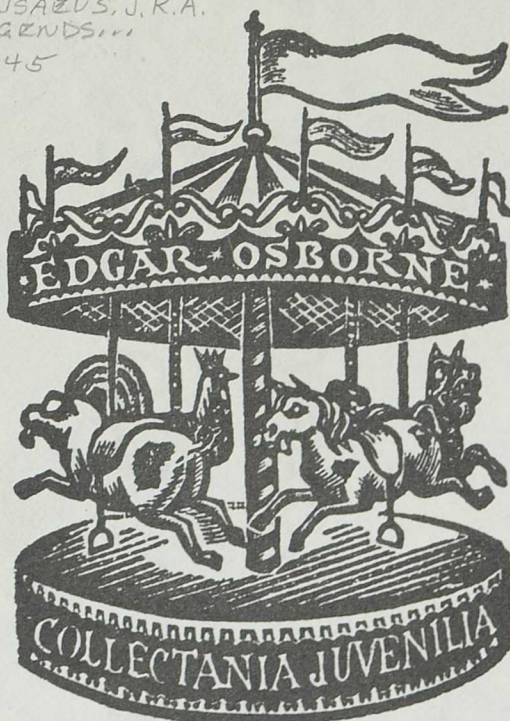




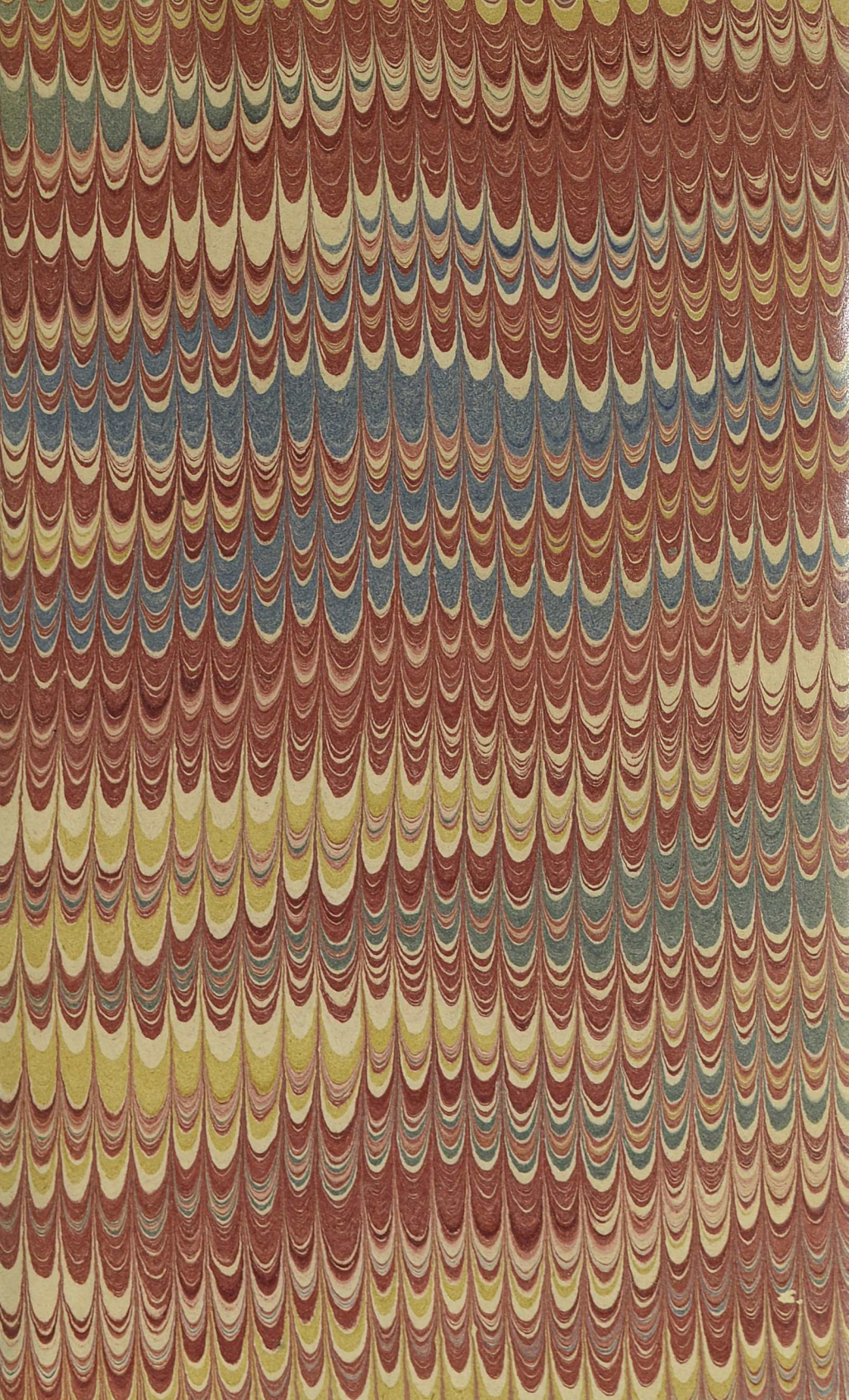


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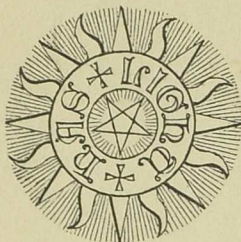
John L. Rosenstiel  
from J. E. L.

Christmas 1857.



352

# The Holiday Library.



EDITED BY WILLIAM HAZLITT, ESQ.

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.

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LEGENDS OF RUBEZAH, L,

AND OTHER TALES.













J. Exleben, lith

Day & Haghe, lith<sup>rs</sup> to the Queen.

## THE COUNT'S FIRST CONTEST.

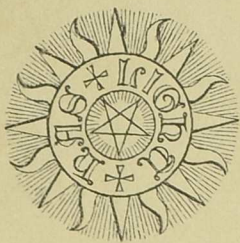


# Legends of Rubezahl,

AND OTHER TALES.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

Musäus.



LONDON:

JOSEPH CUNDALL, 12 OLD BOND STREET.

1845.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY REYNELL AND WEIGHT,  
LITTLE, PULTENEY STREET.

## PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

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JOHN AUGUSTUS MUSÄUS was born at Jena, in 1735 ; his father was a provincial judge. A relation, an ecclesiastical superintendent, deeming him a child of good promise, took him to Eisenach, where he remained till he was nineteen years of age.

He afterwards spent three years at Jena, studied theology, and took a doctor's degree in the sciences. Having completed his education, he returned to his father. In expectation of the situation of a pastor, he frequently preached with success. A cure in the country becoming vacant, Musäus was proposed to fill it, but the parishioners would not have him for their pastor, because he had sometimes



danced. This circumstance disgusted him with the ecclesiastical condition.

The 'Grandison' of Richardson was much admired in Germany at this period. Musäus, who did not sympathise in this admiration, published in 1760, his 'Grandison the Second,' a parody replete with vivid satire, which was reprinted in 1781.

He next, after a considerable interval, published the 'Physiognomical Travels,' in which he ridiculed the rage for Lavater's system, then prevalent in Germany. This production had the greatest success, and as soon as the author (who at first was anonymous), had declared himself, he acquired a high degree of celebrity. Strangers and foreigners now went to Weimar on purpose to see Musäus ; but, however this modest man might rejoice in having found a means to ameliorate the circumstances of his family, he was not to be intoxicated by applause. Some time after this, Musäus took it into contemplation to write the 'Popular Tales of the Germans.' We

are assured, that in order to procure the materials necessary for this work, he, in the evenings, assembled at his house the old women, children, and veteran soldiers of his neighbourhood, where, while spinning, smoking, or at play, each, in succession, told his or her story. These narrators Musäus recompensed with a halfpenny a story, and his pen afterwards communicated to the tales, which he selected, its natural poignancy, raciness, and originality.

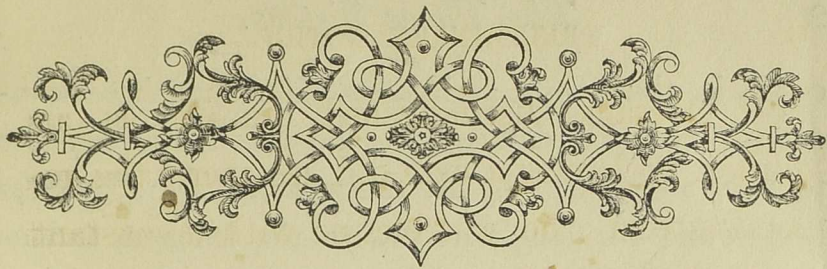
The great success of the ‘*Volksmarchen*,’ first published in 1782, rendered Musäus a prominently favourite author of the Germans. The ‘*Apparitions of Friend Heins*,’ which he published in 1786, though not devoid of wit, are, upon the whole, of a contemplative and philosophic character.

Musäus commenced a new collection of tales, under the title of ‘*Ostrich Plumes*,’ but of these, the first volume only is his, for he died of an aneurism in the heart, on the 28th of October, 1787, at the age of fifty-two.



If Musäus distinguished himself as an author, no less as a man did he merit the general esteem ; he was blessed with a constant gaiety of disposition, and ever found his greatest happiness in being of service to his friends. He was the last to discover the value of his works. His pleasures, like his tastes, were simple. His satires made him no enemies, for his arrows were not envenomed, his sprightliness was free from gall. He spared not the ridiculous, but he never unveiled the weaknesses and infirmities of his friends. Of himself he was less tender ; with rich humour, and with the utmost phlegm, did he burlesque his own defects.

His death deprived society of a good and worthy man, and a witty and original author, who well knew how, at once to amuse and to instruct his readers. Musäus was a perfect master of his own language, and wrote it in the greatest purity. He possessed the art of reviving with effect expressions and terms fallen into disuse ; he sometimes even ven-



THE BOOKS OF THE  
**Chronicle of the Three Sisters.**

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BOOK I.

**T**HERE was once a very, very rich Count, who wasted his substance by the most lavish expenditure. He lived in king-like style, keeping open house every day in the year. Whoever claimed his hospitality, whether knight or squire, was feasted sumptuously for three long days; and no guest but what left him delighted with the entertainment he had received. He was terribly fond of gambling; his Court swarmed with golden-haired pages, running footmen, and heyducs in splendid liveries, and his stables absolutely ran over with countless horses and hounds. His treasures at last became exhausted by all this profusion. He mortgaged one town after another, sold his jewels and plate, dismissed his servants, and shot his dogs; and of all his vast wealth nothing remained but an old



castle in the woods, a virtuous wife, and three wondrously beautiful daughters. To this castle went he to live, abandoned by all the world. The Countess herself and her daughters saw to the kitchen, and as none of them knew anything about cookery, they could only boil potatoes. This frugal fare suited Papa's taste so little, that he grew peevish and ill-tempered, and went about the great rambling, empty house swearing and storming, till the bare walls rung again with his passion. One fine summer's morning he snatched up his hunting spear in a fit of sheer spleen, and set off to the forest to strike a deer, or even any smaller game, so that he might have a more savoury meal than usual.

Of this forest there ran a tale that it was haunted by ungentle spirits. Many a wanderer had lost his way in its intricacies and never been seen again, having been either throttled by wicked gnomes, or torn to pieces by wild beasts. The Count did not at all believe in supernatural agency, and had consequently no fear of invisible enemies, gnomes, or hobgoblins; he made his way stoutly over hill and dale into the forest, where he struggled on, through the thickets, without meeting the game he was in search of, until he was thoroughly tired. He then sat down under a fine tall oak, and drew from his pouch a few boiled potatoes and a little salt, his whole stock of provisions for the mid-day's repast.

On raising his eyes by chance just before he began, lo and behold! a terrible great bear was approaching. The poor Count was monstrously frightened at the sight; escape he could not, and he was not equipped for a bear-fight. However, in this extremity he did all he could: he grasped his spear, and stood in an attitude to defend himself as best he might. The monster came nearer and nearer, and then suddenly stopped short, and distinctly growled out these words: "Robber! plunderest thou my honey-tree? Thou canst only atone for such an outrage with thy life."

"Oh, oh!" cried the Count, pitifully; "pray don't eat me up, Master Bear; I don't want your honey at all; I am an honest knight. If you are hungry, pray be pleased to take pot-luck with me."

So saying, he dished up all the potatoes in his hunting cap for the Bear's acceptance. But the latter scorned the Count's fare, and growled out again, in a most surly tone: "Wretch, think'st thou to redeem thy life at such a price. Instantly promise me thy eldest daughter, Wulfild, for my wife, or I'll devour thee on the spot!"

In his fright the Count would have promised the amorous Bear all three of his daughters, and his wife into the bargain, if he had required it, for necessity has no law.

"She shall be yours, Master Bear," said the Count,



beginning to recover himself a little; "but on condition," he added, cunningly, "that you ransom the bride according to the custom of the land, and come yourself to fetch her home."

"Done!" said the Bear, "shake hands upon it," and he presented him his rough paw; "in seven days I will come and ransom her with a hundred weight of gold, and fetch my darling home."

"Done!" said the Count.

And thereupon they parted in peace; the Bear returned leisurely to his den, and the Count losing no time in getting out of the terrible forest, reached home at starlight, utterly worn out.

It stands to reason that a bear which can talk and traffic rationally, like a man, is not a natural but an enchanted bear. This the Count made up his mind to; and he accordingly determined to chouse his shaggy son-in-law elect, by entrenching himself in his stronghold, so that it would be impossible for the Bear to enter, when he should come to fetch his bride on the appointed day. "For," thought he, "though an enchanted bear may have the gifts of speech and reason, still he is after all only a bear, and has in all other respects merely the qualities of an ordinary animal; so that he can't fly like a bird, or creep through the keyhole of a locked-up room like a spirit, any more than he can pass through the eye of a needle."

On the following day he acquainted his wife and

the young ladies with his adventure in the forest. Miss Wulfild swooned away with horror, when she heard that she was to be married to a frightful bear; Mamma wrung her hands and wept aloud, and the other sisters shivered and shook with woe and wonder. As for Papa, he went out and surveyed the walls and the moat that surrounded the castle, and examined the iron gate to see that it was firm and fast; he then raised the drawbridge, closed every entrance, and lastly went up into the watch-tower where he found a little chamber built in the wall under the battlements, and there he shut up the young lady, who tore her fine flaxen hair, and nearly cried her blue eyes out of her head.

Six days passed away; the seventh had just dawned, when a loud clattering noise proceeded from the forest, just as if the wild hunt was abroad. Whips cracked, horns sounded, horses pranced, and wheels rattled. A splendid state carriage, surrounded by horsemen, rolled over the plain, and speedily reached the castle door. All the bolts shot back, the door flew open, the drawbridge fell, and a young prince, handsome as the day, and dressed in velvet and cloth of silver, stepped out of the carriage. Round his neck, thrice wound, was a chain of gold, solid enough to bear a man's weight; on his hat he wore a string of pearls and diamonds that would have dazzled your eyes to look at; the clasp that fastened his ostrich plume



was worth a dukedom at least. He flew up the winding staircase with the rapidity of the whirlwind, and in the twinkling of an eye brought down the trembling bride in his arms.

The uproar awakened the Count from his morning's slumber; he jumped out of bed and threw open the window; and when he saw the horses and the carriage, and the knights and the troopers, in the courtyard, and his daughter in the arms of a strange man, who was lifting her into the bridal coach, which then set off with the rest of the party through the castle-gate, a pang shot through his heart, and he cried out in a lamentable tone: "Farewell, daughter mine! God be with thee, thou Bear's bride!"

Wulfild heard her father's voice, and waved her handkerchief from the carriage-window, as if to bid him adieu.

The parents were in utter consternation at the loss of their daughter, and looked at each other in mute dismay. Then Mamma would not believe her eyes, and determining that the whole affair was delusion and witchcraft, snatched up her bunch of keys, ran up the watch-tower and opened the cell, where she found neither her daughter, nor any of her clothes; but on the table lay a silver key, of which she took possession; as she chanced to look through the window, she saw a cloud of dust in the distance, towards the eastern horizon, and heard the clatter and

acclamations of the bridal party, till they entered the forest. Full of sorrow, the Countess came down from the tower, put on mourning, strewed her head with ashes, and wept for three whole days, her husband and daughters sharing to the full her grief and lamentations. On the fourth day the Count left the house of mourning, in order to have a little fresh air, when as he crossed the court-yard, what should he see but a beautiful great ebony chest standing there, well secured and very heavy. He readily guessed what it contained. The Countess gave him the key, he opened it, and found therein a hundred weight of gold, all in doubloons and of one coinage. Joyful at this discovery, he forgot all his troubles, bought horses and falcons, and fine clothes for his wife and his dear daughters, hired servants, and set to work again guzzling and gormandizing, till he had drained the chest of the last doubloon. Then he ran into debt, and then the creditors came like a flock of harpies, and regularly cleared out the castle, leaving nothing in it but an old falcon. The Countess and her daughters were again obliged to boil potatoes, while the husband wandered about in the fields all day long with his bird, overcome with ennui and vexation.

One day that he had cast his hawk, it rose high up in the air, and would not return to his hand, call as he might. The Count followed his flight, as well as he could, over the vast plain; the bird went on straight



towards the dread forest, which the Count did not choose foolhardily to tempt again, and accordingly he gave up his dear friend as lost. All of a sudden a mighty eagle rose above the forest trees, and pursued the falcon, which no sooner saw that it was threatened by an enemy so much stronger than itself, than it flew with the speed of an arrow back to its master to seek for protection. But the eagle darted down from aloft, and striking one of its vast talons into the Count's shoulder, crushed the trusty falcon with the other. The Count, at once amazed and alarmed, endeavoured with his spear to free himself from the feathered monster, striking and thrusting fiercely at his foe. But the eagle seized the hunting spear, and having shivered it like a reed, screamed these words loud into his ear: "Audacious creature, how dar'st thou disturb my airy dominions with thy sport? Thou canst only atone for such an outrage with thy life."

The Count at once guessing from the bird's speech what sort of an adventure was likely to ensue, took courage and said: "Softly, Sir Eagle, softly! What harm have I done you? My falcon has paid for his sins, and I'll make him over to you, to satisfy your hunger."

"No!" screamed the Eagle; "I happen just to-day to have a fancy for man's flesh, and you seem a nice fat morsel."

“Pardon me, Master Eagle,” cried the Count in agonized alarm, “ask what you will of me, and you shall have it; only spare my life!”

“Well,” replied the horrible Eagle after a pause, “I’ll take you at your word; you have two handsome daughters, and I want a wife. Promise me your Adelheid in marriage, and I’ll let you go in peace, and ransom her with two golden ingots of a hundred weight each. In seven weeks I shall fetch my darling home.”

So saying the monster soared towards the sky, and disappeared in the clouds.

All is fish that comes to net for poor people. When papa found that the trade in his daughters was so profitable, he consoled himself for their loss. This time he went home in capital spirits, and carefully concealed his adventure, partly to avoid the reproaches which he dreaded from the Countess, and partly not to afflict his dear girl before the time came. For appearance sake, however, he made a great lamentation about the lost falcon, which he said had flown away. Miss Adelheid was the cleverest spinster in all the land. She was also an excellent weaver, and had just then cut from the loom a valuable piece of linen, as fine as cambric, which she bleached on a grass plat, not far from the castle. Six weeks and six days flew by without the beautiful spinster having the slightest misgiving



of the fate that awaited her. Her father, indeed, who began to be somewhat down-hearted as the time fixed for fetching her away drew nigh, had privately given her many a hint of it, either relating some ominous dream he had had, or reminding her of the long since forgotten Wulfild; but Adelheid, who was of a light joyous turn of mind, only thought it was her father's heavy temperament that put these hypochondriacal whimsies into his head. And so, on the seventh day of the seventh week, she slipped away as usual, at early dawn, light as air, to the bleaching-ground, and spread out her piece of linen that it might get saturated with the dew. When she had arranged this matter, and was looking about her a little, she perceived a splendid procession of knights and pages prancing along towards the castle. As her toilet was incomplete, she hid herself behind a wild rosebush that was in full bloom, whence she peeped out to see the gorgeous cavalcade as it passed. The handsomest knight of the whole throng, a slim young man with open vizor, bounded towards the rosebush, and said in a very gentle voice: "I seek thee, I see thee, beautiful beloved; hide not thyself; but haste, that I may put thee behind me on the horse, thou lovely Eagle's bride."

Adelheid knew not what in the world to think when she heard these words. The handsome knight pleased her well enough, but the title, "Eagle's

bride," made the blood freeze in her veins; she sank fainting on the ground, and when she came to her senses, she found herself in the arms of the amiable knight, on the road to the forest.

Meantime Mamma had prepared breakfast; and as Adelheid did not make her appearance, she sent her youngest daughter to see where she was. As the messenger did not return, mamma thought this boded no good, and went to see why her daughter stayed so long; but mamma did not return either. Papa perceived what was going on; his heart went thump! thump! and he slunk off to the grass plat, where both mother and daughter were still looking for Adelheid, and anxiously calling out her name; and he, too, set to work shouting at the top of his voice, though he knew perfectly well that all shouting and seeking were equally fruitless. By-and-by his road took him near the rosebush, where he perceived some objects glittering, which, on examining them more closely, he found to be a couple of golden eggs, each of a hundred weight. He could now no longer help telling his wife their daughter's adventure.

