

LOTTA SCHMIDT

Anthony Trollope



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THE ADVENTURES OF FRED PICKERING.

THE TWO GENERALS.

FATHER GILES OF BALLYMOY.

MALACHI'S COVE.

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

THE LAST AUSTRIAN WHO LEFT VENICE.

MISS OPHELIA GLEDD.

THE JOURNEY TO PANAMA.

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AS all the world knows, the old fortifications of Vienna have been pulled down,—the fortifications which used to surround the centre or kernel of the city; and the vast spaces thus thrown open and forming a broad ring in the middle of the town have not as yet been completely filled up with those new buildings and gardens which are to be there, and which, when there, will join the outside city and the inside city together, so as to make them into one homogeneous whole.

The work, however, is going on, and if the war which has come and passed has not swallowed everything appertaining to Austria into its maw, the ugly remnants of destruction will be soon carted away, and the old glacis will be made bright with broad pavements, and gilded railings, and well-built lofty mansions, and gardens beautiful with shrubs, and beautiful with turf also, if Austrian patience can make turf to grow beneath an Austrian sky.

On an evening of September, when there was still something left of daylight, at eight o'clock, two girls were walking together in the Burgplatz, or large open space which lies between the city palace of the emperor and the gate which passes thence from the old town out to the new town. Here at present stand two bronze equestrian statues, one of the Archduke Charles, and the other of Prince Eugene. And they were standing there also, both of them, when these two girls were walking round them; but that of the prince had not as yet been uncovered for the public. There was coming a great gala day in the city, Emperors and empresses, archdukes and grand-dukes, with their archduchesses and grand-duchesses, and princes and ministers, were to be there, and the new statue of Prince Eugene was to be submitted to the art-critics of the world.

There was very much thought at Vienna of the statue in those days. Well; since that, the statue has been submitted to the art-critics, and henceforward it will be thought of as little as any other huge bronze figure of a prince on horseback. A very ponderous prince is poised in an impossible position, on an enormous dray horse. But yet the thing is grand, and Vienna is so far a finer city in that it possesses the new equestrian statue of Prince Eugene.

"There will be such a crowd, Lotta," said the elder of the two girls, "that I will not attempt it. Besides, we shall have plenty of time for seeing it afterwards."

"Oh, yes," said the younger girl, whose name was Lotta Schmidt; "of course we shall all have enough of the old prince for the rest of our lives; but I should like to see the grand people sitting up there on the benches; and there will be something nice in seeing the canopy drawn up. I think I will come. Herr Crippel has said that he would bring me, and get me a place."

"I thought, Lotta, you had determined to have nothing more to say to Herr Crippel."

"I don't know what you mean by that. I like Herr Crippel very much, and he plays beautifully. Surely a girl may know a man old enough to be her father without having him thrown in her teeth as her lover."

"Not when the man old enough to be her father has asked her to be his wife twenty times, as Herr Crippel has asked you. Herr Crippel would not give up his holiday afternoon to you if he thought it was to be for nothing."

"There I think you are wrong, Marie. I believe Herr Crippel likes to have me with him simply because every gentleman likes to have a lady on such a day as that. Of course it is better than being alone. I don't suppose he will say a word to me except to tell me who the people are, and to give me a glass of beer when it is over."

It may be as well to explain at once, before we go any further, that Herr Crippel was a player on the violin, and

that he led the musicians in the orchestra of the great beer-hall in the Volksgarten. Let it not be thought that because Herr Crippel exercised his art in a beer-hall therefore he was a musician of no account. No one will think so who has once gone to a Vienna beer-hall, and listened to such music as is there provided for the visitors.

