

ART FOR LOVE'S SAKE

By Laura Cleveland Gaylord

KAUFFMANN was about to hold a morning rehearsal.

The great auditorium, with its rows on rows of vacant chairs, lay dismal and cheerless in the dull light. The musicians straggled in one by one and sat about the stage, talking a little now and again in a dispirited sort of way. Their voices and the wail of the violins echoed and re-echoed drearily through the emptiness.

A girl sitting in a corner behind the drums shivered nervously. They had said that Kauffmann would hear her to-day, and she was there, but the little courage she had possessed at the beginning was fast leaving her in the flat reality of this morning rehearsal.

Could this be the same orchestra that had thrilled and pulsed and quivered in such warm, magnetic sympathy with its conductor, the night before, these commonplace, apathetic-looking men? It did not seem possible.

The door at the side of the stage opened, and a man walked quickly across to the conductor's stand. It was the conductor, Kauffmann himself.

He glanced over his music, turned up a corner or two, tapped sharply for attention and began.

Following the movement of his hand came the violins, pianissimo at first, but gradually increasing, then the wood wind, still crescendo, and finally the crash of the brass and the thunder of the drums. It was a new piece, to be played for the first time that night, and this was the final rehearsal.

The girl sat in her corner and watched Kauffmann's stern face, wondering more and more at the perfection of his control over these many minds, the ease and certainty with which he swayed them, now this way, now that, from tenderest sweetness to passion, discord, storm, all with a motion of his hand, a sweep of his arm.

And gradually, as she watched, the secret of his power was revealed to her. Little by little the severity of his face relaxed, a light came into his eyes, a softness to his mouth, eradicating the hint of cruelty that lurked in the corners. His whole face glowed, and she saw that he was simply living every note of the music. Uplifted by his inspiration, her spirit soared with his on wings of warmth and light, higher and higher with the swelling notes of the music, until with a final rush and sweep, a crashing chord, it was ended.

He stepped down to speak to one of the first violins, and she caught her breath in the sudden descent to the cold commonplace. Then he returned to the stand, and looked round, questioning.

Someone motioned toward Nina, and Kauffmann nodded sharply to her.

She rose and made her way slowly past the musicians to his side. There was a heaviness, a lack of elasticity, all through her. She could not sing. Every chord in her throat was stiff and tense. Her hands were cold, her lips trembled. The relapse after the rapture of that wild flight had been too great.

As she went toward him she

looked up into his face for help and support, but found none. Broad forehead, heavy brows, deep-set eyes, strange, curving mouth—all alike were impassive, even stern, and in the line of his jaw she caught a suggestion of relentless power that made her shiver.

He gave her a searching glance.

"You have sung with an orchestra before?"

She shook her head.

"No? You may find it difficult. Will you give me your copy, please?"

The downward inflection made it a command.

"You sing without your notes, of course?"

This was only half a question, but she nodded.

The accompaniment began, sounding appallingly unfamiliar on the violins and flutes. She followed the notes along in a sort of sick dread.

If he would only play it twice!

But the end came. He turned to her with a little warning motion of his bâton, and she opened her mouth.

For one dreadful instant she could make no sound. Then her voice came, but so weak and uncertain that she hardly knew it. She glanced at his face. He was frowning slightly, and the look stung her. She pulled herself together and made her climax, after a fashion.

When she had finished he stood a moment stroking his lip.

"It is not good," he said at last, "but you will have to sing to-night. You appear in the latter part of the program. Be here by nine o'clock. Evening dress, please," and he dismissed her with a curt nod.

The blood that had gone to her heart while she sang, nearly stifling her, rushed to her face and burned there; tears of anger and humiliation smarted in her eyes. She threw up her head with the movement of a spirited horse under the lash, and the blood ebbed again, leaving her face pale and cold.

With the slightest possible bow she turned and walked proudly to the door, to creep miserably home and

throw herself on the bed in a passion of disgust at herself.

The house was ablaze with light and color. A smart shower of applause went round as the number came to an end. The conductor bowed, and crossing to the stage-door led out a slender girl in a black, low-necked dress.

She seemed perfectly composed, a certain defiance in the poise of her head and a slight compression of the lips being the only signs that spoke to the contrary. She had a thin, dark face and smooth, dark hair was wound round the back of her head in heavy braids. Her neck was a shade too thin, but she held herself well. She had an air, and there was a rustle of programs as the audience turned them to seek her name. The result was disappointment; nobody knew her.

The first notes of her song were uncertain, and people fanned themselves impatiently and wondered what Kauffmann meant by presenting an amateur to such an audience as this.

