Beethoven's smile—here in the presence of his dear piano—his life's best friend, whose heartstrings even now wait for the noble, beckoning touch of his artist fingers! I will stay with him until the end. He was a friend to me, Father, and I will be a friend to him, not only for my sake but also for the sake of Hortense.' And all night long Felice watched and prayed at the deathbed of her friend and benefactor.

Three weeks had passed and, to the surprise of everyone, Signor Bottini had made great progress towards recovery. Dr. McCabe was more than pleased, and would say, laughingly: 'Felice, it was your good nursing that saved him.'

The Signor's return to consciousness was gradual, and now that his senses were perfectly restored, he conversed freely with his many pupils, who daily swarmed around his bedside to spend a few minutes with their dear old professor. Another month glided by. Signor Bottini was still very weak and had not yet left his bed. Surgeons and neurologists were called in. Everything was tried to restore movement and sensation to his paralysed arm. Rest, massage, electricity, all had so far proven useless, and Dame Rumor now had it that the Signor would never get the use of his arm—that he would never play the pipe-organ in old St. Patrick's again.

One afternoon the professor sent for the organist who was relieving him at the Cathedral and who, by the way, was an ex-pupil of his, saying that he had something of importance to tell him. 'You see, Richter,' he began, when he arrived, 'on Thursday of next week Father O'Brien will celebrate an anniversary Requiem for the repose of the soul of Mdlle Hortense Laporte, and I would like to have the occasion marked with special music, for she was a faithful and staunch member of the choir. My new Requiem Mass has not yet been produced, and I would like to have it sung on that day. Several months ago, just before I took sick, they knew the Mass perfectly, and one or two rehearsals this week with the full choir will be preparation quite sufficient.'

'But, Bottini, it is impossible!' exclaimed Richter. 'I have no one that is capable of taking the heavy soprano solo parts. Some of the passages are extremely difficult and they require a master voice for their proper rendition.'

'Never mind the soloist,' thoughtfully answered the Signor. 'She will not be found wanting when the proper time arrives.'

III.

Father O'Brien and Signor Bottini were alone in the studio. The Professor had just gone to confession and received. The morning was bright and rosy and outside of the study window a gay little robin was chirping its blithe and cheerful matin song. The room was filled with the odor of roses and carnations, for flowers were everywhere in evidence. The Signor loved them and his pupils knew it, and every morning brought a fresh quota of the choicest blossoms from the down-town conservatories. The little Robin outside was soon joined by his mate, and together they now held forth in love's sweet serenade.

'Listen to the robins, Father!' at last broke forth Bottini. 'There is a simplicity in their song that makes it all the more beautiful. They carol forth the music of hope.'

> 'And hope like the rainbow of summer,
> Gives a promise of Lethe at last.'

'Sing on, O birds! I love your voices. You bring me the joy and the peace of a happy heart and your song teems with the freshness and purity of rich mountain air.'

There was a faint tap at the door and in walked Felice and with her there came a goodly amount of sunshine. She looked beautiful as she stood in the doorway—the crisp morning air had brought the color to her cheeks.

'Good morning, Father O'Brien! You are an early caller. What do you think of my patient?' and Felice smiled sweetly and a ripple of girlish laughter burst from her bright, ruby-red lips.

'Felice, you are a capital nurse,' replied the priest, good-naturedly. 'In fact, I would not hesitate placing myself under your care—providing you did all the nursing and I all the bossing.' Then he laughed a hearty laugh that was contagious, for even Bottini himself could not resist.

'I suppose, Signor, you were wondering what had happened me,' Felice began, addressing Bottini. Well, this morning you were fast asleep and I glided out silently with my music-roll over to mother's. She had not heard my voice in many weeks, and I was going to give her a concert all to herself—poor thing. I sang the 'Jewel Song' from 'Faust,' Gounod's 'Ave Maria,' and my solo parts in your new Mass for the dead. Mother was simply delighted with my progress and you don't know how her face brightened when I sang. But when she spoke of Hortense her voice trembled and there was a hint of sorrow in it.'