The two girls, Marie Weber and Lotta Schmidt, belonged to an establishment in which gloves were sold in the Graben, and now, having completed their work for the day,—and indeed their work for the week, for it was Saturday evening,—had come out for such recreation as the evening might afford them. And on behalf of these two girls, as to one of whom at least I am much interested, I must beg my English readers to remember that manners and customs differ much in Vienna from those which prevail in London. Were I to tell of two London shop girls going out into the streets after their day's work, to see what friends and what amusement the fortune of the evening might send to them, I should be supposed to be speaking of young women as to whom it would be better that I should be silent; but these girls in Vienna were doing simply that which all their friends would expect and wish them to do. That they should have some amusement to soften the rigours of long days of work was recognised to be necessary; and music, beer, dancing, with the conversation of young men, are thought in Vienna to be the natural amusements of young women, and in Vienna are believed to be innocent.

The Viennese girls are almost always attractive in their appearance, without often coming up to our English ideas of prettiness. Sometimes they do fully come up to our English idea of beauty. They are generally dark, tall, light in figure, with bright eyes, which are however very unlike the bright eyes of Italy, and which constantly remind the traveller that his feet are carrying him eastward in Europe. But perhaps the peculiar characteristic in their faces which most strikes a stranger is a certain look of almost fierce

independence, as though they had recognised the necessity, and also acquired the power, of standing alone, and of protecting themselves. I know no young women by whom the assistance of a man's arm seems to be so seldom required as the young women of Vienna. They almost invariably dress well, generally preferring black, or colours that are very dark; and they wear hats that are, I believe, of Hungarian origin, very graceful in form, but which are peculiarly calculated to add something to that assumed savageness of independence of which I have spoken. Both the girls who were walking in the Burgplatz were of the kind that I have attempted to describe. Marie Weber was older, and not so tall, and less attractive than her friend; but as her position in life was fixed, and as she was engaged to marry a cutter of diamonds, I will not endeavour to interest the reader specially in her personal appearance. Lotta Schmidt was essentially a Viennese pretty girl of the special Viennese type. She was tall and slender, but still had none of that appearance of feminine weakness which is so common among us with girls who are tall and slim. She walked as though she had plenty both of strength and courage for all purposes of life without the assistance of any extraneous aid. Her hair was jet-black, and very plentiful, and was worn in long curls which were brought round from the back of her head over her shoulders. Her eyes were blue,—dark blue,—and were clear and deep rather than bright. Her nose was well formed, but somewhat prominent, and made you think at the first glance of the tribes of Israel. But yet no observer of the physiognomy of races would believe for half a moment that Lotta Schmidt was a Jewess. Indeed, the type of form which I am endeavouring to describe is in truth as far removed from the Jewish type as it is from the Italian; and it has no connexion whatever with that which we ordinarily conceive to be the German type. But, overriding everything in her personal appearance, in her form, countenance, and gait,

was that singular fierceness of independence, as though she were constantly asserting that she would never submit herself to the inconvenience of feminine softness. And yet Lotta Schmidt was a simple girl, with a girl's heart, looking forward to find all that she was to have of human happiness in the love of some man, and expecting and hoping to do her duty as a married woman and the mother of a family. Nor would she have been at all coy in saying as much had the subject of her life's prospects become matter of conversation in any company; no more than one lad would be coy in saying that he hoped to be a doctor, or another in declaring a wish for the army.

When the two girls had walked twice round the hoarding within which stood all those tons of bronze which were intended to represent Prince Eugene, they crossed over the centre of the Burgplatz, passed under the other equestrian statue, and came to the gate leading into the Volksgarten. There, just at the entrance, they were overtaken by a man with a fiddle-case under his arm, who raised his hat to them, and then shook hands with both of them.

"Ladies," he said, "are you coming in to hear a little music? We will do our best."

"Herr Crippel always does well," said Marie Weber. "There is never any doubt when one comes to hear him."

"Marie, why do you flatter him?" said Lotta.

"I do not say half to his face that you said just now behind his back," said Marie.

"And what did she say of me behind my back?" said Herr Crippel. He smiled as he asked the question, or attempted to smile, but it was easy to see that he was too much in earnest. He blushed up to his eyes, and there was a slight trembling motion in his hands as he stood with one of them pressed upon the other.

As Marie did not answer at the moment, Lotta replied for her.