Gradually the voice grew steady, however, and the depth and richness of it were more clearly discernible. It was a mezzo-soprano, of the quality that makes one shiver unaccountably, and as the full tones poured out one after another the audience grew still.

When the song was over they applauded, moderately. The voice was good, well trained, evidently, but the girl did not seem to make the most of it. She appeared to need something to rouse her; she was not sufficiently dramatic. So said the audience.

Nina herself was glad to have been able to sing at all in the stage-fright that possessed her. She had had no idea it would be so terrifying to face the people. She had done her best under the circumstances, but she knew that best was far from good, and expected to hear no more from Kauffmann.

Great then was her surprise and almost overwhelming her happiness when on the next day Kauffmann's business manager called on her to

offer her the position of soloist in the orchestra's coming tour. She was surprised again at the sum offered in remuneration for her services. She found afterward that it was not large, as such things go; but at the time, alone as she was, with no pupils, and only two evening dresses left from the many that had been hers before the disasters that left her poor, it seemed princely.

She had enough worldliness to take the offer coolly, to accept it without great interest, even to hesitate a little before committing herself finally, but there was exultation within her.

When the door of her little parlor closed after the manager she threw herself down on the couch by the window and lay staring at the ceiling, trying to adjust herself to the new state of things. This offer meant so much—so very much—to her; independence of the uncle she hated, freedom, the opportunity to live her own life in her own way. At twenty-two she had already tasted deeply the bitterness of living on gifts grudgingly given, had raged and chafed in spirit against her bondage; and this—this was like a breath of fresh air in a close and stuffy place.

For Kauffmann as the means of her happiness she felt a boundless enthusiasm, almost adoration, and the thought of him made her leap to her feet, clasping her hands beneath her chin with a little ecstatic movement. How good he was, how very good! She could never be grateful enough. He would probably say something to-day in acknowledgment of her new position with regard to him, and then she would thank him.

Then it struck her that it must be nearly time for the rehearsal he had appointed, and she flew for her hat and coat. She would not keep him waiting on this day of all others.

She checked her swift steps in the corridor of the Music Hall and walked on the stage with an assumption of calm dignity that scarcely concealed the turbulent pleasure within her. Kauffmann was in his place. She looked at him expectantly as she came

toward him. This was the moment for the word of welcome from him, of gratitude from her, and her heart beat high.

Kauffmann glanced at her and nodded a brief good morning. Then he arranged a sheet of music on his stand, gave a word of direction to the orchestra and turned to her.

"You may try 'Butterflies,' if you please. That was one of your songs? It will serve as an encore. Mr. Hartz has some songs I should like to have you learn."

His tone was quietly, almost monotonously authoritative, and Nina stood under it passive in her bewilderment. Then the accompaniment began, and she found herself singing. She sang much better than she had done the night before. In the absence of the audience she was not so terror stricken, although Kauffmann himself, cold, emotionless, had anything but an inspiring effect.

He was grave all through it. At the end he looked the music over thoughtfully, marking passages here and there.

"We will go through it again," he said. "Please make that crescendo at the end of the second page a little more marked. The whole thing should be broader. I suppose you realize that a certain amateurishness is the worst fault in your singing. Your effects are not big enough. The same thing shows in acting; the amateur is afraid to let himself go, to get his arms away from his sides. That is virtually what you must do. Don't be afraid of your effects. Go at them with more of a sweep, more abandon. Now try again."

The crisp, curt sentences were like taps of a drum, striking sharply into her consciousness. She resented each one, the easy assumption of authority, the quiet, didactic manner. But in spite of it she found herself following his instructions and singing the better for it. It seemed inevitable, and against the inevitable one may not struggle.

They took up next the song she had sung the night before, and she

sang as never before in her life, nettled by his criticisms, fired by his encouragement, moved above and beyond herself by the whole personality of the man, the resistlessness, the force and fire of it. And when at the end, shaking with the effort she had made, she turned for the reward of a word to the man who had roused her to it, he said, merely:

"That is nearer it, but there is something lacking in your singing. I don't know just what it is. Perhaps I shall find out. That will do for this morning. Hartz will meet you with some music at the box-office as you go out, and Johnson will inform you as to our route, dates, and so forth. Good morning."

He turned on his heel and entered into conversation with a 'cellist.

Hot rage blazed within her, and she stood one passionate moment with words of rejection, of repudiation on her tongue. Then something like an arrow struck cold to her soul, and she turned away in silence, realizing with a sudden feeling of deadly languor that she would not leave him, that even with other positions open to her she would keep to this one.

The next day they started on the road tour.

