

but he dare not even stop to look out at them.

One day a fine automobile stopped in front of the apartment, and Herr Schule stepped out. A dozen voices told him where the Levines lived, and he went in. "Mein Gott, the nursery of genius!" he muttered to himself. "What a place to live!"

Isidore's mother opened the door and retreated into the room.

"You are Isidore's mother," said Herr Schule, without going over the mat at the door. "Good! Tomorrow week I give a recital. Isidore shall play. Here are a dozen tickets and \$15. Get a velvet suit made so. That is all right, eh?"

And leaving Mrs. Levine nodding her head vigorously, he went back to the automobile as fastidiously as he had stepped out of it.

Isidore's father crumbled somewhat when he heard:

"Money he makes by Isidore, and—"

But his wife counseled to have patience.

"First Isidore must make a name, and then he can ask what he likes. Meanwhile, go with him to Geoffrin's; he will make a good suit for \$8."

♦ ♦ ♦

III.

ON THE afternoon of the recital Herr Schule's car called for Isidore, who felt ill at ease in his new suit. His father and mother kissed him solemnly on the brow as he went. They were going by street car.

In the anteroom of the concert hall Isidore found Herr Schule and a lady who was wonderfully dressed and had such a fine perfume about her; but, most of all, Isidore liked her eyes and mouth, which were laughing and merry.

When Isidore came in she said in a loud tone of dismay:

"But he is little and thin!"  
"Wait till you hear him play, my dear," replied Herr Schule, examining Isidore's suit with a frown. "It is not right, but it will do. You are not afraid, Isidore?"

Isidore nervously rubbed one foot against the other.

"He's afraid of you," said the lady indignantly. "Come to me, Isidore."

Advancing timidly, Isidore felt a pair of cool arms around his neck and a warm kiss on his lips.

"Now you are not afraid, little boy!" the lady said, laughing. "Do I not know, very time I go on—"

"Such a child you are, Lucia!" said Herr Schule, smiling. "If they knew outside that you were giving kisses, how jealous they would be!"

"And you are jealous, eh?" asked this surprising lady, rising and patting his cheek.

As Herr Schule led Isidore out of the room the master whispered:

"Never forget, my boy, when you grow up, that the great singer Cavalina kissed you before your first recital. Now you will do wonders!"

Isidore felt himself led blindly to the piano. He dare not raise his eyes. There was a strange rustling noise, and then came a thunder of hand-claps. He heard Herr Schule tell him to bow, and he bowed, still with his eyes shut. His heart was beating so fast that he could hardly breathe.

Herr Schule's whisper reached him as he felt the stool and climbed upon it.

"Now, Isidore!"

He wakened to see the keys before him, and he played. He played again and again. All he knew was that he was playing, and that people wanted to hear him.

At last Herr Schule took his hand, and side by side they bowed. What a noise there was!

As Isidore came into the anteroom again he stumbled and felt the singer's arms about him; then he forgot everything. When he opened his eyes he was lying on a couch, and there was a group

of people about him. They were saying: "The excitement—not very strong—poor little fellow!"

Herr Schule put his arm about him. "You are all right, Isidore, all right, my boy! You have made such a success! Never have I seen such enthusiasm. You played wonderfully! And here are your papa and your mamma."

Isidore saw them standing by him, his father very white, his mother very red and flustered by the fine company.

"I am so tired," he breathed weakly.

"You must be very good to him," Mme. Cavalina said impulsively to the sallow man in the shabby frock coat and the stout woman in the purple dress.

♦ ♦ ♦

What strange parents for such a gifted child! Yet who knew what germ of divine melody lurked in the souls of those two people?

Isidore's father nodded, and his mother broke into loud assurances. Isidore saw Herr Schule hand his father a piece of paper, and his father stand holding it with staring eyes.

"Two hundred dollars!" he gasped.

"For Isidore," Herr Schule said gravely.

Isidore was overjoyed. He was a regular business man now, and he was going to make lots of money for his father and mother. What fine things he could buy

them! For himself he would get a box of toy soldiers; and he would surely have a rest now. How tired he was!

He fell asleep in the car, and did not know that Herr Schule's chauffeur carried him upstairs. When he wakened again he was lying on his bed, and his mother was shaking him and telling him that supper was ready. Already the news had spread, and the neighbors kept coming into the apartment and making a fuss over such a smart boy.

Next day the Levines moved into a larger apartment, and the first installment was paid on a new piano. When Isidore

hours at the piano, till his back ached and his fingers were numb.

Herr Schule had arranged another recital for Saturday afternoon. By Friday morning Isidore's head ached as if it would split. He wanted to lie in bed, to shut his eyes and forget. In his ears he heard an endless repetition of his pieces. Over and over again an invisible piano played them, and his mind was forced to follow every bar, protesting and shrinking.

On Saturday he let his mother tie his soft tie without a word, but his silence was that of fear. He was frightened.

His father accompanied him in the car, and held his hand tightly, as if he thought Isidore would try to run away.

Herr Schule was in great spirits. The concert hall was packed. All the critics were there. Isidore's chance had come, and he, Herr Schule, had done it. Yes, of course, his old friend Strunsky had accomplished a little with his antiquated methods.

Strunsky was there in the anteroom, sitting and smiling his wrinkled grin. As Isidore came in the old man's face became grave.

"What are you doing to the boy?" he whispered to Schule. "He is ill—he is frightened!"

Herr Schule shook his head.

"He is always like that till he gets to the piano."

Strunsky moistened his lips.

"Some day, Schule, my friend—" he began.

"You are all right, my boy?" asked Herr Schule.

Isidore's lip trembled. He wanted to beg to be allowed to go away, anywhere, but his father answered for him with a slavish bow:

"A little cold, mein herr, that is all."

"Come, Isidore," commanded Herr Schule, "they are waiting. Coming, Strunsky?"

"No, I wait here. I am not dressed. I can hear quite well," answered his old friend.

Mr. Strunsky heard the swell of applause, and sat up erect. His pupil, yes, his pupil, whom he had found! Then the first chords, a little feeble; and then—ach, Gott, how his boy played! A little older, a little more strength in those frail arms and fingers, and he would be greater than them all!

A tear fell from his eye on his trembling hand, and he dashed it off angrily. An old fool, that was what he was! Well, if he wanted to cry for joy, what then? There was no one left in the room to see him; and other tears trickled down the wrinkles of the queer, smiling old face.

Suddenly he started. The music had stopped with a discordant crash. There was a strange noise—voices—Herr Schule speaking. What was happening? He must see.

Rising, he rushed to the door, to meet Schule, who was carrying Isidore, white-faced and limp, in his arms.

Strunsky's heart broke within him.

"I knew it!" he screamed harshly. "You have killed him, Schule; you have killed the boy!"

Schule laid Isidore on the couch. A moment later a doctor arrived.

"He fainted," explained Schule.

Isidore's father had come in, and was

(Continued on Page 11)



DOROTHY DULIN

All he knew was that he was playing and that people wanted to hear him.