

## **The Daughter of the Regiment**

[Opéra comique, in two acts; text by Bayard and St. Georges. First produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, February 11, 1840.]

### PERSONAGES.

Sulpice, an old sergeant. Tony, a Tyrolean peasant in love with Marie. Hortensius, secretary of the Marchioness. Marie, the adopted Daughter of the Regiment. Marchioness de Berkenfeld. Duchesse de Crackenthorpe.

[Villagers, soldiers, gentlemen, guests.]

The scene is laid in the Tyrol; time, about twelve years after the Battle of Marengo.

At the opening of the opera Marie, the heroine, and vivandière in Napoleon's Twenty-first Regiment, has been saved from falling over a precipice by Tony, a Tyrolean peasant, and is ever after the object of his special admiration and, shortly, of his love. She tells the story of her life, from which it appears that she was adopted as the Daughter of the Regiment because she was picked up on the field of battle by Sergeant Sulpice, who found upon her person a letter written by her father to the Marchioness de Berkenfeld. Tony's reward for his rescue of Marie is his arrest as a spy, but not before he has declared his love for her. He easily clears up his record, and the soldiers decide he may have Marie's hand if he will join them. He gives joyous assent to this proposition, but his hopes are suddenly dashed to the ground when the Marchioness de Berkenfeld appears. Sergeant Sulpice delivers the letter to her, after reading which she claims Marie as her niece, and carries her off amidst smothered imprecations by the soldiers and especially by Tony upon the Marchioness.

In the second act Marie is found in her new home at the castle of Berkenfeld, and the old sergeant is with her, while she is rehearsing a romance which she is to sing to a grand company. She and Sulpice suddenly break out into a rollicking rataplan, and go through military evolutions to the horror of the Marchioness. While the latter is expostulating with them, martial music announces the approach of the gallant Twenty-first, with Tony at their head, for he is now a colonel. He makes another appeal for Marie's hand, and the appeal is seconded by the soldiers, but the Marchioness refuses the favor. Tony then proposes an elopement, to which Marie consents. To thwart this scheme, the Marchioness announces that early in life she had been secretly married to an army officer of low rank and that he was Marie's father. Unable to disobey her mother's wishes, Marie gives up Tony and falls into a melancholy mood. Her sad plight rouses old associations in the mind of the Marchioness, and she at last gives her consent to the union.

The music of the first act is very brilliant, and includes among its best numbers Marie's opening song, "The Camp was my Birthplace"; the duet with Sulpice, known the world over as "The Rataplan," stirring and martial in its character and accompanied by the rattling of drums and the sonorous strains of the brasses; the spirited "Salute to France"; Marie's song of the regiment, "All Men confess it"; her pretty duet with Tony, "No longer can I doubt it"; and her touching adieu to the regiment, "Farewell, a Long Farewell."

In the second act the principal numbers are the "Rataplan" (repeated); Marie's aria, "By the Glitter of Greatness and Riches"; the soldiers' spirited choral appeal, "We have come our Child to free"; Tony's romance, "That I might live in her Dear Sight"; and the effective trio, "Once again, what Delight," leading to the exultant finale. The music of the opera is light, but exceedingly brilliant, and the leading rôles have always been esteemed by great artists. That of Marie was a favorite one with Jenny Lind, Patti, Sontag, and Albani.