Nightly she saw him stirred out of himself by his orchestra, his greater ideal self; she even saw his face change and grow tender at the solo playing of his favorite 'cellist or his first violin; but at her singing, never. Not once could she feel that she had touched him, that he considered her as anything but an automaton, a machine.

And a mere machine she seemed to be. Technically she sang not badly; her voice was well placed and in fair control, and she knew that its quality was good. But beyond a certain point she could not go. The musical journals called her a hard-working, conscientious singer, and she knew that so much was true of her, but she felt that it was not all the truth. She was convinced that she had in her something more than a capacity

for hard work, and she made desperate efforts to rise above her limitations.

Often she looked at Kauffmann and wondered if he had ever found out what was lacking in her singing, whether he would take the trouble to tell her if he knew.

He trained her vigorously at the rehearsals, but on that point he never spoke, and Nina never dared to ask.

And so she struggled on alone. Then it came to pass that the struggle grew too hard for her, and she failed visibly. Her eyes were dull, her manner listless and apathetic, her singing without spirit. It was all so hopeless. She was only a girl, and her young nature craved sympathy and support. A word of interest, of encouragement, would have meant much to her. Mrs. Gillette, her companion, a kindly but not very intelligent woman, was devotedly fond of Nina and considered her singing perfect in every particular, but Nina, grateful as she was for this affection and admiration, needed something more stimulating, criticisms more discriminating, the approval of a trained judgment, and these she never received.

So matters stood when they reached Cleveland after two months of travel.

It was a bad night, chilly and raw. The rain blew in great gusts against the windows and the wind wailed dismally.

Mrs. Gillette had gone out to dine, so that Nina was alone, and she grew intensely depressed in the solitude of her own room after dinner. She was nervous to begin with, and the stillness drove her wild. At length she rang for a carriage and drove round the corner to the theatre. It would be better to sit there within sound of the orchestra and the audience than in the desolation of the big hotel.

The orchestra was tuning. Kauffmann had not yet arrived, she found, opening the door a crack and peeping through. The house was bad. He would not like that.

She closed the door and sat down.

Then she got up and wandered about restlessly, but the place was too small for her. She could not stride as she desired, and she stopped dejectedly in the middle of the dressing-room.

And then, before she knew it, Kauffmann was there beside her. Her head was on his breast, his arms about her, and his eyes, warm with a look she had never seen in them before, were smiling peace and comfort into her own. His lips parted, and he murmured sweet, unstudied loving words that made the color surge to her face and her breath come quickly in little gasps. He smiled again and held her close and bent his head until his mouth touched hers. Her eyes closed, and she lay quite still, drinking in draughts of the great white peace that had come to her, feeling nothing but an unutterable satisfaction.

He raised his head and lifted her arms to his neck.

"I must go, sweet," he whispered, putting his arms round her again. "Tell me you love me, dear. Say 'I love you, Moritz.'"

She obeyed, half-mechanically. Kisses burned on her eyes and lips, and he was gone. She heard the applause when he appeared on the stage, the tap of his bâton, then the first notes of the "Spring Symphony" sounded and brought her to herself. She sank into a chair with her hands over her eyes.

He loved her! . . . For some time that was enough, and she sat still, feeling the wonderful knowledge beating in her pulses and burning in her cheeks. Then a great desire to see him swept over her, and she crept toward the wings, but her courage ebbed again and she went back to her chair. Restlessness took possession of her soon, however, and she threw her cloak about her and went out to the street, half-stifling for the fresh air. She would walk about and wait for the intermission, when he would come to her again.

When she went back she found that the intermission had come and gone. He had been there, for his handker-

chief lay on the floor, and she picked it up and patted and smoothed and folded it, and sat with her cheek against it, waiting the time for her song.

She was nervous and excited when at last it came. Never had she been less in the mood for singing, and she went on the stage with a sinking heart. It would be doubly dreadful to disgrace him now.

The sight of him in no way helped her. His face was cold, indifferent, expressionless, as of old. Her knees shook, and she clasped her hands nervously as she stood during the prelude.

The moment arrived, and she moved her lips. A sound came, but husky and tremulous, and she was on the point of breaking down altogether when she felt Kauffmann turn toward her. She raised her eyes to his, timidly, mechanically, having no hope.

But his face had changed. It was tender, loving, encouraging, and it lent her new life. With those eyes smiling into hers she felt capable of anything. The next note she struck was surer, the next better still. And so she sang on, inspired by the glowing eyes that held hers, until, the audience and the world forgotten, she sang as a bird sings, with the warmth and brightness of the sunshine and the sweetness of the flowers in the mellow notes, and behind and under and through it all the suggestion of a joy other than a bird's, sweeter, richer, more thrilling—the deeply human happiness of a loving woman.

