

The Beggar Student

[Opéra comique, in three acts; first produced in Vienna, 1882.]

PERSONAGES.

Symon Symonovicz, the beggar student. Janitsky, his friend. Gen. Ollendorf, military governor of Krakow. Enterich, } Puffki, } jailers. Major Holtzheim. Sitzky, an innkeeper. Countess Palmatica. Laura, } Bronislava, } her daughters. Eva. Ononphrie. Lieut. Poppenburg. Lieut. Schmeinitz. Lieut. Wangerheim. Burgomaster. Bogumil.

[Prisoners, peasants, soldiers, musicians, courtiers, etc.]

The scene is laid in Krakow; time, the year 1704.

The first act of this tuneful opera opens in the city of Krakow. General Ollendorf, the military governor, is in a rage because he has been repulsed by Laura, daughter of the Countess Palmatica, to whom he has showed some unwelcome attentions. To avenge what he considers an insult, he conceives the idea of dressing some poor and low-born young fellow in the finery of a prince, and passing him off as such upon the Countess and her daughter, trusting that their poverty will induce them to accept the impostor. After such a marriage his revenge would be complete. He finds his accomplice in the military prison. Symon Symonovicz, a vagabond Polish student, is ready to play the gentleman, and only insists on taking along with him Janitsky, a fellow prisoner, to act as his secretary. The plot is successful. The Countess and her daughter, who have been living for a long time in genteel poverty, are dazzled by the finery and prospects of the suitor, and the act closes with the betrothal of Symon and Laura.

In the second act the two find that they are really in love with each other. As the money furnished by the General is all spent, Symon decides to tell Laura of the deception practised upon her, though it

may cost him the marriage, which was to have taken place that day. Afraid to tell her in person, he writes the disclosure, and intrusts the letter to the Countess with the request to have it given to Laura before the ceremony. The General, however, thwarts this scheme, and the pair are married, whereupon he exposes Symon to the assembled guests as an impostor and has him driven from the palace.

At the opening of the third act Symon appears in melancholy plight and contemplating suicide. His friend Janitsky, who is in love with Laura's sister, Bronislava, comes to his rescue. He comes forward as a Polish officer engaged in a plot for the capture of the citadel and the reinstatement of King Stanislaus upon the throne of Poland. The plot with Symon's help succeeds, and in return Symon is not only ennobled, but the Countess and his wife forgive him, and the governor-general is foiled at every point.

The principal numbers are Ollendorf's entrance song in waltz time, "And they say that towards Ladies"; the characteristic duet by Symon and Janitsky on leaving jail, "Confounded Cell, at last I leave thee"; the charming entrance trio for Laura, Bronislava, and the Countess, "Some little Shopping really we ought to do"; and Laura's brilliant song, "But when the Song is sweetly sounding," in the finale of the first act; Laura's humorous song, "If Joy in Married Life you'd find"; the sentimental duet of Bronislava and Janitsky, "This Kiss, Sweet Love"; Ollendorf's grotesque songs, "One Day I was perambulating," and "There in the Chamber Polish," which is usually adapted as a topical song; and the long and cleverly concerted finale of the second act: and Bronislava's song, "Prince a Beggar's said to be," and Symon's couplet, "I'm penniless and outlawed too," in the third act.