"O shameless soul-kidnapper!" she cried; "O vile daughter-murderer! Is it thus thou infamously sacrificest thine own flesh and blood to Moloch, for the sake of filthy lucre?"

The Count, who had, however, but an indifferent



stock of eloquence, defended himself for awhile as best he might, offering as an excuse for his conduct, the pressing danger his life was in at the time: the inconsolable mother would not hear a word he had to say, but continued heaping the bitterest reproaches upon him. He therefore adopted that most infallible method of putting an end to all contests—he held his tongue, and let his lady talk as long as she pleased, and meantime proceeded to secure the golden eggs, by rolling them slowly before him to the castle. Then he wore family mourning three days, for decency's sake; after which he thought of nothing else but resuming his former mode of life.

In a short time the castle again became the abode of pleasure, the Elysium of hungry, spunging parasites. Balls, tournaments, and splendid feasts, became every-day events. Miss Bertha shone as brightly in the eyes of the stately knights who repaired to her father's court, as the silver moon does to the sentimental rambler on a serene summer's night. It was she who bestowed the prize at every tournament, and led off the dance in the evening with the victorious knight. The noble hospitality of the Count, and the rare beauty of his daughter, brought to their halls knights of noblest birth, from the most distant parts of the land. Of these a dozen at the least essayed to win the heart of the rich heiress; but amongst so many suitors the choice was

difficult, where each new comer seemed to surpass his predecessor in nobility and good looks.

The beautiful Bertha chose and doubted, chose and doubted so long, that at last the golden ingots, to which the Count had by no means applied the file sparingly, had dwindled down from roc's eggs to mere hazel nuts.

The Count's finances having thus again fallen into their former low estate, the tournaments were given up, knights and squires disappeared, the castle again became a desert, and the distinguished family returned to their frugal potato diet. The Count once more wandered about the fields, in doleful dumps, longing for a fresh adventure, but meeting with none for a long time, though he went as near the enchanted forest as he dared.

One day he followed a covey of partridges so far that he came close upon the dreaded wood, and although he did not venture in, he kept walking along its skirts for some way, till, lo and behold! he saw before him an immense piece of water he had never set eyes on before, beneath whose clear silver surfaces countless trout were swimming about. This discovery delighted him very much, for the pond had a most unsuspecting appearance; he therefore hastened home and made a net, and the next morning, betimes, there stood he on the shore, ready for fishing. To complete his good fortune, what



should he see among the reeds but a little boat with an oar. Jumping into this, he rowed vigorously about the pond, and then casting his net, caught more trout at one draught than he could possibly carry, with which he made for the shore, delighted with his prize. About a stone's throw from land, however, the boat suddenly stopped in its course, and remained as immovable as if it had stuck to the bottom of the pond. The Count thought this must be the case, and tugged with all his might to set it afloat again, but in vain. The waters barred its progress on every side, above whose surface the vessel seemed to be lifted high, high, as though it were perched on a rock. The poor fisherman could not at all tell what to make of it, and felt excessively uncomfortable. Although the boat was as if nailed to the spot, the banks appeared to recede on every side, the pond extended itself out into a great lake, the waves began to swell and roar and foam, and he perceived to his amazement and alarm that he and his boat were borne upon the back of an enormous fish. He resigned himself to his fate, though of course not a little anxious to see what turn things would take. On a sudden the fish plunged under water, and the boat was again set afloat, but a moment after the monster of the lake re-appeared on its surface, and opening a hideous throat as big as a moderate-sized crater, from its dark abyss, as from a subterraneous

vault, sounded forth deep and distinct these words: "Audacious fisher! how durst thou thus murder my subjects? Thou canst only atone for such an outrage with thy life!"

The Count was by this time so used to such adventures, that he knew exactly how to behave himself. Speedily recovering from his first alarm, when he thus knew that the fish would be willing to listen to reason, he answered quite boldly: "Master Behemoth, do not forget the rights of hospitality; grant me a dish of fish out of your pond, and if you will favour me with a visit, my kitchen and cellar shall be open to you in return."

"Stay, stay," replied the monster, "we are not quite such good friends as all that; know'st thou not that might is right; that the strongest eats the weakest? Thou stealest my subjects to swallow them, and I swallow thee!"

Hereupon the grim fish opened his jaws still wider, as if he would swallow man and boat and trout and all. "Ah, spare my life, spare my life," cried the Count, "You see I am but a sorry breakfast for your whaleship's stomach."

The enormous fish seemed to consider awhile: "Well," said he, "I know thou hast a pretty daughter, promise her to me for a wife, and take thy life in exchange."

When the Count heard the fish take this tone, he laid aside all trace of fear. "She is quite at your



service," said he, "you are a gallant son-in-law, to whom no honest father could refuse his child. But what will you lay down for your bride, according to the custom of the land?"

"I have neither gold nor silver," answered the Fish, "but at the bottom of this lake lies a great treasure of pearl shells. Thou hast only to ask and to have."

"Done," replied the Count; "three bushels of pearls are next to nothing for a pretty bride."

"They are thine," said the Fish, "and mine the bride; in seven months I shall fetch my darling home."

Hereupon he beat the waves lustily with his tail, and sent the boat ashore.

The Count took his trout home, had them boiled, and, with the Countess and the beautiful Bertha, enjoyed the Carthusian meal exceedingly. The poor girl little dreamed how dear this meal was to cost her.

Well, the moon increased and diminished six times, and the Count had nearly forgotten his adventure; but as she became rounder and rounder for the seventh time, he thought of the impending catastrophe, and, in order not to witness it, slipped away on a little excursion into the country. At the sultry hour of noon, on the day of the full moon, a gallant band of knights galloped up to the castle gates.

The Countess, alarmed at the presence of so many strange visitors, hesitated whether to admit

them or not; however, when a knight, well known to her, announced himself, she no longer objected. He had often, in the days of their prosperity and profusion, attended the tournaments at the castle, had manifested rare skill in the joust, had received many a prize from the fair Bertha's hand, and led off many a dance with her; but at the time of the change in the Count's fortunes, he had disappeared with the other knights. The worthy Countess was ashamed of having her poverty exposed to the noble chevalier and his suite, for she had nothing to serve up for their refreshment.

He, however, accosted her in a most friendly manner, and requested nothing but a draught of pure water from the castle well, just as he used to do erewhile, for he had never drunk wine, and had, indeed, been therefore called in joke the Water Knight.

The fair Bertha hastened, at her mother's bidding, to the well, filled a jug, then poured its sparkling contents into a crystal cup, and, after putting it to her lips, presented it to the Knight. He received it from her delicate hand, and placing his mouth to the spot where her coral lips had touched the vase, pledged her with ineffable delight.

The Countess meantime was in the greatest embarrassment at not being able to offer her guest anything for breakfast; at length she recollected that there was



a juicy water melon, just ripe, in the castle garden. She ran to the spot, and in a minute had plucked the melon and laid it on an earthen plate, decked with vine leaves and the prettiest and most odoriferous flowers, as an offering for her guest. On returning from the garden she found the court yard empty and silent, without either horses or horsemen, and, going in doors, she saw as little of knight or squire. In terrible affright she called for her daughter Bertha; there was no answer; she sought for her all over the house; no daughter was to be found. In the hall were placed three bags, made of new canvas, which she had not remarked in her first alarm, and which felt outside as if they were filled with peas; her affliction did not allow her to search any further at the time. The good mother gave herself entirely up to grief, weeping aloud till evening, when her husband returned, and found her in terrible distress. She could not conceal from him what had happened though she would fain have done so, for she dreaded his reproaches for having let an unknown knight into the castle, who had been thus enabled to carry off their beloved daughter. But the Count, who comforted her very affectionately, seemed most interested about the bags of peas she had mentioned, and going out forthwith to look at them, opened one in her presence. What was the astonishment of the afflicted Countess when there rolled out fine pearls, as large

as the big peas in the garden, perfectly round, delicately pierced, and of the purest water. She clearly perceived that her daughter's ravisher had paid every maternal tear with a pearl, and, imbued with an exalted opinion of his rank and riches, was consoled with the thought that this son-in-law, at all events, was no monster, but a stalwart and stately knight, an error which the Count took care not to rectify.

The parents, it is true, had now parted with all their beautiful daughters, but in return they were possessed of an immense treasure. The Count soon converted a portion of it into money. From morning to night the castle was swarming with merchants and Jews, bargaining for the precious pearls. The Count redeemed his towns and estates, let his castle in the woods, and returned to his former capital where he resumed once more his princely state, no longer, however, as a reckless spendthrift, but as a hospitable dignitary of the empire; for he had no more daughters left to barter away. The noble couple were now exceedingly well off, but the Countess could not get over the loss of her daughters; she constantly wore mourning, and hardly ever smiled. For a long time she hoped to see her Bertha again, with the wealthy Knight of the Pearls, and as often as a stranger was announced at their court, she thought it was her son-in-law returning. At last the Count, who could not find it in his heart to feed these fallacious hopes any

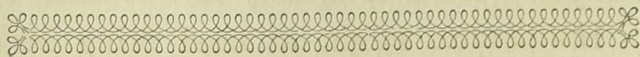


longer, confessed to her that this magnificent son-in-law was none other than an abominable fish.

“Alas!” sighed the Countess, “what an unhappy mother am I! Was I only blessed with children to see them become the prey of ferocious monsters! What are all the treasures in the world to a childless mother!”

“Dear wife,” said the Count, “take comfort; grieve as we may, we cannot recal what has been done, so make thyself content with things as they are.”

But the Countess was not to be so consoled, and she went on mourning, mourning, oh! so mournfully! ever wishing that death would come and end her woes, but he came not.



## BOOK II.

ALL the damsels and waiting women about the Countess's person fully shared in the grief of their kind lady, weeping and lamenting with her, though endeavouring at other times to cheer her up with songs and music; but she was no longer capable of being so amused. Each, moreover, gave some sage advice as to the best means of exorcising the foul fiend Melancholy, but nothing could be devised to lessen the Countess's sorrow. The damsel whose

office it was to present her with water for washing her hands was, though wiser, more diffident than all her companions, and stood high in her mistress's esteem; she had a feeling heart, and often shed tears for her lady's sorrows. From fear of being thought obtrusive she had hitherto kept her thoughts to herself; but at length she could no longer resist the secret impulse she felt to communicate her advice. "Noble lady," said she, "would you but listen to me I could tell you a means of healing the wounds of your heart."

The Countess said: "Speak."

"Not far from hence," continued the damsel, "there lives in a solitary grotto a pious hermit, to whom many pilgrims apply for help in their various exigencies. What if you were to seek help and consolation from him? His prayers might at least bring back your peace of mind."

The Countess approved of the plan; she put on a pilgrim's dress, and repairing to the holy hermit, told him her troubles, and giving him a rosary of pearls, asked for his blessing. The good man's prayers in her behalf were attended with such happy effect, that ere a year had revolved, the Countess's sorrows were entirely removed by the birth of a son.

Great was the joy of the parents at this accession, but lately so altogether unexpected. The whole county became the scene of festivity and rejoicing for



the birth of the young heir. The father named him Reinald the Wonder-Child. The boy was as lovely as Cupid himself, and the greatest possible pains were taken with his education. He grew up strong in limb, sound of heart, the joy of his father and the comfort of his mother, who loved him as the apple of her eye. Yet, though he was the darling of her heart, the recollection of her daughters could not be erased from her thoughts. And often, when she held the smiling little Reinald in her arms, a tear would drop upon his cheek, and when the sweet boy grew a little older, he often asked sorrowfully: "Good mother, why do you weep?" But the Countess purposely concealed from him the cause of her secret grief; for, except her husband, nobody knew what had become of the three young Countesses. Some gossips said they had been carried off by knights errant, which, in those days, was no unfrequent occurrence; while others again were sure they had seen them in the suite of the Queen of Burgundy or of the Countess of Flanders. At length Reinald, by a thousand little arts and caresses, managed to worm the secret out of his fond mother; she related to him the adventures of his three sisters, with all the circumstances, and he garnered up in his heart every word of the wondrous tale. He had now no other wish than to be of an age to bear arms, so that he might sally forth, seek his sisters in the enchanted forest, and deliver them from their

magic thralldom. No sooner was he knighted than he begged his father's permission to join the army in Flanders, as he pretended. The Count was delighted with his son's chivalric spirit, and gave him horses and arms, esquires and varlets, and sped him on his way with his blessing; the anxious mother most unwillingly gave her consent to his departure.

The young knight had no sooner turned his back on his native town than he quitted the high road and galloped off with romantic courage to the castle in the woods, and claimed hospitality of his father's tenant, who received him with the most respectful welcome. Early on the following morning, while all the other inmates of the castle were still slumbering, he saddled his horse and hastened with youthful fire and courage to the enchanted forest. The further he penetrated into its gloomy recesses the thicker they became, while ever and anon the steep rocks rang with the sound of his horse's hoofs. All around him was solitary and silent; at length the thickly-grown trees seemed to bar all further ingress, out of pity to the venturous youth. He got down from his horse, and leaving it to graze, cleared a way for himself through the thicket with his sword, climbing over the steep rocks, and sliding down the precipices. After a world of toil he reached a narrow winding valley, through which a clear brook meandered. Following its serpentine course he perceived, at some distance



before him, the mouth of a cavern hollowed out in the rock, in front of which stood what appeared to be a human figure, that seemed to move. The daring Reinald hastened on, and making his way among the trees close up to the spot, surveyed the scene from behind the lofty oaks, and saw a lady sitting on the grass, caressing a little ugly bear that she held in her lap, while a larger one was gambolling about her, playing all sorts of antics, and toppling in a ludicrous manner, evidently to the lady's great amusement. From what his mother had told him, Reinald knew that he saw before him his sister Wulfild, and at once sprung forth from his hiding place to make himself known to her. She no sooner perceived the young man than she screamed aloud, let the little bear fall on the grass, and hastily rising, approached the stranger and said to him, with a sorrowful voice and an anxious countenance: "Oh! unhappy youth, what evil star has led thee to this forest? Here lives a fierce bear who eats up every human being that comes near his dwelling. Fly, and save thyself."

He bowed modestly to the beautiful lady, and answered: "Fear not, sweet mistress; I know this forest and its strange stories, and I am come to break the spell that keeps you here a prisoner."

"Madman!" cried she, "who art thou that dar'st seek to break this powerful spell, and how think'st thou to perform it?"



J. Eixleben, lith.

Day & Haghe, lith<sup>rs</sup> to the Queen

WULFILD DISCOVERED BY REINALD.





“With this trusty arm and this good sword,” replied he; “I am Reinald, called the Wonder-Child, son of the Count who was deprived of his three daughters by this enchanted forest; are you not Wulfd, his first-born?”

These words perfectly bewildered the lady, and she gazed at the youth in speechless astonishment. He availed himself of this pause, and proved his identity by so many family particulars that she could no longer doubt he was her brother. She embraced him tenderly, but her knees had nearly given way under her with fright when she thought of the manifest danger his life was exposed to.

The beautiful Wulfd then led her dear guest into the cavern to seek for a safe corner to conceal him in. In this large, gloomy chamber lay on one side a heap of moss that served as a couch for the Bear and his cubs; opposite this was a splendid bed, hung with red damask and ornamented with gold lace, for the lady. Under this bed Reinald was fain to creep, and settle himself in a place as quickly as he could, there to await his fate. The least sound was forbidden him on his life, and his anxious sister especially entreated him not to cough or sneeze.

The venturous youth was no sooner safely lodged in his hiding place than the terrible Bear came in growling, and snuffled about everywhere with his bloody snout; he had tracked the knight's noble steed



in the forest, and had torn him to pieces. Wulfild sat on her stately bed as though she were on thorns, her heart oppressed with fear and anguish, for she saw at once that his lordship was in his bearish humour; what if he had got an inkling of his uninvited guest! She did not, however, fail to caress him tenderly, and to stroke his back gently with her velvet-soft hand, and to rub his ears; but the peevish animal seem to pay very little attention to these fondlings.

“I scent man’s flesh,” growled the glutton out of his terrific jaws.

“My darling Bear,” said the lady, “you are mistaken; how could any human being find his way into these dismal solitudes?”

“I scent man’s flesh,” repeated the monster, doggedly, and he began prying all round his wife’s silken bed, by no means to the knight’s satisfaction, who, notwithstanding his courage, felt drops of cold perspiration upon his forehead. Meantime the very desperation of the case inspired the lady with resolution and boldness: “Friend Bruin,” said she, “you go rather too far for my patience; get away from my bed, or I shall be seriously angry.”

Long Snout did not seem to care much for this threat, but went on rummaging and prowling round and round the bed. Still, bear as he was, he got occasionally henpecked by his lady; so when he was

just about to thrust his thick head under the bedstead, Wulfd took courage, and gave him such an energetic kick on the side, that he crept very humbly to his moss, where, after a growl, he squatted down and began to suck his paws and lick his cubs. In a short time he fell asleep and snored like a bear, whereupon the affectionate sister refreshed her brother with a glass of sack and a biscuit, and exhorted him to take courage, as the worst of the danger was over. Reinald was so fatigued with his adventure that he too soon fell into a deep sleep, and vied with his bear brother-in-law in snoring.

When he awoke he found himself in a magnificent state bed, in a room hung with silk tapestry. The morning sun peeped in kindly upon him between the openings of the curtains; his clothes and knightly armour were lying on velvet stools beside the bed, with a little silver bell for summoning the servants. Reinald, was perfectly at a loss to understand how he had been transported from the dreadful cave into this splendid palace, and doubted, indeed, whether he were now dreaming or whether the adventure in the forest had been a dream. In order to put an end to this uncertainty he rang the bell. A handsomely-dressed gentleman of the bed-chamber immediately entered to receive his orders, and announced that his sister Wulfd and her husband, Albert the Bear, were impatiently awaiting him. The young Count for some



moments could not recover from his surprise. Then, although the very mention of the Bear threw him into a cold perspiration, he got himself speedily dressed, and came out into the ante-chamber, where he found a numerous retinue of pages, running footmen, and heyducs. Attended by these, he passed through a number of state apartments and ante-rooms to the audience chamber, where his sister received him amid princely magnificence. Beside her were two lovely children, a prince seven years old and a little girl of such tender years that she was still in leading strings. A moment after in came Albert the Bear, who having laid aside the ferocious exterior and the savage qualities of a bear, now appeared the most amiable of princes. Wulfild presented him to her brother, whom Albert embraced with all the warmth of friendship and of fraternal love.

The Prince and his whole Court were subject on certain days to the power of a malignant spell. He had the privilege of being free from the effect of this enchantment every seventh day, from one dawn to the next; but no sooner did the silver stars begin to lose their brightness, and the first dewdrops to sparkle on the grass, than the merciless charm again enthralled him and his; the castle became a steep, inaccessible rock; the delightful park that surrounded it a melancholy desert; the fountains and cascades were turned to dismal swamps, the owner of the castle into a

shaggy bear, the knights and squires into badgers and martens, and the ladies in waiting and maids of honour, and other attendants, into owls and bats, that hooted and wailed all day and all night.

It was on one of these days of disenchantment that Albert fetched his bride home. The beautiful Wulfild, who had cried for six days on hearing that she was to be married to a shaggy bear, was quite consoled when she found herself in the arms of a handsome young knight, who caressed her fondly, and took her to a splendid palace, where the greatest pomp awaited their nuptials. She was received by lovely maidens, adorned with myrtle wreaths, who welcomed her with songs and music, and after disencumbering her of her countrified clothes, dressed her in royal bridal array. Although not vain, she could not conceal her delight on seeing her beautiful form reflected in the crystal glasses that lined the walls of her chamber, and which said a thousand flattering things to her. A sumptuous banquet followed the marriage ceremony, and a splendid state ball concluded the festivities of this day of rejoicing.

Next morning the bride awoke out of a pleasant dream, and was about to wake her husband with a fond kiss, when to her utter amazement, on finding him gone, and on withdrawing the silk curtains, she found herself transported to a dark cave, just sufficiently lighted by the early dawn that gleamed through



the entrance to enable her to perceive a most alarming bear, which was looking at her sorrowfully from out of his corner.

She sunk back on her bed and fainted away with terror. After a time she came to herself, and collected sufficient strength to set up a loud lamentation, to which responded the screeching voices of a hundred owls outside the cave. The sensitive Bear could not endure to witness this woful scene any longer, and felt he must go out under the canopy of heaven to vent his grief and rage at his hard fate. He rose unvioldily from his couch, and went off growling into the depths of the forest, from which he did not return till the seventh day, just before the transformation was to take place. These six dismal days seemed as many years to the inconsolable lady. In the bustle of the wedding festivities, they had neglected to furnish the cupboard attached to the bride's bed with refreshments for her use; for over all inanimate things that the fair Wulfild had immediately touched the spell had no power, though even in her very arms her husband would have become a bear as soon as the hour for the transformation had struck. In the excess of her grief the poor lady languished for two days without thinking of food; but at length the instinct of self-preservation was brought home to her most forcibly by dame Nature, and a violent hunger drove her out of the cave to seek for nourishment.