'But, come, Felice!' suddenly broke in Father O'Brien, 'will you not sing for me, this morning? I have not heard you for a year past.' The good priest was very sympathetic and he was afraid that if the conversation was to go on thus he could not help but give vent to his feelings. 'Come,' he added, 'sing me Gounod's "Ave Maria!"'

Felice seated herself at the piano and sang the selection beautifully, with all becoming dignity and grace. The priest listened eagerly—so did the noble Signor, but, alas! the latter's thoughts were elsewhere. Before him there loomed a picture of Hortense in the old choir loft. He himself was at the organ; below several thousand people were listening eagerly to that self-same 'Ave Maria,' their heads bowed in prayer. Father O'Brien was at the altar—and all this, alas! seemed but yesterday.

'Well done, child!' lovingly said the priest, as Felice rose and left the piano. 'It was a capital and faultless rendition and I compliment you.'

Signor Bottini raised his head. There was a distant, far-away look in his eyes and he seemed to have suddenly awakened from a dream.

'Signor!' asked the priest, 'How long before your protege takes her place in the choir? Her voice is nigh perfect now, methinks.'

'Before very long—before very long,' answered Bottini, somewhat distractedly. Felice and Father O'Brien exchanged smiles, but on the old professor's face was written a deep and peculiar mystery.

The afternoon passed quietly and evening came with its dark, heavy shadows and hours of peace. The cathedral clock had just struck the hour of eight, when Felice rose from the table and approached the professor's couch and said: 'Signor, I will now run over to the church and go to confession before the crowd comes. Mother and I will both receive to-morrow. It is the anniversary of poor Hortense's death and Father O'Brien will sing a solemn Requiem Mass for her.'

'But stay, child, stay for a few minutes longer! I have something to tell you—something to ask you before you go,' interrupted Bottini.

Felice drew nearer. Her face was pale and she felt as if her heart had suddenly stopped beating. Signor Bottini raised himself slowly on his couch. A weird look stole into his blood-shot eyes and he began nervously: 'Felice, the time has come and I am going to reveal to you the secret that lies hidden in my heart. No ears have heard and none shall hear but thine. Would to God that I could preside at the organ to-morrow, I would play as I never played before, for the sake of Hortense—innocent, white dove—I see you are surprised and I may tell you now that I loved Hortense—loved her with all the tenderness of my poor heart and yet she never knew, for I never told her.'

'Loved Hortense, my sister?' interrupted Felice almost wildly. 'Is it possible?'

'Possible? Yes, Felice,' he went on. 'And, listen—to-morrow morning my new Requiem Mass is to be sung in dear old St. Patrick's for the first time. Herr Richter has held rehearsals with the choir during the week. I promised that I would supply the soloist for the occasion, and Felice, I am going to ask you to take your place in the choir to-morrow morning for the first time, to sing the solo parts of my new Mass.'

Felice drew back like a startled dove. 'To sing to-morrow, when the memory of Hortense will be so fresh within my heart? How can I? Why do you ask?'

'I ask, Felice, because I wrote that Requiem in honor of Hortense and dreamed, one day in the past, that it would be sung on the anniversary of her death. I cannot go because my arm is paralysed. Everything is ready, and you, alone, are capable of singing the soprano solo parts. If you say no, Felice, the new Mass cannot go on. Will you go, Felice?'

Felice stood speechless and her eyes seemed to be gazing far over the misty horizon of the past. She waited an instant and the tears were gathering in her eyes. Then a determined look crept into her pale, white face, and she said: 'Yes, noble Signor! for your sake and for Hortense's sake I will go.'

IV.

The pearly gates of the morning opened and ushered in a perfect day. Signor Bottini turned nervously on his couch aod a look of sadness came into his eyes. He had been sitting up in his easy chair every afternoon for the past two weeks and Dr. McCabe reversed matters a little now and told Felice that the professor might sit up in the morning if he wished. This came as a blessing to the Signor. 'Put my chair close up to the window this morning,' he said to Felice, 'so that I will be able to hear the singing and the music. And, Felice, when you go to church, tell the sexton to open the large