The applause was tumultuous. People shouted and stamped and wept, and she sang for them again and again, radiant, exultant, until at last she could sing no more; and then she went back to the hotel in the carriage, hugging to her the rapturous knowledge of two things, the first, that she had found her love; the second, that with her love she had gained the power to sing.

Knowledge of this had come to Kauffmann in a flash of intuition when he entered the ante-room that evening, and he had acted on an im-

pulse, moved partly by curiosity, partly by the true musician's desire to make the most of a beautiful instrument. Lightly he laid his fingers on the strings that govern a woman's love, forgetting in the insouciance of unscathed youth the immutability of the rules in this great Game of Consequences that men play here below.

After that she lived for him and in him alone. Her very heart and soul were his. She gave him of her love royally, so absorbed in the giving that she never paused to question the quality of the love that he gave in return. It was enough for her that she was with him daily, that she had a part in his life and work, that he was good to her and caressed her. And indeed it would have been hard not to be good to one so bright and sweet and loving.

So discreet were they that the world never guessed that there was more than a professional acquaintance between them. People said that Nina lived wholly for her art, that the enraptured look in her face when she sang was caused by delight in the exercise of her powers. They did not know—so blind is the public at times—that as she stood before them, looking out across the house with the great eyes that glowed in her thin, dark face, that she saw them not. For her that sea of heads, that mass of living, expectant humanity, did not exist. She was conscious, keenly, burningly conscious, of the man who stood beside her at the conductor's stand. She never looked in his direction, not even to get the beat from his bâton, but every movement of his was known to her. Instinctively she followed his mood and gave her songs in accord; never hesitating, never faltering, seeing only with the eye of the spirit.

Night after night the audience rose from the seats and shouted and clapped their hands and heaped flowers at her feet. Night after night she came forward to the footlights and bowed and smiled that brilliant smile of hers, right and left, in appar-

ently grateful acknowledgment. But in truth these wildly moved men and women were as so many blocks of wood or stone to her. Their applause was only of value as it foretold Kauffmann's approbation. Apart from him they were naught in her eyes. She could have sung as well to an empty house, to a vault filled with mummies, if so be that he stood beside her and bade her sing.

When in May the tour came to an end and the orchestra was settled again in its Summer quarters Nina sang no more. The bi-weekly concerts took place out of doors, and Kauffmann said that he did not wish Nina to risk her voice in the night air.

After a few days in town he suggested that she and Mrs. Gillette go away for a time.

To tell the truth, he was weary of the clinging affection that Nina gave him. In the beginning he had made love to her quite heartlessly, convinced that she needed only happiness to make her a great singer, and was absorbed in the attempt to prove the truth of his theory. But whereas then, caring nothing for her, he had been perfectly indifferent to her possible suffering, he was now sufficiently fond of her to be assailed by pangs of conscience. A remorseful feeling that she was too good for him, that he was in no way worthy of her love, took possession of him, but instead of spurring him on to make himself more worthy, it irritated him, so that he desired to be free from her for a time. Only a time, he told himself, refusing—not daring, perhaps—to look forward on his course. He was sure that he meant to treat her well, for he really was very fond of her. Still, he did not look ahead.

There was another force at work within him—ambition.

When he made the first attempt to organize an orchestra the project was looked on by the musical world as an audacious, almost foolhardy, thing. And audacious it certainly was for a man of his youth and consequent inex-

perience to enter the lists against the recognized leaders in orchestral work, men whose years of endeavor had made the standard of performance a high one. He was warm-blooded and high-spirited, however, and enter the lists he did, with his youth and inexperience to hamper him, and with a passionate love of music and careful musical training for his only weapons.

And now after three years' work he had succeeded, had made his orchestra known as one of the first in the land and himself as a leader of ability, and he was slightly intoxicated by his achievements. The taste of success was good in his mouth, and he longed for more, longed to triumph socially as well as artistically and professionally.

Here Nina hampered him. She would not accept invitations.

"Some of the people bore me and some of them frighten me, and it does not seem worth while," she said, and from this he was unable to move her.

So he made his decision as to the course that was best for him to pursue, and proceeded as soon as might be to bring Nina to his way of thinking, or at least to bend her will to his.

"You need a change, Nina," he began.

"But I have had change all Winter, Moritz."

"I know, but I mean a different kind of change. This season has been a strain on your nervous system, and you need rest. What do you say to the seashore for a while, or to the mountains?"

