blushing with joy and happiness, sang on and on—all her most beautiful songs, B—— playing

[1] Giambattista Martini, more commonly called Padre Martini, of Bologna, formed an influential school of music there in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He wrote vocal and instrumental pieces both for the church and for the theatre. He was also a learned historian of music. He has the merit of having discerned and encouraged the genius of Mozart when, a boy of fourteen, he visited Bologna in 1770.

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between whiles as only enthusiasm that is intoxicated with delight can play. Krespel was at first transported with rapture, then he grew thoughtful—still—absorbed in reflection. At length he leapt to his feet, pressed Antonia to his heart, and begged her in a low husky voice, "Sing no more if you love me—my heart is bursting—I fear—I fear—don't sing again."

"No!" remarked the Councillor next day to Doctor R——, "when, as she sang, her blushes gathered into two dark red spots on her pale cheeks, I knew it had nothing to do with your nonsensical family likenesses, I knew it was what I dreaded." The Doctor, whose countenance had shown signs of deep distress from the very beginning of the conversation, replied, "Whether it arises from a too early taxing of her powers of song, or whether the fault is Nature's—enough, Antonia labours under an organic failure in the chest, while it is from it too that her voice derives its wonderful power and its singular timbre, which I might almost say transcend the limits of human capabilities of song. But it bears the announcement of her early death; for, if she continues to sing, I wouldn't give her at the most more than six months longer to live." Krespel's heart was lacerated as if by the stabs of hundreds of stinging knives. It was as though his life had been for the first time overshadowed by a beautiful tree full of the most magnificent blossoms, and now it was to be sawn to pieces at the roots, so that it could not grow green and blossom any more. His resolution was taken. He told Antonia all; he put the alternatives before her—whether she would follow her betrothed and yield to his and the world's seductions, but with the certainty of dying early, or whether she would spread round her father in his old days that joy and peace which had hitherto been unknown to him, and so secure a long life. She threw

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herself sobbing into his arms, and he, knowing the heartrending trial that was before her, did not press for a more explicit declaration. He talked the matter over with her betrothed; but, notwithstanding that the latter averred that no note should ever cross Antonia's lips, the Councillor was only too well aware that even B—— could not resist the temptation of hearing her sing, at any rate arias of his own composition. And the world, the musical public, even though acquainted with the nature of the singer's affliction, would certainly not relinquish its claims to hear her, for in cases where pleasure is concerned people of this class are very selfish and cruel. The Councillor disappeared from F—— along with Antonia, and came to H——. B—— was in despair when he learnt that they had gone. He set out on their track, overtook them, and arrived at H—— at the same time that they did. "Let me see him only once, and then die!" entreated Antonia. "Die! die!" cried Krespel, wild with anger, an icy shudder running through him. His daughter, the only creature in the wide world who had awakened in him the springs of unknown joy, who alone had reconciled him to life, tore herself away from his heart, and he—he suffered the terrible trial to take place. B—— sat down to the piano; Antonia sang; Krespel fiddled away merrily, until the two red spots showed themselves on Antonia's cheeks. Then he bade her stop; and as B—— was taking leave of his betrothed, she suddenly fell to the floor with a loud scream. "I thought," continued Krespel in his narration, "I thought that she was, as I had anticipated, really dead; but as I had prepared myself for the worst, my calmness did not leave me, nor my self-command desert me. I grasped B——, who stood like a silly sheep in his dismay, by the shoulders, and said (here the Councillor fell into his singing tone), 'Now

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that you, my estimable pianoforte-player, have, as you wished and desired, really murdered your betrothed, you may quietly take your departure ; at least have the goodness to make yourself scarce before I run my bright hanger through your heart. My daughter, who, as you see, is rather pale, could very well do with some colour from your precious blood. Make haste and run, for I might also hurl a nimble knife or two after you.' I must, I suppose, have looked rather formidable as I uttered these words, for, with a cry of the greatest terror, B—— tore himself loose from my grasp, rushed out of the room, and down the steps." Directly after B—— was gone, when the Councillor tried to lift up his daughter, who lay unconscious on the floor, she opened her eyes with a deep sigh, but soon closed them again as if about to die. Then Krespel's grief found vent aloud, and would not be comforted. The Doctor, whom the old housekeeper had called in, pronounced Antonia's case a somewhat serious but by no means dangerous attack ; and she did indeed recover more quickly than her father had dared to hope. She now clung to him with the most confiding childlike affection ; she entered into his favourite hobbies—into his mad schemes and whims. She helped him take old violins to pieces and glue new ones together. " I won't sing again any more, but live for you," she often said, sweetly smiling upon him, after she had been asked to sing and had refused. Such appeals however the Councillor was anxious to spare her as much as possible ; therefore it was that he was unwilling to take her into society, and solicitously shunned all music. He well understood how painful it must be for her to forego altogether the exercise of that art which she had brought to such a pitch of perfection. When the Councillor bought the wonderful violin that he had buried with Antonia, and was

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about to take it to pieces, she met him with such sadness in her face and softly breathed the petition, "What! this as well?" By some power, which he could not explain, he felt impelled to leave this particular instrument unbroken, and to play upon it. Scarcely had he drawn the first few notes from it than Antonia cried aloud with joy, "Why, that's me!—now I shall sing again." And, in truth, there was something remarkably striking about the clear, silvery, bell-like tones of the violin; they seemed to have been engendered in the human soul. Krespel's heart was deeply moved; he played, too, better than ever. As he ran up and down the scale, playing bold passages with consummate power and expression, she clapped her hands together and cried with delight, "I did that well! I did that well!"

From this time onwards her life was filled with peace and cheerfulness. She often said to the Councillor, "I should like to sing something, father." Then Krespel would take his violin down from the wall and play her most beautiful songs, and her heart was right glad and happy. Shortly before my arrival in H——, the Councillor fancied one night that he heard somebody playing the piano in the adjoining room, and he soon made out distinctly that B—— was flourishing on the instrument in his usual style. He wished to get up, but felt himself held down as if by a dead weight, and lying as if fettered in iron bonds; he was utterly unable to move an inch. Then Antonia's voice was heard singing low and soft; soon, however, it began to rise and rise in volume until it became an ear-splitting *fortissimo;* and at length she passed over into a powerfully impressive song which B—— had once composed for her in the devotional style of the old masters. Krespel described his condition as being incompre-

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hensible, for terrible anguish was mingled with a delight he had never experienced before. All at once he was surrounded by a dazzling brightness, in which he beheld B—— and Antonia locked in a close embrace, and gazing at each other in a rapture of ecstasy. The music of the song and of the pianoforte accompanying it went on without any visible signs that Antonia sang or that B—— touched the instrument. Then the Councillor fell into a sort of dead faint, whilst the images vanished away. On awakening he still felt the terrible anguish of his dream. He rushed into Antonia's room. She lay on the sofa, her eyes closed, a sweet angelic smile on her face, her hands devoutly folded, and looking as if asleep and dreaming of the joys and raptures of heaven. But she was—dead.

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THE FERMATA.

HUMMEL'S[1] amusing, vivacious picture, "Company in an Italian Inn," became known by the Art Exhibition at Berlin in the autumn of 1814, where it appeared, to the delight of all who saw and studied it. An arbour almost hidden in foliage—a table covered with wine-flasks and fruits—two Italian ladies sitting at it opposite each other, one singing, the other playing a guitar; between them, more in the background, stands an abbot, acting as music-director. With his baton raised, he is awaiting the moment when the Signora shall end, in a long trill, the cadence which, with her eyes directed heavenwards, she is just in the midst of; then down will come his hand, whilst the guitarist gaily dashes off the dominant chord. The abbot is filled with admiration—with exquisite delight—and at the same time his attention is painfully on the stretch. He wouldn't miss the proper downward beat for the world. He hardly dare breathe. He would like to stop the mouth and wings of every buzzing bee and midge. So much the more therefore is he annoyed at the bustling

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[1] Johann Erdmann Hummel, born 1769, died 1852, a German painter, studied in Italy, painted various kinds of pieces, and also wrote treatises on perspective and kindred subjects. The picture here referred to became perhaps almost as much celebrated from the fact of its having suggested this amusing sketch to Hoffmann as for its intrinsic merits as a work of art.

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host who must needs come and bring the wine just at this supreme, delicious moment. An outlook upon an avenue, patterned by brilliant strips of light! There a horseman has pulled up, and a glass of something refreshing to drink is being handed up to him on horseback.

Before this picture stood the two friends Edward and Theodore. "The more I look at this singer," said Edward, "in her gay attire, who, though rather oldish, is yet full of the true inspiration of her art, and the more I am delighted with the grave but genuine Roman profile and lovely form of the guitarist, and the more my estimable friend the abbot amuses me, the more does the whole picture seem to me instinct with free, strong, vital power. It is plainly a caricature in the higher sense of the term, but rich in grace and vivacity. I should just like to step into that arbour and open one of those dainty little flasks which are ogling me from the table. I tell you what, I fancy I can already smell something of the sweet fragrance of the noble wine. Come, it were a sin for this solicitation to be wasted on the cold senseless atmosphere that is about us here. Let us go and drain a flask of Italian wine in honour of this fine picture, of art, and of merry Italy, where life is exhilarating and given for pleasure."

Whilst Edward was running on thus in disconnected sentences, Theodore stood silent and deeply absorbed in reflection. "Ay, that we will, come along," he said, starting up as if awakening out of a dream; but nevertheless he had some difficulty in tearing himself away from the picture, and as he mechanically followed his friend, he had to stop at the door to cast another longing lingering look back upon the singer and guitarist and abbot. Edward's proposal easily admitted of being carried into execution. They crossed the street diag-

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onally, and very soon a flask exactly like those in the picture stood before them in Sala Tarone's [1] little blue room. "It seems to me," said Edward, as Theodore still continued very silent and thoughtful, even after several glasses had been drunk, "it seems to me that the picture has made a deeper impression upon you than upon me, and not such an agreeable impression either." "I assure you," replied Theodore, "that I lost nothing of the brightness and grace of that animated composition; yet it is very singular,—it is a faithful representation of a scene out of my own life, reproducing the portraits of the parties concerned in it in a manner startlingly life-like. You will, however, agree with me that diverting memories also have the power of strangely moving the mind when they suddenly spring up in this extraordinary and unexpected way, as if awakened by the wave of a magician's wand. That's the case with me just now." "What! a scene out of your own life!" exclaimed Edward, quite astonished. "Do you mean to say the picture represents an episode in your own life? I saw at once that the two ladies and the priest were eminently successful portraits, but I never for a moment dreamed that you had ever come across them in the course of your life. Come now, tell me all about it, how it all came about; we are quite alone, nobody else will come at this time o' day." "Willingly," answered Theodore, "but unfortunately I must go a long way back—to my early youth in fact." "Never mind; fire away," rejoined Edward; "I don't know over much about your early days. If it lasts a good while, nothing worse will happen than that we shall have to empty a bottle more than we at first bargained for; and to that

[1] The keeper of a well-known tavern in Berlin, at about the time when this tale was written, 1817 to 1820.

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nobody will have any objection, neither we, nor Mr. Tarone."

"That, throwing everything else aside, I at length devoted myself entirely to the noble art of music," began Theodore, "need excite nobody's astonishment, for whilst still a boy I would hardly do anything else but play, and spent hours and hours strumming on my uncle's old creaking, jarring piano. The little town was very badly provided for music; there was nobody who could give me instruction except an old opinionated organist; he, however, was merely a dry arithmetician, and plagued me to death with obscure, unmelodious toccatas and fugues. But I held on bravely, without letting myself be daunted. The old fellow was crabby, and often found a good deal of fault, but he had only to play a good piece in his own powerful style, and I was at once reconciled both with him and with his art. I was then often in a curious state of mind; many pieces particularly of old Sebastian Bach were almost like a fearful ghost-story, and I yielded myself up to that feeling of pleasurable awe to which we are so prone in the days of our fantastic youth. But I entered into a veritable Eden when, as sometimes happened in winter, the bandmaster of the town and his colleagues, supported by a few other moderate dilettante players, gave a concert, and I, owing to the strict time I always kept, was permitted to play the kettle-drum in the symphony. It was not until later that I perceived how ridiculous and extravagant these concerts were. My teacher generally played two concertos on the piano by Wolff or Emanuel Bach,[1] a member of the town band struggled with Stamitz,[2] while the re-

[1] The third son of the Sebastian Bach—*the* Bach—just mentioned above. He was sometimes called "the Berlin Bach," or "the Hamburg Bach."

[2] See note, p. 12 above.

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ceiver of excise duties worked away hard at the flute, and took in such an immense supply of breath that he blew out both lights on his music-stand, and always had to have them relighted again. Singing wasn't thought about; my uncle, a great friend and patron of music, always disparaged the local talent in this line. He still dwelt with exuberant delight upon the days gone by, when the four choristers of the four churches of the town agreed together to give *Lottchen am Hofe*.[1] Above all, he was wont to extol the toleration which united the singers in the production of this work of art, for not only the Catholic and the Evangelical but also the Reformed community was split into two bodies—those speaking German and those speaking French. The French chorister was not daunted by the *Lottchen*, but, as my uncle maintained, sang his part, spectacles on nose, in the finest falsetto that ever proceeded forth from a human breast. Now there was amongst us (I mean in the town) a spinster named Meibel, aged about fifty-five, who subsisted upon the scanty pension which she received as a retired court singer of the metropolis, and my uncle was rightly of opinion that Miss Meibel might still do something for her money in the concert hall. She assumed airs of importance, required a good deal of coaxing, but at last consented, so that we came to have *bravuras* in our concerts. She was a singular creature this Miss Meibel. I still retain a lively recollection of her lean little figure. Dressed in a many-coloured gown, she was wont to step forward with her roll of music in her hand, looking very grave and solemn, and to acknowledge the audience with a slight inclination of the upper part of

[1] This was one of a species of musical composition called *Singspiele*, a development of the simple song or *Lied*, by Johann Adam Hiller, (properly Hüller), born 1728, died 1804.

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her body. Her head-dress was a most remarkable head-dress. In front was fastened a nosegay of Italian flowers of porcelain, which kept up a strange trembling and tottering as she sang. At the end, after the audience had greeted her with no stinted measure of applause, she proudly handed the music-roll to my uncle, and permitted him to dip his thumb and finger into a little porcelain snuff-box, fashioned in the shape of a pug dog, out of which she took a pinch herself with evident relish. She had a horrible squeaky voice, indulged in all sorts of ludicrous flourishes and roulades, and so you may imagine what an effect all this, combined with her ridiculous manners and style of dress, could not fail to have upon me. My uncle overflowed with panegyrics; that I could not understand, and so turned the more readily to my organist, who, looking with contempt upon vocal efforts in general, delighted me down to the ground as in his hypochondriac malicious way he parodied the ludicrous old spinster.

"The more decidedly I came to share with my master his contempt for singing, the higher did he rate my musical genius. He took a great and zealous interest in instructing me in counterpoint, so that I soon came to write the most ingenious toccatas and fugues. I was once playing one of these ingenious specimens of my skill to my uncle on my birthday (I was nineteen years old), when the waiter of our first hotel stepped into the room to announce the visit of two foreign ladies who had just arrived in the town. Before my uncle could throw off his dressing-gown—it was of a large flower pattern—and don his coat and vest, his visitors were already in the room. You know what an electric effect every strange event has upon those who are brought up in the narrow seclusion of a small

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country town; this in particular, which crossed my path so unexpectedly, was pre-eminently fitted to work a complete revolution within me. Picture to yourself two tall, slender Italian ladies, dressed fantastically and in bright colours, quite up to the latest fashion, meeting my uncle with the freedom of professional *artistes*, and yet with considerable charms of manner, and addressing him in firm and sonorous voices. What the deuce of a strange tongue they speak! Only now and then does it sound at all like German. My uncle doesn't understand a word; embarrassed, mute as a maggot, he steps back and points to the sofa. They sit down, talk together—it sounds like music itself. At length they succeed in making my good uncle comprehend that they are singers on a tour; they would like to give a concert in the place, and have come to him, as he is the man to conduct such musical negotiations.