She scooped a little water in the hollow of her hand out of a neighbouring stream, with which she refreshed her parched lips, and plucked a few hips and blackberries, and then, scarcely knowing what she did, swallowed a handful of acorns that she picked up eagerly, and carried an apronful of them back into the cave with her from mere instinct; for as to her life, so far from caring about it, she wished for nothing so much as death.

With this wish still uppermost in her mind, she fell asleep on the evening of the sixth day, and awoke next morning in the same room she had entered as a bride, where she found everything precisely in the order in which she had left it, and the handsomest and tenderest of husbands by her side, who expressed, in the most touching terms, his deep sympathy for the melancholy condition to which she had been reduced by his unconquerable love for her, and entreated her with tears to forgive him. He then explained the nature of the spell, which was powerless every seventh day, and allowed everything to return to its natural shape. Wulfild was touched by her husband's tenderness; she reflected that, so far from its being a bad bargain in married life, if one day in the seven be happy, none but the fondest couples can boast of even this privilege; in short, she resigned herself to her fate, repaid love with love, and made her Albert the happiest bear



under the sun. In order that she might not again suffer from want of food in the cavern, she took care, at each meal throughout the day, to put on a pair of large pockets, which she filled with sweetmeats, juicy oranges, and other delicious fruits. She likewise retained in the press under the bed her husband's night draught, that was always brought into their chamber, and thus her kitchen and cellar were always sufficiently supplied for the period of the transformation.

She had lived for one-and-twenty years in the enchanted forest, but this length of time had not robbed her of a single youthful charm; and the mutual love of the noble couple retained all its pristine freshness and potency. Dame Nature asserts her rights even when her order is apparently subverted; she watches over them with the utmost jealousy even in the world of enchantment, and forbids all advances and gradual changes of time so long as the concerns of this world are withdrawn from her dominion by the unnatural encroachments of magic. According to the testimony of the holy legend, the seven sleepers of pious memory rose up out of the Roman catacombs, after their slumber of a hundred years, as lively and as vigorous as they went in, and were only one night older. The beautiful Wulfild, therefore, according to our mother Nature's reckoning, had in these one-and-twenty years only lived

three, and was therefore still in the full bloom of woman's life. The same condition held good for her husband and the whole enchanted court.

All this the noble pair related to the amiable young knight, as they took a turn in the park, under an arched walk of wild jasmine and honeysuckle interwoven together. The happy day passed but too rapidly amid the varied pageantry and amusement of a gay court gala, and mutual demonstrations of friendship. After dinner there was a drawing-room and cards. Some of the courtiers rambled about the park with the ladies till the trumpet summoned them to supper, which was served up in a gallery lined with looking glasses and illuminated with countless wax lights. They ate, drank, and were merry till near midnight, and according to custom Wulfild took care to fill her pockets, and advised her brother not to forget his. When the dishes were cleared away, Albert seemed to grow uneasy, and whispered something in his wife's ear. She thereupon took her brother aside, and said to him sorrowfully: "Dearest brother, we must part, for the time of the transformation is just at hand, when all the delights of this palace will disappear. Albert is afflicted about you; he fears for your life, since, were you to await the coming change here, he would not be able to withstand his animal impulse to devour you. Leave this luckless forest, and seek it not again."



“No!” returned Reinald; “let what may happen, I will not part from thee, dearest sister! It was to find thee I quitted our father’s castle, and now that I have accomplished this long-cherished object, I will not leave the forest without thee. Say, how can I break this potent spell?”

“Alas!” replied she, “’tis beyond mortal power to do so.”

Here Albert joined their conversation, and when he heard the young knight’s bold resolution, he urged him from his purpose in such affectionate terms, and so forcibly, that he at length yielded to the wishes of his brother-in-law, and the tears and entreaties of his tender sister, and consented to depart.

Prince Albert embraced the gallant youth with brotherly affection, and after the latter had fallen on his sister’s neck and bid her farewell, he drew out his pocket book and took from it three bear’s bristles, which he rolled up in a piece of paper and gave to the knight, as though for a kind of jocosé memento of his adventure in the forest. “Yet do not despise this trifle,” he added earnestly; “should you ever be in desperate need of help, rub these three hairs between your hands and await the event.”

In the courtyard stood a handsome open carriage, drawn by six black horses, with outriders and footmen, in which Reinald reluctantly placed himself.

“Farewell, brother!” cried Albert the Bear.

“Farewell, brother!” replied Reinald the Wonder-Child; and the carriage thundered over the draw-bridge, off and away.

The golden stars shone clear in the sky for yet an hour as the train dashed on without stop or stay, up hill and down dale, over stock and stone, through wood and waste, over moor and mountain; but when the morning began to dawn, all of a sudden every torch was extinguished, and Reinald found himself very unceremoniously deposited on the ground, without his at all knowing how it came about; the carriage and the horses had disappeared, and in their place the early streaks of daylight enabled him to perceive only six black ants galloping from between his feet, carrying off a nutshell; beyond, he distinguished a number of martens skurrying away.

The brave knight at once saw what had taken place, and sat quite still that he might not tread inadvertently on one of the ants; then he waited patiently till the sun had risen, when, as he found himself not yet beyond the boundary of the forest, he determined to go in quest of his two younger sisters, and though he might not succeed in delivering them from the sorcerer’s spell, at least to pay them a visit.

Three days did he wander about the forest without encountering anything remarkable. He had just eaten the last morsel of one of the milk rolls that came from the table of his brother-in-law, Albert the



Bear, when he heard a tremendous rustling high up in the air, like the noise of a ship in full sail cleaving the waves of the sea. He looked up and perceived a mighty eagle darting down upon his nest, which was on a vast tree, close by. Reinald was highly delighted at this discovery, and concealing himself in the underwood, he watched till the eagle should mount up into the air again. In seven hours the stately bird rose from his nest. The youth, who had been lying in wait all this time, now stepped forth, and cried with a loud voice: "Adelheid: beloved sister, if thou livest on this lofty oak, answer me. I am Reinald, called the Wonder-Child, thy brother, and have come to seek thee, and break the mighty spell that binds thee."

He had no sooner ceased speaking than a soft female voice answered from above, as if out of the clouds: "If thou art indeed Reinald, the Wonder-Child, my brother, welcome shalt thou be to Adelheid; lose no time, but climb up hither and embrace thy inconsolable sister."

Delighted at this reception, the knight joyfully essayed to climb the tree, but in vain. Three times did he anxiously pace round its trunk, but it was too thick to embrace with his arms, and the nearest branch was quite out of his reach. However, while he was engaged in devising some means for attaining his object, a silken ladder was let down, and with the

help of this he soon climbed to the top of the tree, to the eagle's nest, which was as roomy and as firm as a terrace. He found his sister sitting under a canopy which was protected on the outside from the weather by oilskin, and lined inside with pink satin; in her lap lay an eagle's egg, which she was hatching. The meeting was very affectionate on both sides; Adelheid was intimately acquainted with all that had happened at her father's, and of course knew that Reinald was her brother, though born since her time. Edgar the Eagle, her husband, was spell-bound for weeks instead of days; one week in seven he was free from the influence of the charm; and in these intervals he had, to please his beloved wife, frequently visited his father-in-law's residence, *incognito*, so that he might procure her news, from time to time, of all that was passing in her family. Adelheid invited her brother to stay with her till the next transformation should take place; and though it was not to happen for six weeks, he willingly consented. She went and showed him a good large hollow tree, where he could hide comfortably; and as to living, undertook to feast him daily from the cupboard under her sofa, where it was her custom, on the close of the seventh free day, to stow away, as for a sea voyage, a plentiful supply of all such provisions as would keep for six weeks. On taking leave she earnestly exhorted him: "As thou valueth thy life,



keep thyself from Edgar's eagle glance; for should he discover thee on his territories, thou art lost. He'll tear thy eyes out, and devour thy heart, as he did only yesterday to three of thy squires who were seeking thee here in the forest."

Reinald shuddered on hearing the fate of his poor fellows, and all the more zealously promised to be careful. He watched six long weeks in the hollow tree; enjoying, however, the pleasure of a chat with his sister as often as the Eagle went on an excursion; and at the end of that time he was amply compensated for this trial of his patience by seven days of thorough enjoyment.

The welcome he met with from brother-in-law Eagle was not one whit less cordial than that of brother Bear had been. His castle and court were just the same; each day was a festival; and the time for the fatal transformation approached but too rapidly. On the evening of the seventh day Edgar dismissed his guest with the tenderest embrace, but warned him not to enter his territories again.

"Must I part with you for ever, my beloved friends?" Said Reinald sorrowfully. "Is it not possible to break the unhappy spell that keeps you here in thrall? Had I a hundred lives to lose, I would give them all to set you free."

Edgar pressed his hand warmly: "Thank you, noble young man, for your love and friendship; but

give up, I intreat you, so bold an enterprise. It is, certainly, within possibility to break the spell, but you must not, shall not attempt it. Whoever undertakes it forfeits his life should he fail, and you shall not be sacrificed for us."

These words only fanned the flame of Reinald's courage, and fixed his determination to essay the adventure. His eyes sparkled with eagerness, and his cheeks were flushed with a ray of hope, that he should now accomplish his object, since 'twas a possible one. He pressed his brother-in-law to make known to him the secret how the spell of the forest was to be broken: but he would not, for fear of endangering the brave youth's life.

"All I may tell you, dear brother," said he, "is, that he must find the *key of the enchantments* who is to succeed in releasing us. If you are destined by fate to be our deliverer, the favourable stars will guide you to the spot where you must seek it; if not, it were folly to make the attempt." Then taking out his pocket-book, he selected from it three eagle's feathers, which he presented to the knight as a remembrance. "Should you ever be in desperate need of help," said he, "rub these three feathers between your hands and await the event." They then took a friendly leave of each other. Edgar's Marshal of the Household and a large body of the courtiers accompanied the beloved stranger along an immense avenue of magnificent



pinces and oaks to the boundary of his estate, and as soon as he was outside they closed the grated gates and returned hastily, for the time of transformation was at hand.

Reinald sat down under a lime tree in order to witness the strange sight; the full moon shone bright and clear; he still saw the castle rising quite distinctly amid the noble trees. But when the morning began to dawn, he found himself enveloped in a thick fog, and when it was dispersed by the rising sun, castle, park, and gate, had all vanished, and he found himself in a dismal solitude, on the top of a rock that overhung an unfathomable abyss.

The young adventurer looked around in order to discover a way down into the valley. In the distance he perceived a lake that lay like a mirror, all silvered by the beams of the sun. During the whole day did he labour hard in making his way through the thickly grown forest; but as all his efforts were directed towards the lake, where he supposed his third sister, Bertha, to be, he grudged not his toil, though the further he penetrated into the thicket the more difficult it became to proceed. For a long time he lost all sight of the lake, and well nigh all hope of finding it again. Towards sunset he did, indeed, get a glimpse of its waters between the trees, when the forest became clearer; but he did not reach its shore till night had begun to close in. Thoroughly fatigued,

he now lay down under a tree, and did not wake till the sun was high in the heavens. He then rose, refreshed by sleep, and with renovated strength wandered along the shore, full of plans for reaching his sister in the lake. In vain did he send his greeting on the winds, thus: "Bertha, beloved sister, if thou dost inhabit this pond, pray answer me! I am Reinald, thy brother, come in quest of thee, to break thy spell, and deliver thee from this watery prison." But no one answered him, except many-voiced Echo from the forest. "O, you dear fish," he went on, as a whole host of red-spotted trout swam towards the shore, and seemed to be staring at the young stranger, "you dear fish, tell your mistress that her brother is waiting here to meet her." And emptying his pockets of all the fragments of bread he had left, he broke them into crumbs, and threw them into the water to bribe the fish to take his message. The trout, greedily snapped up the benefaction, without troubling themselves any further about the benefactor. Reinald, accordingly, seeing that his harangue was lost on the fish, turned to some other means of accomplishing his undertaking. A well-trained knight, he was an adept in all bodily exercises, and could swim like a water rat. His resolution was therefore soon taken; he doffed his armour, and retaining no arms but his drawn sword, which he held in his mouth, he sprang into the water in his



red satin doublet (for he came across no boat as his father had done), to seek his brother-in-law Behemoth. For, thought he, he will not swallow me at once, but listen to a word of reason, as he did with my father. And, accordingly, he splashed about the water, at a great rate, in order to attract the water monster's attention, as he floated on the blue waves in the middle of the lake.

As long as his strength held out, he followed his watery way in excellent spirits, though he met with no adventure; at length, beginning to be exhausted, he looked towards the shore, when, at no great distance, what should he see but a thin vapour rising into the air, which seemed to proceed from a high flake of ice. He swam with all his might to get a nearer view of this phenomenon, and found a short pillar of rock crystal protruding out of the water, and apparantly hollow, for out of it curled a most refreshing perfume, in little clouds of smoke, which the playful breeze blew down upon the waters. The bold swimmer guessed this to be the chimney of his sister's subteraqueous dwelling. He therefore ventured to slide down the aperture, and his expectation did not deceive him. The chimney led immediately to the fireplace in the lovely Bertha's bed chamber, where she was sitting in an elegant morning negligee, preparing her chocolate on a little fire of red sandal wood. When the lady heard the noise in the chimney,

and suddenly saw two human feet dangling down it, she was frightened half out of her wits by this unexpected visit; and overturning the pot of chocolate in her alarm, she sank back fainting in her armchair. Reinald shook her till she returned to herself, then she said in a feeble voice: "Unhappy mortal, whoever you are, how did you venture to set foot in this place? Do you not know that your rashness will lead you to inevitable death?"

"Fear not, dearest," said the knight, "I am thy brother Reinald, and fear neither danger nor death so that I find my beloved sister, and break the magic spell that binds her."

Bertha embraced her brother tenderly, but her slight frame trembled with fear.

Ufo the Dolphin, her husband, had likewise visited his father-in-law's court, *incognito*, and had lately heard of Reinald's setting out in quest of his sisters. He had often lamented to his wife the youth's rash undertaking. "For," said he, "should brother Bear not eat him, nor brother Eagle pick his eyes out, brother Dolphin will surely swallow him; for in a paroxysm of animal fury I shall not be able to resist the inclination to sup him up; and shouldst thou, my beloved, encircle him with thy tender arms to protect him, I should infallibly shatter thy crystal dwelling to atoms, and thou, dearest, wouldst be drowned by the waters rushing in, while he would be engulfed in



my whalelike stomach. Thou knowest, fair one, that at the time of transformation our abode is not to be approached by strangers."

The beautiful Bertha repeated every word of this to her brother; but he answered: "Canst thou not hide me from the sight of the monster as thy sisters did, that I may stay here till the spell is over?" "Alas!" said she, "how can I conceal thee? Dost thou not see that this dwelling is made of crystal, and that all the walls are transparent as glass?" "But there must surely be some impervious corner in the house," persisted Reinald; "thou must surely know some mode of deceiving thy husband's eye."

The lovely Bertha was quite a novice in this art; she considered and considered, and at length she luckily bethought herself she might conceal her brother in the wood-house. He adopted the proposition without hesitation, and arranging the wood in the transparent chamber as skilfully as the beaver builds his house, he concealed himself in the best way he could. The lady then hastened to her dressing room, and having donned the most becoming costume she possessed, so that she looked as lovely as one of the three graces, pictured by a poet's imagination, proceeded to the audience chamber, to await the visit of her husband, Ufo the Dolphin. During the time of the transformation, he could not enjoy his amiable wife's society in any other way

than by paying her a daily visit, and gazing at her beauty through the crystal wall.

The charming Bertha had scarcely entered the audience chamber when the enormous fish came swimming up, the waters rolling on before him from afar, and curling in strong eddies round the palace. The monster of the lake, on arriving in front of the room, stayed his course, and after joyously inhaling a vast body of water at a breath, which he then spouted into the air out of his immense throat, gazed at his beautiful wife with his great sea-green eyes, in speechless ecstasy. In spite of the good lady's earnest endeavours to put on a look of unconcern, it was quite out of her power to do so; all trickery and deceit was foreign to her nature, and she could not keep her heart from throbbing violently, her breast from heaving in the most agitated manner, and her lips and cheeks from growing red and pale by turns. The Dolphin, despite his heavy fishy nature, had still sufficient physiognomical perception to smell a rat, and forthwith, making a hideous contortion, he darted off like mad, and swam round and round the palace, in countless gyrations, and made such an uproar in the water, that the crystal dwelling shook to its foundation, and the frightened Bertha expected nothing short of seeing it fall about her ears every moment. But the inquisitive Dolphin, not discovering anything in this minute external search through the house that



could tend to strengthen his suspicions, became easier in his mind by degrees, and fortunately his tearing about had so troubled the waters, that he could not see the state the anxious Bertha was in. Soon afterwards he swam away, and the lady recovered from her fright. Reinald remained very quiet in his wood house until the time of the transformation came; and although apparently his brother-in-law, the Dolphin, was not quite cured of all his suspicions (for he never omitted at each daily visit to swim three times round the house, and to peep into every corner of the crystal palace), yet he did not behave so outrageously as on the first occasion. The hour of the transformation at length enabled the patient prisoner to quit his retirement.

One day when he woke, he found himself in a princely palace, on a small island surrounded by handsome houses, which, as well as the pleasure gardens and market-places, all seemed to be floating on the water. A hundred gondolas were darting up and down the canals, and there was a joyous and busy hum of life in all the streets, in all the squares; in short, brother Dolphin's residence was a miniature Venice. The reception the young knight met with here was just as cordial as in the courts of his two other brothers-in-law. Ufo the Dolphin was spell-bound by *months*; the seventh month was his holiday from enchantment; when, from one full moon to an-

other, everything resumed its natural state. As Reinald made a longer stay with Ufo, he necessarily became more intimate with the Dolphin than with the Bear or the Eagle. He had long been tormented with the desire to learn by what singular fate the three princes had been thrown into this unnatural state of enchantment, and he questioned his sister Bertha very closely on the subject; but she could not give him the desired information, and Ufo maintained the most mysterious silence on this head. So Reinald did not get what he wanted. Meanwhile the pleasant days flew on with the speed of the wind; the moon lost its silver horns by degrees, and its form grew rounder and rounder every day.

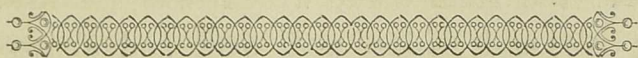
At length, during an evening walk *tête-à-tête*, Ufo informed his brother-in-law that the moment of separation was at hand, and exhorted him to return to his parents, who were very uneasy on his account; his mother had been inconsolable ever since she had learned that he had not gone to Flanders, but to seek adventures in the enchanted forest. Reinald inquired whether the forest offered any other than those he had experienced, and was told that there was one besides, of which, indeed, he had already heard; that of *The Search for the Key to the Enchantments*, the key which would break the powerful talisman, during whose existence the princes could not hope for delivery, and whose discoverer would receive a full



reward at the hands of Love and Beauty; "but," added the Dolphin, in a friendly tone, "follow good advice, young man! thank your stars and the protection of your sisters, that you have not fallen a victim so far to your rash temerity in penetrating the magic forest; and satisfied with the fame you have acquired, go your ways home, give your parents an account of all you have seen and heard, and rescue your mother from the brink of the grave, to which her grief and anxiety have almost reduced her, by your speedy return." Reinald promised all his brother-in-law required, but with the mental reservation of first having his own way; for when sons are no longer under the maternal discipline, and are grown to be tall, strong men, and able to vault on fiery horses, they do not trouble themselves over much about their poor mothers' tears. Ufo at once saw what the youth was set upon; he therefore took three fish's scales out of his pocket-book, and gave them to him, saying: "Should you ever be in desperate need of help, rub these three scales between your hands, and await the event."

Reinald got into a beautiful gilded gondola, and was rowed ashore by a couple of boatmen. No sooner had he set his foot on land than the gondola, the castle, the gardens, and the town disappeared, and nothing remained of all the recent magnificence but a great fishpond, edged by tall reeds, and ruffled by a cool morning breeze. The knight found himself at

at the very spot where three months before he had boldly jumped into the water; his shield and armour were lying in the same place, with his spear stuck upright beside them, just as he had left them. But, nothing daunted, nay, encouraged, he vowed to take no rest until he held the key of the enchantments in his hand.



## BOOK III.

“**W**HO will tell me the nearest way, who will direct my feet to the right path that leads to the most wonderful of all the marvels of this boundless forest? O, ye translunar powers! look down upon me favourably, and if a son of earth is destined to break this mighty spell, then let me be the favoured mortal!”

So spoke Reinald as, quite absorbed in his reflections, he followed his difficult way deeper and deeper into the forest. For seven days did he wander through the interminable wilderness, without a thought of fear; for seven nights did he sleep under the canopy of heaven, so that his weapons had grown rusty with the dew. On the eighth day he climbed a steep rock, from whose summit he looked down upon a



range of barren precipices, like the view from Mount St Gothard, reduced. One side opened into a valley overgrown with periwinkle, and enclosed by high rocks of granite, overtopped by firs and mournful cypresses. In the distance he beheld an edifice, consisting of two colossal marble pillars, with bronze chapters and pedestals, supporting a Doric structure that was backed against a wall of rock, and jetting out over the steel door, which was guarded with strong bolts and chains, and, over and above these, with a padlock as big as a bushel. Not far from the door a black bull was grazing, which ever and anon looked about with fiery eyes, as though he had the charge of guarding the entry.