"With you?"

"No, dear. You know I cannot get away. Mrs. Gillette will go with you."

"I would rather stay here."

"And I would rather have you go."

The glance of unutterable reproach that she gave him sent him striding up and down the room.

"Oh, Nina!" he cried, "don't make me seem such an ogre! Don't you see that I wish it for your good? You are worn out; you know you

are. And you can't rest here in this hot, noisy town. And as for being with me, you can't be very much, even if you stay. I have a lot of things to do this Summer, scores to rewrite, a half-dozen men to beat into shape, any number of things. And then I shall have to go out and meet people more or less, and you hate that. Nina, love—" he sank on one knee beside her—"let me arrange it for you; let me do as I think best. Think how you would feel if you could not sing next Winter!"

Her face changed, and he hastened to pursue his advantage.

"You would not like that, would you? And it is exactly what will happen. Your voice is not as good now as it was two weeks ago."

Tears filled her eyes.

"Not nearly so good. It is weaker, and you are not so sure of your high notes. It is growing more noticeable every day. Come, Nina, be sensible; let me judge for you. Ah, my dear little girl, don't you know that if I had my way we should be together always, and that it is only for yourself that I send you away?"

And so she let herself be persuaded, fearing the parting as she feared death, but unable to withstand him when he pleaded.

When the time came she clung to him desperately, longing but not daring to ask for a reprieve, and he, reading her longing in her eyes, kissed her and put her on the car.

She took the chair he found for her and lay back in it with her eyes closed, waiting for the train to start. If it would only go quickly while she had herself in hand! Kauffmann's talk with Mrs. Gillette and his parting injunctions to herself she only half-heard, and she even came to wish to have him leave her, so great was the strain of her effort for control.

And then when he did swing himself from the slowly moving train she started up wildly to call him back. She could not have him go! But it was too late, and she sank back again with closed eyes, struggling to be quiet, to be quiet—not to scream.

The place Kauffmann had chosen for her was charming, and with the help of his daily letters and his weekly visits she lived through three weeks there. When he came down on the third Saturday he looked at her approvingly.

"You are better, Nina. Isn't she, Mrs. Gillette? You begin to look more like yourself," and she glowed like a rose under his smile. It always amused him to see her blushes; there was something so naïve about them. In fact, all her manner with him was naïve. She wanted to please him, that was the beginning and end of her life, and she showed it with almost infantile simplicity.

Now a gleam of hope showed in her face.

"Then may I go home if I am so much better?" she ventured.

"We'll see, we'll see," he rejoined, hastily. "You are not well yet by any means. We'll see how you are when I come next Sunday."

But he did not come on the next Sunday, nor on the one after that. He was too busy, his notes said. Nina must be patient. It was not as if his reputation, his position in the world were assured. She must remember that in a sense he had his way yet to make. His tour the past Winter had been very successful, but he was young yet, and comparatively unknown, and there were many things that must be done, whether or no. He could not order his life according to his individual desires. She must not be too exacting. He would come when he could.

And Nina, alone in the mountains, waited through the weeks, filled meanwhile with a sick longing that grew with the passing days. She was not well and she needed him—ah, how she needed him!—for he was all the world to her, her very life.

At length she grew desperate, and leaving Mrs. Gillette, she went down to town by the night train, arriving in the early morning.

At ten o'clock she went to the hall where he held his rehearsals in the Summer. The orchestra was tuning

as she entered the building, and the familiar sounds made her feel suddenly young and gay again.

She ran lightly up the steps and through the corridor, checking herself at the end with a thought that came to her. She would not let Moritz see her at first; she would stand and watch him awhile before he knew. So she took up her position in the wings at the back of the stage, in such a way that she was in the shadow and still had a full view of the director's stand.

The stage before her was filled with the musicians. The great auditorium was empty, chill, gray and forbidding, as such places always are in the light of the morning. The only spot of color was in one of the proscenium boxes to the right. There two women sat, one elderly, black-gowned, negative; the other young, well favored, glowing like a rose in the somberness of the box.

Her gown, of some fine, flowered Summer stuff, was made over silk of a contrasting color that rustled when she moved. The front of the bodice was a mass of dainty *lingerie*, edged and ruffled with yards of finest lace. Her hat was heaped with heavy black ostrich plumes. As she sat back in her chair, doing nothing, one felt instinctively that she was by nature and training of the class that commands.

Nina glanced at her indifferently. What were women, even gorgeously attired women, to her? Her whole being was quiescent; she was waiting.

She did not wait long. Kauffmann entered the box, spoke a moment with the ladies sitting there, and then came on the stage. A word to the violins to his left, a warning to the 'cellists before him, and he raised his bâton.