"I will tell you what I said behind your back. I said that

Herr Crippel had the firmest hand upon a bow, and the surest fingers among the strings, in all Vienna—when his mind was not wool-gathering. Marie, is not that true?”

“ I do not remember anything about the wool-gathering,” said Marie.

“ I hope I shall not be wool-gathering to-night; but I shall doubtless;—I shall doubtless,—for I shall be thinking of your judgment. Shall I get you seats at once? There; you are just before me. You see I am not coward enough to fly from my critics,” and he placed them to sit at a little marble table, not far from the front of the low orchestra in the foremost place in which he would have to take his stand.

“ Many thanks, Herr Crippel,” said Lotta. “I will make sure of a third chair, as a friend is coming.”

“ Oh, a friend!” said he; and he looked sad, and all his sprightliness was gone.

“ Marie’s friend,” said Lotta, laughing. “Do not you know Carl Stobel?”

Then the musician became bright and happy again. “I would have got two more chairs if you would have let me; one for the fraulein’s sake, and one for his own. And I will come down presently, and you shall present me, if you will be so very kind.”

Marie Weber smiled and thanked him, and declared that she should be very proud;—and the leader of the band went up into his place.

“ I wish he had not placed us here,” said Lotta.

“ And why not?”

“ Because Fritz is coming.”

“ No!”

“ But he is.”

“ And why did you not tell me?”

“ Because I did not wish to be speaking of him. Of course you understand why I did not tell you. I would rather it should seem that he came of his own account,—with Carl. Ha, ha!” Carl Stobel was the diamond-cutter to whom

Marie Weber was betrothed. "I should not have told you now,—only that I am disarranged by what Herr Crippel has done."

"Had we not better go,—or at least move our seats? We can make any excuse afterwards."

"No," said Lotta. "I will not seem to run away from him. I have nothing to be ashamed of. If I choose to keep company with Fritz Planken, that should be nothing to Herr Crippel."

"But you might have told him."

"No; I could not tell him. And I am not sure Fritz is coming either. He said he would come with Carl if he had time. Never mind; let us be happy now. If a bad time comes by-and-by, we must make the best of it."

Then the music began, and, suddenly, as the first note of a fiddle was heard, every voice in the great beer-hall of the Volksgarten became silent. Men sat smoking, with their long beer-glasses before them, and women sat knitting, with their long beer-glasses also before them, but not a word was spoken. The waiters went about with silent feet, but even orders for beer were not given, and money was not received. Herr Crippel did his best, working with his wand as carefully,—and I may say as accurately,—as a leader in a fashionable opera-house in London or Paris. But every now and then, in the course of the piece, he would place his fiddle to his shoulder and join in the performance. There was hardly one there in the hall, man or woman, boy or girl, who did not know, from personal knowledge and judgment, that Herr Crippel was doing his work very well.

"Excellent, was it not?" said Marie.

"Yes; he is a musician. Is it not a pity he should be so bald?" said Lotta.

"He is not so very bald," said Marie.

"I should not mind his being bald so much, if he did not try to cover his old head with the side hairs. If he would cut off those loose straggling locks, and declare himself to be bald at once, he would be ever so much better. He would look to

be fifty then. He looks sixty now."

"What matters his age? He is forty-five, just; for I know. And he is a good man."

"What has his goodness to do with it?"

"A great deal. His old mother wants for nothing, and he makes two hundred florins a month. He has two shares in the summer theatre. I know it."

"Bah! what is all that when he will plaster his hair over his old bald head?"

"Lotta, I am ashamed of you." But at this moment the further expression of Marie's anger was stopped by the entrance of the diamond-cutter; and as he was alone, both the girls received him very pleasantly. We must give Lotta her due, and declare that, as things had gone, she would much prefer now that Fritz should stay away, though Fritz Planken was as handsome a young fellow as there was in Vienna, and one who dressed with the best taste, and danced so that no one could surpass him, and could speak French, and was confidential clerk at one of the largest hotels in Vienna, and was a young man acknowledged to be of much general importance,—and had, moreover, in plain language, declared his love for Lotta Schmidt. But Lotta would not willingly give unnecessary pain to Herr Crippel, and she was generously glad when Carl Stobel, the diamond-cutter, came by himself. Then there was a second and third piece played, and after that Herr Crippel came down, according to promise, and was presented to Marie's lover.