Reinald did not for a moment doubt that this was the adventure brother-in-law Ufo the Dolphin had told him of; so he at once determined to achieve it, and quietly slipping down from the top of the rock into the valley beneath, came within bow-shot of the bull, without being taken any notice of; but, on a sudden, the animal sprung up, and tossed and raged about as though he were going to do battle, like an Andalusian bull, and snuffled in the ground till he raised clouds of dust, and stamped so as to shake the very earth, and butted with his horns against the rocks, till he made the splinters fly all about him. The knight prepared himself for the attack, and when the bull rushed at him, avoided his terrific horns by

twisting round adroitly, and then aimed such a blow with his good sword at the monster's neck, that he thought he must have severed the head from his body. But—oh disaster! the neck was invulnerable by steel; the sword broke to shivers, and the knight had only the hilt left in his hand. He had now nothing wherewith to defend himself but his two-edged maple lance; but this too was broken to bits like a mere straw, at the second attack. The villainous monster then took the poor youth on his horns, and tossed him high, high up into the air, as though he had been a mere shuttlecock, and lay in wait either to gore him or trample him under foot, when he should come down. But luckily he happened to fall between the spreading branches of a wild pear tree, which received him in his descent, and though every rib in his body seemed to crack, he retained his senses sufficiently to cling fast to the friendly boughs; but soon the infuriated animal had so violently butted at it with his brazen forehead, as to tear it up by the roots, and down it fell. Just as the beast was about to make a fresh onset, fiercer than the first, Reinald bethought him of the presents of his brothers-in-law. Chance directed his hand first to the paper with three bear's bristles, which he rubbed with all his might between his hands, and immediately there came from among the trees a great grim bear which furiously set upon the bull, and soon getting the



better, strangled him, and tore him to pieces. As the conqueror was ripping open the bull's carcase, there flew out of it a wild duck, which made off with a loud quack! quack! Reinald at once suspected that this was a magic bird, which, defeating the triumph the bear had achieved, was sent by the powers of darkness to bear away the sought-for prize; so hastily seizing the three feathers, he rubbed them between his hands, and immediately a mighty eagle appeared in mid-air, at sight of which the frightened duck lowered under the brushwood, thinking to avoid the Air-King which soared above him at an immeasurable height. Seeing this the knight roused the duck, and pursued him till the forest grew clearer, when finding he could no longer hide himself, he took wing and flew straight towards the pond. In a moment, however, the eagle darted down upon him from the clouds, and dashed him to pieces with his mighty talons. But as he died, he let a golden egg fall into the pond. The attentive Reinald, prepared for this new device of the enemy, rubbed the fish's scales between his palms, when a dolphin rose from the depths of the water, and catching the egg in his vast jaws, spouted it out on the shore. The knight, full of joy, lost no time in breaking the golden egg in two, when out fell a little key, which he triumphantly recognised as the key to the enchantments.

He flew to the steel door; the little fairy key, it

is true, seemed scarcely to belong to the giant padlock, still he thought he could but try; and scarcely had it touched the lock when it sprung back, the heavy iron bolts drew themselves of their own accord, and the steel door opened of itself. The overjoyed knight then went down into a dark grotto, whence seven doors led to seven subterranean chambers, all magnificently decorated and brilliantly lighted with spermaceti candles. Reinald proceeded through them all, one after the other, and in a cabinet leading out of the seventh, he found a young lady lying on a sofa in an intense magic slumber, from which no ordinary power could wake her. At this touching sight a feeling of love became awakened in his breast; he stood speechless, motionless, nor could he for awhile remove his eyes from the beauteous object.

When Knight Reinald had recovered somewhat from his admiring wonderment, he looked around the room and perceived near the sleeping lady an alabaster slab inscribed with strange characters. He instantly conceived that on this was engraven the spell which kept in force all the enchantments of the forest. In his just indignation he clenched his gauntletted hand, and struck the tablet with all his strength. The lovely sleeper started, awoke, glanced timidly at the slab, and then sank back into her deep slumber. Reinald repeated the blow with the same result. It was obvious that the talisman must be destroyed, but



how to effect this object? He had neither sword nor lance, nothing but two vigorous arms. With these, however, he again seized the magic slab, and dashing it from its high pedestal on to the marble flags, it broke to atoms. The young lady then awoke from her trance, and now for the first time perceived the presence of the young knight, who bent his knee before her in the most respectful manner. But ere he could speak, she concealed her lovely face in her veil, and exclaimed, in an indignant tone: "Hence, vile sorcerer! Even though you take the form of the handsomest youth in the world, you can neither deceive my eyes nor my heart. You know my sentiments; leave me, then, to the deathlike slumber into which your wicked spells have plunged me."

Reinald, who saw the fair speaker's error, was not deterred by her words; thus he answered: "Lovely damsel! be not angry. I am not the hated sorcerer who has kept you here a prisoner; I am Count Reinald, called the Wonder-Child, who has broken the spell that bound you."

The lady glanced from under her veil, and when she saw the alabaster slab in pieces, she wondered greatly at the young adventurer's bold deed, and looking at him graciously, was pleased with his form and features. She held out her hand in a friendly manner to raise him, and said: "If what you say be indeed true, noble knight, then complete your good work

and lead me out of this frightful cavern, that I may see the sun shining in the heavens if it be day time, or the golden stars if it be night."

Reinald offered his arm to conduct her through the seven state rooms by which he had entered. He opened the door, but outside was nothing but Egyptian darkness, so thick that one might have laid hold of it, as in the times of chaos, ere the electric beam of light had been created. All the candles were extinguished, the crystal lustre no longer illumined the high cupola of the basaltic vault with its mild radiance. The noble pair groped about in the dark for a long time ere they found means to extricate themselves from the labyrinthine windings, when at length they perceived the daylight struggling in through the distant aperture of a roughly-hewn cave. The disenchanted lady felt all the heart-refreshing influence of balmy nature's reviving powers, and inhaled with delight the perfume of flowers which the gentle breezes sent her across the blooming meadows. She sat down on the grass beside the slim young knight, who at once became perfectly enamoured, for she was as beautiful as Eve. Importuned, at the same time, by another passion scarcely less intense, that of curiosity, the desire of knowing how she had been spell-bound in the forest, he modestly begged her to give him this information, and the young lady, opening her rosy mouth, at once spoke as follows: "I am Hildegard,



daughter of Radbod the Prince of Pomerania. Zornebock the Prince of the Sorbenians asked me in marriage of my father; but as he was a horrible giant and a heathen, and moreover had the reputation of being a necromancer, he was refused under the pretence of my tender years. The wretch was so enraged at this that he made war upon my father, slew him in an encounter, and took possession of his lands. I had flown to my father's sister, the Countess of Vohburg, and my three brothers, all brave knights, were at that time out of the kingdom on chivalrous expeditions. My abode could not remain concealed from the magician, and no sooner had he taken possession of my father's kingdom, than he resolved to carry me off; and this was easy for him, by means of his magic arts. The Count, my uncle, was very fond of the chace, and I used frequently to accompany him; all the knights at his court vied with each other, on these occasions, in offering me the best equipped horse that could be procured. One day an unknown equerry presented himself before me with a beautiful dapple gray, and begged me in his master's name to mount it and consider it as my own. I inquired the name of his master, but he excused himself from answering this question till I had tried the horse, and should have declared on my return from the chace that I did not disdain his present. I could not very well refuse this proposal; moreover the horse was so beautifully

equipped that it attracted the notice of the whole court. Gold and precious stones and curious embroidery were lavished on the scarlet housing. A red silk bridle was attached to the bit, and encircled his neck. The bit and the stirrups were of massive gold, thickly set with rubies. I vaulted into the saddle, and was delighted with the creature. His motion was so light and easy, that his hoofs seemed scarcely to touch the earth. He leaped over hedges and ditches so rapidly, that the boldest riders could not follow him. A white stag which passed me in the chase, and which I began pursuing, led me into the depths of the forest, and I became separated from the rest of the hunters. In order not to lose myself, I abandoned the stag, intending to go back to the place of rendezvous, but the horse refused to obey, and began to rear and plunge and toss, and to become restive. I tried to pacify him, but on a sudden I perceived with alarm that the animal had changed under me into a feathered monster: his forefeet spread into a pair of wings, a broad beak stretched forth from his head, and I found myself seated on a horrid hippogryph, who, springing up into the air, transported me in less than an hour to this forest, where he descended before the steel door of an old castle.

“I had not recovered from my first fright when my alarm was considerably increased by seeing the equerry



who brought me the horse that morning, approach respectfully to help me out of the saddle. Half frantic with terror and indignation, I suffered myself to be conducted in silence through a number of state rooms into one where was a party of gorgeously-dressed ladies who received me as their mistress, and besought my commands. They all vied with each other who should be most attentive, but no one would inform me into whose power I had fallen. I gave myself up to much sorrow, which Zornebock interrupted for a few moments by kneeling at my feet under the form of a youthful prince, and soliciting my love. I treated him as my heart told me the murderer of my father should be treated. The tyrant was furious at his rejection, raged fiercely, but braving his utmost anger, I dared him to fulfil his threat of breaking the palace to atoms and burying me under its ruins; the monster, however, soon left me, giving me as he said time to think better of the matter.

“In seven days he renewed his hateful suit; I repelled him with disdain, and he left the apartment in a storm of rage; the ground then shook under my feet, the castle seemed rolling down a precipice, and I sunk upon the sofa and fainted away. The next thing I was conscious of was the hated voice of the magician awakening me from my slumber: ‘Wake, beloved sleeper,’ said he, ‘wake out of your seven years’ sleep, and tell me whether the healing effects

of time have not softened your hatred towards your faithful paladin. Do but rejoice my heart with the smallest ray of hope, and this dismal grotto shall be changed into the temple of joy.'

"I did not condescend to answer the abominable sorcerer, nor even to look at him, but hid my face in my veil and wept. My grief appeared to touch him, he begged, he implored; he wailed aloud, and crawled at my feet like a worm. At length his patience was exhausted; he started to his feet and said, 'Well then, so be it; in seven years we will speak to one another again!'

"He then placed the alabaster slab on the pedestal, and a resistless sleep closed my eyelids from that moment until the period when, within another seven years, the cruel wretch again awakened me.

"'Unfeeling girl,' cried he; 'if you are cruel to me, at least have some mercy for your three brothers. My faithless equerry informed them of your fate, but the traitor has been punished. These unhappy mortals came with an army to rescue you from my hands; but I was too mighty for them, and they now see their folly, transformed as they are into different shapes in this forest.'

"This pitiful falsehood, to which the magician had recourse to overcome my resolution, only increased my hostility towards him. The most withering contempt sat upon my lips. 'Unhappy wretch!' furiously



exclaimed the heathen, 'your doom is now fixed! Sleep as long as the powers of darkness shall obey this talisman!'

"He then replaced the marble slab, and I was once more deprived of all consciousness. You, noble knight, have awakened me from the deathly sleep by destroying the spell, though I cannot conceive by what power you have effected it."

The beautiful Hildegard having finished, Reinald, in turn, related his adventures. When he gave her an account of the three enchanted Princes, his brothers-in-law, she was greatly agitated, for she now found that Zornebock had told her the truth, and that her dear brothers had really been subjected to his power. The knight was just on the point of finishing his story, when cries of triumph and rejoicing pierced the air far and near, echoing through the woods, re-echoed by the mountains, and immediately there issued from the forest three gallant bands of knights and ladies, and their retinues, at whose head Hildegard recognized her brothers, and Reinald his sisters. The spell of the forest was broken. After mutual embraces and demonstrations of joy, the cavalcades thus set free from enchantment left the dismal waste, and repaired to the castle in the woods. Couriers were despatched to the old Count's capital with the joyful message that his children might shortly be expected. The court was

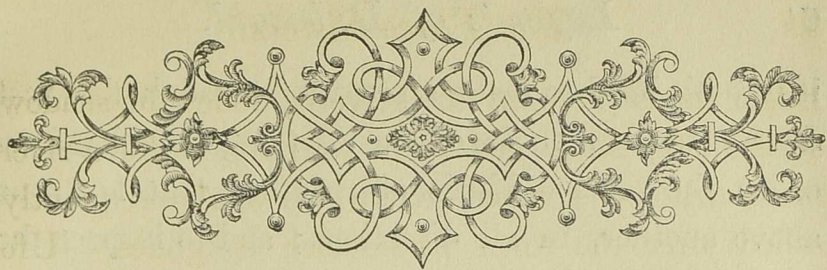
then in deep mourning for the loss of the young Count, whom they wept as dead, the parents imagining that the magic forest had engulfed him for ever. The sorrowing mother had no comfort left on earth, and was on the brink of absolute despair, when on the receipt of the young Count's despatches life and joy pervaded every bosom. In a few days the venerable parents had the delight of embracing their children and grandchildren. Since her brother's visit the egg with which we lately saw Adelheid, had become a lovely little girl, who, as she lay in her mother's lap, stretched out her little arms to her grandpapa, and smiled, and played with his silver locks. Amongst all the festivities attending this happy return, none were so sumptuous as those accompanying Reinald's nuptials with the beautiful Hildegard. A whole year passed in entertainments and rejoicings.

At length the Princes bethought themselves that a protraction of this sort of holiday life would tend to enervate the courage and activity of their knights and squires; moreover, the Count's dwelling was not large enough to contain so many households conveniently; the three sons-in-law and their wives therefore prepared to depart. Reinald the Wonder-Child never left his aged parents, and closed their eyes like a pious son. Albert the Bear bought the principality of Askania, and founded the town of Bernburg.



Edgar the Eagle went to Helvetia, under the shadow of the lofty Alps, and built Aarburg, beside a river there, without a name, but which was subsequently called after the town past which it glides. Ufo the Dolphin led an army into Burgundy, and taking possession of a portion of that kingdom, called the conquered province Dauphiny. And in the same spirit that the three Princes played upon their transformations in the names of their towns and dynasties, so they adopted the same creatures whose forms they had borne, as their crests, so that to this very day Bernburg has a bear with a golden crown on his head, Aarburg an eagle, and Dauphiny a salt-water fish, in their several coats of arms. And the finest pearls that adorn the brows of their descendants, on gala-days, and which pass for oriental jewels, are none other than those which came from the pond in the enchanted forest, in the three canvas bags.


End of the Chronicle of the Three Sisters.



## Legends of Rubezahl.

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### THE FIRST LEGEND.

HE famous Mountain Spirit Rubezahl, who alone has conferred upon the land of the Sudetes more celebrity than have all its poets put together, dwells, in peaceful harmony with Apollo and his nine Muses, on the often though but feebly sung Riesengeberg, that Parnassus of the Silesians. This Prince of the Gnomes, indeed, possesses on the surface of the earth but a very limited territory, and this he only holds in common with two mighty Potentates, who take no notice whatever of his sovereignty. But then, at a few fathoms underground, he exercises a monarchy which there is no one to dispute, control, or trench upon; and which, extending far and wide, descends eight hundred and sixty miles, right down to the very centre of the earth. Sometimes the subterranean Starost takes



it into his head to make a progress through this vast domain to view those exhaustless treasure-chambers of his, the veins and beds of rich ore that lay, one above another, in all directions; and to inspect the operations of his subject gnomes, as they stop or regulate, with strong dykes or embankments, the fierce fire-torrents that ever and anon burst forth in the bowels of the earth, and rush tumultuous through its cavernous recesses; or, with precious metal-fraught vapours, fecundate the previously sterile rocks, and convert them into glowing piles of ore. At other times, relaxing from regal cares, he ascends to our nether world, and strolling about the Riesengeberg, attired in some mundane guise, disports himself with mankind, playing them all sorts of tricks, more or less mischievous, according to the humour he is in; occasionally doing somebody a good turn, but much oftener teasing poor folks to death, while he all the while is laughing ready to split his sides at their discomfiture.

For his Lordship's temper, you must know, is as variable as the wind: now well, now ill humoured; gentle, boisterous; bearish, polite; haughty, unassuming; generous and refined, mean and doltish; wise as Solomon, stupid as an ass; soft as an egg before boiling, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, harder than the egg boiled to its hardest; obstinate as an oak, pliant as a willow; to-day your best friend,

to-morrow he won't know you ; ever in contradiction with himself, he gives way to the impulse of the moment, and you have no more hold upon him than upon a shadow.

A long, long time ago, ere the race of Japhet had extended itself so far northwards, so that these regions were as yet uninhabited by man, Rubezahl used to divert himself in their wild solitudes with setting the bears and the aurochs together by the ears, exciting them to fight it out to the death ; or else with frightening, by his hideous shouts and uproar, the more timid animals, driving them up and down, here and there, until at last the poor things blindly threw themselves over some precipice, and got dashed to pieces. After a time, tired of this sport, he withdrew to his underground domain, where he remained quiet for ever so many centuries, until, by and by, it came into his head that he should like to go up and bask in the sun once more, and see what was going on in the world above. How great was his surprise, on stepping out upon the snow-capped summit of the Riesengeberg, to find the whole surrounding region utterly changed from what it was when he last saw it. The vast forests which then stretched out miles and miles on every side, dark, gloomy, impenetrable by man, were now well nigh all cleared away, and a large portion of their site converted into rich corn fields, glowing with golden crops. Amid flourishing



orchards, whose trees were laden with noble fruit, gleamed forth the thatched roofs of pretty cottages, the friendly smoke from whose chimnies rose curling into the clear air. At intervals on the mountain slopes, frowned turreted fortresses, at once dominating and defending the vallies beneath. In the blooming meadows which varied the scene, pastured herds of sheep and of cattle; the while, amid pleasant groves, re-echoed the soothing notes of shepherds' pipes.

The novelty of the thing, and the agreeable aspect of the new region, so astonished and delighted the subterranean sovereign, that he never once thought of being angry with those who had, without his permission, taken possession of his territory, or of disturbing them in their operations. Like the good-natured farmer who suffers the sociable swallow, or even the troublesome sparrow, to retain unmolested the nest it has built beneath his eaves, Rubezahl benevolently resolved that the busy mortals should receive no interruption from him. On the contrary, he conceived a fancy to make acquaintance with these creatures, intermediate between spirits and animals, and see what they were made of. 'Twould serve to amuse him awhile. Forthwith, he assumed the form of a lusty hind, and offering his services to the first farmer he met with, was accepted. All that he undertook throve in the hands of Rips, for so he called himself, who soon became noted as

the best ploughman in the village. But his master was a glutton and guzzler, who squandered away all that his faithful, hardworking servant earned, and gave him, moreover, small thanks for his pains and labour. So Rips left him, and went to a neighbour, who entrusted to him the charge of a large flock of sheep. These he tended with the most scrupulous care, conducting them now into the plains, now to the mountain side, wherever the freshest and sweetest grass was to be found. His woolly charge thrived amazingly; their number increased and increased, and never was one of them known to break its neck down a precipice, or to be torn in pieces by the marauding wolf, so unremitting was the zeal of excellent Rips. But his new master was a wretched hunk, who, so far from rewarding him as he deserved, himself stole the best ram of the flock, and made Rips pay for it out of his wages. Rips, therefore, left the miser's service, and entered that of the District Judge, as whose officer he became the scourge of all the thieves for miles and miles around. But the Judge was an unrighteous man, who perverted justice, giving judgment according to favour, and making a mockery of law. When Rips refused to be the instrument of his iniquity, and intimated an intention to leave his service, he threw the honest fellow into prison, whence, of course, Mr Rips Rubezahl forthwith made his exit, slipping quietly



through the keyhole as the gaoler drew out the key, after the accustomed manner of sprites.

These first essays at the study of mankind were obviously not calculated to excite any especial feeling of philanthropy in the mind of our gnome, who returned full of indignation to his mountain peak, where he stopped awhile to survey once more the smiling landscape which human industry had created, and marvelled greatly that Dame Nature should have lavished her blessings upon such a cross-grained brood as he had come across. Meditating hereupon, it occurred to him that perhaps he had not sufficiently investigated the matter, and he accordingly resolved to make one more experiment. Retracing his steps, the invisible monarch descended into the valley, and taking a new direction, was strolling through a delicious grove, when, behold, he saw through the trees at a short distance before him, a girl, lovely and fine-formed as Venus, preparing for the bath, surrounded by her companions, with whom, as they reclined on the grassy margin of a cascade, whose silver flood fell gently into a basin constructed by the all-providing hand of Nature, she was prattling in the innocent freedom and gaiety of youth. This vision had such an effect upon his gnomic Majesty, that he well nigh forgot his spiritual nature and attributes, or, rather, would willingly have accepted the lot of humanity, could he have shared it with the fair

mortal before him. But the organs of sprites are so fine, so ethereal, that they can retain, while in their own form, no clear or lasting impression of objects, and Rubezahl well knew that it was necessary for him to assume some bodily shape ere he could so realize that of the fair image he gazed upon, by passing it through the chamber of the eyes, as to fix it in his imagination. He therefore took the shape of a great raven, and flying towards the lovely group, perched on a tall ash that overshadowed the waterfall. But, alas ! this expedient by no means answered the purpose, for he now saw everything with the eyes of a raven ; so that a nest of wood-mice would have been far more interesting to him than all the handsome women in the world,—the thoughts and desires of the soul taking their form and pressure entirely from the body in which it is placed.