To Nina, crouching in the wings, music-starved, heart-hungry, it seemed a taste of heaven. To see him, though he knew it not, to feast her eyes on his face, to drink in the music—*his* music—what did it not mean to her! Once a chill doubt of his reception of her crossed her mind, but it vanished

again. He could not be anything but kind.

Of weariness she did not think. While the music went on she could not be tired. But with the end of that the end of her strength came also, and she looked round for a chair. None was to be found, however, and she came back to her old position in the wings.

Kauffmann was in the box now, talking absorbedly with the ladies there, with the younger one especially, and as Nina watched them, his air of deference, her graciousness and evident pleasure in his admiration, the iron of jealousy entered her soul. What was she that Moritz should care for her when women like this—beautiful, brilliantly dressed—courted his attention?

She covered her face with her hands to shut out the sight. When she looked again Kauffmann and the ladies were crossing the stage, were already close to her. A foolish terror seized her, and she stood shrinking against the wall, gazing at them with a sort of fascination.

To Kauffmann the unexpected sight of her came almost with a shock, and he stopped in the middle of a sentence. It annoyed him that she should look so ill; it annoyed him that she should get any idea of this flirtation with Mrs. Hoynes-Robinson, the leader of rather a fast set. But the thing that he resented perhaps the most was the fact that she had come to town without his permission. His first impulse was to pass her and come back later, but Mrs. Hoynes-Robinson stopped with an exclamation:

"Oh, is not this Miss Sherard? May we not meet her? Please introduce us, Mr. Kauffmann."

And he was forced to come forward and perform the introduction. He did it in a markedly perfunctory way, and Nina, knowing so well the different shades of his manner, glanced at him timidly. Mrs. Hoynes-Robinson made several gracious remarks and swept on, taking Kauffmann and her companion with her.

Nina stood where they left her, lis-

tening to their retreating footsteps. At the outer door they stopped, and she heard their voices for a moment. Then Kauffmann came back alone. She turned to meet him.

There were still traces of annoyance on his face.

"What under the sun does this mean, Nina?" he cried.

She went to him, smiling.

"I wanted to see you," she said, quite simply, as if that were enough.

"That is nonsense. I should have come to you."

"But you didn't," she reminded him, still smiling.

"I should have come when I could, you know that; and in the meantime it is not convenient for me to have you here. I have engagements for every hour in the day, not a moment to call my own—or to give to you. I really don't see what good this is going to do you."

"Haven't you even a moment now?"

"Not one."

"Moritz, are you very angry with me?" she pleaded.

"Not angry, no, but seriously displeased. You really might have had more regard for my wishes, Nina."

She stood before him like a culprit. Then she ventured to plead her cause.

"But I wanted to see you so much, Moritz, and I thought it wouldn't make any difference if I came down for a day—just one day, Moritz!"

"For heaven's sake, don't be so abject, Nina," he cried, in sudden rancor. "I don't care whether you come down or not—suit yourself, only I haven't any time to give you."

She was like a stone facing him. Then her lips unclosed.

"You don't care for me any more!" she said.

"What nonsense!" he cried. "I am just as fond of you as I ever was. You are unreasonable. You do not seem to understand that a man's life is not like a woman's, that he cannot be making love all the time. There are other things for him to do; he has to get out and fight and work and make his way."

His words went by her like the wind. She only heard the tone.

"You don't care for me!" she said again.

"I do," he protested.

"You don't care for me!" she reiterated, dully. "I wonder if you ever will again."

His patience went at loose ends.

"I tell you once for all, Nina," he said, incisively, "that I care for you now as much as I have ever done; and that's a lot more than I did in the beginning," he added with an afterthought, half to himself.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean—well, I mean that I did not care much about you in the beginning."

He was looking at his watch. It was past the time for his appointment. He looked up after a minute, as she did not speak. She was staring straight before her. He could see that she was suffering.

Presently she turned to him.

"Why did you do it?" she asked, sharply.

He cursed himself inwardly for saying that one thing. No matter how true it was nor how much she tried him, there was no need for her to know that. He tried an evasion, but she set it aside.

"Why did you do it?" she repeated.

He braced himself against the wall and spoke, keeping his eyes on her face.

"I don't know that I had any motive at the time, except that you looked very little and lonely and brown," he said, speaking rapidly. "And then—yes, I did have a theory, a sort of feeling that if you were happy, if your nature were satisfied, so far as your craving for affection was concerned, you would sing magnificently. And you did," he added, triumphantly.

"Then it was all a sham," she said.