"Ladies," said he, "I hope I have not gathered wool."

"You have surpassed yourself," said Lotta.

"At wool-gathering?" said Herr Crippel.

"At sending us out of this world into another," said Lotta.

"Ah! go into no other world but this," said Herr Crippel, "lest I should not be able to follow you." And then he went away again to his post.

Before another piece had been commenced, Lotta saw Fritz

Planken enter the door. He stood for a moment gazing round the hall, with his cane in his hand and his hat on his head, looking for the party which he intended to join. Lotta did not say a word, nor would she turn her eyes towards him. She would not recognise him if it were possible to avoid it. But he soon saw her, and came up to the table at which they were sitting. When Lotta was getting the third chair for Marie's lover, Herr Crippel, in his gallantry, had brought a fourth, and now Fritz occupied the chair which the musician had placed there. Lotta, as she perceived this, was sorry that it should be so. She could not even dare to look up to see what effect this new arrival would have upon the leader of the band.

The new comer was certainly a handsome young man, such a one as inflicts unutterable agonies on the hearts of the Herr Crippels of the world. His boots shone like mirrors, and fitted his feet like gloves. There was something in the make and set of his trousers which Herr Crippel, looking at them, as he could not help looking at them, was quite unable to understand. Even twenty years ago, Herr Crippel's trousers, as Herr Crippel very well knew, had never looked like that. And Fritz Planken wore a blue frock coat with silk lining to the breast, which seemed to have come from some tailor among the gods. And he had on primrose gloves, and round his neck a bright pink satin handkerchief joined by a ring, which gave a richness of colouring to the whole thing which nearly killed Herr Crippel, because he could not but acknowledge that the colouring was good. And then the hat! And when the hat was taken off for a moment, then the hair—perfectly black, and silky as a raven's wing, just waving with one curl! And when Fritz put up his hand, and ran his fingers through his locks, their richness and plenty and beauty were conspicuous to all beholders. Herr Crippel, as he saw it, involuntarily dashed his hand up to his own pate, and scratched his straggling, lanky hairs from off his head.

“ You are coming to Sperl’s to-morrow, of course?” said Fritz to Lotta. Now Sperl’s is a great establishment for dancing in the Leopoldstadt, which is always open on a Sunday evening, and which Lotta Schmidt was in the habit of attending with much regularity. It was here she had become acquainted with Fritz. And certainly to dance with Fritz was to dance indeed! Lotta, too, was a beautiful dancer. To a Viennese such as Lotta Schmidt, dancing is a thing of serious importance. It was a misfortune to her to have to dance with a bad dancer, as it is to a great whist-player among us to sit down with a bad partner. Oh, what she had suffered more than once when Herr Crippel had induced her to stand up with him!

“ Yes; I shall go. Marie, you will go?”

“ I do not know,” said Marie.

“ You will make her go, Carl; will you not?” said Lotta.

“ She promised me yesterday, as I understood,” said Carl.

“ Of course we will all be there,” said Fritz, somewhat grandly; “and I will give a supper for four.”

Then the music began again, and the eyes of all of them became fixed upon Herr Crippel. It was unfortunate that they should have been placed so fully before him as it was impossible that he should avoid seeing them. As he stood up with his violin to his shoulder, his eyes were fixed on Fritz Planken and Fritz Planken’s boots, and coat, and hat, and hair. And as he drew his bow over the strings he was thinking of his own boots and of his own hair. Fritz was sitting, leaning forward in his chair, so that he could look up into Lotta’s face, and he was playing with a little amber-headed cane, and every now and then he whispered a word. Herr Crippel could hardly play a note. In very truth he was wool-gathering. His hand became unsteady, and every instrument was more or less astray.