"Whilst they were talking together I picked up their Christian names, and I fancied that I could now more easily and more distinctly distinguish the one from the other, for their both making their appearance together had at first confused me. Lauretta, apparently the elder of the two, looked about her with sparkling eyes, and talked away at my embarrassed old uncle with gushing vivacity and with demonstrative gestures. She was not too tall, and of a voluptuous build, so that my eyes wandered amid many charms that hitherto had been strangers to them. Teresina, taller, more slender, with a long grave face, spoke but seldom, but what she did say was more intelligible. Now and then a peculiar smile flitted across her features; it almost seemed as if she were highly amused at my good uncle, who had withdrawn into his silken dressing-gown like a snail into its shell, and was vainly endeavouring to push out

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of sight a treacherous yellow string, with which he fastened his night-jacket together, and which would keep tumbling out of his bosom yards and yards long. At length they rose to depart; my uncle promised to arrange everything for the concert for the third day following; then the sisters gave him and me, whom he introduced to them as a young musician, a most polite invitation to take chocolate with them in the afternoon.

"We mounted the steps with a solemn air and awkward gait; we both felt very peculiar, as if we were going to meet some adventure to which we were not equal. In consequence of due previous preparation my uncle had a good many fine things to say about art, which nobody understood, neither he himself nor any of the rest of us. This done, and after I had thrice burned my tongue with the scalding hot chocolate, but with the stoical fortitude of a Scævola had smiled under the fiery infliction, Lauretta at length said that she would sing to us. Teresina took her guitar, tuned it, and struck a few full chords. It was the first time I had heard the instrument, and the characteristic mysterious sounds of the trembling strings made a deep and wonderful impression upon me. Lauretta began very softly and held on, the note rising to *fortissimo*, and then quickly broke into a crisp complicated run through an octave and a half. I can still remember the words of the beginning, '*Sento l'amica speme.*' My heart was oppressed; I had never had an idea of anything of the kind. But as Lauretta continued to soar in bolder and higher flights, and as the musical notes poured upon me like sparkling rays, thicker and thicker, then was the music that had so long lain mute and lifeless within me enkindled, rising up in strong, grand flames. Ah! I had never heard what music was in my life before! Then the sisters sang one of those grand im-

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pressive duets of Abbot Steffani[1] which confine themselves to notes of a low register. My soul was stirred at the sound of Teresina's alto, it was so sonorous, and as pure as silver bells. I couldn't for the life of me restrain my emotion; tears started to my eyes. My uncle coughed warningly, and cast angry glances upon me; it was all of no use, I was really quite beside myself. This seemed to please the sisters; they began to inquire into the nature and extent of my musical studies; I was ashamed of my performances in that line, and with the hardihood born of enthusiastic admiration, I bluntly declared that that day was the first time I had ever heard music. 'The dear good boy!' lisped Lauretta, so sweetly and bewitchingly.

"On reaching home again, I was seized with a sort of fury: I pounced upon all the toccatas and fugues that I had hammered out, as well as a beautiful copy of forty-five variations of a canonical theme that the organist had written and done me the honour of presenting to me,—all these I threw into the fire, and laughed with spiteful glee as the double counterpoint smoked and crackled. Then I sat down at the piano and tried first to imitate the tones of the guitar, then to play the sisters' melodies, and finished by attempting to sing them. At length about midnight my uncle emerged from his bedroom and greeted me with, 'My boy, you'd better just stop that screeching and troop off to bed;' and he put out both candles and went back to his own room. I had no other alternative but to obey. The mysterious power of song came to me in my dreams—at least I thought so—for I sang '*Sento l'amica speme*' in excellent style.

[1] Agostino Steffani, an Italian by birth (1655), spent nearly all his life in Germany at the courts of Munich and Hanover. He wrote several operas, and was renowned for his duets, motets, &c.

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"The next morning my uncle had hunted up everybody who could fiddle and blow for the rehearsal. He was proud to show what good musicians the town possessed; but everything seemed to go perversely wrong. Lauretta set to work at a fine scena; but very soon in the recitative the orchestra was all at sixes and sevens, not one of them had any idea of accompaniment. Lauretta screamed—raved—wept with impatience and anger. The organist was presiding at the piano; she attacked him with the bitterest reproaches. He got up and in silent obduracy marched out of the hall. The bandmaster of the town, whom Lauretta had dubbed a 'German ass!' took his violin under his arm, and, banging his hat on his head with an air of defiance, likewise made for the door. The members of his company, sticking their bows under the strings of their violins, and unscrewing the mouthpieces of their brass instruments, followed him. There was nobody but the dilettanti left, and they gazed about them with disconsolate looks, whilst the receiver of excise duties exclaimed, with a tragic air, 'O heaven! how mortified I feel!' All my diffidence was gone,—I threw myself in the bandmaster's way, I begged, I prayed, in my distress I promised him six new minuets with double trios for the annual ball. I succeeded in appeasing him. He went back to his place, his companions followed suit, and soon the orchestra was reconstituted, except that the organist was wanting. He was slowly making his way across the market-place, no shouting or beckoning could make him turn back. Teresina had looked on at the whole scene with smothered laughter, while Lauretta was now as full of glee as before she had been of anger. She was unstinted in her praise of my efforts; she asked me if I played the piano, and ere I knew what I was about, I sat in the organist's place with the music

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before me. Never before had I accompanied a singer, still less directed an orchestra. Teresina sat down beside me at the piano and gave me every time; Lauretta encouraged me with repeated 'Bravos!' the orchestra proved manageable, and things continued to improve. Everything was worked out successfully at the second rehearsal; and the effect of the sisters' singing at the concert is not to be described.

"The sovereign's return to his capital was to be celebrated there with several festive demonstrations; the sisters were summoned to sing in the theatre and at concerts. Until the time that their presence was required they resolved to remain in our little town, and thus it came to pass that they gave us a few more concerts. The admiration of the public rose to a kind of madness. Old Miss Meibel, however, took with a deliberate air a pinch of snuff out of her porcelain pug and gave her opinion that 'such impudent caterwauling was not singing; singing should be low and melodious.' My friend, the organist, never showed himself again, and, in truth, I did not miss him in the least. I was the happiest fellow in the world. The whole day long I spent with the sisters, copying out the vocal scores of what they were to sing in the capital. Lauretta was my ideal; her vile caprices, her terribly passionate violence, the torments she inflicted upon me at the piano —all these I bore with patience. She alone had unsealed for me the springs of true music. I began to study Italian, and try my hand at a few canzonets. In what heavenly rapture was I plunged when Lauretta sang my compositions, or even praised them. Often it seemed to me as if it was not I who had thought out and set what she sang, but that the thought first shone forth in her singing of it. With Teresina I could not somehow get on familiar terms; she sang but seldom,

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and didn't seem to make much account of all that I was doing, and sometimes I even fancied that she was laughing at me behind my back. At length the time came for them to leave the town. And now I felt for the first time how dear Lauretta had become to me, and how impossible it would be for me to separate from her. Often, when she was in a tender, playful mood, she had caressed me, although always in a perfectly artless fashion; nevertheless, my blood was excited, and it was nothing but the strange coolness with which she was more usually wont to treat me that restrained me from giving reins to my ardour and clasping her in my arms in a delirium of passion. I possessed a tolerably good tenor voice, which, however, I had never practised, but now I began to cultivate it assiduously. I frequently sang with Lauretta one of those tender Italian duets of which there exists such an endless number. We were just singing one of these pieces, the hour of departure was close at hand—'*Senza di te ben mio, vivere non poss' io*' ('Without thee, my own, I cannot live!') Who could resist that? I threw myself at her feet—I was in despair. She raised me up—'But, my friend, need we then part?' I pricked up my ears with amazement. She proposed that I should accompany her and Teresina to the capital, for if I intended to devote myself wholly to music I must leave this wretched little town some time or other. Picture to yourself one struggling in the dark depths of boundless despair, who has given up all hopes of life, and who, in the moment in which he expects to receive the blow that is to crush him for ever, suddenly finds himself sitting in a glorious bright arbour of roses, where hundreds of unseen but loving voices whisper, 'You are still alive, dear,—still alive'—and you will know how I felt then. Along with them to the capital! that had

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seized upon my heart as an ineradicable resolution. But I won't tire you with the details of how I set to work to convince my uncle that I ought now by all means to go to the capital, which, moreover, was not very far away. He at length gave his consent, and announced his intention of going with me. Here was a tricksy stroke of fortune! I dare not give utterance to my purpose of travelling in company with the sisters. A violent cold, which my uncle caught, proved my saviour.

"I left the town by the stage-coach, but only went as far as the first stopping-station, where I awaited my divinity. A well-lined purse enabled me to make all due and fitting preparations. I was seized with the romantic idea of accompanying the ladies in the character of a protecting paladin—on horseback; I secured a horse, which, though not particularly handsome, was, its owner assured me, quiet, and I rode back at the appointed time to meet the two fair singers. I soon saw the little carriage, which had two seats, coming towards me. Lauretta and Teresina sat on the principal seat, whilst on the other, with her back to the driver, sat their maid, the fat little Gianna, a brown-cheeked Neapolitan. Besides this living freight, the carriage was packed full of boxes, satchels, and baskets of all sizes and shapes, such as invariably accompany ladies when they travel. Two little pug-dogs which Gianna was nursing in her lap began to bark when I gaily saluted the company.

"All was going on very nicely; we were traversing the last stage of the journey, when my steed all at once conceived the idea that it was high time to be returning homewards. Being aware that stern measures were not always blessed with a remarkable degree of success in such cases, I felt advised to have recourse

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to milder means of persuasion; but the obstinate brute remained insensible to all my well-meant exhortations. I wanted to go forwards, he backwards, and all the advantage that my efforts gave me over him was that instead of taking to his heels for home, he continued to run round in circles. Teresina leaned forward out of the carriage and had a hearty laugh; Lauretta, holding her hands before her face, screamed out as if I were in imminent danger. This gave me the courage of despair, I drove the spurs into the brute's ribs, but that very same moment I was roughly hurled off and found myself sprawling on the ground. The horse stood perfectly still, and, stretching out his long neck, regarded me with what I took to be nothing else than derision. I was not able to rise to my feet; the driver had to come and help me; Lauretta had jumped out and was weeping and lamenting; Teresina did nothing but laugh without ceasing. I had sprained my foot, and couldn't possibly mount again. How was I to get on? My steed was fastened to the carriage, whilst I crept into it. Just picture us all—two rather robust females, a fat servant-girl, two pug-dogs, a dozen boxes, satchels, and baskets, and me as well, all packed into a little carriage. Picture Lauretta's complaints at the uncomfortableness of her seat, the howling of the pups, the chattering of the Neapolitan, Teresina's sulks, the unspeakable pain I felt in my foot, and you will have some idea of my enviable situation! Teresina averred that she could not endure it any longer. We stopped; in a trice she was out of the carriage, had untied my horse, and was up in the saddle, prancing and curvetting around us. I must indeed admit that she cut a fine figure. The dignity and elegance which marked her carriage and bearing were still more prominent on horseback. She asked for her guitar, then dropping the reins on her arm, she

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began to sing proud Spanish ballads with a full-toned accompaniment. Her light silk dress fluttered in the wind, its folds and creases giving rise to a sheeny play of light, whilst the white feathers of her hat quivered and shook, like the prattling spirits of the air which we heard in her voice. Altogether she made such a romantic figure that I could not keep my eyes off her, notwithstanding that Lauretta reproached her for making herself such a fantastic simpleton, and predicted that she would suffer for her audacity. But no accident happened; either the horse had lost all his stubbornness or he liked the fair singer better than the paladin; at any rate, Teresina did not creep back into the carriage again until we had almost reached the gates of the town.

"If you had seen me then at concerts and operas, if you had seen me revelling in all sorts of music, and as a diligent accompanist studying arias, duets, and I don't know what besides at the piano, you would have perceived, by the complete change in my behaviour, that I was filled with a new and wonderful spirit. I had cast off all my rustic shyness, and sat at the pianoforte with my score before me like an experienced professional, directing the performances of my *prima donna*. All my mind—all my thoughts—were sweet melodies. Utterly regardless of all the rules of counterpoint, I composed all sorts of canzonets and arias, which Lauretta sang, though only in her own room. Why would she never sing any of my pieces at a concert? I could not understand it. Teresina also arose before my imagination curvetting on her proud steed with the lute in her hands, like Art herself disguised in romance. Without thinking of it consciously, I wrote several songs of a high and serious nature. Lauretta, it is true, played with her notes like a capricious fairy queen.

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There was nothing upon which she ventured in which she had not success. But never did a roulade cross Teresina's lips; nothing more than a simple interpolated note, at most a *mordent;* but her long-sustained tones gleamed like meteors through the darkness of night, awakening strange spirits, who came and gazed with earnest eyes into the depths of my heart. I know not how I remained ignorant of them so long!

"The sisters were granted a benefit concert; I sang with Lauretta a long scena from Anfossi.[1] As usual I presided at the piano. We came to the last *fermata.* Lauretta exerted all her skill and art; she warbled trill after trill like a nightingale, executed sustained notes, then long elaborate roulades—a whole *solfeggio.* In fact, I thought she was almost carrying the thing too far this time; I felt a soft breath on my cheek; Teresina stood behind me. At this moment Lauretta took a good start with the intention of swelling up to a 'harmonic shake,' and so passing back into *a tempo.* The devil entered into me; I jammed down the keys with both hands; the orchestra followed suit; and it was all over with Lauretta's trill, just at the supreme moment when she was to excite everybody's astonishment. Almost annihilating me with a look of fury, she crushed her roll of music together, tore it up, and hurled it at my head, so that the pieces flew all over me. Then she rushed like a madwoman through the orchestra into the adjoining room; as soon as we had concluded the piece, I followed her. She wept; she raved. 'Out of my sight, villain,' she screamed as soon as she saw me. 'You devil, you've completely ruined me—my fame, my honour—and oh! my trill.

[1] Pasquale Anfossi, an Italian operatic composer of the eighteenth century. He was for a time the fashion of the day at Rome, but occupies now only a subordinate rank amongst musicians.

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Out of my sight, you devil's own!' She made a rush at me; I escaped through the door. Whilst some one else was performing, Teresina and the music-director at length succeeded in so far pacifying her rage, that she resolved to appear again; but I was not to be allowed to touch the piano. In the last duet that the sisters sang, Lauretta did contrive to introduce the swelling 'harmonic shake,' was rewarded with a storm of applause, and settled down into the best of humours.

"But I could not get over the vile treatment which I had received at her hands in the presence of so many people, and I was firmly resolved to set off home next morning for my native town. I was actually engaged in packing my things together when Teresina came into my room. Observing what I was about, she exclaimed, astonished, 'Are you going to leave us?' I gave her to understand that after the affront which had been put upon me by Lauretta I could not think of remaining any longer in her society. 'And so,' replied Teresina, 'you're going to let yourself be driven away by the extravagant conduct of a little fool, who is now heartily sorry for what she has done and said. Where else can you better live in your art than with us? Let me tell you, it only depends upon yourself and your own behaviour to keep her from such pranks as this. You are too compliant, too tender, too gentle. Besides, you rate her powers too highly. Her voice is indeed not bad, and it has a wide compass; but what else are all these fantastic warblings and flourishes, these preposterous runs, these never-ending shakes, but delusive artifices of style, which people admire in the same way that they admire the foolhardy agility of a rope-dancer? Do you imagine that such things can make any deep impression upon us and stir the heart? The 'harmonic shake' which you

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spoilt I cannot tolerate; I always feel anxious and pained when she attempts it. And then this scaling up into the region of the third line above the stave, what is it but a violent straining of the natural voice, which after all is the only thing that really moves the heart? I like the middle notes and the low notes. A sound that penetrates to the heart, a real quiet, easy transition from note to note, are what I love above all things. No useless ornamentation—a firm, clear, strong note—a definite expression, which carries away the mind and soul—that's real true singing, and that's how I sing. If you can't be reconciled to Lauretta again, then think of Teresina, who indeed likes you so much that you shall in your own way be her musical composer. Don't be cross—but all your elegant canzonets and arias can't be matched with this single ——,' she sang in her sonorous way a simple devotional sort of canzona which I had set a few days before. I had never dreamed that it could sound like that. I felt the power of the music going through and through me; tears of joy and rapture stood in my eyes; I seized Teresina's hand, and pressing it to my lips a thousand times, swore I would never leave her.