"But I grew to care for you afterward, Nina," he cried, the quick sympathetic side of his artistic nature roused by her evident suffering. He had been selfishly blind to her possi-

ble pain when she was not with him, had put from him in the stress of his ambition the thought that she might suffer. But now, with her here before him, repentance followed swiftly on the blow, and he longed to take it back.

"It was all a sham," she said again, bitterly, "all a sham, and I let myself be deluded, be made a fool—a tool! Don't—don't touch me!" she cried, warding him off with outstretched palms. "Not that—now. You need not pretend any longer! You have hurt me as much as you can; don't try to soften it with more make-believes!"

"Nina!" he cried. "Nina, listen to me, dear!"

"Hush," she said, solemnly, "don't tell another lie. I have heard enough for one while. I will go now."

Her hands dropped wearily to her sides and she turned from him toward the door. He put out an arm to detain her, but she shook her head, and he let her go.

Unsteadily she made her way between the wings. After a few steps she turned and came swiftly back to him.

He caught her outstretched hands and drew her into his arms, all the passion of his nature responding to her kiss.

"Nina," he whispered, "sweet-heart, forgive me!"

"Good-bye," she whispered, softly; "good-bye. Hush! I will come back, but not now. Good-bye, dear, good-bye!"

She took his face between her hands and he felt her lips on his eyes and mouth, and then—he was alone.

He stood a moment bewildered, and when at length he reached the door she had gone, had passed out of sight in the crowded street.

Long he sought for her, all Summer long, quietly, since he knew that publicity would hurt her more than all else, but he did not find her, because it did not occur to him to look in the suburb where he himself lived.

His passionate desire for her grew

greater with his regret and the uncertainty and delay, and when Winter came and the orchestra started on the work of the regular season, it seemed to him that he could not go on without her.

To have any other woman singing beside him, going through the rehearsals with him, would be insupportable, and he tried to get a man for the position. Circumstances were against him, however, and a heavy young woman with a blonde head and a big, expressionless voice came to take the place of his little Nina—Nina, with her fine, dark face and sensitive alertness to interpret his mood.

Success was his in a measure, for all society was open to him. There was no house in the most exclusive circles of the city where his presence was not desired and sought; matrons sat at his feet and drank in his words; maidens maneuvered for a glance of his eye, a touch of his hand.

But after a time people began to say that the work of the orchestra did not improve, the young conductor was not fulfilling his promise, and whispers and rumors of all sorts went about. But none came near the truth, that this same young conductor had had the best and lost it, and that the knowledge was eating his heart out.

December went by and part of January, and the time had come for the orchestra's Spring tour. The date for the last town concert was set, and seats went at a premium, for this was a society event, one of the last before the sobriety of the Lenten season.

Everything was in readiness, even to the decoration of the Music Hall with flowers and palms, when the soloist sent word that she could not sing, that she had succumbed to an attack of tonsillitis.

Kauffmann scoured the town in the vain attempt to find a substitute; coming home at last, dead tired, with the intention of putting in his leading violinist for a solo.

After a hasty dinner and toilette he drove to the hall. The house was full, the orchestra in readiness, and he went directly on the stage. His intention was to announce the change in the program only when the time for the solo came.

The concert went off sufficiently well, although it seemed to two or three close observers that the directing was more or less perfunctory. As a matter of fact, it had occurred to Kauffmann that it was just a year ago, in the last concert before the Spring tour, that Nina had sung for him first, and that thought combined with physical weariness to send his mind away in vague weavings of dreams and memories, some connected with Nina, some not; so that afterward, when he tried to bring back some knowledge of this concert, he could recall nothing save that the link in one of his sleeves was loose and rattled against the stiff cuff as he moved his arm.

In the intermission he went downstairs to get some water, of which he drank two or three glasses. Then he returned to the stage.

As he stepped from the stand after the string quartette in the second half, a note was brought to him, half a dozen words scrawled on a scrap of paper:

Make no announcement. I will sing.
NINA.

He crushed it in his hand and strode across the platform between the violins. Before he reached the door it opened, and Nina came through it toward him.

Her gown was black, low-necked, without a touch of color, without flower or ribbon or gem. A soft, fluffy scarf lay loosely about her shoulders and fell far down in front, hiding her neck in part. She was thin, much thinner than he had ever seen her, so thin that her eyes looked out from her face almost unearthly in their size and brilliance.

Her lips were a scarlet line, in her cheeks a riotous color burned.

He made a motion to take her back

to the ante-room, but she set it aside with a wistful smile at him.

"I will sing," she said; "'Samson and Delilah.' The men know it. Tell them."