“ Your old friend is making a mess of it to-night,” said Fritz to Lotta. “I hope he has not taken a glass too much of schnapps.”

“ He never does anything of the kind,” said Lotta, angrily.

“He never did such a thing in his life.”

“ He is playing awfully bad,” said Fritz.

“ I never heard him play better in my life than he has played to-night,” said Lotta.

“ His hand is tired. He is getting old,” said Fritz. Then Lotta moved her chair and drew herself back, and was determined that Marie and Carl should see that she was angry with her young lover. In the meantime the piece of music had been finished, and the audience had shown their sense of the performer’s inferiority by withdrawing those plaudits which they were so ready to give when they were pleased.

After this some other musician led for awhile, and then Herr Crippel had to come forward to play a solo. And on this occasion the violin was not to be his instrument. He was a great favourite among the lovers of music in Vienna, not only because he was good at the fiddle and because with his bow in his hand he could keep a band of musicians together, but also as a player on the zither. It was not often now-a-days that he would take his zither to the music-hall in the Volksgarten; for he would say that he had given up that instrument; that he now played it only in private; that it was not fit for a large hall, as a single voice, the scraping of a foot, would destroy its music. And Herr Crippel was a man who had his fancies and his fantasies, and would not always yield to entreaty. But occasionally he would send his zither down to the public hall; and in the programme for this evening there had been put forth that Herr Crippel’s zither would be there and that Herr Crippel would perform. And now the zither was brought forward, and a chair was put for the zitherist, and Herr Crippel stood for a moment behind his chair and bowed. Lotta glanced up at him, and could see that he was very pale. She could even see that the perspiration stood upon his brow. She knew that he was trembling, and that he would have given almost his zither

itself to be quit of his promised performance for that night. But she knew also that he would make the attempt.

“What! the zither?” said Fritz. “He will break down as sure as he is a living man.”

“Let us hope not,” said Carl Stobel.

“I love to hear him play the zither better than anything,” said Lotta.

“It used to be very good,” said Fritz; “but everybody says he has lost his touch. When a man has the slightest feeling of nervousness he is done for the zither.”

“H—sh; let him have his chance at any rate,” said Marie. Reader, did you ever hear the zither? When played, as it is sometimes played in Vienna, it combines all the softest notes of the human voice. It sings to you of love and then wails to you of disappointed love, till it fills you with a melancholy from which there is no escaping,—from which you never wish to escape. It speaks to you as no other instrument ever speaks, and reveals to you with wonderful eloquence the sadness in which it delights. It produces a luxury of anguish, a fulness of the satisfaction of imaginary woe, a realisation of the mysterious delights of romance, which no words can ever thoroughly supply. While the notes are living, while the music is still in the air, the ear comes to covet greedily every atom of tone which the instrument will produce, so that the slightest extraneous sound becomes an offence. The notes sink and sink so low and low, with their soft sad wail of delicious woe, that the listener dreads that something will be lost in the struggle of listening. There seems to come some lethargy on his sense of hearing, which he fears will shut out from his brain the last, lowest, sweetest strain, the very pearl of the music, for which he has been watching with all the intensity of prolonged desire. And then the zither is silent, and there remains a fond memory together with a deep regret.

Herr Crippel seated himself on his stool and looked once or twice round about upon the room almost with dismay. Then

he struck his zither, uncertainly, weakly, and commenced the prelude of his piece. But Lotta thought that she had never heard so sweet a sound. When he paused after a few strokes there was a noise of applause in the room, of applause intended to encourage by commemorating past triumphs. The musician looked again away from his music to his audience, and his eyes caught the eyes of the girl he loved; and his gaze fell also upon the face of the handsome, well-dressed, young Adonis who was by her side.

He, Herr Crippel the musician, could never make himself look like that; he could make no slightest approach to that outward triumph. But then, he could play the zither, and Fritz Planken could only play with his cane! He would do what he could! He would play his best! He had once almost resolved to get up and declare that he was too tired that evening to do justice to his instrument. But there was an insolence of success about his rival's hat and trousers which spirited him on to the fight. He struck his zither again, and they who understood him and his zither knew that he was in earnest.