"Lauretta looked upon my intimacy with her sister with envious but suppressed vexation, and she could not do without me, for, in spite of her skill, she was unable to study a new piece without help; she read badly, and was rather uncertain in her time. Teresina, on the contrary, sang everything at sight, and her ear for time was unparalleled. Never did Lauretta give such free rein to her caprice and violence as when her accompaniments were being practised. They were never right for her; she looked upon them as a necessary evil; the piano ought not to be heard at all, it should always be *pianissimo;* so there was nothing but

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giving way to her again and again, and altering the time just as the whim happened to come into her head at the moment. But now I took a firm stand against her; I combated her impertinences; I taught her that an accompaniment devoid of energy was not conceivable, and that there was a marked difference between supporting and carrying along the song and letting it run to riot, without form and without time. Teresina faithfully lent me her assistance. I composed nothing but pieces for the Church, writing all the solos for a voice of low register. Teresina, too, tyrannised over me not a little, to which I submitted with a good grace, since she had more knowledge of, and (so at least I thought) more appreciation for, German seriousness than her sister.

"We were touring in South Germany. In a little town we met an Italian tenor who was making his way from Milan to Berlin. My fair companions went in ecstasies over their countryman; he stuck close to them, cultivating in particular Teresina's acquaintance, so that to my great vexation I soon came to play rather a secondary part. Once, just as I was about to enter the room with a roll of music under my arm, the voices of my companions and the tenor, engaged in an animated conversation, fell upon my ear. My name was mentioned; I pricked up my ears; I listened. I now understood Italian so well that not a word escaped me. Lauretta was describing the tragical occurrence of the concert when I cut short her trill by prematurely striking down the concluding notes of the bar. 'A German ass!' exclaimed the tenor. I felt as if I must rush in and hurl the flighty hero of the boards out of the window, but I restrained myself. She then went on to say that she had been minded to send me about my business at once, but, moved by my clamorous

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entreaties, she had so far had compassion upon me as to tolerate me some time longer, since I was studying singing under her. This, to my utter amazement, Teresina confirmed. 'Yes, he's a good child,' she added; 'he's in love with me now and sets everything for the alto. He is not without talent, but he must rub off that stiffness and awkwardness which is so characteristic of the Germans. I hope to make a good composer out of him; then he shall write me some good things—for there's very little written as yet for the alto voice—and afterwards I shall let him go his own way. He's very tiresome with his billing and cooing and love-sick sighing, and he worries me too much with his wearisome compositions, which have been but poor stuff up to the present.' 'I at least have now got rid of him,' interrupted Lauretta; 'and Teresina, how the fellow pestered me with his arias and duets you know very well.' And now she began to sing a duet of my composing, which formerly she had praised very highly. The other sister took up the second voice, and they parodied me both in voice and in execution in the most shameful manner. The tenor laughed till the walls rang again. My limbs froze; at once I formed an irrevocable resolve. I quietly slipped away from the door back into my own room, the windows of which looked upon a side street. Opposite was the post-office; the post-coach for Bamberg had just driven up to take in the mails and passengers. The latter were all standing ready waiting in the gateway, but I had still an hour to spare. Hastily packing up my things, I generously paid the whole of the bill at the hotel, and hurried across to the post-office. As I crossed the broad street I saw the fair sisters and the Italian still standing at the window, and looking out to catch the sound of the

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post-horn. I leaned back in the corner, and dwelt with a good deal of satisfaction upon the crushing effect of the bitter scathing letter that I had left behind for them in the hotel."

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With evident gratification Theodore tossed off the rest of the fiery Aleatico [1] that Edward had poured into his glass. The latter, opening a new flask and skilfully shaking off the drops of oil [2] which swam at the top, remarked, "I should not have deemed Teresina capable of such falseness and artfulness. I cannot banish from my mind the recollection of what a charming figure she made as she sat on horseback singing Spanish ballads, whilst the horse pranced along in graceful curvets." "That was her culminating point," interrupted Theodore; "I still remember the strange impression which the scene made upon me. I forgot my pain; she seemed to me like a creature of a higher race. It is indeed very true that such moments are turning-points in one's life, and that in them many images arise which time does not avail to dim. Whenever I have succeeded with any fine *romance*, it has always been when Teresina's image has stepped forth from the treasure-house of my mind in clear bright colours at the moment of writing it."

"But," said Edward, "but let us not forget the artistic Lauretta; and, scattering all rancour to the winds, let us drink to the health of the two sisters." They did so. "Oh," exclaimed Theodore, "how the fragrant breezes of Italy arise out of this wine and fan my cheeks,—my blood rolls with quickened energy in my

[1] A red, aromatic, sweet Italian wine, made chiefly at Florence.

[2] The wine was presumably in flasks of the usual Italian kind, bottles encased in straw or reed, &c., with oil on the top of the wine instead of a cork in the neck of the bottle.

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veins. Oh! why must I so soon leave that glorious land again!" "As yet," interrupted Edward, "as yet in all that you have told me I can see no connection with the beautiful picture, and so I believe that you still have something more to tell me about the sisters. Of course I perceive plainly that the ladies in the picture are none other than Lauretta and Teresina themselves." "You are right, they are," replied Theodore; "and my ejaculations and sighs, and my longings after the glorious land of Italy, will form a fitting introduction to what I still have to say. A short time ago, perhaps about two years since, just before leaving Rome, I made a little excursion on horseback. Before an inn stood a charming girl; the idea struck me how nice it would be to receive a cup of wine at the hands of the pretty child. I pulled up before the door, in a walk so thickly planted on each side with shrubs that the sunlight could only make its way through in patches. In the distance I heard sounds of singing and the tinkling of a guitar. I pricked up my ears and listened, for the two female voices affected me somehow in a singular fashion; strangely enough dim recollections began to stir within my mind, but they refused to take definite shape. I dismounted and slowly drew near to the vine-clad arbour whence the music seemed to proceed, eagerly catching up every sound in the meantime. The second voice had ceased to sing. The first sang a canzonet alone. As I came nearer and nearer that which had at first seemed familiar to me, and which had at first attracted my attention, gradually faded away. The singer was now in the midst of a florid, elaborate *fermata*. Up and down she warbled, up and down; at length she stopped, holding a note on for some time. But all at once a female voice began to let off a torrent of abuse, maledictions, curses, vituperations! A man

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protested; a second laughed. The other female voice took part in the altercation. The quarrel continued to wax louder and more violent, with true Italian fury. At length I stood immediately in front of the arbour; an abbot rushes out and almost runs over me; he turns his head to look at me; I recognise my good friend Signor Lodovico, my musical news-monger from Rome. 'What in the name of wonder'—— I exclaim. 'Oh, sir! sir!' he screams, 'save me, protect me from this mad fury, from this crocodile, this tiger, this hyæna, this devil of a woman. Yes, I did, I did; I was beating time to Anfossi's canzonet, and brought down my baton too soon whilst she was in the midst of the *fermata;* I cut short her trill; but why did I meet her eyes, the devilish divinity! The deuce take all *fermatas*, I say!' In a most curious state of mind I hastened into the arbour along with the priest, and recognised at the first glance the sisters Lauretta and Teresina. The former was still shrieking and raging, and her sister still seriously remonstrating with her. Mine host, his bare arms crossed over his chest, was looking on laughing, whilst a girl was placing fresh flasks on the table. No sooner did the sisters catch sight of me than they threw themselves upon me exclaiming, 'Ah! Signor Teodoro!' and covered me with caresses. The quarrel was forgotten. 'Here you have a composer,' said Lauretta to the abbot, 'as charming as an Italian and as strong as a German.' Both sisters, continually interrupting each other, began to recount the happy days we had spent together, to speak of my musical abilities whilst still a youth, of our practisings together, of the excellence of my compositions; never did they like singing anything else but what I had set. Teresina at length informed me that a manager had engaged her as his first singer in tragic casts for the next carnival; but she would give

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him to understand that she would only sing on condition that the composition of at least one tragic opera was intrusted to me. The tragic was above all others my special department, and so on, and so on. Lauretta on her part maintained that it would be a pity if I did not follow my bent for the light and the graceful, in a word, for *opera buffa*. She had been engaged as first lady singer for this species of composition; and that nobody but I should write the piece in which she was to appear was simply a matter of course. You may fancy what my feelings were as I stood between the two. In a word, you perceive that the company which I had joined was the same as that which Hummel painted, and that just at the moment when the priest is on the point of cutting short Lauretta's *fermata*." "But did they not make any allusion," asked Edward, "to your departure from them, or to the scathing letter?" "Not with a single syllable," answered Theodore, "and you may be sure I didn't, for I had long before banished all animosity from my heart, and come to look back upon my adventure with the sisters as a merry prank. I did, however, so far revert to the subject that I related to the priest how that, several years before, exactly the same sort of mischance befell me in one of Anfossi's arias as had just befallen him. I painted the period of my connection with the sisters in tragi-comical colours, and, distributing many a keen side-blow, I let them feel the superiority, which the ripe experiences, both of life and of art, of the years that had elapsed in the interval had given me over them. 'And a good thing it was,' I concluded, 'that I did cut short that *fermata*, for it was evidently meant to last through eternity, and I am firmly of opinion that if I had left the singer alone, I should be sitting at the piano now.' 'But, signor,' replied the priest, 'what director is there who would

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dare to prescribe laws to the *prima donna*? Your offence was much more heinous than mine, you in the concert hall, and I here in the leafy arbour. Besides, I was only director in imagination; nobody need attach any importance to that, and if the sweet fiery glances of these heavenly eyes had not fascinated me, I should not have made an ass of myself.' The priest's last words prowed tranquillising, for, although Lauretta's eyes had begun to flash with anger as the priest spoke, before he had finished she was quite appeased.

We spent the evening together. Many changes take place in fourteen years, which was the interval that had passed since I had seen my fair friends. Lauretta, although looking somewhat older, was still not devoid of charms. Teresina had worn better, without losing her graceful form. Both were dressed in rather gay colours, and their manners were just the same as before, that is, fourteen years younger than the ladies themselves. At my request Teresina sang some of the serious songs that had once so deeply affected me, but I fancied that they sounded differently from what they did when I first heard them; and Lauretta's singing too, although her voice had not appreciably lost anything, either in power or in compass, seemed to me to be quite different from my recollection of it of former times. The sisters' behaviour towards me, their feigned ecstasies, their rude admiration, which, however, took the shape of gracious patronage, had done much to put me in a bad humour, and now the obtrusiveness of this comparison between the images in my mind and the not over and above pleasing reality, tended to put me in a still worse. The droll priest, who in all the sweetest words you can imagine was playing the *amoroso* to both sisters at once, as well as frequent applications to the good wine, at length

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restored me to good humour, so that we spent a very pleasant evening in perfect concord and gaiety. The sisters were most pressing in their invitations to me to go home with them, that we might at once talk over the parts which I was to set for them and so concert measures accordingly. I left Rome without taking any further steps to find out their place of abode."

"And yet, after all," said Edward, "it is to them that you owe the awakening of your genius for music."

"That I admit," replied Theodore, "I owed them that and a host of good melodies besides, and that is just the reason why I did not want to see them again. Every composer can recall certain impressions which time does not obliterate. The spirit of music spake, and his voice was the creative word which suddenly awakened the kindred spirit slumbering in the breast of the artist; then the latter rose like a sun which can nevermore set. Thus it is unquestionably true that all melodies which, stirred up in this way, proceed from the depths of the composer's being, seem to us to belong to the singer alone who fanned the first spark within us. We hear her voice and record only what she has sung. It is, however, the inheritance of us weak mortals that, clinging to the clods, we are only too fain to draw down what is above the earth into the miserable narrowness characteristic of things of the earth. Thus it comes to pass that the singer becomes our lover—or even our wife. The spell is broken, and the melody of her nature, which formerly revealed glorious things, is now prostituted to complaints about broken soup-plates or ink-stains in new linen. Happy is the composer who never again so long as he lives sets eyes upon the woman who by virtue of some mysterious power enkindled in him the flame of music. Even though the young artist's heart may be rent by pain and despair

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when the moment comes for parting from his lovely enchantress, nevertheless her form will continue to exist as a divinely beautiful strain which lives on and on in the pride of youth and beauty, engendering melodies in which time after time he perceives the lady of his love. But what is she else if not the Highest Ideal which, working its way from within outwards, is at length reflected in the external independent form?"

"A strange theory, but yet plausible," was Edward's comment, as the two friends, arm in arm, passed out from Sala Tarone's into the street.

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SIGNOR FORMICA.[1]

I.

The celebrated painter Salvator Rosa comes to Rome, and is attacked by a dangerous illness. What befalls him in this illness.

CELEBRATED people commonly have many ill things said of them, whether well-founded or not. And no exception was made in the case of that admirable painter Salvator Rosa, whose living pictures cannot fail to impart a keen and characteristic delight to those who look upon them.

At the time that Salvator's fame was ringing through Naples, Rome, and Tuscany—nay, through all Italy, and painters who were desirous of gaining applause were striving to imitate his peculiar and unique style, his malicious and envious rivals were laboring to spread abroad all sorts of evil reports intended to sully with ugly black stains the glorious splendor of his artistic fame. They affirmed that he had at a former period of his life belonged to a company of banditti,[2] and that it

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[1] This tale was written for the Leipsic *Taschenbuch zum geselligen Vergnügen* for the year 1820.

[2] Respecting the facts of Salvator Rosa's life there exists more than one disputed statement; and of these perhaps the most disputed is his share of complicity (if any) in the evil doings of Calabrian banditti. Poor, and of a wild and self-willed disposition, but with a strong and independent character, he was unable to find a suitable master in

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was to his experiences during this lawless time that he owed all the wild, fierce, fantastically-attired figures which he introduced into his pictures, just as the gloomy fearful wildernesses of his landscapes—the *selve selvagge* (savage woods)—to use Dante's expression, were faithful representations of the haunts where they lay hidden. What was worse still, they openly charged him with having been concerned in the atrocious and bloody revolt which had been set on foot by the notorious Masaniello[1] in Naples. They even described the share he had taken in it, down to the minutest details.

The rumor ran that Aniello Falcone,[2] the painter of battle-pieces, one of the best of Salvator's masters, had been stung into fury and filled with bloodthirsty vengeance because the Spanish soldiers had slain one of his relatives in a hand-to-hand encounter. Without de-

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Naples, so, at the age of eighteen, he set out to study the lineaments of nature face to face, and spent some time amidst the grand and savage scenery of Calabria. Here it is certain that he came into contact with the banditti who haunted those wild regions. He is alleged to have been taken prisoner by a band, and to have become a member of the troop. Accepting this as true, we may perhaps charitably believe that he was prompted not so much by a regard for his own safety, as by the wish to secure a rare opportunity for studying his art unhindered, and also charitably hope that the accusations of his enemies, that he actively participated in the deeds of his companions, are unfounded, or, at any rate, exaggerations. It may be remarked that the "Life and Times of Salvator Rosa" by Lady Morgan (1824) is admittedly a romance rather than an accurate and faithful biography.

[1] Masaniello, a poor fisherman of Naples, was for a week in July, 1647, absolute king of his native city. At that time Naples was subject to the crown of Spain. The people, provoked by the exasperating rapacity and extortion of the Viceroy of the King of Spain, rose in rebellion, choosing Masaniello as their captain and leader.