This psychological reflection no sooner occurred to the gnome than he hastened to remedy the blunder he had committed. The raven flew away into the wood, and there became a handsome young man, by which means alone, the spirit knew, could he attain a perfect idea of female beauty. In a moment there sprung up in his bosom sensations he had never before experienced ; all his thoughts took a new flight ; a pleasing commotion agitated the region of the heart, and aspirations found a place there of which he knew not even the name. An irresistible



impulse drew him towards the waterfall; and yet, when he came near it, a still more powerful feeling of bashfulness stayed his steps, and he remained just within the wood, his gaze fixed with rapture on the beauteous vision before him.

The object of his admiration was no less a person than the daughter of the Silesian monarch, whose sceptre at that period swayed the Riesengeberg, among the groves of which beautiful district it was her wont often to take a stroll, attended by the maidens of her court, for the purpose of gathering sweet-smelling herbs or flowers, or, after the homely fashion of those days, of collecting wild cherries or strawberries for her father's private table. At times, when the weather was warmer than usual, she would repair to the waterfall and refresh herself with a bath; and on one of these occasions it was that the gnome king fell in love with her.

Well, there he stood, fixed by a resistless charm, until at last the all-unconscious Princess departed with her attendants, making the wood resound with their merry voices. The enamoured spirit did not venture to follow, but instinctively persuaded that ere long she would return to the same spot, he took up his position there, day after day, impatiently awaiting her benign presence. At the expiration of a week, amid the noontide heat of a glowing summer's day, the Princess and her suite again sought the pleasant

shade of the waterfall. 'Twere vain to aim at any description of the utter amazement which overcame her, when she saw the entire change that had taken place there since her last visit. The once rude and straggling rocks were now reduced to form, and clothed in carved marble and alabaster; the stream no longer fell wildly and noisily over a rugged precipice, but murmured in gentle gradations over a smooth descent into a noble basin of polished marble, in the centre of which stood a fountain, through whose thousand jets the sparkling waters rose high into the clear air, and then returning with a graceful sweep, scattered abroad, as it seemed in the sun's rays, myriads of brilliants, and rubies, and emeralds, and topazes, and other stones of price, of varied form and colour, ere it regained its marble home beneath. Around the basin, up to its very edge, lay a soft carpet of the brightest verdure, sprinkled thick with daisies and the other modest flowers which add beauty to the fresh and beautiful grass. A hedge of jasmine and sweetbriar, and roses and honeysuckles, bordered this charming spot, at once affording shade and sweet odours and security from intrusion. Right and left of the cascade stood gates, giving double entrance to a magnificent grotto, whose walls and arched ceiling were composed of a mosaic of the richest crystals and spars, the many-coloured effulgence of which dazzled the sight. In niches around was arranged



a collation, the mere sight of which was enough to create an appetite in the least hungry.

The Princess stood for a while in mute amazement, hardly trusting her eyes at first, and then uncertain whether to advance into the charmed circle or to fly. But she was a true daughter of Eve, and could not long withstand the eager curiosity that seized her to examine more closely the wonders of the place, and to taste the exquisite fruits and confections she caught sight of through the open portals, and which she instinctively felt were destined for her. She accordingly ventured in, followed by the no less astonished maidens; and, after they had all thoroughly satisfied the senses of sight and taste, the Princess fancied she should like to try the new bath that had been prepared for her. She accordingly proceeded to undress for that purpose, having first stationed two of her attendants at the trelliced entrance, to take care that no prying eye of passing huntsman, or cotter or courtier, should intrude upon her privacy.

Scarcely, however, had the beauteous nymph passed over the polished brink of the bath ere she felt herself sinking down, down to a depthless deep, though just before, the silver sand which shone through the placid waves seemed to lay but some two or three feet beneath their surface, giving no indication whatsoever of danger. Before any one of the attendants, who rushed up on hearing her cries, could catch hold

of her flowing golden hair, the greedy waters had swallowed up their beauteous mistress. Loud and lamentable were the exclamations of the whole frightened troop. "Woe! woe! Alas! alas!" screamed they, as wringing with anguish their snow-white hands they ran desperately round and round the fatal pool, calling upon the Naiads to take pity and restore to them their lovely lady; but all in vain. No Naiad commiserated their pitiable condition; but, on the contrary, the Nymph of the Fountain, mocking their despair, directed the streams of water so energetically upon them as to wet them every one through and through. Of all the Princess's attendants, grief-laden as they seemed, not one manifested any readiness to share her fate, except her favourite, Brinhilda, who, when all hope was fled, boldly leaped into the devouring waters; but they were not devouring waters for her. No: despite all her efforts to get beneath their surface, she floated about as light as a cork, and was at last wafted by some unseen agency on to the grassy bank.

There was now nothing else to be done but to make the King acquainted, as soon as possible, with the terrible misadventure that had befallen his daughter. It chanced that his Majesty was at this very moment on his way to hunt in the forest, and the terror-stricken maidens had accordingly proceeded only a short distance when they met him at the head of his



pack. On learning the news, the King rent his garments, and taking the golden crown from his head, covered his face with his purple mantle, weeping and wailing lustily for the loss of his dear Emma.

When he had thus paid the first tribute of fatherly love, he came to himself again, and putting on his golden crown, hastened to the scene of the adventure. When he got there, lo and behold! the enchantment was at an end; there was no mosaic work grotto, no polished marble basin, no alabaster columns, no odorous hedge; everything of the sort had utterly disappeared, and nature had resumed all her original wildness. Nevertheless, the Princess's attendants, though more frightened than ever, stuck to their story, as well they might, since it was the literal truth, and neither threats nor promises could make them deviate from it in one single particular. His Majesty was perfectly at a loss what to think; there were no wandering knights in those days to carry off king's daughters, or any body else's daughters; what could it all mean? At last, in default of any other solution of the mystery, he made up his mind that Thor or Wodin, or some other of the gods, had taken a fancy to the charming Emma, and consoled by this flattering impression, he ordered the weeping ladies to dry up their tears and go home, while he himself proceeded on his excursion.

Meantime the charming Emma, for her part, found

herself by no means so badly off. When Master Gnome, by that shameful trick of his, had got her away from her screaming attendants, he bore her insensible form swiftly along the recesses of his subterrene domain, and then up to a magnificent palace he had just prepared for her reception, in comparison with which her father's castle was a barn. When she recovered consciousness, she was reclining on a delightful sofa, attired in the most perfect style of art of that period, in a rich pink satin robe, encircled and compressed by a zone of Heaven's own blue, that seemed the very cestus of Venus. At her feet knelt a young man, splendidly dressed, of a fine form and most prepossessing countenance, who, in language breathing love's own eloquence, was offering up his vows of eternal devotion, vows which the fair one received in modest silence, and with downcast looks. The enamoured spirit then, having, however, first explained who he was, what his illustrious origin, and how great the extent of his subterrene monarchy, conducted his mistress through the principal apartments of the palace, each of which seemed still more magnificent than the one preceding it, and then into the noble garden which surrounded the mansion, and which, laid out as it was with exquisite taste, and abounding with magnificent flowers and plants, unknown to the outer world, delighted the Princess more than anything she had seen. At one extremity of the



grounds she visited an orchard filled with trees, whose golden fruit surpassed the highest efforts of mortal culture. Each grove, each tree, was crowded with song-birds, whose melodious throats sent forth, in every direction, the most ravishing strains. The gnome, encircling the fair one's waist with one arm, trod the arched walks in perfect ecstasy ; his eyes fixed unceasingly on hers, and his ear drinking with intoxication each word that fell, in gentle tones, from her honey mouth. In all his long, long, long life, never had he experienced aught resembling the rapture of this, his first love !

But Emma was far from being equally happy ; pensiveness clouded her brow ; she was oppressed with that soft, that undefined melancholy, which oftentimes renders beauty doubly interesting, by exciting sympathy as well as passion. This state of mind did not escape Rubezahl, who endeavoured to dispel it by his caresses ; but in vain.

“ Ah ! ” said he within himself, after a brief meditation, “ the human race, like the bees and ants, are of a social disposition ; my charming mistress needs other company than mine ; and, after all, perhaps the society of a husband only may not always be sufficient for a wife. For to whom is she to communicate things she may not deem it expedient to talk about to her lord ? With whom can she hold council on the choice of her dresses ? Was Eve able long to

endure an unvaried *tête-à-tête*, though with the first and only man in the world? No; rather than be without a confidential friend, she took to a serpent."

Rubezahl having made these judicious reflections, forthwith hastened into the fields, tore up a dozen fresh turnips, arranged them in a very pretty covered basket, and brought them to Emma, whom he found musing in a solitary bower, unconsciously tearing a rose to pieces, and giving its leaves to the breeze.

"Fairest of Earth's fair daughters," he murmured, "let ennui and chagrin be banished from thy soul; let thy heart expand to the pleasure of social converse: thy palace and thy gardens shall no longer be a solitude to thee; this basket contains all that is necessary to make thy abode agreeable. Take this wand, touch these turnips with it, and at thy word each shall assume whatever form thou namest."

This said he withdrew. Emma immediately opened the basket, and taking out the first turnip that came to hand, struck it with her wand, and exclaimed: "Brinhilda, dear Brinhilda, appear!" And instantly Brinhilda, her eyes overflowing with tears of joy, knelt at her mistress's feet, embracing her knees with transport.

So perfect was the illusion, that Emma herself hardly knew whether her wand had restored to her the true Brinhilda, or whether her eyes were de-



ceived by the apparition of a vain phantom. None the less, however, did she surrender herself to the most heartfelt delight, and immediately commenced promenading the gardens with this beloved companion, pointing out to her admiration all their beauties in detail, and gathering some of the finest of the golden apples for her. She then led her through all the apartments of the palace, large and small, until they came to the dressing room, where they found so much to amuse them that they remained in it till sun-set. Robes, veils, girdles, jewels, were passed over and over again in review by this feminine committee, tried on, and criticised. The fictitious Brinhilda played her part to admiration, and showed so much taste, so much tact, so profound an erudition in costume and trinkets, that though, in truth, she was nothing but a turnip, everybody must have deemed her the very pink and pearl of handmaidens.

The gnome, who stood by invisible, intently watching the pair, was excessively delighted and vain-glorious at the success of his scheme; although a mere tyro in the study of human nature, he already began to deem himself very far advanced in the knowledge of the fair sex. Never had Emma appeared to him so lovely, so gracious, so tender, so every way fascinating, as at that moment. She, meantime, lost no time, in animating, by the aid of her magic wand, the whole stock of turnips contained

in the basket, giving them the forms of the young girls, her wonted attendants in the castle of her father. And as, after completing her court, two turnips still remained, she gave to one the figure of a cat, as soft, as flowing-haired, as caressing as ever came from far Angora, and fashioned the other into the prettiest little lap-dog, the most frisking, amusing little pet, that lady could desire. And now in possession of all she needed, she arranged her court, and appointed to her attendants their respective posts; and never was princess better served than she. All her wishes were anticipated, her slightest gesture or look was instantly understood. Several weeks passed on in undisturbed enjoyment. Dancing, singing, music, an ever varying round of entertainments succeeded each other in the harem of the Gnome. But after some time the Princess began to observe that the complexion of her attendants was gradually losing its brilliancy. The great mirror of the marble saloon first led her to observe that she alone continued as fresh and bright as a new-blown rose, while her beloved Brinhilda, and her other women, were more like faded flowers, nearly expiring from drought; yet they all assured her they were in perfect health. Assuredly it was not from want of living well that they looked thus pale and exhausted, for the table of the Gnome was set out with equal profusion and refinement. But not the less did the



damsels daily pine away, until by degrees all the fire of youth was extinguished in their eyes.

At last the poor Princess was perfectly horrified, when one morning, after having enjoyed a long and tranquil night's rest, on entering her saloon, she beheld a set of wretched, shrivelled, blear-eyed old women, supporting themselves with difficulty on sticks and crutches, and half suffocated by a dry cough, totter forward to meet her. The dear little dog, erewhile so full of life and vivacity, lay on his side with his tongue hanging out, at his last gasp, utterly worn out; while the sweet, gentle Mimi, once so playful and caressing, paralysed in all her limbs, could with difficulty drag herself on a short space to receive her mistress.

Struck with horror, the Princess rushed out of the room to escape the frightful spectacle, and flying to the balcony, loudly called the Gnome, who, in most humble guise, at once presented himself. "Villainous spirit!" cried the angry beauty; "what! dost thou seek to deprive me of the only solace of my now wretched life? Dost thou grudge me even the semblance of my old companions? Is it not enough that thy malice compels my abode in this desert? Would'st thou, moreover, convert it into a hospital? Instantly restore to my maidens their youth and beauty, or expect naught from me but hatred and scorn."

“ Fairest of mortals,” replied the Gnome, submissively, “ be not unjust in thy anger; I have no will but thine, I do all in my power to please thee, but ask not impossibilities. I command the powers of nature, but I cannot change her inflexible laws. So long as the turnips preserved any vegetative vigour, the magic wand was capable of metamorphosing them at thy pleasure; but now that their juices are dried up, they inevitably verge towards dissolution, the elementary spirit by which they were vivified having now evaporated. But grieve not for this, my beloved; a second basket of turnips will easily restore all thou hast lost, and give thee back thy companions. Return to Mother Nature those gifts which have served to amuse thee for the past few weeks; thou wilt find more agreeable company on the great grass plot in the garden.”

Having thus spoken, the Gnome withdrew. Emma touched the old women with her wand, and they became a set of shrunken and withered turnips, which she forthwith treated as a child does a plaything he is tired of; threw the rubbish out of the window, and thought no more about it.

Then she ran off to the great grass plot, in hope of there finding another basket of turnips; but found it not. In vain did she search through every part of the garden, up and down: no basket was to be seen. Near the grape espaliers she met the Gnome, whose



face was so woefully long that even at a considerable distance his embarrassment was plainly visible. "Thou hast deceived me," cried she; "where is the basket? I have been seeking it an hour without success."

"Dear mistress of my heart," replied the Gnome, in faltering accents, "Canst thou forgive my want of foresight? I have promised what it is not possible for me to perform. Through the whole country have I been in search of turnips, but they have all long been gathered, and lie withering or rotting in the cellars. The fields are mourning, the valleys filled with snow; it is only in the scenes blessed by thy presence that spring is perennial; it is only under thy feet that flowers are ever springing up. Have patience but for three months, and thy companions shall be restored to thee." But ere the Gnome had done speaking, Emma had already turned her back on him, and had run to shut herself up in her boudoir. He immediately proceeded to the next market town in the guise of a farmer, bought an ass, which he loaded with sacks of turnip seed, enough for a whole acre; which having carefully sowed, he gave the field in charge to one of his ministering spirits, with orders to keep up a good subterranean fire beneath its whole surface, so as to bring forward these turnips with the rapidity of pineapples in a hot-house.

The seed shot vigorously out, and gave promise

of an early and abundant produce. Emma went every day to visit the field, more interesting to her than the garden of the Hesperides and its golden fruit. But soon even this resource failed, and *ennui* began to dim the brightness of her beautiful eyes. She forsook the growing turnips for a gloomy grove of firs, sauntering listlessly along the banks of a clear streamlet, into whose silver current she scattered flowers, that were quickly borne away into the gulfs of the Odergrund. Now whoever has any experience in matters of love, well knows that to have constant recourse to so melancholy an amusement, denotes some secret sorrow of the heart.

The Gnome could not fail to observe, that in spite of all the tenderness he manifested for Emma, in spite of his never-ceasing earnest attentions, he had hitherto made no progress in her heart. But far from being discouraged, he redoubled his efforts to please, doing his best to anticipate her every wish. Why should he despair of the conquest of the fair one? Inexperienced as he was in love affairs, he deemed that all the difficulties which he had to encounter were no more than the usual results of terrestrial custom in such matters; and gifted with that delicacy and refinement which is the birth-right of spirits, he felt that the resistance opposed to him was not without its charm, and would render his delayed triumph only the more glorious and



delightful. But he, poor novice, with all his fancied progress in knowledge of the sex, never suspected the real cause of the cross and crabbed humours of her whom he adored. He imagined the heart of Emma as free as his own had been until he saw her; and, in his simplicity, he deemed her love his due, as a matter of course, as 'twere a piece of unoccupied land, which he, as first claimant, was entitled to of right.

The Gnome was altogether out in his reckoning; for it so happened that Ratibor, a young prince whose states, on the banks of the Oder, were contiguous to those of the sovereign of Silesia, had already inspired Emma with that first love which, as people say, is as durable as brass. Already the happy pair were awaiting with impatience the day on which they were to renew their vows at the altar, when the betrothed suddenly disappeared. The terrible news turned Ratibor Inamorato into Orlando Furioso. He quitted his capital, wandered all by himself through the forest, over the mountains, making the rocks re-echo with his cries and groans. Meantime his faithful Emma sighed her secret grief in her splendid prison, taking care to conceal her real feelings from the Gnome, that she might the more readily secure the means of deceiving his vigilance and of recovering her liberty. After many a sleepless night she thought of a scheme which appeared to her at all events worth trying.

Spring had now restored their verdure to hill and dale; the Gnome had permitted the subterranean fire under his turnip field to go out, and the turnips themselves, which, despite the winter, had been going on, now began to come forth. Every day did Emma pull up a few of these turnips, and as if in sport, give them such forms as the caprice of the moment seemed to suggest; but this apparent sport had in reality a very serious object. One day she turned a little turnip into a bee, which she forthwith sent to bring her some account of her lover. "Fly, dear little bee," said she, "to Prince Ratibor, and buz gently into his ear that Emma still lives for him, but in captivity with the Gnome Prince, whose dwelling is in the mountains. Forget not one word of this greeting, and bring back tidings of my lover." The bee at once flew from the finger of its mistress on its mission; but scarcely was it on the wing, ere a hungry swallow pounced upon it, and in an instant swallowed up, to the great vexation of the lady, the messenger of love and all its despatches. Forthwith, by virtue of her wondrous wand, Emma created a grasshopper, whom she charged with a similar message. "Little grasshopper," said she, "hop over the mountains to Prince Ratibor, and chirp in his ear that his faithful Emma waits with impatience for his strong arm to free her from her bonds." The grasshopper hopped



away as fast as it could to fulfil its orders; but a great long-legged stork, that was stalking along the very road the grasshopper took, seized the poor little thing in its bill, and threw it down into its capacious craw. The failure of these two experiments did not discourage the resolute Emma from trying a third. This time she transformed her turnip into a magpie. "Fly, prattling bird," she said; "flutter on from tree to tree, till thou shalt find my affianced Ratibor; tell him of my captivity; tell him in three days from this to await me with horse and man on the borders of the mountain, in the Maienthal, in readiness to carry off the fugitive, who hopes by that time to have broken her chains." The mottled messenger departed, fluttering from one resting place to another, Emma anxiously watching its flight till out of sight.

Ratibor, a prey to grief, still wandered amid the solitary woods; the return of spring, the revivification of nature, had naught alleviated his woe. Seated in the shade of a tufted oak, he thought of his lost Princess, and softly breathed her name; the beloved accents were repeated by many-tongued Echo. At the same moment, an unknown voice called out, "Ratibor!" The Prince, amazed, looked round, listened, and seeing no one, hearing nothing, concluded he had been mistaken; when the same strange voice repeated, "Ratibor! Ratibor!" Here-

upon the mournful youth, looking up, perceived a magpie hopping from branch to branch, to and fro, calling incessantly, "Ratibor! Ratibor!" "Wretched babbler," cried he, "who can have taught thee to pronounce the name of an unfortunate who desires to be blotted for ever from the recollection of mankind?" This said, he snatched up a stone, and was aiming it at the magpie, when the bird cried, "Emma!" This magic name disarmed the Prince; its gentle influence at once pervaded his whole being; and, rising from the soul, the beloved accents were breathed from his own lips,— "Emma!" Having thus secured the Prince's attention, the magpie, from its leafy perch, communicated to him the message with which it had been entrusted, with all the volubility of its kind. No sooner had Ratibor received the glad tidings, than hope once more dawned in his breast, and the death-like grief which had alike borne down all the faculties of mind and body, vanished; and awaking, as it were, out of a hideous dream, he eagerly put to the comfort-bringing bird all sorts of inquiries touching his beloved Emma; but the magpie could add nothing to the message it had already communicated, which having once more gabbled over like a magpie, it flew off. As for Ratibor, recalled from his misanthropy, he hastened to his castle, gave instant orders to boot and saddle; and, followed by a strong



party of horse, set out, full of hope, to the appointed place, to await the adventure.

Emma meantime, with all the subtlety of her sex, had been doing all that she deemed necessary to secure the success of her project. She had ceased to torment the all-enduring Gnome with deadly coldness; her eye spoke hope; her deportment relaxed somewhat of its haughty reserve. How transporting so favourable a change, to a suitor hitherto repulsed with scorn! Rubezahl, spirit as he was, fell into the snare. Discouragement had long closed his lips; he now once more became eloquent, nay, even pressing. Emma seemed to yield; she requested but one day's delay; which the Gnome, intoxicated with love and joy, willingly consented to, and then retired, deeming his triumph perfectly secure.