The old men who had listened to him for the last twenty years declared that he had never played as he played on that night. At first he was somewhat bolder, somewhat louder than was his wont; as though he were resolved to go out of his accustomed track; but, after awhile, he gave that up; that was simply the effect of nervousness, and was continued only while the timidity remained present with him. But he soon forgot everything but his zither and his desire to do it justice. The attention of all present soon became so close that you might have heard a pin fall. Even Fritz sat perfectly still, with his mouth open, and forgot to play with his cane. Lotta's eyes were quickly full of tears, and before long they were rolling down her cheeks. Herr Crippel, though he did not know that he looked at her, was aware that it was so. Then came upon them all there an ecstasy of delicious sadness. As I have said before, every

ear was struggling that no softest sound might escape unheard. And then at last the zither was silent, and no one could have marked the moment when it had ceased to sing. For a few moments there was perfect silence in the room, and the musician still kept his seat with his face turned upon his instrument. He knew well that he had succeeded, that his triumph had been complete, and every moment that the applause was suspended was an added jewel to his crown. But it soon came, the loud shouts of praise, the ringing bravos, the striking of glasses, his own name repeated from all parts of the hall, the clapping of hands, the sweet sound of women's voices, and the waving of white handkerchiefs. Herr Crippel stood up, bowed thrice, wiped his face with a handkerchief, and then sat down on a stool in the corner of the orchestra.

"I don't know much about his being too old," said Carl Stobel.

"Nor I either," said Lotta.

"That is what I call music," said Marie Weber.

"He can play the zither, certainly," said Fritz; "but as to the violin, it is more doubtful."

"He is excellent with both,—with both," said Lotta, angrily. Soon after that the party got up to leave the hall, and as they went out they encountered Herr Crippel.

"You have gone beyond yourself to-night," said Marie, "and we wish you joy."

"Oh, no. It was pretty good, was it? With the zither it depends mostly on the atmosphere; whether it is hot, or cold, or wet, or dry, or on I knew not what. It is an accident if one plays well. Good-night to you. Good-night, Lotta. Good-night, Sir." And he took off his hat, and bowed,—bowed, as it were, expressly to Fritz Planken.

"Herr Crippel," said Lotta, "one word with you." And she dropped behind from Fritz, and returned to the musician.

"Herr Crippel, will you meet me at Sperl's to-morrow night?"

" At Sperl's? No. I do not go to Sperl's any longer, Lotta. You told me that Marie's friend was coming to-night, but you did not tell me of your own."

" Never mind what I told you, or did not tell you. Herr Crippel, will you come to Sperl's to-morrow?"

" No; you would not dance with me, and I should not care to see you dance with anyone else."

" But I will dance with you."

" And Planken will be there?"

" Yes, Fritz will be there. He is always there; I cannot help that."

" No, Lotta; I will not go to Sperl's. I will tell you a little secret. At forty-five one is too old for Sperl's."

" There are men there every Sunday over fifty—over sixty, I am sure."

" They are men different in their ways of life from me, my dear. No, I will not go to Sperl's. When will you come and see my mother?"

Lotta promised that she would go and see the Frau Crippel before long, and then tripped off and joined her party.

Stobel and Marie had walked on, while Fritz remained a little behind for Lotta.

" Did you ask him to come to Sperl's to-morrow?" he said.

" To be sure I did."

" Was that nice of you, Lotta?"

" Why not nice? Nice or not, I did it. Why should not I ask him, if I please?"

" Because I thought I was to have the pleasure of entertaining you; that it was a little party of my own."

" Very well, Herr Planken," said Lotta, drawing herself a little away from him; "if a friend of mine is not welcome at your little party, I certainly shall not join it myself."

" But, Lotta, does not everyone know what it is that Crippel wishes of you?"

" There is no harm in his wishing. My friends tell me that I am very foolish not to give him what he wishes. But I still

have the chance."