[2] Aniello Falcone (1600–65), teacher of Salvator Rosa and founder of the *Compagnia della Morte*, painted battle-pieces which bear a high reputation. His works are said to be scarce and much sought after.

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lay he leagued together a band of daring spirits, mostly young painters, put arms into their hands, and gave them the name of the "Company of Death." And in truth this band inspired all the fear and consternation suggested by its terrible name. At all hours of the day they traversed the streets of Naples in little companies, and cut down without mercy every Spaniard whom they met. They did more—they forced their way into the holy sanctuaries, and relentlessly murdered their unfortunate foes whom terror had driven to seek refuge there. At night they gathered round their chief, the bloody-minded madman Masaniello,[1] and painted him by torchlight, so that in a short time there were hundreds of these little pictures[2] circulating in Naples and the neighbourhood.

This is the ferocious band of which Salvator Rosa was alleged to have been a member, working hard at butchering his fellow-men by day, and by night working just as hard at painting. The truth about him has however been stated by a celebrated art-critic, Taillasson,[3] I believe. His works are characterised by defiant originality, and by fantastic energy both of conception and of execution. He delighted to study Nature, not in the lovely attractiveness of green meadows, flourishing fields, sweet-smelling groves, murmuring springs, but in the sublime as seen in towering masses of rock,

[1] At first the young fisherman administered stern but impartial justice; but afterwards his mind seems to have reeled under the intense excitement and strain of his position, and he began to act the part of an arbitrary and cruel tyrant. Several hundreds of persons are said to have been put to death by his order during the few days he held power.

[2] Amongst them more than one by Salvator himself.

[3] A French painter and writer on painting; was born near Bordeaux in 1746, and died at Paris in 1809. Besides other works he wrote *Observations sur quelques grands peintres* (1807).

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in the wild sea-shore, in savage inhospitable forests; and the voices that he loved to hear were not the whisperings of the evening breeze or the musical rustle of leaves, but the roaring of the hurricane and the thunder of the cataract. To one viewing his desolate landscapes, with the strange savage figures stealthily moving about in them, here singly, there in troops, the uncomfortable thoughts arise unbidden, "Here's where a fearful murder took place, there's where the bloody corpse was hurled into the ravine," etc.

Admitting all this, and even that Taillasson is further right when he maintains that Salvator's "Plato," nay, that even his "Holy St. John proclaiming the Advent of the Saviour in the Wilderness," look just a little like highway robbers—admitting this, I say, it is nevertheless unjust to argue from the character of the works to the character of the artist himself, and to assume that he, who represents with lifelike fidelity what is savage and terrible, must himself have been a savage, terrible man. He who prates most about the sword is often he who wields it the worst; he who feels in the depths of his soul all the horrors of a bloody deed, so that, taking the palette or the pencil or the pen in his hand, he is able to give living form to his feelings, is often the one least capable of practising similar deeds. Enough! I don't believe a single word of all those evil reports, by which men sought to brand the excellent Salvator an abandoned murderer and robber, and I hope that you, kindly reader, will share my opinion. Otherwise, I see grounds for fearing that you might perhaps entertain some doubts respecting what I am about to tell you of this artist; the Salvator I wish to put before you in this tale—that is, according to my conception of him—is a man bubbling over with the exuberance of life and fiery energy, but at the same time a man

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endowed with the noblest and most loyal character—a character, which, like that of all men who think and feel deeply, is able even to control that bitter irony which arises from a clear view of the significance of life. I need scarcely add that Salvator was no less renowned as a poet and musician than as a painter. His genius was revealed in magnificent refractions. I repeat again, I do not believe that Salvator had any share in Masaniello's bloody deeds; on the contrary, I think it was the horrors of that fearful time which drove him from Naples to Rome, where he arrived a poor poverty-stricken fugitive, just at the time that Masaniello fell.

Not over well dressed, and with a scanty purse containing not more than a few bright sequins[1] in his pocket, he crept through the gate just after nightfall. Somehow or other, he didn't exactly know how, he wandered as far as the Piazza Navona. In better times he had once lived there in a large house near the Pamfili Palace. With an ill-tempered growl, he gazed up at the large plate-glass windows glistening and glimmering in the moonlight. "Hm!" he exclaimed peevishly, "it'll cost me dozens of yards of coloured canvas before I can open my studio up there again." But all at once he felt as if paralysed in every limb, and at the same moment more weak and feeble than he had ever felt in his life before. "But shall I," he murmured between his teeth as he sank down upon the stone steps leading up to the house door, "shall I really be able to finish canvas enough in the way the fools want it done? Hm! I have a notion that that will be the end of it!"

A cold cutting night wind blew down the street.

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[1] The sequin was a gold coin of Venice and Tuscany, worth about 9*s.* 3*d.* It is sometimes used as equivalent to ducat (see note p. 98).

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Salvator recognised the necessity of seeking a shelter. Rising with difficulty, he staggered on into the Corso,[1] and then turned into the Via Bergognona. At length he stopped before a little house with only a couple of windows, inhabited by a poor widow and her two daughters. This women had taken him in for little pay the first time he came to Rome, an unknown stranger noticed of nobody; and so he hoped again to find a lodging with her, such as would be best suited to the sad condition in which he then was.

He knocked confidently at the door, and several times called out his name aloud. At last he heard the old woman slowly and reluctantly wakening up out of her sleep. She shuffled to the window in her slippers, and began to rain down a shower of abuse upon the knave who was come to worry her in this way in the middle of the night; her house was not a wine-shop, &c., &c. Then there ensued a good deal of cross-questioning before she recognised her former lodger's voice; but on Salvator's complaining that he had fled from Naples and was unable to find a shelter in Rome, the old dame cried, "By all the blessed saints of Heaven! Is that you, Signor Salvator? Well now, your little room up above, that looks on to the court, is still standing empty, and the old fig-tree has pushed its branches right through the window and into the room, so that you can sit and work like as if you was in a beautiful cool arbour. Ay, and how pleased my girls will be that you have come back again, Signor Salvator. But, d'ye know, my Margarita's grown a big girl and fine-looking? You won't give her any more

[1] The Corso is a wide thoroughfare running almost north and south from the Piazza del Popolo, a square on the north side of Rome, to the centre of the city. It is in the Corso that the horse-races used to take place during the Carnival.

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rides on your knee now. And—and your little pussy, just fancy, three months ago she choked herself with a fish-bone. Ah well, we all shall come to the grave at last. But, d'ye know, my fat neighbour, who you so often laughed at and so often painted in such funny ways—d'ye know, she *did* marry that young fellow, Signor Luigi, after all. Ah well! *nozze e magistrati sono da dio destinati* (marriages and magistrates are made in heaven) they say."

"But," cried Salvator, interrupting the old woman, "but, Signora Caterina, I entreat you by the blessed saints, do, pray, let me in, and then tell me all about your fig-tree and your daughters, your cat and your fat neighbour—I am perishing of weariness and cold."

"Bless me, how impatient we are," rejoined the old dame; "*Chi va piano va sano, chi va presto more lesto* (more haste less speed, take things cool and live longer), I tell you. But you are tired, you are cold; where are the keys? quick with the keys!"

But the old woman still had to wake up her daughters and kindle a fire—but oh! she was such a long time about it—such a long, long time. At last she opened the door and let poor Salvator in; but scarcely had he crossed the threshold than, overcome by fatigue and illness, he dropped on the floor as if dead. Happily the widow's son, who generally lived at Tivoli, chanced to be at his mother's that night. He was at once turned out of his bed to make room for the sick guest, which he willingly submitted to.

The old woman was very fond of Salvator, putting him, as far as his artistic powers went, above all the painters in the world; and in everything that he did she also took the greatest pleasure. She was therefore quite beside herself to see him in this lamentable condition, and wanted to run off to the neighbouring monas-

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tery to fetch her father confessor, that he might come and fight against the adverse power of the disease with consecrated candles or some powerful amulet or other. On the other hand, her son thought it would be almost better to see about getting an experienced physician at once, and off he ran there and then to the Spanish Square, where he knew the distinguished Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni dwelt. No sooner did the doctor learn that the painter Salvator Rosa lay ill in the Via Bergognona than he at once declared himself ready to call early and see the patient.

Salvator lay unconscious, struck down by a most severe attack of fever. The old dame had hung up two or three pictures of saints above his bed, and was praying fervently. The girls, though bathed in tears, exerted themselves from time to time to get the sick man to swallow a few drops of the cooling lemonade which they had made, whilst their brother, who had taken his place at the head of the bed, wiped the cold sweat from his brow. And so morning found them, when with a loud creak the door opened, and the distinguished Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni entered the room.

If Salvator had not been so seriously ill that the two girls' hearts were melted in grief, they would, I think, for they were in general frolicsome and saucy, have enjoyed a hearty laugh at the Doctor's extraordinary appearance, instead of retiring shyly, as they did, into the corner, greatly alarmed. It will indeed be worth while to describe the outward appearance of the little man who presented himself at Dame Caterina's in the Via Bergognona in the grey of the morning. In spite of all his excellent capabilities for growth, Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni had not been able to advance beyond the respectable stature of four feet. Moreover,

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in the days of his youth, he had been distinguished for his elegant figure, so that, before his head, always indeed somewhat ill-shaped, and his big cheeks, and his stately double chin had put on too much fat, before his nose had grown bulky and spread owing to overmuch indulgence in Spanish snuff, and before his little belly had assumed the shape of a wine-tub from too much fattening on macaroni, the priestly cut of garments, which he at that time had affected, had suited him down to the ground. He was then in truth a pretty little man, and accordingly the Roman ladies had styled him their *caro puppazetto* (sweet little pet).

That however was now a thing of the past. A German painter, seeing Doctor Splendiano walking across the Spanish Square, said—and he was perhaps not far wrong—that it looked as if some strapping fellow of six feet or so had walked away from his own head, which had fallen on the shoulders of a little marionette clown, who now had to carry it about as his own. This curious little figure walked about in patchwork—an immense quantity of pieces of Venetian damask of a large flower pattern that had been cut up in making a dressing-gown; high up round his waist he had buckled a broad leather belt, from which an excessively long rapier hung; whilst his snow-white wig was surmounted by a high conical cap, not unlike the obelisk in St. Peter's Square. Since the said wig, like a piece of texture all tumbled and tangled, spread out thick and wide all over his back, it might very well be taken for the cocoon out of which the fine silkworm had crept.

The worthy Splendiano Accoramboni stared through his big, bright spectacles, with his eyes wide open, first at his patient, then at Dame Caterina. Calling her aside, he croaked with bated breath, "There lies our

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talented painter Salvator Rosa, and he's lost if my skill doesn't save him, Dame Caterina. Pray tell me when he came to lodge with you? Did he bring many beautiful large pictures with him?"

"Ah! my dear Doctor," replied Dame Caterina, "the poor fellow only came last night. And as for pictures—why, I don't know nothing about them; but there's a big box below, and Salvator begged me to take very good care of it, before he became senseless like what he now is. I daresay there's a fine picture packed in it, as he painted in Naples."

What Dame Caterina said was, however, a falsehood; but we shall soon see that she had good reasons for imposing upon the Doctor in this way.

"Good! Very good!" said the Doctor, simpering and stroking his beard; then, with as much solemnity as his long rapier, which kept catching in all the chairs and tables he came near, would allow, he approached the sick man and felt his pulse, snorting and wheezing, so that it had a most curious effect in the midst of the reverential silence which had fallen upon all the rest. Then he ran over in Greek and Latin the names of a hundred and twenty diseases that Salvator had not, then almost as many which he might have had, and concluded by saying that on the spur of the moment he didn't recollect the name of his disease, but that he would within a short time find a suitable one for it, and along therewith, the proper remedies as well. Then he took his departure with the same solemnity with which he had entered, leaving them all full of trouble and anxiety.

At the bottom of the steps the Doctor requested to see Salvator's box; Dame Caterina showed him one—in which were two or three of her deceased husband's cloaks now laid aside, and some old worn-out shoes.

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The Doctor smilingly tapped the box, on this side and on that, and remarked in a tone of satisfaction "We shall see! we shall see!" Some hours later he returned with a very beautiful name for his patient's disease, and brought with him some big bottles of an evil-smelling potion, which he directed to be given to the patient constantly. This was a work of no little trouble, for Salvator showed the greatest aversion for —utter loathing of the stuff, which looked, and smelt, and tasted, as if it had been concocted from Acheron itself. Whether it was that the disease, since it had now received a name, and in consequence really signified something, had only just begun to put forth its virulence, or whether it was that Splendiano's potion made too much of a disturbance inside the patient—it is at any rate certain that the poor painter grew weaker and weaker from day to day, from hour to hour. And notwithstanding Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni's assurance that, after the vital process had reached a state of perfect equilibrium, he would give it a new start like the pendulum of a clock, they were all very doubtful as to Salvator's recovery, and thought that the Doctor had perhaps already given the pendulum such a violent start that the mechanism was quite impaired.

Now it happened one day that when Salvator seemed scarcely able to move a finger he was suddenly seized with the paroxysm of fever; in a momentary accession of fictitious strength he leapt out of bed, seized the full medicine bottles, and hurled them fiercely out of the window. Just at this moment Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni was entering the house, when two or three bottles came bang upon his head, smashing all to pieces, whilst the brown liquid ran in streams all down his face, and wig, and ruff. Hastily rushing into the

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house, he screamed like a madman, "Signor Salvator has gone out of his mind, he's become insane; no skill can save him now, he'll be dead in ten minutes. Give me the picture, Dame Caterina, give me the picture—it's mine, the scanty reward of all my trouble. Give me the picture, I say."

But when Dame Caterina opened the box, and Doctor Splendiano saw nothing but the old cloaks and torn shoes, his eyes spun round in his head like a pair of fire-wheels; he gnashed his teeth; he stamped; he consigned poor Salvator, the widow, and all the family to the devil; then he rushed out of the house like an arrow from a bow, or as if he had been shot from a cannon.

After the violence of the paroxysm had spent itself, Salvator again relapsed into a death-like condition. Dame Caterina was fully persuaded that his end was really come, and away she sped as fast as she could to the monastery, to fetch Father Boniface, that he might come and administer the sacrament to the dying man. Father Boniface came and looked at the sick man; he said he was well acquainted with the peculiar signs which approaching death is wont to stamp upon the human countenance, but that for the present there were no indications of them on the face of the insensible Salvator. Something might still be done, and he would procure help at once, only Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni with his Greek names and infernal medicines was not to be allowed to cross the threshold again. The good Father set out at once, and we shall see later that he kept his word about sending the promised help.

Salvator recovered consciousness again; he fancied he was lying in a beautiful flower-scented arbour, for green boughs and leaves were interlacing above his head. He felt a salutary warmth glowing in his veins,

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but it seemed to him as if somehow his left arm was bound fast. "Where am I?" he asked in a faint voice. Then a handsome young man, who had stood at his bedside, but whom he had not noticed until just now, threw himself upon his knees, and grasping Salvator's right hand, kissed it and bathed it with tears, as he cried again and again, "Oh! my dear sir! my noble master! now it's all right; you are saved, you'll get better."

"But do tell me"—began Salvator, when the young man begged him not to exert himself, for he was too weak to talk; he would tell him all that had happened. "You see, my esteemed and excellent sir," began the young man, "you see, you were very ill when you came from Naples, but your condition was not, I warrant, by any means so dangerous but that a few simple remedies would soon have set you, with your strong constitution, on your legs again, had you not through Carlos's well-intentioned blunder in running off for the nearest physician fallen into the hands of the redoubtable Pyramid Doctor, who was making all preparations for bringing you to your grave."

"What do you say?" exclaimed Salvator, laughing heartily, notwithstanding the feeble state he was in. "What do you say?—the Pyramid Doctor? Ay, ay, although I was very ill, I saw that the little knave in damask patchwork, who comdemned me to drink his horrid, loathsome devil's brew, wore on his head the obelisk from St. Peter's Square—and so that's why you call him the Pyramid Doctor?"