Next morning, shortly after sunrise, Emma came forth from her toilet, dressed like a bride, and ornamented with all her jewels. Her fair hair was gracefully arranged in a knot, which a myrtle wreath encircled; the edges of her robe glittered with precious stones. On seeing the Gnome, who was impatiently expecting her upon the great terrace, she modestly covered her face with her veil. "Celestial maid," said Rubezahl, in faltering accents, "deny me not the joy of drinking deep draughts of love from thine eyes; let nothing intercept those tender,

yielding glances, which are about to render me the happiest being the ruddy morning sun e'er shone upon." So saying, he would have removed the veil which concealed the lovely features he so desired to gaze upon; but Emma only drew it still closer around her, and replied in a scarcely audible tone of voice: "O master of my heart! 'tis not in mortal to resist thee! Thy constancy hath triumphed. Receive from my lips the confession of my tenderness; but suffer this veil still to hide my blushes and my tears."—"Why tears?" said Rubezahl, in faltering accents; "every tear of thine falls like a drop of burning oil on my heart. I ask love for love, but no sacrifice."—"Ah!" replied Emma, "why will'st thou misinterpret my tears? My heart responds to thy tenderness, but anxious misgivings harass me. The wife does not retain the charms of the mistress. Thou art not assailable by old age; but the beauty of mortals is a flower which soon fades. How can I be assured that thou wilt prove as tender and constant a husband, as thou hast been a passionate and devoted lover?"—"Demand what proof thou wilt of my fidelity," replied Rubezahl, "and it shall be given. Only put my constancy to the proof, and thou shalt find how unalterable is my deep love."—"Be it so," said Emma; "I ask but one evidence of thy complaisance. Go, count all the turnips in the field. 'Tis my wish that our nuptials should not



be unattended. When thou hast ascertained the number of turnips, so that I may form my arrangements, I will convert them into a magnificent train; but take care how you miscount, even by one. This is the proof I demand of thy devotion."

However unwilling the Gnome might be to quit his beautiful betrothed at such a moment, he delayed not to obey her; and running to the field, set to work with more haste than good speed, hurrying along the rows of turnips as fast as the doctors do along the rows of patients' beds in a hospital. So zealous was he in his exertions, that the account was quickly summed up; but to "make assurance doubly sure," he deemed it safest to go over the computation again, when, to his great annoyance, he discovered an error which necessitated a third scrutiny; and this, again, only served to manifest a new defect of addition. Nor can we be surprised at these mistakes; the idea of a pretty girl is quite enough to confuse the brain of the very best of arithmeticians; the most infallible among them have been known to blunder when the figure of a fair lady has happened to get mixed up with the other figures to which they were applying themselves.

No sooner had the crafty Emma lost sight of her lover than she took measures for flight. She had kept in reserve a large juicy turnip, which, at a stroke of her wand, became a powerful horse, ready

saddled and bridled. Instantly vaulting upon its back, she was borne with the rapidity of the wind over moor and mountain, to the lovely valley Maienthal, where, once more restored to happiness, she threw herself into the arms of her beloved Ratibor, who had been there for some hours, full of the most solicitous suspense.

The busy Gnome, meantime, was so totally absorbed in his enumeration, that he neither saw nor heard anything that was going on. After infinite trouble and vexation, he had at length arrived at the precise number of turnips, large and small, which the field contained; and full of exultation, he flew to rejoin the lady of his love to render his account, in the hope of now fully convincing her that he should prove the most complaisant and obedient husband that ever fantastic and capricious daughter of Eve led by the nose. He presented himself on the great grass plot, with an air of very considerable self-satisfaction. Not finding there her whom he sought, he examined all the arbours and paths in the garden with equal want of success; he then rushed into the house, and looked into every corner of it, calling aloud the dear name of "Emma!" But the vaulted ceilings of the lone apartments alone repeated the beloved name; no Emma was there. All at once the truth flashed on his mind. Relieving himself instantly



from the cumbrous coil of mortal mould, and re-suming his spirit shape, he shot up high in the air, like an arrow from a bow, and descried the fair fugitive in the far distance, just at the moment when her courser was about to pass the limits of his dominions. Furious, the Gnome seized on a couple of clouds that were peaceably sailing past him, and dashing them against each other, sent after the perfidious fair one a terrible flash of lightning, which splintered to atoms an oak that had marked the barrier for a thousand years. That barrier, however, Emma had already passed; and, as beyond it Rubezahl was powerless, the cloud dispersed in a light mist.

After having desperately dashed to and fro, here and there, in the upper air, venting to the four winds his rage, Rubezahl, o'erladen with grief, returned to the castle, and wandered through its vast and lone apartments, which re-echoed to his groans and cries. Then he sought once more the garden, whose beauties had no longer any charm for him; one single trace of his faithless mistress's footsteps, which he discovered in the soft gravel, was of deeper interest to him than all the splendid flowers and fruits around. There was not a spot which did not remind him of happiness, now fled; here, there, everywhere, as she conversed with Brinhilda, as she played with her lapdog, as she

plucked and arranged her tasteful bouquets, had he watched her with rapture; at times invisible, at other times, when in mortal guise, he breathed his vows of love, and occupied the hours in pleasing converse. Slowly paced he up and down, plunged in the most gloomy reverie; then, roused to fury, he poured forth curses loud and deep against the whole human race, whom—so bad, so treacherous did he now deem them—he determined to hold thenceforth in utter scorn and hatred. In an excess of rage he thrice stamped with his foot, and instantly the magic palace and all its appurtenances disappeared, and into the fathomless gulf which opened in its place the Gnome precipitated himself, nor paused in his career till he reached the centre of the earth, carrying with him a sense of the bitterest mortification and disappointment, and fierce hatred to all mankind.

Meantime Prince Ratibor, who had lost no time in providing for the security of his lovely prize, bore her in triumph to her father's court, where their espousals were celebrated; and thence he proceeded with his bride to his dominions, ascended the throne of his forefathers, and built the town which bears his name to this day. The wondrous adventure of the Princess in the Riesengeberg, her daring flight, and fortune-favoured escape, became a tradition in all men's mouths, handed down from generation to



generation. The inhabitants of the surrounding districts, who knew not the spirit's spirit-name, thence derived a soubriquet for their Gnome neighbour, and have ever since designated him Rubenzahl, or more briefly, Rubezahl (the Turnip-counter).



#### LEGEND THE SECOND.

MOTHER EARTH has at all times been the refuge of disappointed love, the safe and quiet retreat to which those unlucky children of Adam, whose amorous hopes and wishes have been frustrated, have ever made their way by cord, or steel, or poison, or lead, or consumption, or some other disagreeable medium. But spirits can go below without any such preliminary process; and, moreover, enjoy the valuable privilege of re-visiting the upper world at pleasure, whenever their passion has ceased to torment them; whereas poor mortals, who have once taken the downward path, who have once experienced the *facilis descensus*, find it not only not easy, but impossible, to return. The distressed Gnome had quitted the sublunary world with the determination of never more beholding the light of the sun; but the soothing influence of time, by slow degrees, wore

off the edge of his grief; nine hundred and ninety-nine years, however, elapsed ere the wound in his heart was completely healed. At length, one day, when Rubezahl felt peculiarly hippish, a certain frolicksome sprite, who filled the post of court-buffoon to his subterranean highness, suggested a trip to the Giant Mountains, and the suggestion was forthwith adopted. In less than one minute the immense journey was accomplished, and Rubezahl stood upon the great grass plot of his erewhile garden, the which, with its palace and appurtenances, by a single act of his will, he reintegrated in all its pristine beauty; yet nought was visible to mortal eyes, the travellers who passed over the mountains seeing only a dreary wilderness. This scene of his former love, so delightful to Rubezahl when graced by the presence of the lovely Emma, made a deep impression upon him: it seemed to him but as yesterday that his mistress had deceived him; her charms were as present to his imagination as when she then walked by his side. The memory of his wrongs, thus recalled to his feelings, revived in all its bitterness the hatred he had sworn against the whole human race. "Vile earth-worms!" cried he, as he looked around him, and saw from the mountain height the towers of churches and convents, and castles and cities; "you continue, then, to flourish down there in the valley. You've plagued me more than enough with your



tricks and knavery, and now you shall pay for it. I'll teach you, to your cost, to know the Spirit of the Mountain."

Before he had done speaking human voices reached him from a distance. Three young men were passing below, the boldest of whom was bawling incessantly:—"Come down, Rubezahl! come down, thou girl-stealer!"

During all these centuries, the scandalous chronicle of the district had preserved the history of Rubezahl's amour, and as a matter of course, from mouth to mouth through so many generations, had not failed to receive infinite embellishments. All the travellers who passed over the Riesengeberg narrated the adventure to each other, and each added something to the tale he himself had heard. Many an awful story was current, altogether unfounded in fact, but the recital of which failed not to cause the very flesh to creep on the bones of timorous travellers; while, on the other hand, the strong-minded folks, the wits and philosophers, who in broad day-light, and with plenty of friends about them, had no belief in ghosts, and made themselves exceedingly merry at all such ridiculous notions, were in the habit, whenever a party of them passed the mountain in the day-time, of shouting out very valorously and scornfully the Mountain Spirit's nickname, and calling upon him to appear; and when he did not appear, they got

braver and braver, and would downright abuse and vilify him. They little thought that the reason why the apparently peaceful Spirit took no notice of their impertinences was simply that in the depths where he had retreated their insolent bravadoes never reached his ear. What was Rubezahl's amazement, what his indignation, when he now found that his unhappy amour was an ordinary subject of jest and mockery in the mouths of the contemptible creatures who had made good their intrusion on his domains. Like a whirlwind, and as invisible, he rushed through the thick forest of firs, and was just about to strangle the fellow who had, however unconsciously, insulted him, when, on the instant, he reflected that so terrible a vengeance, necessarily exciting general alarm throughout the country, would drive away all travelers from his mountains, and thus deprive him of the pleasure he promised himself, of playing a thousand pranks upon the children of Adam; he therefore permitted the delinquent and his companions to pass on undisturbed for the present, with the clear intention, however, of punishing him most severely for his offence on a very early occasion.

At the next cross-roads, the Spirit-mocker parted from his two companions, and reached his native town, Hirschberg, safe and sound, and without the slightest notion of the scrape he had got into. Rubezahl having followed him to the inn where he



put up, and thus ascertained where to find him again when requisite, retraced his steps to the mountain, meditating divers plans of vengeance. On his way, he met a rich Jew proceeding to Hirschberg, and it instantly occurred to him that he might make this man an instrument of his revenge. He forthwith assumed the precise form and features, and dress of the traveller who had insulted him, and joining the Israelite, entered into friendly converse with him, and under pretence of a short cut, led him out of the road into a thicket, where, suddenly seizing him in the most ferocious manner by the beard, he shook him soundly, and then throwing him roughly on the ground, tied him neck and heels, and took from him his purse, which contained a large amount in gold and jewels. He then, by way of adieu, kicked and cuffed the unhappy Jew, until he well nigh became a jelly, after which satisfactory exercise the Gnome left his victim half dead among the bushes, and went his way.

As soon as the sufferer had recovered from his awful panic, and satisfied himself by pinching his poor bruised arms and legs that he was not dead, he set up a doleful howling, and bawled piteously for help, and well he might, for left there, in the depth of the forest, and unable to rise, what was to save him from dying of hunger where he lay? His cries brought to his assistance a grave, respectable-looking person, apparently a burgess of some neighbouring town,

who, while earnestly inquiring the cause of those agonized cries, those cruel bonds, undid with all benevolent haste the rope that kept the poor fellow's body rolled up almost in the form of a ball; next, he refreshed the Israelite's inward man with a draught of right royal cordial from a gourd he bore at his girdle, then carried him into the high road, and, as soon as the patient had recovered the use of his limbs, supported him the remaining distance to Hirschberg, to the very door of the tavern where he intended to pass the night, and there only bade him adieu, after having slipped into his hand a small sum of money. What was the astonishment of the Jew, on entering the house, to see the vagabond who had plundered him sitting at a table in the common room, as calm and unembarrassed as though he were the most innocent creature in the world. Before him stood a great pitcher of wine; around him were other lusty lads, with whom he was laughing and joking in the most hardened manner; beside him lay his wallet, in which Master Rubezahl, having, after taking leave of the Jew at the door as the honest burgess, entered the room, invisible to all eyes, had placed the purse which, as a robber, he had forced from poor Moses. The latter, hardly knowing how to believe his eyes, slunk into a corner, to consider of the best and readiest means of recovering his property. After having minutely examined his man, he was convinced there could be



no mistake in the case; and accordingly, slipping unperceived out of the house, he hastened to the magistrates and laid his plaint. Justice, in the good town of Hirschberg, had, at that period, the repute of great vigilance and activity in all cases where the expenses were sure to be paid; though 'twas said her progress was little better than snail-paced in mere profitless *ex officio* proceedings. The same thing, for that matter, has been insinuated of other times and places. Our Israelite, who knew the way of Hirschberg, when he found the judge hesitate to receive his deposition, pointed out to him that the wallet of the accused contained a *corpus delicti* far more than sufficient to pay handsomely all fees, expenses, and perquisites whatever. These golden spectacles at once cleared the magistrate's vision, and he forthwith issued his warrant, armed with which, and with rusty pikes and halberts, a body of catchpoles surrounded the inn pointed out by the Jew; the more daring of them then rushed, with firm determination, into the common room, furiously seized the unconscious offender, and dragged him to the hall of justice.

"Who art thou?" demanded the judge, with a stern voice, "and whence comest thou?"—"I am an honest tailor by business," replied the young man, in a firm, fearless tone, "my name is Benedict; I come from Liebenau; I work in my master's house."—"Hast thou not attacked this Jew in the forest, beaten him

unmercifully, tied him neck and heels, and robbed him of his purse ?"—“I never saw this Jew before ; I have neither beaten him, nor bound him, nor robbed him. I am an honest freeman of my company, and no highway robber.”—“How canst thou prove all this ?”—“By my certificates.”—“Let us see them.”

Benedict opened his wallet with the utmost confidence, for he felt quite certain that it contained nothing that was not his own property. What was his alarm, on throwing out the first handful of things, to hear the clink of gold as it fell upon the floor among them. The officers instantly ran up, and turning over Benedict's shirts and stockings, found a heavy purse, which the Jew eagerly claimed as his property, and took possession of, *deductis deducendis*, all fees and expenses being first handed over to justice. The poor tailor was thunder-struck, ready to sink into the earth ; he turned ghastly pale ; his lips convulsively quivered ; his knees shook ; his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth ; he became quite speechless. The brow of the judge clouded over, and his threatening countenance foretold a severe sentence. “Wretch !” thundered he, “wilt thou now dare to deny thy guilt ?”—“Mercy ! mercy ! my lord !” whimpered the poor fellow, throwing himself on his knees, and raising his clasped hands in supplication ; “I call all the saints in Paradise to witness, I am innocent of this robbery. How the



Jew's purse got into my wallet I have not the least idea, I swear it!"

"Pshaw, fellow!" cried the judge; "thou standest convicted beyond a doubt. The purse clearly manifests thy guilt. Pay, then, to God and to justice the late respect of a free confession, and compel not the executioner to extort the truth by torture."

The miserable Benedict only answered by renewed protestations of his innocence; but he addressed deaf ears. Everybody present regarded him as a hardened rogue, well deserving of the gallows.

Master Torturer, that formidable father confessor, was now called in, to see if, by his impressive eloquence, he could not induce the prisoner to acknowledge himself guilty, whether or no; and his presence produced the usual effect; the mere anticipation of the pain that threatened him deprived Benedict of all the support which his good conscience had hitherto afforded. When the thumb-screws were about to be applied, the unfortunate tailor, reflecting that this operation must for ever disable him from using his needle at all decently, and deeming it better to die by hanging than by hunger, consented to father a crime he had not committed. The court forthwith unanimously sentenced him to be hanged, and he was ordered for execution next morning at sunrise, for the purpose of at once promptly satisfying justice and of saving the town the expense of providing the ragamuffin's breakfast.

The spectators, who had watched the proceedings with the greatest interest, pronounced the decision of the sapient magistrates of Hirschberg to be in the highest degree right and reasonable; and of the whole audience, no one was louder in his applause than the good Samaritan who helped the Jew home, and who, having made his way into the thick of the crowd, had manifested huge delight at the way in which matters went from first to last against the poor fellow at the bar, though no one knew better than he the entire innocence of the accused,—seeing that it was he himself, the malicious Rubezahl, who, as we have before intimated, had, unseen of all, put the Jew's purse that he had taken into the unfortunate tailor's wallet. With the earliest dawn the Gnome, under the form of a raven, was perched upon the gallows, awaiting with eagerness the fatal procession that was to gratify his revenge so far, and moreover, with a raven's appetite, well disposed to pick out the eyes of the sufferer for breakfast. But once again he reckoned without his host.

A pious monk, one of those who, out of pure desire to save men's souls, attend criminals under sentence of death, had found Benedict so deplorably ignorant of all religious matters, that it was impossible to prepare him for death in the short time allowed, and he had therefore obtained for his penitent a respite for three days, though not without a great deal of trouble,



and absolutely menacing all the judges with excommunication, if they continued to refuse his demand. As soon as Rubezahl heard of this he flew off in a terrible pet to his mountains, to await the day of execution.

During the interval he made excursions through the mountains and valleys. In one of his rambles, he came upon a young girl who was reclined beneath a tree; her head, resting upon a hand whiter than alabaster, sank mournfully upon her bosom. Her dress was plain, but clean and neat. From time to time she wiped away a burning tear from her pale cheek, while deep sighs agitated her bosom. Ten centuries before, the Gnome had felt the powerful influence of woman's tears; and he was now so strongly affected by the distress of the girl before him, that he resolved she should be an exception to the vow he had made to torment and injure all such children of Adam as came in his way in the mountains: and not only this, he determined to assist her in her grief. For this purpose, having assumed the form of a respectable burgher, he approached the mourner, and addressed her in friendly tones: "My child, why weepest thou here alone in this solitude? Tell me all thy sorrows, that I may see whether I can remove them."

The poor girl, who had been so absorbed in her grief as not to have perceived the speaker's approach, looked up, seized with alarm, when she heard herself

thus accosted. And what a pair of soft blue eyes were there! They would have melted a heart of stone! A pearly tear trembled under each lid; the double expression of grief and of timidity now impressed upon her ingenuous countenance, added new charms to her beauty. When she saw that the person who addressed her was a man who seemed worthy of respect and confidence, she opened her coral lips and replied: "Worthy sir, heed not my sufferings, since 'tis not in your power to assist me. I am a wretch—a monster; I have murdered the man I love, and naught remains for me but to expiate my crime by tears and lamentations, until death shall end my misery."

The benevolent traveller stood amazed. "Thou a murderess!" cried he; "can those angelic features be the mask of wickedness? Impossible! 'Tis true, mankind is a collection of knaves and villains, as I know to my cost; but that thou should'st not be an exception to the rule, is to me inconceivable; 'tis a perfect riddle."

"I will explain it," said the unhappy girl. "I had, as my beloved companion from childhood, the son of a worthy widow, our neighbour. When we grew up he called me, and I was happy in the title, his sweetheart, his betrothed; he was so good, so kind, so honest and true; he loved me so dearly, that I could not but love him truly in return. And now



what have I done ? I have poisoned the mind of that dear young man—have made him forget the excellent lessons of his virtuous mother, and perverted him to the perpetration of a crime for which he has forfeited his life.”

“Thou!” exclaimed the Gnome, with emphatic earnestness.

“Yes, sir, I am his murderess, his corrupter ; for I am the cause of his having committed a highway robbery—of his having plundered a rogue of a Jew. He has fallen into the hands of the magistracy of Hirschberg, has been condemned, and, O heart’s misery ! to-morrow he dies !”

“And this was thy fault ?” inquired the amazed Rubezahl.

“Yes, sir, his young blood lies at my door.”

“How can that be ?”

“When he set out on his journeymen’s travels, as, bidding me farewell he held me to his heart, he said : ‘Dear love, be true to me. When the apple tree shall bloom for the third time, and the swallow for the third time build her nest, I shall have returned from my wanderings ; and then I swear by all I hold sacred thou shalt be my wife.’ The apple tree bloomed for the third time, the swallow for the third time had built her nest, Benedict came back, reminded me of my promise, and asked me to marry. But I flouted and mocked him, as girls often do their lovers, and said :

‘How can I be thy wife, thou hast no home to take me to. Go and get some good hard money, and then we’ll consider of the matter.’ This language went to the heart of the poor fellow. ‘Ah, Clara!’ sighed he, with tears in his eyes, ‘if thy mind be set upon goods and gold, thou art no longer the honest girl thou once wast. Didst thou not give me thy hand to my hand that thou would’st be true? And what had I then more than this hand wherewith to maintain thee? Why now thus proud, thus cold? Ah, Clara! I need not ask; some rich lover has robbed me of thy heart. Is this my reward, faithless one? Three long years have I spent, counting the months and days and hours that separated me from thee. As I crossed the mountains on my return, my before wearied feet became light and free, my strength and speed were renewed by the glowing hope of the welcome which I expected at thy hands, and now thou receivest me with contempt.’ He wept and sobbed, but I did not give way. ‘Benedict,’ I said coldly, ‘my heart despises thee not; my hand rejects thee not; all I require is this—depart once more, get money, and then come home, and I will be thine.’—‘Well,’ he replied moodily, ‘so be it, since thou wilt have it so. I will depart once more, and work, beg, borrow, or steal; nor shalt thou see me again until, by some means or other, good or bad, I have acquired the vile dross by which alone I can purchase thy hand.’—‘Good-bye,’ I said lightly.’