"Don't do it, Nina. Let me take you back," he implored.

"I will sing. Tell the men," she repeated, and he led her forward mechanically.

She bowed slightly in response to the applause that greeted her, then stood waiting for the prelude. Kauffmann turned to her once, but her eyes compelled him, and he raised his bâton.

When she began, her voice, though clear, was far from strong, and to the man who watched her in an agony of apprehension it seemed that she herself was too weak and frail to carry the song to the end.

Once she faltered, and he forgot to beat the time as he watched her. But she caught herself and went on, and from that time strength seemed to come to her, and to the end she sang with all her old sweetness and finish and fire.

When it was over the audience rose to her just as in the old days, shouting, applauding, heaping flowers at her feet; and she stood before them, worn to the point of emaciation, smiling her old, brilliant smile to right and left, while her eyes burned and that hot, feverish color blazed in her cheeks.

Kauffmann bent toward her.

"That is enough, Nina. Let me take you away."

But the spirit that was in her would not let it be enough. She waved him back.

"'Butterflies!' They know that, too," she answered. Her breath came in a gasp at the end, but she smiled at him once more compellingly, and once more he raised his bâton.

It seemed impossible that she should sing this sparkling, airy thing. This surely was beyond the power even of her will. But sing it she did, gaily, lightly, sweetly, with all the old verve and abandon.

And again the audience rose.

She bowed, but only once, and the smile on her lips faltered and faded as she turned to Kauffmann. His bâton fell with a rattle that passed unnoticed in the tumult, and he caught her hands and half-led, half-carried her from the stage.

Deceived in part by her brilliant color and her spirit, blinded for the rest by its own enthusiasm, the audience stormed and shouted madly for a space, but she did not come back to satisfy its demands.

Behind the closed doors of a little ante-room a man was in distress for the woman he loved.

She lay against his knee on the floor, with his arm round her. Her color was gone, she was pinched and haggard now, and she gasped for breath. Presently she opened her eyes and looked up at him, trying to smile.

"We—roused them, didn't we, dear? We always—could—rouse them—together—you—and I."

The panting, broken sentences stopped. He waited for her to gather strength, watching the wan shadows of her old smile flicker over her face—her dear, dear face, so wan and thin!

"You have been ill, Nina?"

Her eyelids fluttered.

"Not ill; hungry!" she whispered.

"Hungry?" He was aghast.

"Not for food. I had that—generally. I taught. It was my heart—that was hungry."

"Your heart, Nina?"

"I wanted you," faintly, "and so my heart was hungry, and—do I look so bad?"

The anxious eyes sought his. He raised her hand to his lips. An instant the fingers closed on his, and then she tried to rise. He held her.

"I must go!"

"No, dear, no! lie still!"

"I must go! I must go!" she repeated, feverishly. "I did not come to stay, only to sing. I must go back."

Still he held her closely, striving for words to tell his need of her.

"See, Nina," he said, desperately,

"see, dear! If you have been heart-hungry, have I been less so? You left me, dear, when I had only begun to know how much I loved you, and all these weary months I have worked without you, needing you and loving you and searching for you always. I was cruel and wicked, but I have suffered for it. Is my punishment not yet enough?"

She turned on him a face shining with sorrow. Soft, pitying fingers touched his cheek, but something aloof, far-off in her look chilled his veins. Tender it was, yes, but with

the tenderness of an angel at cool heights above the sorrow of this world. Was she then so near heaven and the love eternal that she had no need of the warm, human love of man? Was her heart no longer hungry for him?

He crushed her hand in his.

"Nina!" he cried, despairingly, "Nina! Nina!"

The old love-light flared up in her eyes. With an effort she raised herself, and he knew as he met her kiss that she was no angel, but a woman, all a woman, and his.



CHARM

IT dwells beneath a Circe's baleful glance,
Or looks out calmly from Madonna eyes,
A gift apart, to thrill, inspire, entrance,
A wondrous spirit, clothed in different guise.

Its presence or in man or woman found
Means power to win us, though we know not why;
A tone, a smile, a thing that holds us bound,
A spell to drag us down or lift us high.

A. R. MORGAN DAHLGRÉN.



JUST LIKE A WIDOWER

LITTLE CLARENCE—Pa, when Lot's wife was turned to salt what did he do?

MR. CALLIPERS—Began to look for a fresh one, I presume.



AT THE FIRESIDE

FORTH from the coals a rosy rhythm runs;
Hark! how the flames unfold
The vows and dreams of unremembered suns
To vanished forests told!

MARY T. WAGGAMAN.