"Why, good heavens!" said the young man, likewise laughing, "why, Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni must have come to see you in his ominous conical nightcap; and, do you know, you may see it flashing every morning from his window in the Spanish Square like a portentous meteor. But it's not by any means owing to

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this cap that he's called the Pyramid Doctor; for that there's quite another reason. Doctor Splendiano is a great lover of pictures, and possesses in truth quite a choice collection, which he has gained by a practice of a peculiar nature. With eager cunning he lies in wait for painters and their illnesses. More especially he loves to get foreign artists into his toils; let them but eat an ounce or two of macaroni too much, or drink a glass more Syracuse than is altogether good for them, he will afflict them with first one and then the other disease, designating it by a formidable name, and proceeding at once to cure them of it. He generally bargains for a picture as the price of his attendance; and as it is only specially obstinate constitutions which are able to withstand his powerful remedies, it generally happens that he gets his picture out of the chattels left by the poor foreigner, who meanwhile has been carried to the Pyramid of Cestius, and buried there. It need hardly be said that Signor Splendiano always picks out the best of the pictures the painter has finished, and also does not forget to bid the men take several others along with it. The cemetery near the Pyramid of Cestius is Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni's corn-field, which he diligently cultivates, and for that reason he is called the Pyramid Doctor. Dame Caterina had taken great pains, of course with the best intentions, to make the Doctor believe that you had brought a fine picture with you; you may imagine therefore with what eagerness he concocted his potions for you. It was a fortunate thing that in the paroxysm of fever you threw the Doctor's bottles at his head, it was also a fortunate thing that he left you in anger, and no less fortunate was it that Dame Caterina, who believed you were in the agonies of death, fetched Father Boniface to come and administer to you the sacrament. Father

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Boniface understands something of the art of healing; he formed a correct diagnosis of your condition and fetched me"——

"Then you also are a doctor?" asked Salvator in a faint whining tone.

"No," replied the young man, a deep blush mantling his cheeks, "no, my estimable and worthy sir, I am not in the least a doctor like Signor Splendiano Accoramboni; I am however a chirurgeon. I felt as if I should sink into the earth with fear—with joy—when Father Boniface came and told me that Salvator Rosa lay sick unto death in the Via Bergognona, and required my help. I hastened here, opened a vein in your left arm, and you were saved. Then we brought you up into this cool airy room that you formerly occupied. Look, there's the easel which you left behind you; yonder are a few sketches which Dame Caterina has treasured up as if they were relics. The virulence of your disease is subdued; simple remedies such as Father Boniface can prepare is all that you want, except good nursing, to bring back your strength again. And now permit me once more to kiss this hand—this creative hand that charms from Nature her deepest secrets and clothes them in living form. Permit poor Antonio Scacciati to pour out all the gratitude and immeasurable joy of his heart that Heaven has granted him to save the life of our great and noble painter, Salvator Rosa." Therewith the young surgeon threw himself on his knees again, and, seizing Salvator's hand, kissed it and bathed it in tears as before.

"I don't understand," said the artist, raising himself up a little, though with considerable difficulty, "I don't understand, my dear Antonio, what it is that is so especially urging you to show me all this respect. You are, you say, a chirurgeon, and we don't

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in a general way find this trade going hand in hand with art——"

"As soon," replied the young man, casting down his eyes, "as soon as you have picked up your strength again, my dear sir, I have a good deal to tell you that now lies heavy on my heart."

"Do so," said Salvator; "you may have every confidence in me—that you may, for I don't know that any man's face has made a more direct appeal to my heart than yours. The more I look at you the more plainly I seem to trace in your features a resemblance to that incomparable young painter—I mean Sanzio."[1] Antonio's eyes were lit up with a proud, radiant light—he vainly struggled for words with which to express his feelings.

At this moment Dame Caterina appeared, followed by Father Boniface, who brought Salvator a medicine which he had mixed scientifically according to prescription, and which the patient swallowed with more relish and felt to have a more beneficial effect upon him than the Acheronian waters of the Pyramid Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni.

II.

By Salvator Rosa's intervention Antonio Scacciati attains to a high honour. Antonio discloses the cause of his persistent trouble to Salvator, who consoles him and promises to help him.

And Antonio's words proved true. The simple but salutary remedies of Father Boniface, the careful nursing of good Dame Caterina and her daughters, the warmer weather which now came—all co-operated so

[1] The great painter Sanzio Raphael.

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well together with Salvator's naturally robust constitution that he soon felt sufficiently well to think about work again; first of all he designed a few sketches which he thought of working out afterwards.

Antonio scarcely ever left Salvator's room; he was all eyes when the painter drew out his sketches; whilst his judgment in respect to many points showed that he must have been initiated into the secrets of art.

"See here," said Salvator to him one day, "see here, Antonio, you understand art matters so well that I believe you have not merely cultivated your excellent judgment as a critic, but must have wielded the brush as well."

"You will remember," rejoined Antonio, "how I told you, my dear sir, when you were just about coming to yourself again after your long unconsciousness, that I had several things to tell you which lay heavy on my mind. Now is the time for me to unfold all my heart to you. You must know then, that though I am called Antonio Scacciati, the chirurgeon, who opened the vein in your arm for you, I belong also entirely to art—to the art to which, after bidding eternal farewell to my hateful trade, I intend to devote myself for once and for all."

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed Salvator, "Ho! ho! Antonio, weigh well what you are about to do. You *are* a clever chirurgeon, and perhaps will never be anything more than a bungling painter all your life long; for, with your permission, as young as you are, you are decidedly too old to begin to use the charcoal now. Believe me, a man's whole lifetime is scarce long enough to acquire a knowledge of the True—still less the practical ability to represent it."

"Ah! but, my dear sir," replied Antonio, smiling blandly, "don't imagine that I should now have come

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to entertain the foolish idea of taking up the difficult art of painting had I not practised it already on every possible occasion from my very childhood. In spite of the fact that my father obstinately kept me away from everything connected with art, yet Heaven was graciously pleased to throw me in the way of some celebrated artists. I must tell you that the great Annibal [1] interested himself in the orphan boy, and also that I may with justice call myself Guido Reni's [2] pupil."

"Well then," said Salvator somewhat sharply, a way of speaking he sometimes had, "well then, my good Antonio, you have indeed had great masters, and so it cannot fail but that, without detriment to your surgical practice, you must have been a great pupil. Only I don't understand how you, a faithful disciple of the gentle, elegant Guido, whom you perhaps outdo in elegance in your own pictures—for pupils do do those sort of things in their enthusiasm—how you can find any pleasure in my productions, and can really regard me as a master in the Art."

At these words, which indeed sounded a good deal like derisive mockery, the hot blood rushed into the young man's face.

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[1] Annabale Caracci, a painter of Bologna of the latter half of the sixteenth century. His most celebrated work is a series of frescoes on mythological subjects in the Farnese Palace at Rome. Along with his cousin Lodovico and his brother Agostino he founded the so-called Eclectic School of Painting; their maxim was that "accurate observation of Nature should be combined with judicious imitation of the best masters." The Caracci enjoyed the highest reputation amongst their contemporaries as teachers of their art. Annibale died in 1609; Masaniello's revolt occurred, as already mentioned, in 1647; Antonio must therefore have been at least fifty years of age. This however is not the only anachronism that Hoffmann is guilty of.

[2] The well-known painter Guido, born in 1575 and died in 1642. He early excited the envy of Annibale Caracci.

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"Oh, let me lay aside all the diffidence which generally keeps my lips closed," he said, "and let me frankly lay bare the thoughts I have in my mind. I tell you, Salvator, I have never honoured any master from the depths of my soul as I do you. What I am amazed at in your works is the sublime greatness of conception which is often revealed. You grasp the deepest secrets of Nature: you comprehend the mysterious hieroglyphics of her rocks, of her trees, and of her waterfalls, you hear her sacred voice, you understand her language, and possess the power to write down what she has said to you. Verily I can call your bold free style of painting nothing else than *writing down*. Man alone and his doings does not suffice you; you behold him only in the midst of Nature, and in so far as his essential character is conditioned by natural phenomena; and in these facts I see the reason why you are only truly great in landscapes, Salvator, with their wonderful figures. Historical painting confines you within limits which clog your imagination to the detriment of your genius for reproducing your higher intuitions of Nature."

"That's talk you've picked up from envious historical painters," said Salvator, interrupting his young companion; "like them, Antonio, you throw me the choice bone of landscape-painting that I may gnaw away at it, and so spare their own good flesh. Perhaps I do understand the human figure and all that is dependent upon it. But this senseless repetition of others' words."——

"Don't be angry," continued Antonio, "don't be angry, my good sir; I am not blindly repeating anybody's words, and I should not for a moment think of trusting to the judgment of our painters here in Rome at any rate. Who can help greatly admiring the bold

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draughtsmanship, the powerful expression, but above all the living movement of your fingers? It's plain to see that you don't work from a stiff, inflexible model, or even from a dead skeleton form; it is evident that you yourself are your own breathing, living model, and that when you sketch or paint, you have the figure you want to put on your canvas reflected in a great mirror opposite to you."

"The devil! Antonio," exclaimed Salvator, laughing, "I believe you must often have had a peep into my studio when I was not aware of it, since you have such an accurate knowledge of what goes on within."

"Perhaps I may," replied Antonio; "but let me go on. I am not by a long way so anxious to classify the pictures which your powerful mind suggests to you as are those pedantic critics who take such great pains in this line. In fact, I think that the word 'landscape,' as generally employed, has but an indifferent application to your productions; I should prefer to call them historical representations in the highest sense of the word. If we fancy that this or the other rock or this or the other tree is gazing at us like a gigantic being with thoughtful earnest eyes, so again, on the other hand, this or the other group of fantastically attired men resembles some remarkable stone which has been endowed with life; all Nature, breathing and moving in harmonious unity, lends accents to the sublime thought which leapt into existence in your mind. This is the spirit in which I have studied your pictures, and so in this way it is, my grand and noble master, that I owe to you my truer perceptions in matters of art. But pray don't imagine that I have fallen into childish imitation. However much I would like to possess the free bold pencil that you possess, I do not attempt to conceal the fact that Nature's colours appear to me

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different from what I see them in your pictures. Although it is useful, I think, for the sake of acquiring technique, for the pupil to imitate the style of this or that master, yet, so soon as he comes to stand in any sense on his own feet, he ought to aim at representing Nature as he himself sees her. Nothing but this true method of perception, this unity with oneself, can give rise to character and truth. Guido shared these sentiments; and that fiery man Preti,[1] who, as you are aware, is called *Il Calabrese*—a painter who certainly, more than any other man, has reflected upon his art—also warned me against all imitation. Now you know, Salvator, why I so much respect you, without imitating you."

Whilst the young man had been speaking, Salvator had kept his eyes fixed unchangeably upon him; he now clasped him tumultuously to his heart.

"Antonio," he then said, "what you have just now said are wise and thoughtful words. Young as you are, you are nevertheless, so far as the true perception of art is concerned, a long way ahead of many of our old and much vaunted masters, who have a good deal of stupid foolish twaddle about their painting, but never get at the true root of the matter. Body alive, man! When you were talking about my pictures, I then began to understand myself for the first time, I believe; and because you do not imitate my style,—do not, like a good many others, take a tube of black paint in your hand, or dab on a few glaring colours, or even make two or three crippled figures with repulsive faces look

[1] Mattia Preti, known as *Il Cavaliere Calabrese*, from his having been born in Calabria. He was a painter of the Neapolitan school and a pupil of Lanfranco, and lived during the greater part of the seventeenth century. Owing to his many disputes and quarrels he was more than once compelled to flee for his life.

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up from the midst of filth and dirt, and then say, 'There's a Salvator for you!'—just for these very reasons I think a good deal of you. I tell you, my lad, you'll not find a more faithful friend than I am—that I can promise you with all my heart and soul."

Antonio was beside himself with joy at the kind way in which the great painter thus testified to his interest in him. Salvator expressed an earnest desire to see his pictures. Antonio took him there and then to his studio.

Salvator had in truth expected to find something fairly good from the young man who spoke so intelligently about art, and who, it appeared, had a good deal in him; but nevertheless he was greatly surprised at the sight of Antonio's fine pictures. Everywhere he found boldness in conception, and correctness in drawing; and the freshness of the colouring, the good taste in the arrangement of the drapery, the uncommon delicacy of the extremities, the exquisite grace of the heads, were all so many evidences that he was no unworthy pupil of the great Reni. But Antonio had avoided this master's besetting sin of an endeavour, only too conspicuous, to sacrifice expression to beauty. It was plain that Antonio was aiming to reach Annibal's strength, without having as yet succeeded.

Salvator spent some considerable time of thoughtful silence in the examination of each of the pictures. Then he said, "Listen, Antonio: it is indeed undeniable that you were born to follow the noble art of painting. For not only has Nature endowed you with the creative spirit from which the finest thoughts pour forth in an inexhaustible stream, but she has also granted you the rare ability to surmount in a short space of time the difficulties of technique. It would only be false flattery if I were to tell you that you had yet ad-

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vanced to the level of your masters, that you are yet equal to Guido's exquisite grace or to Annibal's strength; but certain I am that you excel by a long way all the painters who hold up their heads so proudly in the Academy of St Luke[1] here—Tiarini,[2] Gessi,[3] Sementa,[4] and all the rest of them, not even excepting Lanfranco[5] himself, for he only understands fresco-painting. And yet, Antonio, and yet, if I were in your place, I should deliberate awhile before throwing away the lancet altogether, and confining myself entirely to the pencil. That sounds rather strange, but listen to me. Art seems to be having a bad time of it just now, or rather the devil seems to be very busy amongst our painters now-a-days, bravely setting them together by the ears. If you cannot make up your mind to put up with all sorts of annoyances, to endure more and more scorn and contumely in proportion as you advance in art, and as your fame spreads to meet with malicious scoundrels everywhere, who with a friendly face will force themselves upon you in order to ruin you the more surely afterwards,—if you cannot, I say, make up your mind to endure all this—let painting alone. Think of the fate of your teacher, the great Annibal, whom a rascally band of rivals malignantly persecuted in Naples, so that he did not receive one single com-

[1] The Accademia di San Luca, a school of art, founded at Rome about 1595, Federigo Zuccaro being its first director.

[2] Alessandro Tiarini (1577–1668) of Bologna, was a pupil of the Caracci.

[3] Giovanni Francesco Gessi (1588–1649), sometimes called "The second Guido," was a pupil of Guido.

[4] Sementi or Semenza (1580–1638), also a pupil of Guido.

[5] Giovanni Lanfranco (1581–1647), studied first under Agostino Caracci. He was the first to encourage the early genius of Salvator Rosa.

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mission for a great work, being everywhere rejected with contempt; and this is said to have been instrumental in bringing about his early death. Think of what happened to Domenichino[1] when he was painting the dome of the chapel of St. Januarius. Didn't the villains of painters—I won't mention a single name, not even the rascals Belisario[2] and Ribera[3]—didn't they bribe Domenichino's servant to strew ashes in the

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[1] Zampieri Domenichino (1581–1641) was a pupil of the Caracci. The work here referred to is a series of frescoes, which he did not live to quite finish, representing the events of the life of St. Januarius, in the chapel of the *Tesoro* of the cathedral at Naples, which he began in 1630.

The malicious spite which the text attributes to the rivals of Domenichino is not at all exaggerated. There did really exist a so-called "Cabal of Naples," consisting chiefly of the painters Corenzio, Ribera, and Caracciolo, who leagued together to shut out all competition from other artists; and their persecution of the Bolognese Domenichino is well known. Often on returning to his work in the morning he found that some one had obliterated what he had done on the previous day.