‘Farewell,’ he mournfully replied, and left me. ’Twas thus I plunged him into guilt. When he departed from me, bitterness entered his soul; his guardian angel abandoned him, and he did that which the laws and his own heart alike condemn.”

The worthy burgess shook his head on hearing this recital, and exclaimed, after a pause: “This is indeed very extraordinary! but,” he continued, “why stayest thou here, filling this solitary wild with lamentations, which can be of no use either to thy lover or to thyself.”

“Kind sir,” she replied, “I was on my way to Hirschberg, when the violence of my grief so oppressed me, that I sunk, half dead, beneath this tree.”

“And what dost thou purpose to do at Hirschberg?”

“I will throw myself at the feet of the judges; I will rouse the town with my cries, and the maidens of Hirschberg, mingling their tears and entreaties with mine, will induce the Tribunal to take compassion on us, and to spare my lover’s life. At all events, if I cannot save his life, I will die with him.”

The Gnome was so moved by the poor girl’s distress, that he from that moment utterly abandoned all idea of further vengeance against the unlucky Benedict, whom he resolved without delay to restore to her arms. “Dry thy tears,” said he in sympathizing tones, “and let thy sorrow cease; before sunset thy lover shall be free. To-morrow morning, at the first crow-

ing of the cock, be on the watch; when thou shalt hear a finger tap at thy window, open the door without fear; it will be thy lover who calls thee. And take heed, girl, not again to madden him by thy insolent cruelty. For thy comfort know, that he did not commit the robbery with which he is charged, so that thou hast no such guilt wherewith to burden thy conscience, though there is no saying to what extremities his love and thy caprice might have driven him."

The girl greatly marvelled at all this, but on looking fixedly at the speaker, and detecting in his face no indication that he was otherwise than in serious earnest, she began to place faith in his words, and therewith her brow cleared up somewhat, and she said to him, with a joyful yet timid earnestness:

"Dear sir, if you mock me not, if all be as you say, surely you must be Benedict's good angel, to know and do all this."

"His good angel!" exclaimed Rubezahl, not a little disconcerted, "no, on my soul! but I may, as thou shalt find, become so. I am a burgher of Hirschberg, and was one of the judges who, as it then seemed justly, condemned the accused, but his innocence is now brought to light; have no fears, therefore, for his life. I am now on my way to the town, where I have considerable influence; and trust me he shall be forthwith liberated. Be of good cheer,



and go home full of confident hope for the event of to-morrow's early morning."

The girl obeyed, and departed on her return home, hope and fear alternating in her agitated bosom.

During the three days of respite, Father Graurock had laboured hard to get Benedict into a fit state for his approaching end; but his penitent was an ignorant layman, who knew far better how to handle the needle and shears than the rosary. He was for ever mixing up the Ave Maria and the Paternoster in inexplicable confusion; and as for the Credo, he did not know one syllable of it. The zealous monk had all the difficulty in the world in driving the latter into his head, nor did he succeed in this until full two days out of the three had expired. For unhappily worldly feelings, and the image of Clara, would ever and anon interrupt the progress of his spiritual lessons; but at last the patient monk succeeded in setting before his appalled contemplation a picture of the infernal regions so dreadful, that it drove from the mind of the poor fellow all thought of his mistress, and he paid assiduous attention to the exhortations of his ghostly attendant.

"Great indeed is thy crime, my son," said the monk, as he took leave of him on the evening of the third day, "but despair not. The fire of purgatory will suffice to cleanse thee. Well is it for thee that it was no true believer, but only a miscreant Jew,

whom thou didst despoil. As it is, a hundred years of purgatorial penance will suffice to whiten thy soul as new silver; had it been otherwise, hadst thou assailed a Christian, not a thousand years would have purged thee. Farewell!”

The monk had just quitted his penitent, who, unable to appreciate the advantage of having *only* one hundred years of purgatory, was perfectly terror-struck and inconsolable, when, at the entrance to the prison, he passed Rubezahl, who, however, was invisible, not having yet made up his mind in what form he should proceed to fulfil his purpose of setting the poor tailor at liberty, in such a manner as not to spoil the sport of the magistracy of Hirschberg, by depriving them of the sight of a hanging, adjudged in virtue of their high and mighty power and privileges; for, sooth to say, their offhand method of administering justice had tickled his fancy mightily. On sight of the confessor, an idea struck him which he immediately adopted. He followed the monk to his convent, stole from the vestiary a dress of the order, put it on, and, as Brother Graurock, presented himself at the gate of the prison, which was respectfully opened to him by the gaoler.

“Although I have but this moment quitted thee,” said he to the tailor, “yet my anxiety for the good of thy soul brings me once more back to thee. Con-



fess, my son, whatever thou hast upon thy conscience, that I may give thee consolation."

"Father," replied Benedict, "my conscience troubles me not, but the thought of your fiery purgatory puts me into horrible fear and agony."

Rubezahl, who, as may be supposed, had a very slight acquaintance with the subject which oppressed the poor prisoner's imagination, returned gruffly: "What art talking about? I ask thee, wilt thou confess?"

"Oh, father," sobbed the penitent, "but can't you save me from burning. 'Tis horrible, even for a hundred years, to say nothing of a thousand!"

"Burning! hundred years! thousand years!" impatiently repeated the Gnome; "who wants thee to burn. If thou dost not like fire, keep out of it."

Benedict looked so utterly amazed at this piece of advice that the *extempore* monk could not help thinking he must have committed some capital blunder, so he changed the conversation.

"Dost thou still think of Clara?" said he; "dost thou still love her as thy betrothed?"

Benedict was still more astonished than before, to hear this name so abruptly introduced by the very man, as he supposed, who had so recently, so earnestly, so solemnly, interdicted all mention of it, on pain of his high displeasure, and peril of the penitent's soul;

such was the revulsion in poor Benedict's feelings that he burst into an agony of tears, sobbing as if his heart would break.

This was too much for the Gnome, who, as we have intimated, was a good fellow at bottom, and he resolved at once to "cut short all intermission," and end his victim's troubles.

"My poor Benedict," said he, "be of good cheer; resume thy wonted spirits, thou shalt not die. I have learned that thou art innocent, and I have come to release thee from thy bonds and from prison."

He then drew a key from his pocket. "Let us see," said he, "if it will fit."

The padlock flew open at a touch, and the chains fell from the hands and feet of the prisoner. The benevolent confessor having then changed dresses with the tailor, dismissed him with these instructions:

"Walk slowly, with an air as grave as a monk, till thou hast passed the guards at the doors of the prison and at the town gate; then tuck up thy robe, and be off as fast as thou canst to the mountains, nor stop till thou hast reached Liebenau, and art at Clara's door; knock gently at her window; she awaits thee with heart's impatience."

Benedict at first imagined this was all a dream; but having, by dint of rubbing his eyes and soundly pinching his legs and arms, ascertained that he was quite awake, he threw himself at the feet of his de-



liverer, fervently embraced his knees, and would have poured out his thanks, but that joy deprived him of utterance. The excellent monk raised him up, gave him a roll and a long sausage to eat by the way, and pushed him out at the door. Just freed from his gyves, Benedict crossed the threshold of his prison with but a tottering step, trembling, moreover, lest he should be recognised. But his monk's frock effectually covered all delinquencies, real and alleged, and he received, on passing out, every bit as much respect as Brother Graurock himself.

Clara meantime sat alone and full of suspense, in her little bed-room, listening to every breath of wind, earnestly following each passing footstep. Ever and anon she was certain some one had tapped at the window-shutter or rung the bell, and would run out with a beating heart, but only to encounter a succession of disappointments. Already the cocks in the neighbourhood had announced, by their "lively din," the approach of day; already the convent bell had rung for matins, to Clara it had a funeral sound; already the watchman had blown his horn for the last time, to rouse the bread-bakers to their labour. The lamp of Clara was just going out for want of oil; nor, a prey to her anxiety, did she observe the bright circlet of happy omen, which shone around the extremity of the expiring wick. Seated on her bed-side, she wept bitterly, repeating gloomily: "Ah!







J. Erxleben, lith.

Day & Haghe, lith<sup>rs</sup> to the Queen.

# BENEDICTS RETURN.

Benedict! Benedict! what a fatal day for thee and me is now dawning." The sky over Hirschberg was blood-red, while along the horizon, clouds, which in her fancy took the shape of funereal crapes and palls, drove to and fro. Terror-struck at these awful appearances, she sank back on her bed in a state of utter stupefaction.

On a sudden three taps were heard at the window. A tremulous joy instantly ran through her frame; she started up, and a slight scream rose to her lips, as a well-known voice whispered through the key-hole, "Dearest love, art thou awake?" She flew to the door and exclaimed, "Benedict! Benedict! is it thyself, or is it but thy ghost?" When she saw the grey frock, she, with disappointment and alarm, fainted, but the warm kisses of her lover, who folded her in his arms, quickly restored her to life.

The first transports of their meeting over, Benedict related his miraculous deliverance from prison; but ere he had well completed the tale, the tongue clove to his mouth from thirst.

Clara ran and brought him a glass of fresh spring water. When he had drunk he felt excessively hungry; poor Clara had nothing to give him for breakfast but bread and salt, that panacea which some lovers imagine they can live very comfortably upon, but which don't at all answer in practice. Benedict now bethought him of his sausage, which he forth-



with drew from his pocket. He was quite surprised to find how heavy it was, for he had not noticed its weight at all as he came along; and you may be sure he was still more surprised, when, breaking it in two, no end of bright gold pieces rolled out upon the floor. At sight of this treasure Clara was not a little alarmed, for it at once struck her that this must be a part of the booty taken from the Jew; and that, consequently, her lover was not so innocent as the respectable gentleman whom she had met in the mountains had made him out to be. But Benedict assured her that his pious confessor had presented him with this treasure, probably, that it might enable them to establish themselves in life. And such frankness and sincerity was there in his voice and manner, that Clara at once saw this to be the real truth. The lovers gave a thousand heart's thanks to their generous benefactor, and that very day they quitted their native town and went to Prague, where Master Benedict, with Clara his wife, lived happily together for a great many years, well to do as reputable citizens, and brought up a large family in comfort. And the fear of the gallows left on him an impression so salutary, that, contrary to the whole practice of the trade, to the very nature of tailors, he never cheated his customers, never cabbaged the smallest shred.

At the very moment when Clara, to her great joy, heard Benedict's finger tapping at the window,

another finger was tapping at the gates of the prison of Hirschberg. This was Brother Graurock, who, moved by zealous zeal, was up by daybreak, with intent to complete the conversion of his penitent, and to deliver him, already half a saint, into the hands of the executioner. Rubezahl having once undertaken the part of the delinquent, thought himself bound to go through with it, for the honour of justice. He therefore affected the most calm resignation to his fate, to the great joy of the pious ecclesiastic, who failed not to regard the happy result as the good seed of his own exertions. To fortify this most promising frame of mind, he addressed to his penitent one last discourse full of consolatory matter, to which Mr Rubezahl listened with exemplary attention. When he had finished, he ordered the prisoner's chains to be taken off, that he might hear his confession, and give him absolution. But first a thought struck him: he would make the culprit once more go over the confession of faith, which it had cost him so much labour to impress upon his memory, in order that when at the gallows he might repeat it fluently, and without any mistake, for the benefit of the spectators. What was the good monk's horror on finding that the wretched blockhead, overwhelmed with his fears, had in the course of the night clean forgotten the whole lesson? The indefatigable confessor, perfectly certain that nothing short of the



direct intervention of Satan himself, could have effected such a catastrophe, had recourse to a powerful exorcism, but the Evil one would not budge an inch, nor could Creed or Paternoster be crammed into the prisoner's dense skull.

Inexorable time held on his course ; the hour arrived to which the tribunal had most reluctantly put off the execution, and not a minute longer would they give to save the criminal's soul or their own. The wand was broken over the pro-tailor's head, and the procession set out. The patient submitted with excellent grace to all the formalities usual on such occasions, up to the moment of being turned off. He then, however, indulged in the most extraordinary kicks and capers that were ever exhibited on that sort of tight-rope, twisting and turning about, first on one side, then on the other, and he went on in this way, almost bursting with suppressed laughter, until the populace, thinking it was all the executioner's fault, and that he was needlessly torturing the sufferer, got into a great rage and began throwing stones at the unfortunate official. Rubezahl, having no spite against the man, on observing this manifestation of feeling, stretched himself out as stiff as a board, and assumed all the appearance of death. The crowd then dispersed. Shortly afterwards, however, a few idlers, curious to see how the corpse of a criminal, who had been hanged, looked on closer in-

spection, returned to the gallows, and our waggish Gnome then took it into his head to indulge these philosophers with a second exhibition; he therefore not only recommenced his odd capers, throwing up his toes to his head, so as to become a regular hoop, but taking off his cap, made such horrible faces at them that the whole party fled, horror-struck. In the evening a report was current that the tailor had been so unartistically hanged that he was not yet dead, but was still jigging away on the gallows, which, coming to the ears of the magistrates, they assembled in conclave, and the first thing next morning, for nobody would venture in the dark, a deputation of the more valorous burghers proceeded to investigate the matter on the spot. On reaching the gallows they found hanging thereon nothing but a straw manikin, such as the farmers put into the fields to frighten birds withal. The worthy magistrates were altogether dumb-founded; however, as the only thing to be done, they privately burned the man of straw, and buried his memory; and to silence all popular rumours, gave out, that during the night a high wind had carried off the body of the thin slender tailor into the mountains.





### LEGEND THE THIRD.

**R**UBEZAH has not always been disposed so nobly to indemnify those whom his perverse humour had led him to injure ; often has he tormented poor mortals for the mere amusement of tormenting them, little heeding whether his victim were a worthy man or a knave, and making them no compensation at all. A frequent joke with him has ever been to join some solitary traveller, attired as a simple countryman, and under pretence of showing him a shorter road, to lead him half a dozen miles out of his way ; then, having brought him to the brink of a precipice, or up to his knees in a quagmire, to vanish with a shout of scornful laughter. At other times, he has terrified out of their wits the poor countrywomen on their way to and from market, by suddenly appearing before them in the shape of some unknown monster of frightful aspect. The leopard-like animal that, 'tis said, has sometimes shown itself in these mountains, and which the country people have called the Rysow, is merely one of the forms under which Rubezahl

has chosen to play his pranks. Often has he paralyzed the traveller's horse, so that it could not advance a step; or broken the wheel of the carrier's cart; or thrown down before his very eyes, in the middle of the road, a mass of rock, requiring a world of labour to remove it ere the cart could proceed on its journey. Not unfrequently a waggon perfectly empty has been suddenly stopped by a force so great that six horses could not move it one step forward; and did the waggoner exclaim that this was a trick of Rubezahl's, or if, in his impatience, he indulged in invectives against the Spirit of the Mountain, a cloud of gadflies assailed his horses, and rendered them utterly unmanageable, while a shower of stones, or a sound cudgelling, inflicted by an invisible hand, left the wretched wight all covered with bruises.

There was one old shepherd, a good and worthy man, with whom the Gnome had made an acquaintance, which had ripened into such warm friendship that he had permitted him to pasture his flock close to the hedges of his gardens, which no other person could have done with impunity. The Spirit of the Mountain sometimes listened with pleasure to the recital which this patriarch gave of several of the unpretending events in his life. Yet even this poor man got into a scrape with Rubezahl; for having one day, according to custom, led his flock to the borders of the Gnome's domain, a few sheep



broke through the hedge, and got browsing on the grass plots of his garden, which threw Rubezahl into such a fury, that he spread a panic-terror through the flock, and the sheep madly rushing about, and precipitating themselves over the rocks, the greater part of them perished. And so the poor fellow's means of subsistence being thus taken from him, he pined away and died.

A physician of Schmiedeberg, who used to go botanizing on the Giant Mountains, had also the honour of sometimes chatting with the Gnome, who attired now as a wood cutter, now as a traveller, listened with interest to the history of the wonderful cures which the Schmeideberg Æsculapius boasted of having performed, the most trifling details of which he set forth in the most pompous and pragmatical manner. At times Rubezahl went so far in his complaisance as to carry the doctor's basket of herbs a good bit of the way home for him, having first rendered it doubly heavy and valuable by pointing out, and teaching him the healing properties of, many a herb of which he knew not the whereabouts, nor even the existence. The doctor, who thought he must needs know more of the matter than a wood cutter could possibly know, one day took his instructions amiss, and with some ill humour, said: "Cobbler! stick to thy last. What! shall a wood cutter pretend to teach a physician botany? But come, now, thou to whom all plants,

known and unknown, from the hyssop on the wall to the cedar on Lebanon, tell me, thou Solomon, which came first, the acorn or the oak ?"—“ The oak, doubtless,” replied the Gnome ; “ for the fruit comes of the tree.”—“ Blockhead !” cried the doctor ; “ whence, then, came the first oak, if not from an acorn, which contains the essential germ of oaks ? ” —“ That,” replied the wood cutter, “ is a master’s question, which, I confess, is far beyond me. But let me, in turn, propose a question to you. Tell me to whom belongs the ground on which we are ? To the King of Bohemia, or to the Lord of the Mountain ? ” (so was the Gnome now called by the people of the surrounding district, who had learned to their cost that Rubezahl was a name interdicted, and that whoever made use of it within reach of the touchy Spirit, was sure to get well kicked and cuffed, as the very least that would happen to them). — “ This land,” replied the physician, without hesitation, “ belongs to my sovereign, the King of Bohemia. As to Rubezahl, he’s a mere chimera, a nonentity, a name wherewith to frighten children.” Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when the wood cutter became a monstrous giant, with fire-darting eyes and furious gestures, who, glaring ferociously at the wretched doctor, roared at him in a voice of thunder, “ Rubezahl ! rascal ! Rubezahl : I’ll Rubezahl thee. I’ll crack thy ribs, till thou art a nonentity thyself.”



He then seized the unhappy son of Æsculapius by the nape of the neck, shook him as a cat shakes a mouse, banged him against the trees, knocking one of his eyes out of his head; and finally left him half dead on the ground. After awhile, the poor wretch recovered a little, and crawling away as best he could, got home at last, and took very good care never to go herbalizing on the Giant Mountains again.

Rubezahl's friendship, you see, was easily forfeited; on the other hand, 'twas as readily secured. A peasant of the district of Reichenberg had for his neighbour a bad, litigious man, who having taken an enmity to him, had persecuted him by means of a villanous lawsuit, until he had stripped him of the little property he had possessed; even his last cow had been taken from him. The poor fellow had now nothing left but a wife and six children, all well nigh reduced to skeletons; a good half of whom, in his despair, he would willingly have given in exchange for his cow. He had still, indeed, a pair of vigorous arms, but without a foot of land these were of no service. It went to his heart to hear the poor children crying for bread, and he with none to give them. "If any one," said he one day to his miserable wife, "would lend us a hundred dollars, we might establish ourselves on some farm at a distance from our litigious neighbour, and raise our fallen fortunes. Thou hast rich relations on the other side of the mountains; I will go

and tell them of our distress; perhaps one of them will take pity on us, and out of his superfluity lend us, at interest, the money necessary to relieve us from our misery."

The poor woman acquiesced in this idea, with slight hopes, indeed, of any beneficial result; but she had nothing better to suggest. Early next morning, accordingly, the husband departed on his journey, saying hopefully to his wife and children: "Do not weep; my heart tells me I shall find a benefactor." Faint and weary, for 'twas a long distance, and he had naught but a hard crust to support him on his way, he arrived by nightfall at the village where the rich relations lived; but not one of them offered him a night's lodging; some of them even denied all knowledge of him. The scalding tears coursing down his furrowed cheeks, he piteously represented to them his utter misery; 'twas all in vain; the hard-hearted wretches were in no degree affected, but, on the contrary, insulted his misfortune by reproaches and throwing musty proverbs at him: "As you make your bed, so you must lie in it," said one. "Every one forges his own fortune," cried another. And so they all mocked him and abused him, calling him idler, spendthrift, a sieve, and finally thrust him out of doors by the shoulders. The poor man had not expected such a reception from his wife's rich relations: he slunk off, oppressed



with disappointment and grief, and having no money to pay for a lodging at the inn, he was fain to lay down under a hay-stack in a neighbouring field; where, without once closing his eyes, he waited impatiently until day-break, and then began his journey home.