" Oh yes, no doubt you still have the chance."

" Herr Crippel is a very good man. He is the best son in the world, and he makes two hundred florins a month."

" Oh, if that is to count!"

" Of course it is to count. Why should it not count? Would the Princess Theresa have married the other day if the young prince had had no income to support her?"

" You can do as you please, Lotta."

" Yes, I can do as I please, certainly. I suppose Adela Bruhl will be at Sperl's to-morrow?"

" I should say so, certainly. I hardly ever knew her to miss her Sunday evening."

" Nor I. I, too, am fond of dancing—very. I delight in dancing. But I am not a slave to Sperl's, and then I do not care to dance with everyone."

" Adela Bruhl dances very well," said Fritz.

" That is as one may think. She ought to; for she begins at ten, and goes on till two, always. If there is no one nice for dancing she puts up with some one that is not nice. But all that is nothing to me."

" Nothing, I should say, Lotta."

" Nothing in the world. But this is something; last Sunday you danced three times with Adela."

" Did I? I did not count."

" I counted. It is my business to watch those things, if you are to be ever anything to me, Fritz. I will not pretend that I am indifferent. I am not indifferent. I care very much about it. Fritz, if you dance to-morrow with Adela you will not dance with me again—either then or ever." And having uttered this threat she ran on and found Marie, who had just reached the door of the house in which they both lived. Fritz, as he walked home by himself, was in doubt as to the course which it would be his duty as a man to pursue in reference to the lady whom he loved. He had distinctly heard that lady ask an old admirer of hers to go to Sperl's

and dance with her; and yet, within ten minutes afterwards, she had peremptorily commanded him not to dance with another girl! Now, Fritz Planken had a very good opinion of himself, as he was well entitled to have, and was quite aware that other pretty girls besides Lotta Schmidt were within his reach. He did not receive two hundred florins a month, as did Herr Crippel, but then he was five-and-twenty instead of five-and-forty; and, in the matter of money, too, he was doing pretty well. He did love Lotta Schmidt. It would not be easy for him to part with her. But she, too, loved him, as he told himself, and she would hardly push matters to extremities. At any rate, he would not submit to a threat. He would dance with Adela Bruhl, at Sperl's. He thought, at least, that when the time should come he would find it well to dance with her.

Sperl's dancing saloon, in the Tabor Strasse, is a great institution at Vienna. It is open always of a Sunday evening, and dancing there commences at ten, and is continued till two or three o'clock in the morning. There are two large rooms, in one of which the dancers dance, and in the other the dancers and visitors who do not dance, eat, and drink, and smoke continually. But the most wonderful part of Sperl's establishment is this, that there is nothing there to offend anyone. Girls dance and men smoke, and there is eating and drinking, and everybody is as well behaved as though there was a protecting phalanx of dowagers sitting round the walls of the saloon. There are no dowagers, though there may probably be a policeman somewhere about the place. To a stranger it is very remarkable that there is so little of what we call flirting;—almost none of it. It would seem that to the girls dancing is so much a matter of business, that here at Sperl's they can think of nothing else. To mind their steps, and at the same time their dresses, lest they should be trod upon, to keep full pace with the music, to make all the proper turns at every proper time, and to have the foot fall on the floor at the

exact instant; all this is enough, without further excitement. You will see a girl dancing with a man as though the man were a chair, or a stick, or some necessary piece of furniture. She condescends to use his services, but as soon as the dance is over she sends him away. She hardly speaks a word to him, if a word! She has come there to dance, and not to talk; unless, indeed, like Marie Weber and Lotta Schmidt, she has a recognised lover there of her very own.

At about half-past ten Marie and Lotta entered the saloon, and paid their kreutzers and sat themselves down on seats in the further saloon, from which through open archways they could see the dancers. Neither Carl nor Fritz had come as yet, and the girls were quite content to wait. It was to be presumed that they would be there before the men, and they both understood that the real dancing was not commenced early in the evening. It might be all very well for such as Adela Bruhl to dance with anyone who came at ten o'clock, but Lotta Schmidt would not care to amuse herself after that fashion. As to Marie, she was to be married after another week, and of course she would dance with no one but Carl Stobel.