Not only have we a faithful picture of the Italian artist's life in the middle of the seventeenth century depicted in this tale, but the actual facts of the lives of Salvator Rosa, of Preti, of the Caracci, as well as the existence of Falcone's *Compagnia della Morte*, furnish ample materials and illustrations of the wild lives they did lead, of their jealousies and heartburnings, of their quarrelsomeness and revengefulness. They seem to have been ready on all occasions to exchange the brush for the sword. They were filled to overflowing with restless energy. The atmosphere of the age they lived in was highly charged with vigour of thought and an irrepressible vitality for artistic production. Under the conditions which these things suppose the artists of that age could not well have been otherwise than what they were.

[2] Belisario Corenzio, a Greek (1558–1643). "Envious, jealous, cunning, treacherous, quarrelsome, he looked upon all other painters as his enemies."

[3] Giuseppe Ribera, called *Il Spagnoletto*, a Spaniard by birth (1589), was a painter of the Neapolitan school, and delighted in horrible and gloomy subjects. He died in 1656.

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lime? So the plaster wouldn't stick fast on the walls, and the painting had no stability. Think of all that, and examine yourself well whether your spirit is strong enough to endure things like that, for if not, your artistic power will be broken, and along with the resolute courage for work you will also lose your ability."

"But, Salvator," replied Antonio, "it would hardly be possible for me to have more scorn and contumely to endure, supposing I took up painting entirely and exclusively, then I have already endured whilst merely a chirurgeon. You have been pleased with my pictures, you have indeed! and at the same time declared from inner conviction that I am capable of doing better things than several of our painters of the Academy. But these are just the men who turn up their noses at all that I have industriously produced, and say contemptuously, 'Do look, here's our chirurgeon wants to be a painter!' And for this very reason my resolve is only the more unshaken; I will sever myself from a trade that grows with every day more hateful. Upon you, my honoured master, I now stake all my hopes. Your word is powerful; if you would speak a good word for me, you might overthrow my envious persecutors at a single blow, and put me in the place where I ought to be."

"You repose great confidence in me," rejoined Salvator. "But now that we thoroughly understand each other's views on painting, and I have seen your works, I don't really know that there is anybody for whom I would rather take up the cudgels than for you."

Salvator once more inspected Antonio's pictures, and stopped before one representing a "Magdalene at the Saviour's feet," which he especially praised.

"In this Magdalene," he said, "you have deviated

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from the usual mode of representation. Your Magdalene is not a thoughtful virgin, but a lovely artless child rather, and yet she is such a marvellous child that hardly anybody else but Guido could have painted her. There is a unique charm in her dainty figure; you must have painted with inspiration; and, if I mistake not, the original of this Magdalene is alive and to be found in Rome. Come, confess, Antonio, you are in love!"

Antonio's eyes sought the ground, whilst he said in a low shy voice, "Nothing escapes your penetration, my dear sir; perhaps it is as you say, but do not blame me for it. That picture I set the highest store by, and hitherto I have guarded it as a holy secret from all men's eyes."

"What do you say?" interrupted Salvator. "None of the painters here have seen your picture?"

"No, not one," was Antonio's reply.

"All right then, Antonio," continued Salvator, his eyes sparkling with delight. "Very well then, you may rely upon it, I will overwhelm your envious overweening persecutors, and get you the honour you deserve. Intrust your picture to me; bring it to my studio secretly by night, and then leave all the rest to me. Will you do so?"

"Gladly, with all my heart," replied Antonio. "And now I should very much like to talk to you about my love-troubles as well; but I feel as if I ought not to do so to-day, after we have opened our minds to each other on the subject of art. I also entreat you to grant me your assistance both in word and deed later on in this matter of my love."

"I am at your service," said Salvator, "for both, both when and where you require me." Then as he was going away, he once more turned round and said, smiling,

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"See here, Antonio, when you disclosed to me the fact that you were a painter, I was very sorry that I had spoken about your resemblance to Sanzio. I took it for granted that you were as silly as most of our young folk, who, if they bear but the slightest resemblance in the face to any great master, at once trim their beard or hair as he does, and from this cause fancy it is their business to imitate the style of the master in their art achievements, even though it is a manifest violation of their natural talents to do so. Neither of us has mentioned Raphael's name, but I assure you that I have discerned in your pictures clear indications that you have grasped the full significance of the inimitable thoughts which are reflected in the works of this the greatest of the painters of the age. You understand Raphael, and would give me a different answer from what Velasquez[1] did when I asked him not long ago what he thought of Sanzio. 'Titian,' he replied, 'is the greatest painter; Raphael knows nothing about carnation.' This Spaniard, methinks, understands flesh but not criticism; and yet these men in St. Luke elevate him to the clouds because he once painted cherries which the sparrows picked at."[2]

It happened not many days afterwards that the Academicians of St. Luke met together in their church to prove the works which had been announced for exhibition. There too Salvator had sent Scacciati's fine picture. In spite of themselves the painters were

[1] Don Diego Velazquez de Silva, the great Spanish painter, born in 1599, died in 1660. He twice visited Italy and Naples, in 1629–31 and in 1648–51, and was for a time intimate with Ribera.

[2] This suggests the legend of Quentin Massys of Antwerp and the fly, or the still older, but perhaps not more historical story of the Greek painters, Zeuxis and the bunch of grapes, which the birds came to peck at, and Parrhasius, whose curtain deceived even Zeuxis himself.

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greatly struck with its grace and power; and from all lips there was heard nothing but the most extravagant praise when Salvator informed them that he had brought the picture with him from Naples, as the legacy of a young painter who had been cut off in the pride of his days.

It was not long before all Rome was crowding to see and admire the picture of the young unknown painter who had died so young; it was unanimously agreed that no such work had been done since Guido Reni's time; some even went so far in their just enthusiasm as to place this exquisitely lovely Magdalene before Guido's creations of a similar kind. Amongst the crowd of people who were always gathered round Scacciati's picture, Salvator one day observed a man who, besides presenting a most extraordinary appearance, behaved as if he were crazy. Well advanced in years, he was tall, thin as a spindle, with a pale face, a long sharp nose, a chin equally as long, ending moreover in a little pointed beard, and with grey, gleaming eyes. On the top of his light sand-coloured wig he had set a high hat with a magnificent feather; he wore a short dark red mantle or cape with many bright buttons, a sky-blue doublet slashed in the Spanish style, immense leather gauntlets with silver fringes, a long rapier at his side, light grey stockings drawn up above his bony knees and gartered with yellow ribbons, whilst he had bows of the same sort of yellow ribbon on his shoes.

This remarkable figure was standing before the picture like one enraptured: he raised himself on tiptoe; he stooped down till he became quite small; then he jumped up with both feet at once, heaved deep sighs, groaned, nipped his eyes so close together that the tears began to trickle down his cheeks, opened them

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wide again, fixed his gaze immovably upon the charming Magdalene, sighed again, lisped in a thin, querulous, mutilated voice, "*Ah! carissima—benedettissima! Ah! Marianna—Mariannina—bellissima,*" &c. ("Oh! dearest—most adored! Ah! Marianna—sweet Marianna! my most beautiful!") Salvator, who had a mad fancy for such oddities, drew near to the old fellow, intending to engage him in conversation about Scacciati's work, which seemed to afford him so much exquisite delight. Without paying any particular heed to Salvator, the old gentleman stood cursing his poverty, because he could not give a million sequins for the picture, and place it under lock and key where nobody could set their infernal eyes upon it. Then, hopping up and down again, he blessed the Virgin and all the holy saints that the reprobate artist who had painted the heavenly picture which was driving him to despair and madness was dead.

Salvator concluded that the man either was out of his mind, or was an Academician of St. Luke with whom he was unacquainted.

All Rome was full of Scacciati's wonderful picture; people could scarcely talk about anything else, and this of course was convincing proof of the excellence of the work. And when the painters were again assembled in the church of St. Luke, to decide about the admission of certain other pictures which had been announced for exhibition, Salvator Rosa all at once asked, whether the painter of the "Magdalene at the Saviour's Feet" was not worthy of being admitted a member of the Academy. They all with one accord, including even that hairsplitter in criticism, Baron Josépin,[1] declared that such a great artist would have

[1] Giuseppe Cesari, called Josépin or the Chevalier d'Arpin, a painter of the Roman school, born in 1560 or 1568, died in 1640.

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been an ornament to the Academy, and expressed their sorrow at his death in the choicest phrases, although, like the crazy old man, they were praising Heaven in their hearts that he was dead. Still more, they were so far carried away by their enthusiasm that they passed a resolution to the effect that the admirable young painter whom death had snatched away from art so early should be nominated a member of the Academy in his grave, and that masses should be read for the benefit of his soul in the church of St. Luke. They therefore begged Salvator to inform them what was the full name of the deceased, the date of his birth, the place where he was born, &c.

Then Salvator rose and said in a loud voice, "Signors, the honour you are anxious to render to a dead man you can more easily bestow upon a living man who walks in your midst. Learn that the 'Magdalene at the Saviour's Feet'—the picture which you so justly exalt above all other artistic productions that the last few years have given us, is not the work of a dead Neapolitan painter as I pretended (this I did simply to get an unbiassed judgment from you); that painting, that masterpiece, which all Rome is admiring, is from the hand of Signor Antonio Scacciati, the chirurgeon."

The painters sat staring at Salvator as if suddenly thunderstruck, incapable of either moving or uttering a single sound. He, however, after quietly exulting over their embarrassment for some minutes, continued, "Well now, signors, you would not tolerate the worthy Antonio amongst you because he is a chirurgeon; but I think that the illustrious Academy of St. Luke has great need of a surgeon to set the limbs of the many

He posed as an artistic critic in Rome during the later years of his life, and his judgment was claimed by his friends to be authoritative and final in all matters connected with art.

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crippled figures which emerge from the studios of a good many amongst your number. But of course you will no longer scruple to do what you ought to have done long ago, namely, elect that excellent painter Antonio Scacciati a member of the Academy."

The Academicians, swallowing Salvator's bitter pill, feigned to be highly delighted that Antonio had in this way given such incontestable proofs of his talent, and with all due ceremony nominated him a member of the Academy.

As soon as it became known in Rome that Antonio was the author of the wonderful picture he was overwhelmed with congratulations, and even with commissions for great works, which poured in upon him from all sides. Thus by Salvator's shrewd and cunning stratagem the young man emerged all at once out of his obscurity, and with the first real step he took on his artistic career rose to great honour.

Antonio revelled in ecstasies of delight. So much the more therefore did Salvator wonder to see him, some days later, appear with his face pale and distorted, utterly miserable and woebegone. "Ah! Salvator!" said Antonio, "what advantage has it been to me that you have helped me to rise to a level far beyond my expectations, that I am now overwhelmed with praise and honour, that the prospect of a most successful artistic career is opening out before me? Oh! I am utterly miserable, for the picture to which, next to you, my dear sir, I owe my great triumph, has proved the source of my lasting misfortune."

"Stop!" replied Salvator, "don't sin against either your art or your picture. I don't believe a word about the terrible misfortune which, you say, has befallen you. You are in love, and I presume you can't get all your wishes gratified at once, on the spur of the moment;

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that's all it is. Lovers are like children; they scream and cry if anybody only just touches their doll. Have done, I pray you, with that lamentation, for I tell you I can't do with it. Come now, sit yourself down there and quietly tell me all about your fair Magdalene, and give me the history of your love affair, and let me know what are the stones of offence that we have to remove, for I promise you my help beforehand. The more adventurous the schemes are which we shall have to undertake, the more I shall like them. In fact, my blood is coursing hotly in my veins again, and my regimen requires that I engage in a few wild pranks. But go on with your story, Antonio, and as I said, let's have it quietly without any sighs and lamentations, without any Ohs! and Ahs!"

Antonio took his seat on the stool which Salvator had pushed up to the easel at which he was working, and began as follows:—

"There is a high house in the Via Ripetta,[1] with a balcony which projects far over the street so as at once to strike the eye of any one entering through the Porta del Popolo, and there dwells perhaps the most whimsical oddity in all Rome,—an old bachelor with every fault that belongs to that class of persons—avaricious, vain, anxious to appear young, amorous, foppish. He is tall, as thin as a switch, wears a gay Spanish costume, a sandy wig, a conical hat, leather gauntlets, a rapier at his side"——

[1] In a previous note it was stated that the Via del Corso ran from the Piazza del Popolo southwards to the centre of the city of Rome. Besides this street there are two others which run from the same square in almost the same direction, the Via di Ripetta and the Via del Babuino, the former being to the west of the Via del Corso and the latter to the east, and each gradually gets more distant from the Via del Corso the farther it recedes from the Square. On the opposite side of the Piazza del Popolo is the Porta del Popolo.

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"Stop, stop!" cried Salvator, interrupting him, "excuse me a minute or two, Antonio." Then, turning about the picture at which he was painting, he seized his charcoal and in a few free bold strokes sketched on the back side of the canvas the eccentric old gentleman whom he had seen behaving like a crazed man in front of Antonio's picture.

"By all the saints!" cried Antonio, as he leapt to his feet, and, forgetful of his unhappiness, burst out into a loud laugh, "by all the saints! that's he! That's Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, whom I was just describing, that'a he to the very T."

"So you see," said Salvator calmly, "that I am already acquainted with the worthy gentleman who most probably is your bitter enemy. But go on."

"Signor Pasquale Capuzzi," continued Antonio, "is as rich as Crœsus, but at the same time, as I just told you, a sordid miser and an incurable coxcomb. The best thing about him is that he loves art, particularly music and painting; but he mixes up so much folly with it all that even in these things there's no getting on with him. He considers himself the greatest musical composer in the world, and that there's not a singer in the Papal choir who can at all approach him. Accordingly he looks down upon our old Frescobaldi[1] with contempt; and when the Romans talk about the wonderful charm of Ceccarelli's voice, he informs them that Ceccarelli knows as much about singing as a pair of top-boots, and that he, Capuzzi, knows which is the right way to fascinate the public. But as the first singer of the Pope bears the proud name of Signor Odoardo Ceccarelli di Merania, so our Capuzzi is

[1] Girolamo Frescobaldi, the most distinguished organist of the seventeenth century, born about 1587 or 1588. He early won a reputation both as a singer and as an organist.

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greatly delighted when anybody calls him Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senigaglia; for it was in Senigaglia [1] that he was born, and the popular rumour goes that his mother, being startled at sight of a sea-dog (seal) suddenly rising to the surface, gave birth to him in a fisherman's boat, and that accounts, it is said, for a good deal of the sea-cur in his nature. Several years ago he brought out an opera on the stage, which was fearfully hissed; but that hasn't cured him of his mania for writing execrable music. Indeed, when he heard Francesco Cavalli's [2] opera *Le Nozze di Teti e Peleo*, he swore that the composer had filched the sublimest of the thoughts from his own immortal works, for which he was near being thrashed and even stabbed. He still has a craze for singing arias, and accompanies his hideous squalling on a wretched jarring, jangling guitar, all out of tune. His faithful Pylades is an ill-bred dwarfish eunuch, whom the Romans call Pitichinaccio. There is a third member of the company—guess who it is?—Why, none other than the Pyramid Doctor, who kicks up a noise like a melancholy ass and yet fancies he's singing an excellent bass, quite as good as Martinelli of the Papal choir. Now these three estimable people are in the habit of meeting in the evening on the balcony of Capuzzi's house, where they sing Carissimi's [3] motets, until all the dogs and cats in the neighbourhood round break

[1] Senigaglia or Senigallia, a town on the Adriatic, in the province of Ancona.

[2] Pietro Francesco Cavalli, whose real name was Caletti-Bruni. He was organist at St. Mark's at Venice for about thirty-six years (1640–1676). He composed both for the Church and for the stage.

[3] Giacomo Carissimi, attached during the greater part of his life to the church of San Apollinaris at Rome. He died in 1674. He did much for musical art, perfecting recitative and advancing the development of the sacred cantata. His accompaniments are generally distinguished for "lightness and variety."

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out into dirges of miawing and howling, and all their neighbours heartily wish the devil would run away with all the blessed three.

"With this whimsical old fellow, Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, of whom my description will have enabled you to form a tolerably adequate idea, my father lived on terms of intimacy, since he trimmed his wig and beard. When my father died, I undertook this business; and Capuzzi was in the highest degree satisfied with me, because, as he once affirmed, I knew better than anybody else how to give his moustaches a bold upward twirl; but the real reason was because I was satisfied with the few pence with which he rewarded me for my pains. But he firmly believed that he more than richly indemnified me, since, whilst I was trimming his beard, he always closed his eyes and croaked through an aria from his own compositions, which, however, almost split my ears; and yet the old fellow's crazy gestures afforded me a good deal of amusement, so that I continued to attend him. One day when I went, I quietly ascended the stairs, knocked at the door, and opened it, when lo, there was a girl—an angel of light, who came to meet me. You know my Magdalene; it was she. I stood stock still, rooted to the spot. No, Salvator, you shall have no Ohs! and Ahs! Well, the first sight of this, the most lovely maiden of her sex, enkindled in me the most ardent passionate love. The old man informed me with a smirk that the young lady was the daughter of his brother Pietro, who had died at Senigaglia, that her name was Marianna, and that she was quite an orphan; being her uncle and guardian, he had taken her into his house. You can easily imagine that henceforward Capuzzi's house was my Paradise. But no matter what devices I had recourse to, I could never succeed

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in getting a *tête-à-tête* with Marianna, even for a single moment. Her glances, however, and many a stolen sigh, and many a soft pressure of the hand, resolved all doubts as to my good fortune. The old man divined what I was after,—which was not a very difficult thing for him to do. He informed me that my behaviour towards his niece was not such as to please him altogether, and he asked me what was the real purport of my attentions. Then I frankly confessed that I loved Marianna with all my heart, and that the greatest earthly happiness I could conceive was a union with her. Whereupon Capuzzi, after measuring me from top to toe, burst out in a guffaw of contempt, and declared that he never had any idea that such lofty thoughts could haunt the brain of a paltry barber. I was almost boiling with rage; I said he knew very well that I was no paltry barber but rather a good surgeon, and, moreover, in so far as concerned the noble art of painting, a faithful pupil of the great Annibal Caracci and of the unrivalled Guido Reni. But the infamous Capuzzi only replied by a still louder guffaw of laughter, and in his horrible falsetto squeaked, 'See here, my sweet Signor barber, my excellent Signor surgeon, my honoured Annibal Caracci, my beloved Guido Reni, be off to the devil, and don't ever show yourself here again, if you don't want your legs broken.' Therewith the cranky, knock-kneed old fool laid hold of me with no less an intention than to kick me out of the room, and hurl me down the stairs. But that, you know, was past everything. With ungovernable fury I seized the old fellow and tripped him up, so that his legs stuck uppermost in the air; and there I left him screaming aloud, whilst I ran down the stairs and out of the house-door; which, I need hardly say, has been closed to me ever since.

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"And that's how matters stood when you came to Rome and when Heaven inspired Father Boniface with the happy idea of bringing me to you. Then so soon as your clever trick had brought me the success for which I had so long been vainly striving, that is, when I was accepted by the Academy of St. Luke, and all Rome was heaping up praise and honour upon me to a lavish extent, I went straightway to the old gentleman and suddenly presented myself before him in his own room, like a threatening apparition. Such at least he must have thought me, for he grew as pale as a corpse, and retreated behind a great table, trembling in every limb. And in a firm and earnest way I represented to him that it was not now a paltry barber or a surgeon, but a celebrated painter and Academician of St. Luke, Antonio Scacciati, to whom he would not, I hoped, refuse the hand of his niece Marianna. You should have seen into what a passion the old fellow flew. He screamed; he flourished his arms about like one possessed of devils; he yelled that I, a ruffianly murderer, was seeking his life, that I had stolen his Marianna from him since I had portrayed her in my picture, and it was driving him mad, driving him to despair, for all the world, all the world, were fixing their covetous, lustful eyes upon his Marianna, his life, his hope, his all; but I had better take care, he would burn my house over my head, and me and my picture in it. And therewith he kicked up such a din, shouting, 'Fire! Murder! Thieves! Help!' that I was perfectly confounded, and only thought of making the best of my way out of the house.

"The crackbrained old fool is over head and ears in love with his niece; he keeps her under lock and key; and as soon as he succeeds in getting dispensation from the Pope, he will compel her to a shameful alliance with himself. All hope for me is lost!"

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"Nay, nay, not quite," said Salvator, laughing, "I am of opinion that things could not be in a better form for you. Marianna loves you, of that you are convinced; and all we have to do is to get her out of the power of that fantastic old gentleman, Signor Pasquale Capuzzi. I should like to know what there is to hinder a couple of stout enterprising fellows like you and me from accomplishing this. Pluck up your courage, Antonio. Instead of bewailing, and sighing, and fainting like a lovesick swain, it would be better to set to work to think out some plan for rescuing your Marianna. You just wait and see, Antonio, how finely we'll circumvent the old dotard; in such like emprises, the wildest extravagance hardly seems to me wild enough. I'll set about it at once, and learn what I can about the old man, and about his usual habits of life. But you must not be seen in this affair, Antonio. Go away quietly home, and come back to me early to-morrow morning, then we'll consider our first plan of attack."

Herewith Salvator shook the paint out of his brush, threw on his mantle, and hurried to the Corso, whilst Antonio betook himself home as Salvator had bidden him—his heart comforted and full of lusty hope again.

III.

Signor Pasquale Capuzzi turns up at Salvator Rosa's studio. What takes place there. The cunning scheme which Rosa and Scacciati carry out, and the consequences of the same.

Next morning Salvator, having in the meantime inquired into Capuzzi's habits of life, very greatly surprised Antonio by a description of them, even down to the minutest details.

"Poor Marianna," said Salvator, "leads a sad life of

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it with the crazy old fellow. There he sits sighing and ogling the whole day long, and, what is worse still, in order to soften her heart towards him, he sings her all and sundry love ditties that he has ever composed or intends to compose. At the same time he is so monstrously jealous that he will not even permit the poor young girl to have the usual female attendance, for fear of intrigues and amours, which the maid might be induced to engage in. Instead, a hideous little apparition with hollow eyes and pale flabby cheeks appears every morning and evening to perform for sweet Marianna the services of a tiring-maid. And this little apparition is nobody else but that tiny Tomb Thumb of a Pitichinaccio, who has to don female attire. Capuzzi, whenever he leaves home, carefully locks and bolts every door; besides which there is always a confounded fellow keeping watch below, who was formerly a bravo, and then a gendarme, and now lives under Capuzzi's rooms. It seems, therefore, a matter almost impossible to effect an entrance into his house, but nevertheless I promise you, Antonio, that this very night you shall be in Capuzzi's own room and shall see your Marianna, though this time it will only be in Capuzzi's presence."

"What do you say?" cried Antonio, quite excited; "what do you say? We shall manage it to-night? I thought it was impossible."

"There, there," continued Salvator, "keep still, Antonio, and let us quietly consider how we may with safety carry out the plan which I have conceived. But in the first place I must tell you that I have already scraped an acquaintance with Signor Pasquale Capuzzi without knowing it. That wretched spinet, which stands in the corner there, belongs to the old fellow, and he wants me to pay him the preposterous sum of

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ten ducats' for it. When I was convalescent I longed for some music, which always comforts me and does me a deal of good, so I begged my landlady to get me some such an instrument as that. Dame Caterina soon ascertained that there was an old gentleman living in the Via Ripetta who had a fine spinet to sell. I got the instrument brought here. I did not trouble myself either about the price or about the owner. It was only yesterday evening that I learned quite by chance that the gentleman who intended to cheat me with this rickety old thing was Signor Pasquale Capuzzi. Dame Caterina had enlisted the services of an acquaintance living in the same house, and indeed on the same floor as Capuzzi,—and now you can easily guess whence I have got all my budget of news."

"Yes," replied Antonio, "then the way to get in is found; your landlady"——

"I know very well, Antonio," said Salvator, cutting him short, "I know what you're going to say. You think you can find a way to your Marianna through Dame Caterina. But you'll find that we can't do anything of that sort; the good dame is far too talkative; she can't keep the least secret, and so we can't for a single moment think of employing her in this business.

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[1] The first silver ducat is believed to have been struck in 1140 by Roger II., Norman king of Sicily; and ducats have been struck constantly since the twelfth century, especially at Venice (see *Merchant of Venice*). They have varied considerably both in weight and fineness, and consequently in value, at different times and places. Ducats have been struck in both gold and silver. The early Venetian silver ducat was worth about five shillings. The name is said, according to one account, to have been derived from the last word of the Latin legend found on the earliest Venetian gold coins:—*Sit tibi, Christe, datus, quem tu regis, ducatus* (duchy); according to another account it is taken from "*il ducato*," the name generally applied to the duchy of Apulia.

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Now just quietly listen to me. Every evening when it's dark Signor Pasquale, although it's very hard work for him owing to his being knock-kneed, carries his little friend the eunuch home in his arms, as soon as he has finished his duties as maid. Nothing in the world could induce the timid Pitichinaccio to set foot on the pavement at that time of night. So that when "——

At this moment somebody knocked at Salvator's door, and to the consternation of both, Signor Pasquale stepped in in all the splendour of his gala attire. On catching sight of Scacciati he stood stock still as if paralysed, and then, opening his eyes wide, he gasped for air as though he had some difficulty in breathing. But Salvator hastily ran to meet him, and took him by both hands, saying, "My dear Signor Pasquale, your presence in my humble dwelling is, I feel, a very great honour. May I presume that it is your love for art which brings you to me? You wish to see the newest things I have done, perchance to give me a commission for some work. Pray in what, my dear Signor Pasquale, can I serve you?"

"I have a word or two to say to you, my dear Signor Salvator," stammered Capuzzi painfully, "but—alone—when you are alone. With your leave I will withdraw and come again at a more seasonable time."

"By no means," said Salvator, holding the old gentleman fast, "by no means, my dear sir. You need not stir a step; you could not have come at a more seasonable time, for, since you are a great admirer of the noble art of painting, and the patron of all good painters, I am sure you will be greatly pleased for me to introduce to you Antonio Scacciati here, the first painter of our time, whose glorious work—the wonderful 'Magdalene at the Saviour's Feet'—has excited throughout all Rome the most enthusiastic admiration.

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You too, I need hardly say, have also formed a high opinion of the work, and must be very anxious to know the great artist himself."

The old man was seized with a violent trembling; he shook as if he had a shivering fit of the ague, and shot fiery wrathful looks at poor Antonio. He however approached the old gentleman, and, bowing with polished courtesy, assured him that he esteemed himself happy at meeting in such an unexpected way with Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, whose great learning in music as well as in painting was a theme for wonder not only in Rome but throughout all Italy, and he concluded by requesting the honour of his patronage.

This behaviour of Antonio, in pretending to meet the old gentleman for the first time in his life, and in addressing him in such flattering phrases, soon brought him round again. He forced his features into a simpering smile, and, as Salvator now let his hands loose, gave his moustache an elegant upward curl, at the same time stammering out a few unintelligible words. Then, turning to Salvator, he requested payment of the ten ducats for the spinet he had sold him.

"Oh! that trifling little matter we can settle afterwards, my good sir," was Salvator's answer. "First have the goodness to look at this sketch of a picture which I have drawn, and drink a glass of good Syracuse whilst you do so." Salvator meanwhile placed his sketch on the easel and moved up a chair for the old gentleman, and then, when he had taken his seat, he presented him with a large and handsome wine-cup full of good Syracuse—the little pearl-like bubbles rising gaily to the top.

Signor Pasquale was very fond of a glass of good wine—when he had nothing to pay for it; and now he ought to have been in an especially happy frame of

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mind, for, besides nourishing his heart with the hope of getting ten ducats for a rotten, worn-out spinet, he was sitting before a splendid, boldly-designed picture, the rare beauty of which he was quite capable of estimating at its full worth. And that he was in this happy frame of mind he evidenced in divers way; he simpered most charmingly; he half closed his little eyes; he assiduously stroked his chin and moustache; and lisped time after time, "Splendid! delicious!" but they did not know to which he was referring, the picture or the wine.

When he had thus worked himself round into a quiet cheerful humour, Salvator suddenly began—"They tell me, my dear sir, that you have a most beautiful and amiable niece, named Marianna—is it so? All the young men of the city are so smitten with love that they stupidly do nothing but run up and down the Via Ripetta, almost dislocating their necks in their efforts to look up at your balcony for a sight of your sweet Marianna, to snatch a single glance from her heavenly eyes."

Suddenly all the charming simpers, all the good humour which had been called up into the old gentleman's face by the good wine, were gone. Looking gloomily before him, he said sharply, "Ah! that's an instance of the corruption of our abandoned young men. They fix their infernal eyes, there probate seducers, upon mere children. For I tell you, my good sir, that my niece Marianna is quite a child, quite a child, only just outgrown her nurse's care."

Salvator turned the conversation upon something else; the old gentleman recovered himself. But just as he, his face again radiant with sunshine, was on the point of putting the full wine-cup to his lips, Salvator began anew. "But pray tell me, my dear sir, if it is

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indeed true that your niece, with her sixteen summers, really has such beautiful auburn hair, and eyes so full of heaven's own loveliness and joy, as has Antonio's 'Magdalene?' It is generally maintained that she has."

"I don't know," replied the old gentleman, still more sharply than before, "I don't know. But let us leave my niece in peace; rather let us exchange a few instructive words on the noble subject of art, as your fine picture here of itself invites me to do."

Always when Capuzzi raised the wine-cup to his lips to take a good draught, Salvator began anew to talk about the beautiful Marianna, so that at last the old gentleman leapt from his chair in a perfect passion, banged the cup down upon the table and almost broke it, screaming in a high shrill voice, "By the infernal pit of Pluto! by all the furies! you will turn my wine into poison—into poison I tell you. But I see through you, you and your fine friend Signor Antonio, you think to make sport of me. But you'll find yourselves deceived. Pay me the ten ducats you owe me immediately, and then I will leave you and your associate, that barber-fellow Antonio, to make your way to the devil."

Salvator shouted, as if mastered by the most violent rage, "What! you have the audacity to treat me in this way in my own house! Do you think I'm going to pay you ten ducats for that rotten box; the wood-worms have long ago eaten all the goodness and all the music out of it? Not ten—not five—not three—not one ducat shall you have for it, it's scarcely worth a farthing. Away with the tumbledown thing!" and he kicked over the little instrument again and again, till the strings were all jarring and jangling together.

"Ha!" screeched Capuzzi, "justice is still to be had in Rome; I will have you arrested, sir,—arrested and cast into the deepest dungeon there is," and off he was

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rushing out of the room, blustering like a hailstorm. But Salvator took fast hold of him with both hands, and drew him down into the chair again, softly murmuring in his ear, "My dear Signor Pasquale, don't you perceive that I was only jesting with you? You shall have for your spinet, not ten, but *thirty* ducats cash down." And he went on repeating, "thirty bright ducats in ready money," until Capuzzi said in a faint and feeble voice, "What do you say, my dear sir? Thirty ducats for the spinet without its being repaired?" Then Salvator released his hold of the old gentleman, and asserted on his honour that within an hour the instrument should be worth thirty—nay, forty ducats, and that Signor Pasquale should receive as much for it.

Taking in a fresh supply of breath, and sighing deeply, the old gentleman murmured, "Thirty—forty ducats!" Then he began, "But you have greatly offended me, Signor Salvator"—— "Thirty ducats," repeated Salvator. Capuzzi simpered, but then began again, "But you have grossly wounded my feelings, Signor Salvator"—— "Thirty ducats," exclaimed Salvator, cutting him short; and he continued to repeat, "Thirty ducats! thirty ducats!" as long as the old gentleman continued to sulk—till at length Capuzzi said, radiant with deiight, "If you will give me thirty, —I mean forty ducats for the spinet, all shall be forgiven and forgotten, my dear sir."