"Look at her," said Lotta, pointing with her foot to a fair girl, very pretty, but with hair somewhat untidy, who at this moment was waltzing in the other room. "That lad is a waiter from the Minden hotel. I know him. She would dance with anyone."

"I suppose she likes dancing, and there is no harm in the boy," said Marie.

"No, there is no harm, and if she likes it I do not begrudge it her. See what red hands she has."

"She is of that complexion," said Marie.

"Yes, she is of that complexion all over; look at her face. At any rate she might have better shoes on. Did you ever see anybody so untidy?"

"She is very pretty," said Marie.

“ Yes, she is pretty. There is no doubt she is pretty. She is not a native here. Her people are from Munich. Do you know, Marie, I think girls are always thought more of in other countries than in their own.”

Soon after this Carl and Fritz came in together, and Fritz, as he passed across the end of the first saloon, spoke a word or two to Adela. Lotta saw this, but determined that she would take no offence at so small a matter. Fritz need not have stopped to speak, but his doing so might be all very well. At any rate, if she did quarrel with him she would quarrel on a plain, intelligible ground. Within two minutes Carl and Marie were dancing, and Fritz had asked Lotta to stand up. “ I will wait a little,” said she, “ I never like to begin much before eleven.”

“ As you please,” said Fritz; and he sat down in the chair which Marie had occupied. Then he played with his cane, and as he did so his eyes followed the steps of Adela Bruhl.

“ She dances very well,” said Lotta.

“ H—m—m, yes.” Fritz did not choose to bestow any strong praise on Adela’s dancing.

“ Yes, Fritz, she does dance well—very well, indeed. And she is never tired. If you ask me whether I like her style, I cannot quite say that I do. It is not what we do here—not exactly.”

“ She has lived in Vienna since she was a child.”

“ It is in the blood then, I suppose. Look at her fair hair, all blowing about. She is not like one of us.”

“ Oh no, she is not.”

“ That she is very pretty, I quite admit,” said Lotta. “ Those soft gray eyes are delicious. Is it not a pity she has no eyebrows?”

“ But she has eyebrows.”

“ Ah! you have been closer than I, and you have seen them. I have never danced with her, and I cannot see them. Of course they are there—more or less.”

After a while the dancing ceased, and Adela Bruhl came up

into the supper-room, passing the seats on which Fritz and Lotta were sitting.

"Are you not going to dance, Fritz?" she said, with a smile, as she passed them.

"Go, go," said Lotta; "why do you not go? She has invited you."

"No; she has not invited me. She spoke to us both."

"She did not speak to me, for my name is not Fritz. I do not see how you can help going, when she asked you so prettily."

"I shall be in plenty of time presently. Will you dance now, Lotta? They are going to begin a waltz, and we will have a quadrille afterwards."

"No, Herr Planken, I will not dance just now."

"Herr Planken, is it? You want to quarrel with me then, Lotta."

"I do not want to be one of two. I will not be one of two. Adela Bruhl is very pretty, and I advise you to go to her. I was told only yesterday her father can give her fifteen hundred florins of fortune! For me—I have no father."

"But you may have a husband to-morrow."

"Yes, that is true, and a good one. Oh, such a good one!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"You go and dance with Adela Bruhl, and you shall see what I mean."

Fritz had some idea in his own mind, more or less clearly developed, that his fate, as regarded Lotta Schmidt, now lay in his own hands. He undoubtedly desired to have Lotta for his own. He would have married her there and then—at that moment, had it been possible. He had quite made up his mind that he preferred her much to Adela Bruhl, though Adela Bruhl had fifteen hundred florins. But he did not like to endure tyranny, even from Lotta, and he did not know how to escape the tyranny otherwise than by dancing with Adela. He paused a moment, swinging his cane, endeavouring to think how he might best assert his