"But," began Salvator, "before I can fulfil my promise, I still have one little condition to make, which you, my honoured Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senigaglia, can easily grant. You are the first musical composer in all Italy, besides being the foremost singer of the day. When I heard in the opera *Le Nozze di Teti e Peleo* the great scene which that shameless Fran-

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cesco Cavalli has thievishly taken from your works, I was enraptured. If you would only sing me that aria whilst I put the spinet to rights you would confer upon me a pleasure than which I can conceive of none more enjoyable."

Puckering up his mouth into the most winning of smiles, and blinking his little grey eyes, the old gentleman replied, "I perceive, my good sir, that you are yourself a clever musician, for you possess taste and know how to value the deserving better than these ungrateful Romans. Listen—listen—to the aria of all arias."

Therewith he rose to his feet, and, stretching himself up to his full height, spread out his arms and closed both eyes, so that he looked like a cock preparing to crow; and he at once began to screech in such a way that the walls rang again, and Dame Caterina and her two daughters soon came running in, fully under the impression that such lamentable sounds must betoken some accident or other. At sight of the crowing old gentleman they stopped on the threshold utterly astonished; and thus they formed the audience of the incomparable musician Capuzzi.

Meanwhile Salvator, having picked up the spinet and thrown back the lid, had taken his palette in hand, and in bold firm strokes had begun on the lid of the instrument the most remarkable piece of painting that ever was seen. The central idea was a scene from Cavalli's opera *Le Nozze di Teti*, but there was a multitude of other personages mixed up with it in the most fantastic way. Amongst them were the recognisable features of Capuzzi, Antonio, Marianna (faithfully reproduced from Antonio's picture), Salvator himself, Dame Caterina and her two daughters,—and even the Pyramid Doctor was not wanting,—and all grouped so

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intelligently, judiciously, and ingeniously, that Antonio could not conceal his astonishment, both at the artist's intellectual power as well as at his technique.

Meanwhile old Capuzzi had not been content with the aria which Salvator had requested him to give, but, carried away by his musical madness, he went on singing or rather screeching without intermission, working his way through the most awful recitatives from one execrable scene to another. He must have been going on for nearly two hours when he sank back in his chair, breathless, and with his face as red as a cherry. And just at this same time also Salvator had so far worked out his sketch that the figures began to wear a look of vitality, and the whole, viewed at a little distance, had the appearance of a finished work.

"I have kept my word with respect to the spinet, my dear Signor Pasquale," breathed Salvator in the old man's ear. He started up as if awakening out of a deep sleep. Immediately his glance fell upon the painted instrument, which stood directly opposite him. Then, opening his eyes wide as if he saw a miracle, and jauntily throwing his conical hat on the top of his wig, he took his crutch-stick under his arm, made one bound to the spinet, tore the lid off the hinges, and holding it above his head, ran like a madman out of the room, down the stairs, and away, away out of the house altogether, followed by the hearty laughter of Dame Caterina and both her daughters.

"The old miser," said Salvator, "knows very well that he has only to take yon painted lid to Count Colonna or to my friend Rossi and he will at once get forty ducats for it, or even more."

Salvator and Antonio then both deliberated how they should carry out the plan of attack which was to be made when night came. We shall soon see what

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the two adventurers resolved upon, and what success they had in their adventure.

As soon as it was dark, Signor Pasquale, after locking and bolting the door of his house, carried the little monster of an eunuch home as usual. The whole way the little wretch was whining and growling, complaining that not only did he sing Capuzzi's arias till he got catarrh in the throat and burn his fingers cooking the macaroni, but he had now to lend himself to duties which brought him nothing but sharp boxes of the ear and rough kicks, which Marianna lavishly distributed to him as soon as ever he came near her. Old Capuzzi consoled him as well as he could, promising to provide him an ampler supply of sweetmeats than he had hitherto done; indeed, as the little man would nohow cease his growling and querulous complaining, Pasquale even laid himself under the obligation to get a natty abbot's coat made for the little torment out of an old black plush waistcoat which he (the dwarf) had often set covetous eyes upon. He demanded a wig and a sword as well. Parleying upon these points they arrived at the Via Bergognona, for that was where Pitichinaccio dwelt, only four doors from Salvator.

The old man set the dwarf cautiously down and opened the street door; and then, the dwarf on in front, they both began to climb up the narrow stairs, which were more like a rickety ladder for hens and chickens than steps for respectable people. But they had hardly mounted half way up when a terrible racket began up above, and the coarse voice of some wild drunken fellow was heard cursing and swearing, and demanding to be shown the way out of the damned house. Pitichinaccio squeezed himself close to the wall, and entreated Capuzzi, in the name of all the saints, to go on first. But before Capuzzi had ascended

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two steps, the fellow who was up above came tumbling headlong downstairs, caught hold of the old man, and whisked him away like a whirlwind out through the open door below into the middle of the street. There they both lay,—Capuzzi at bottom and the drunken brute like a heavy sack on top of him. The old gentleman screamed piteously for help; two men came up at once and with considerable difficulty freed him from the heavy weight lying upon him; the other fellow, as soon as he was lifted up, reeled away cursing.

"Good God! what's happened to you, Signor Pasquale? What are you doing here at this time of night? What big quarrel have you been getting mixed up in in that house there?" thus asked Salvator and Antonio, for that is who the two men were.

"Oh, I shall die!" groaned Capuzzi; "that son of the devil has crushed all my limbs; I can't move."

"Let me look," said Antonio, feeling all over the old gentleman's body, and suddenly he pinched his right leg so sharply that Capuzzi screamed out aloud.

"By all the saints!" cried Antonio in consternation, "by all the saints! my dear Signor Pasquale, you've broken your right leg in the most dangerous place. If you don't get speedy help you will within a short time be a dead man, or at any rate be lame all your life long."

A terrible scream escaped the old man's breast. "Calm yourself, my dear sir," continued Antonio, "although I'm now a painter, I haven't altogether forgotten my surgical practice. We will carry you to Salvator's house and I will at once bind up"——

"My dear Signor Antonio," whined Capuzzi, "you nourish hostile feelings towards me, I know." "But," broke in Salvator, "this is now no longer the time to talk about enmity; you are in danger, and that is

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enough for honest Antonio to exert all his skill on your behalf. Lay hold, friend Antonio."

Gently and cautiously they lifted up the old man between them, him screaming with the unspeakable pain caused by his broken leg, and carried him to Salvator's dwelling.

Dame Caterina said that she had had a foreboding that something was going to happen, and so she had not gone to bed. As soon as she caught sight of the old gentleman and heard what had befallen him, she began to heap reproaches upon him for his bad conduct. "I know," she said, "I know very well, Signor Pasquale, who you've been taking home again. Now that you've got your beautiful niece Marianna in the house with you, you think you've no further call to have women-folk about you, and you treat that poor Pitichinaccio most shameful and infamous, putting him in petticoats. But look to it. *Ogni carne ha il suo osso* (Every house has its skeleton). Why if you have a girl about you, don't you need women-folk? *Fate il passo secondo la gamba* (Cut your clothes according to your cloth), and don't you require anything either more or less from your Marianna than what is right. Don't lock her up as if she were a prisoner, nor make your house a dungeon. *Asino punto convien che trotti* (If you are in the stream, you had better swim with it); you have a beautiful niece and you must alter your ways to suit her, that is, you must only do what she wants you to do. But you are an ungallant and hard-hearted man, ay, and even in love, and jealous as well, they say, which I hope at your years is not true. Your pardon for telling you it all straight out, but *chi ha nel petto fiele non puo sputar miele* (when there's bile in the heart there can't be honey in the mouth). So now, if you don't die of your broken leg, which at your great age is not at all un-

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likely, let this be a warning to you ; and leave your niece free to do what she likes, and let her marry the fine young gentleman as I know very well."

And so the stream went on uninterruptedly, whilst Salvator and Antonio cautiously undressed the old gentleman and put him to bed. Dame Caterina's words were like knives cutting deeply into his breast ; but whenever he attempted to intervene, Antonio signed to him that all speaking was dangerous, and so he had to swallow his bitter gall. At length Salvator sent Dame Caterina away, to fetch some ice-cold water that Antonio wanted.

Salvator and Antonio satisfied themselves that the fellow who had been sent to Pitichinaccio's house had done his duty well. Notwithstanding the apparently terrible fall, Capuzzi had not received the slightest damage beyond a slight bruise or two. Antonio put the old gentleman's right foot in splints and bandaged it up so tight that he could not move. Then they wrapped him up in cloths that had been soaked in ice-cold water, as a precaution, they alleged, against inflammation, so that the old gentleman shook as if with the ague.

"My good Signor Antonio," he groaned feebly, "tell me if it is all over with me. Must I die ?"

"Compose yourself," replied Antonio. "If you will only compose yourself, Signor Pasquale ! As you have come through the first dressing with so much nerve and without fainting, I think we may say that the danger is past ; but you will require the most attentive nursing. At present we mustn't let you out of the doctor's sight."

"Oh ! Antonio," whined the old gentleman, "you know how I like you, how highly I esteem your talents. Don't leave me. Give me your dear hand—so ! You won't leave me, will you, my dear good Antonio ?"

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"Although I am now no longer a surgeon," said Antonio, "although I've quite given up that hated trade, yet I will in your case, Signor Pasquale, make an exception, and will undertake to attend you, for which I shall ask nothing except that you give me your friendship, your confidence again. You were a little hard upon me"——

"Say no more," lisped the old gentleman, "not another word, my dear Antonio"——

"Your niece will be half dead with anxiety," said Antonio again, "at your not returning home. You are, considering your condition, brisk and strong enough, and so as soon as day dawns we'll carry you home to your own house. There I will again look at your bandage, and arrange your bed as it ought to be, and give your niece her instructions, so that you may soon get well again."

The old gentleman heaved a deep sigh and closed his eyes, remaining some minutes without speaking. Then, stretching out his hand towards Antonio, he drew him down close beside him, and whispered, "It was only a jest that you had with Marianna, was it not, my dear sir?—one of those merry conceits that young folks have"——

"Think no more about that, Signor Pasquale," replied Antonio. "Your niece did, it is true, strike my fancy; but I have now quite different things in my head, and—to confess honestly to it—I am very pleased that you did return a sharp answer to my foolish suit. I thought I was in love with your Marianna, but what I really saw in her was only a fine model for my 'Magdalene.' And this probably explains how it is that, now that my picture is finished, I feel quite indifferent towards her."

"Antonio," cried the old man, in a strong voice,

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"Antonio, you glorious fellow! What comfort you give me—what help—what consolation! Now that you don't love Marianna I feel as if all my pain had gone."

"Why, I declare, Signor Pasquale," said Salvator, "if we didn't know you to be a grave and sensible man, with a true perception of what is becoming to your years, we might easily believe that you were yourself by some infatuation in love with your niece of sixteen summers."

Again the old gentleman closed his eyes, and groaned and moaned at the horrible pain, which now returned with redoubled violence.

The first red streaks of morning came shining in through the window. Antonio announced to the old gentleman that it was now time to take him to his own house in the Via Ripetta. Signor Pasquale's reply was a deep and piteous sigh. Salvator and Antonio lifted him out of bed and wrapped him in a wide mantle which had belonged to Dame Caterina's husband, and which she lent them for this purpose. The old gentleman implored them by all the saints to take off the villainous cold bandages in which his bald head was swathed, and to give him his wig and plumed hat. And also, if it were possible, Antonio was to put his moustache a little in order, that Marianna might not be too much frightened at sight of him.

Two porters with a litter were standing all ready before the door. Dame Caterina, still storming at the old man, and mixing a great many proverbs in her abuse, carried down the bed, in which they then carefully packed him; and so, accompanied by Salvator and Antonio, he was taken home to his own house.

No sooner did Marianna see her uncle in this wretched plight than she began to scream, whilst a

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torrent of tears gushed from her eyes; without noticing her lover, who had come along with him, she grasped the old man's hands and pressed them to her lips, bewailing the terrible accident that had befallen him—so much pity had the good child for the old man who plagued and tormented her with his amorous folly. Yet at this same moment the inherent nature of woman asserted itself in her; for it only required a few significant glances from Salvator to put her in full possession of all the facts of the case. Now, for the first time, she stole a glance at the happy Antonio, blushing hotly as she did so; and a pretty sight it was to see how a roguish smile gradually routed and broke through her tears. Salvator, at any rate, despite the "Magdalene," had not expected to find the little maiden half so charming, or so sweetly pretty as he now really discovered her to be; and, whilst almost feeling inclined to envy Antonio his good fortune, he felt that it was all the more necessary to get poor Marianna away from her hateful uncle, let the cost be what it might.

Signor Pasquale forgot his trouble in being received so affectionately by his lovely niece, which was indeed more than he deserved. He simpered and pursed up his lips so that his moustache was all of a totter, and groaned and whined, not with pain, but simply and solely with amorous longing.

Antonio arranged his bed professionally, and, after Capuzzi had been laid on it, tightened the bandage still more, at the same time so muffling up his left leg as well that he had to lay there motionless like a log of wood. Salvator withdrew and left the lovers alone with their happiness.

The old gentleman lay buried in cushions; moreover, as an extra precaution, Antonio had bound a thick piece of cloth well steeped in water round his head, so

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that he might not hear the lovers whispering together. This was the first time they unburdened all their hearts to each other, swearing eternal fidelity in the midst of tears and rapturous kisses. The old gentleman could have no idea of what was going on, for Marianna ceased not, frequently from time to time, to ask him how he felt, and even permitted him to press her little white hand to his lips.

When the morning began to be well advanced, Antonio hastened away to procure, as he said, all the things that the old gentleman required, but in reality to invent some means for putting him, at any rate for some hours, in a still more helpless condition, as well as to consult with Salvator what further steps were then to be taken.

IV.

Of the new attack made by Salvator Rosa and Antonio Scacciati upon Signor Pesquale Capussi and upon his company, and of what further happens in consequence.

Next morning Antonio came to Salvator, melancholy and dejected.

"Well, what's the matter?" cried Salvator when he saw him coming, "what are you hanging your head about? What's happened to you now, you happy dog? can you not see your mistress every day, and kiss her and press her to your heart?"

"Oh! Salvator, it's all over with my happiness, it's gone for ever," cried Antonio. "The devil is making sport of me. Our stratagem has failed, and we now stand on a footing of open enmity with that cursed Capuzzi."

"So much the better," said Salvator; "so much

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the better. But come, Antonio, tell me what's happened."

"Just imagine, Salvator," began Antonio, "yesterday when I went back to the Via Ripetta after an absence of at the most two hours, with all sorts of medicines, whom should I see but the old gentleman standing in his own doorway fully dressed. Behind him was the Pyramid Doctor and the deuced ex-gendarme, whilst a confused something was bobbing about round their legs. It was, I believe, that little monster Pitichinaccio. No sooner did the old man get sight of me than he shook his fist at me, and began to heap the most fearful curses and imprecations upon me, swearing that if I did but approach his door he would have all my bones broken. 'Be off to the devil, you infamous barber-fellow,' he shrieked; 'you think to outwit me with your lying and knavery. Like the very devil himself, you lie in wait for my poor innocent Marianna, and fancy you are going to get her into your toils—but stop a moment! I will spend my last ducat to have the vital spark stamped out of you, ere you're aware of it. And your fine patron, Signor Salvator, the murderer—bandit—who's escaped the halter—he shall be sent to join his captain Masaniello in hell—I'll have him out of Rome; that won't cost me much trouble.'

"Thus the old fellow raged, and as the damned ex-gendarme, incited by the Pyramid Doctor, was making preparations to bear down upon me, and a crowd of curious onlookers began to assemble, what could I do but quit the field with all speed? I didn't like to come to you in my great trouble, for I know you would only have laughed at me and my inconsolable complaints. Why, you can hardly keep back your laughter now."

As Antonio ceased speaking, Salvator did indeed burst out laughing heartily.

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