When he got back to the mountains, he felt so overcome with grief and weariness, that he almost yielded to despair. "Two day's labour lost," groaned he; "worn out with heart-sorrow and hunger; no hope! no hope! What shall I do, what can I do when my toil-worn limbs shall reach my wretched hovel? the starving inmates will hold up their hands, crying to me for bread, and I have none to give them! Father's heart, can'st thou bear this? Break rather, ere this extreme of misery comes upon thee!" He threw himself beneath a sloe tree, and tore up the grass with his nails and teeth, and wept and howled in his despair. As the sailor who sees his vessel sinking will have recourse to any expedient, even jumping into the boiling waves, in the hope of escaping, or at all events postponing immediate destruction, so poor Veit, after forming and rejecting a thousand futile schemes, resolved at last to have recourse to the Spirit of the Mountain. He had heard a hundred stories about the Gnome from travellers with whom he had conversed at different

times, and he remembered that though sometimes the Spirit had shown himself excessively touchy and spiteful, he had on other occasions manifested considerable kindness of heart to people in distress. He was aware, too, that one certain mode of irritating his Lordship was to call him by his nickname; but as he knew not how to make himself understood by any other means, he made up his mind to a sound cudgelling, and set to work, bawling at the pitch of his voice: "Rubezahl! Rubezahl!" Forthwith there started up before him a great black, sooty collier, with a broad red beard that reached down to his girdle; fire flashed from his eyes, and he was armed with an enormous club as long as a weaver's beam, which he raised with a ferocious air, and was about to smash with it the impudent vagabond who had dared thus barefacedly to insult him.

"A word, by your leave, my Lord Rubezahl," said Veit, with an intrepid air; "pray pardon me, that, unacquainted with your proper designation, I have, may-be, unintentionally addressed you by a title that seems disrespectful. I meant no offence." This straightforward address, and the man's careworn face, expressive of anything in the world but insolence or impertinent curiosity, somewhat mollified the Gnome. "Earth worm!" cried he, "what can have possessed thee to disturb me thus?"



Know'st thou not how terribly I punish such an outrage ? ”

“ My Lord,” replied Veit, “ sheer necessity has driven me to take this step. I have a petition to lay before you, which you can readily comply with, and thereby save me from utter destruction. If you will lend me a hundred dollars, I will in three years, as I am an honest man, repay you the money with full legal interest.” — “ Blockhead ! ” replied the Gnome, “ dost thou take me for a usurer ? Go, address thyself to thy brother men, and borrow of them the sum thou needest, and trouble me no longer.” — “ Alas ! ” replied Veit, “ it's all up with me in that quarter ; brotherhood among men does not extend to money matters.” He then told his pitiful story in detail, and described the oppression and misery he had suffered so pathetically, that the Gnome could not resist his entreaties. Even had the poor wretch been less deserving of compassion, the idea of borrowing money from him struck Rubezahl as something so original, so confiding, so ingenuous, that he would not have hesitated to extricate the petitioner from his difficulties. “ Follow me,” said he ; and plunging into the wood, he led Veit through it to a distant valley, at whose extremity rose a steep rock, the base of which was surrounded by thick brushwood.

When Veit and his conductor had with some

trouble forced their way through the bushes, they found themselves at the mouth of a dark cavern. Poor Veit was not without his misgivings while groping his way through the deep gloom. A cold chill began to come over him, and his hair was getting on end. "I should not be the first," thought he, "whom Rubezahl has deceived. Who knows on the brink of what abyss I may at this moment be walking, into which the next step may hurl me!" At that moment he began to hear a terrible roaring, rushing noise, as of a torrent dashing into a gulf. The farther he advanced the more was his heart oppressed with fear; but at length, to his great consolation, he perceived in the distance a bluish flame, which, on nearer approach, he found to proceed from a large lamp suspended from the centre of the rocky ceiling of a spacious grotto, throughout which it diffused a brilliant light. On the floor, beneath the lamp, stood an immense copper, brimful of new, hard, glittering dollars. At sight of this treasure all Veit's fears vanished, and his heart leaped with joy. "Take," said the Spirit, "what thou needest, be it more or less; and then, if thou canst write, draw up thy note of hand for the amount." Veit having replied that he could write, scrupulously counted out the hundred dollars, not one more, not one less. The Gnome, affecting to pay no attention



to him while thus occupied, went to another part of the grotto, to look for his writing materials. Veit then drew up the note in the most binding terms he could think of, and handed it over to the Gnome, who locked it up in a strong box, and then bade him farewell. "Go thy way, my friend," said he, in the gentlest tone, "and by thy honest industry make the most of the money thou hast got. Forget not that thou art my debtor; impress well on thy memory the road to this valley, and the entrance to the cavern. On the third year complete from this day, thou must return and pay me principal and interest. I am a strict creditor; so fail not, or thou wilt repent it." Honest Veit, without taking any oath in the matter, without pledging soul and salvation, as so many lax payers are so ready to do, promised, by his two hands, to be punctual to the day; and then departed, full of gratitude to the kind-hearted Mountain Spirit, finding his way out of the cavern without any of that difficulty which he experienced on entering it. The hundred dollars were to poor Veit a very balsam of life. When, on leaving the dark cave, he hailed the light of heaven, he felt as though born anew. Full of joy and renovated vigour, he walked sturdily homewards, and reached the miserable cottage just as the day was closing. As soon as the starving children descried their

father, they cried out, with their faint voices; "Bread, father! a morsel of bread! How long thou hast kept us waiting!" The woe-worn mother sat weeping in a corner, scarcely daring to look at her husband, so much did her oppressed spirit dread his having only bad news to communicate; but he, assuring her with a cordial smile and a loving kiss, bade her mend the fire; and then lit up the hollow eyes of all by drawing from his wallet the oatmeal, millet, and other eatables he had bought at Reichenberg on his way home. In the shortest possible time there was got ready a bowl of porridge, so thick that the spoon stood upright in it; and then the poor hungry folks set to work, and ate away so heartily and joyously, 'twould have done you good to have seen them. The next thing to be done was to satisfy his wife's earnest desire to know how he had sped. Not deeming it advisable for the present to let her know the real state of the case, he said: "Thy relations are uncommonly nice people; they by no means insulted me for my poverty, nor affected not to know me, nor turned me into the street by the shoulders. Oh! dear, no; they received me most hospitably; opened heart and hand to me, and advanced me a hundred dollars down on the nail. Of course they did!" The poor woman felt relieved from a sense of mortification which had long weighed



heavily on her mind. Her rich relations, then, would notice her, and give her a helping hand. The thought quite elevated her: "Ah!" said she, with an air, "had we in the first instance knocked at the right door, had you thought proper to apply earlier to my relations, we should have been spared much misery." And so she went on to laud and glorify her rich kindred, though up to that moment she had always discouraged any recourse to them as utterly hopeless on account of their pride and meanness. For some time Veit, in consideration of the many troubles she had gone through, allowed her to indulge in the pleasure she took in setting forth the importance, the inestimable value, of her rich relations; it tickled her vanity, and though he was annoyed, yet for awhile he put up with it; but when he found that the theme seemed exhaustless, that week after week the praises of those opulent niggards was well nigh her only topic, he lost all patience, and one day said to her: "Dost thou know what the master of the house gave me when I went, as thou boastest, to knock at the right door?"—"No, tell me."—"Well, he gave me a proverb: 'Every one forges his own fortune;' that was what he gave me. Another of thy rich relations gave me — what dost think? another proverb: 'Strike while the iron is hot,' said he. And a third gave me a third

proverb : ‘ Help yourself, and your friends will bless you.’ Now, wife, let us at all events attend to this last proverb; let us help ourselves; let us talk no more of thy rich relations, but make the best use we can of our hands and heads, so that by the end of three years we may be able to pay principal and interest, the money I borrowed of thy rich relations, as thou thinkest, and then we shall be clear before the world.” The wife was a woman of good natural sense; she took the advice now given, and thenceforward heartily seconded her husband, who by slow and safe degrees bought one bit of land after another, until he had realized a hundred acres. A blessing was on the hundred dollars, and they went on doubling themselves as though there had been a decoy dollar among them. Veit sowed and reaped, and was already looked up to in the village as a man well to do in the world; every year he saved something towards the purchase of more land, so that at the close of the third summer he had considerably added to his hundred acres. Good fortune so attended him in all he did, that not a single investment he made but returned him large profits.

The time of payment approached, and Veit had so well managed that he was perfectly able to take up his note, without the slightest inconvenience. Having already put apart the hundred crowns, with interest,



on the appointed day he rose very early in the morning, roused his wife and children, directed her to wash and comb them nicely, and to dress herself and them in their Sunday clothes, desiring her, in especial, to put on the new shoes and fine scarlet bodice he had bought her for a new-year's gift, and which she had only worn once. He himself donned his best things, and, meantime, opening the window, called out: "Hans, put to the horses!"

"Why what's the meaning of all this?" asked his wife; "'tis no holiday or church festival to-day; what has put thee into this merry-making vein? Where art thou going to take us?"—"Oh!" said he, laughingly, "I'm going to see those rich relations beyond the mountains, who helped us in the time of need, and to pay my debt; to-day, principal and interest, the money falls due." The wife, highly delighted, dressed out herself and her children in all their finery, and to complete the favourable effect she intended to produce in the minds of her rich relations, and manifestly to prove that her circumstances were now good, she hung round her neck a string of crooked ducats. Everybody being ready, Veit took the heavy bag of dollars in his hand, and off they started; and Hans making the four horses keep up a good trot, they were not long in reaching the Giant Mountains.

At the bottom of a steep hill Veit stopped the

vehicle, stepped out himself, and made his family do the same. "Hans," said he, "go gently up the mountain, and wait for us under the three linden trees thou wilt come to; don't be uneasy if we do not immediately join thee; the horses will have time to rest and graze a bit. We're going by a foot-path I'm acquainted with, somewhat round about, 'tis true, but very pleasant." He then conducted his family through the wood into the valley, and down to the copse at its extremity, where he looked about, up and down, here and there, until his wife began to fear he had lost his way, and proposed to him to return and get into the high road again. Hereupon Veit called around him his six children, who were playing about, and said: "Thou believest, my dear wife, that we are going to pay a visit to thy friends; but such is not, just now, my intention. Thy rich relations are niggards and knaves, who, when in my affliction I went to seek consolation and assistance at their hands, treated me with insolence and outrage, and turned me out of doors. No; 'tis here resides the benefactor to whom our gratitude is due for our present well-being, who lent me, on my bare word, the hundred dollars which have so prospered in my hands. This is the day he fixed for the repayment of the debt. And who, thinkest thou, is our creditor? No other than the Lord of the Mountain, whom men call Rubezahl." The wife was horribly frightened at this intelligence,



and pulling out a great cross, waved it frantically about herself and the children, who were clinging round her, all trembling at the idea of their father having anything to do with Rubezahl, of whom they had heard, over and over again, as a hideous giant and man-eater. Veit proceeded to relate all the circumstances of his adventure; how the Spirit, on being called, had appeared to him in the form of a collier; how he had gone with him into the cavern, received the money, and given a note of hand for its repayment; and so moved was the poor fellow with the recollection of the Gnome's kindness to him, that, as he spoke, the tears of affectionate gratitude ran down his sun-burnt cheeks.

"Await me here," said he at last, "I am now going into the cavern to settle this affair. Fear nothing; I shall be back directly; and, if I can prevail upon his Lordship, will bring him to receive your thanks; hesitate not to shake him cordially by the hand, black and rough though it be, if he will permit you; he will do you no harm, but, on the contrary, will doubtless be pleased with the fruits of his good action, and our heartfelt thanks. Fear nothing, I say; perhaps he may even give you some gold-streaked apples, or gingerbread."

The timid woman was but half reassured, and did all in her power to prevent her husband from entering the cavern; the children, too, cried, and held him back; but, disengaging himself, Veit forced his way

through the thick underwood, and, after much labour, reached the well-remembered rock. He at once recognized all the land-marks he had so well impressed on his memory ; and, prominent among them, there stood, and had stood for centuries, the hollow oak, amongst the roots of which the subterranean entrance opened ; but not a trace of any opening was now to be seen.

In vain did he try every means he could think of to gain admission into the mountain ; he took up a great stone and threw it a dozen times against the rock with all his might ; he intreated, implored it to open ; he drew the bag of crowns from his pocket, and rattled its contents, calling out as loud as he could bawl : “ Spirit of the Mountain ! come and receive thy due ! ” But the Spirit was not to be seen or heard. The honest debtor was therefore fain to carry his dollars back again out of the wood, through which, strange enough, he had now no difficulty in making his way, a path presenting itself which he had not before remarked. As soon as his wife and children saw him coming they joyfully ran to meet him ; but Veit, full of sorrow and heaviness at not being able to effect his payment, threw himself disconsolately on the grass, to consider what he should do. By-and-bye, his old device recurred to him, and up he jumped with a delighted air. “ Yes ! yes ! that will be sure to do,” cried he ; “ I’ll call on him by his



nickname: he'll be angry, no doubt, and perhaps beat me black and blue; but no matter, so that he comes and receives the money. I'd rather be well cudgelled than he should think me dishonest." And therewith he set to work, shouting with all his might: "Rubezahl! Rubezahl!" His alarmed wife implored him to be silent, and essayed to put her hand upon his mouth; but he did but bawl all the louder. By-and-bye the youngest of the children suddenly cried out, pressing close to his mother: "Ah, there's the black man!" "Where?" said Veit, joyfully. "There, behind that tree," replied the little one. And thereupon all the little things crowded together, screaming at the pitch of their lungs. The father ran towards the tree, but saw nobody there: fear, or a shadow, had deceived the child. It was clear Rubezahl would not make his appearance, so it was of no use to call him any more.

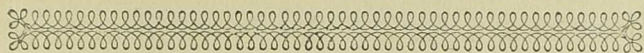
The party now turned their heads towards home, Veit walking slowly on, full of grief and disappointment, and fear for his character with the Gnome. All at once a gentle breeze arose; there was a rustling among the trees; the slender birches waved gently to and fro their graceful heads; the trembling aspen leaves quivered. The breeze still rose, and agitating the wide-spreading branches of the holm oak, scattered their dry leaves and stems abroad, sending them round and round in a gay whirl with

the circling dust, which danced up from the arid road, making fine sport for the children, who (Rubezahl altogether forgotten) chased the flying leaves, as airy and well nigh as heedless as they. Among the other things that were tearing about, the boy who had seen, as he thought, the Spirit of the Mountain, descried much more certainly a bit of white paper, which he forthwith made a special dash after. He had just caught hold of it, when there came a gust of wind, and off it went again, and off went the boy. Again and again it escaped him. At last he threw his hat at it, and having caught it in the cleverest way in the world, and found it to be a good big sheet, that might be of use, he ran after his father with it. On examination, what should it turn out to be but the identical note of hand he had given to the Spirit of the Mountain; at the bottom was written: *Received in full.*

At sight of this, Veit was transported with joy, and loudly exclaimed: "Dear wife! dear children! rejoice with me! He has seen us! he has heard the expression of our heartfelt thanks. Our good benefactor, though he remained invisible to us, knows that Veit is an honest man. I am quit of my debt. Now I can return home happy." And away went parents and children to their vehicle, weeping tears of joy and gratitude. But ere they returned home, the wife, whom her husband's narrative had greatly



irritated against her rich relations, determined to go and pay them a visit: not now to return them thanks, but to make them ashamed of their mean conduct. So the horses' heads were turned towards the village where the niggards lived; and in the evening they reached the very farm from which, three years before, Veit had been so inhospitably and cruelly driven. This time the thriving farmer marched boldly up and knocked with a flourish. A perfect stranger opened the door; and, in answer to Veit's inquiries, informed him that the rich relations had all gone to the dogs: one was dead, leaving no money; another was still alive in the place, subsisting on alms; a third had found it convenient to decamp, without beat of drum, and was wandering about without a home, and so on. Veit, with his family, spent the night in the house of the new proprietor, a very hospitable man, who related to him at large the various misfortunes that had befallen the niggards. Next day he returned home; his affairs continued to prosper, and he and his wife lived together in health, happiness, and opulence, to a very advanced period of life.



#### LEGEND THE FOURTH.

**T**HOUGH the Gnome's *protegé* took the greatest care to keep secret the true source of his opulence, in order to save his patron the visits of importunate suitors, yet, after a time, the thing became known all over the neighbourhood. When a woman has once got any secret of her husband's at her tongue's end, however important to be preserved, the lightest breeze in the world will burst it, as easily as a soap-bubble. First, Veit's better-half told the matter, of course in the strictest confidence, to an immensely discreet female neighbour; this immensely discreet neighbour, in turn, whispered it to a gossip of her own; the gossip communicated it to her godfather, the village barber, who related it to all his customers; so that in a very short time indeed it was known to the whole village, the whole district. Forthwith, every broken trader, every idle vagabond in the place, pricked up his ears, and started off, troops of them, to the mountains, thinking they had nothing to do but to bawl "Rubezahl! Rubezahl!" and he would come and hand them over a hundred dollars a-piece, as had happened to Veit. The Gnome not



taking any notice of their studied insults, the next thing was to get spades and mattocks, and set to work digging all over his territory, in search of the great copper of dollars. Rubezahl let them fag away as much as they liked, amused, indeed, at the folly of these blockheads, whom he deemed quite beneath his anger. Now and then, for the better sport, when some treasure-seeker, eager to get ahead of his competitors, would come in the night-time to dig, he would cause a small bluish flame to spring out of the earth, in a particular spot ; the dupe would run up to this, thinking all his hopes about to be realized, and after working away like a horse for three or four hours, till he was ready to drop, would come to an old iron-bound box. Oh ! how his heart would beat ! Ay, he knew what he was about ; all the other fellows were fools ! Then, oh ! how hard would he labour in dragging the treasure home ! And oh ! how difficult 'twas to keep his fingers from breaking it open until the nine days enjoined by custom in such cases to be first passed over had expired ; and oh ! with what palpitations of the heart would he force the lid on the tenth day ; and oh ! how very miserable would he look when he found nothing in the treasure-chest but stones and clods of earth ! But, nothing deterred, the vagabonds persisted in coming, bawling "Rubezahl ! Rubezahl !" and digging away like mad. At last the Gnome quite lost all patience, and drove

every ragamuffin that presented himself from his domain with a storm of stones. Even poor innocent travellers, now and then, got so mauled, when the Gnome was out of humour, thinking of the way in which he had been annoyed, that nobody, for a long time, ventured over the mountain without fear and trembling; and, during several generations, the name of Rubezahl was never heard in the mountains.

One day, years and years after Veit was dead and gone, the Gnome, while lying in the sun under the hedge of his garden, saw coming that way a young woman whose appearance struck him: she had an infant at her breast; another child, about a year older, was riding pick-a-back; she led a third by the hand; and a fourth, carrying a basket, and dragging a rake after him, walked on before her. They were going to collect dead leaves and boughs for fuel. "These mothers," thought Rubezahl, "are excellent creatures. Here is a poor thing dragging about four children, and attending to her work at the same time, without grumbling at it, and presently she'll have to carry a heavy basket into the bargain. These are the joys of wedded love, are they? Poor thing! She has paid dearly for her whistle!" These reflections put the well-natured Gnome in so benevolent a frame of mind that he resolved to get into conversation with the young woman, and see if he could be of service to her. Meantime, setting her children on the grass,



she had begun to collect leaves and dead branches, and was getting on bravely with her work, when the infant, getting weary of his situation, began to cry. The mother instantly ran to him, danced and tossed him for awhile, playing at the same time with the other children, and then, soothing him off to sleep, once more returned to her fuel-picking. In a few minutes the gnats again awoke the little sleepers, who all set up a tune. The mother, far from expressing the least impatience, ran to gather wild strawberries for the bigger children, and quieted the youngest by giving it the breast. These maternal attentions strongly affected the Gnome. By-and-bye, the little fellow who had been carried pick-a-back became perfectly untractable, stormed and roared, and when his mother offered him strawberries, threw them away, and only bawled the louder. The poor woman at last grew impatient. "Rubezahl!" cried she, "come here and eat up this noisy boy." The Gnome immediately assumed his wonted form of a collier, and jumping over the hedge, said: "Here I am; what dost thou want?" The woman was at first terribly frightened at this apparition, but being naturally stout-hearted, she soon collected herself, and answered undauntedly: "I only called you to make my children quiet; now that they are so, I do not need your services; but I thank you kindly for your ready attention."—"Knowest thou



J. Erxleben lith.

Day & Haghe lith<sup>d</sup> to the Queen

RUBEZAHL AND LISA.





not," returned the Gnome, "that people never call upon me thus with impunity? I take thee at thy word; give me that little squaller, that I may eat him; 'tis long since I've come across such a delicate morsel." So saying, he stretched forth his great rough black hand, as if to lay hold of the child. As the anxious hen, when she sees the devouring fox enter the farm-yard, and make his way towards her tender darlings, dashes, regardless of all disparity of strength, at the cruel enemy of her race, so this alarmed mother, forgetting everything but the safety of her threatened child, rushed at the collier, and clawing with one hand his long beard, and clinching the other, cried: "Monster! ere thou touch my child thou shalt tear out my heart." Rubezahl, who had by no means anticipated so fierce an assault, hastily drew back, and, after his first astonishment, burst out into a hearty laugh; he had been deceived ere now by a woman; but to be beaten by one!—faith, that was too good! "Don't be in a passion," said he good-humouredly; "I am not a cannibal, as thou art so ready to believe, and mean no harm to either thee or thy children; on the contrary, I am willing to serve you all. I like this boy; leave him with me; I will bring him up like a nobleman; he shall be clothed in satin and velvet; shall have money enough, when he grows up, to support you all comfortably; and, meantime, I'll give thee a hundred crowns down."



“Ha!” said the mother, with a pleased smile, though still keeping on her guard, “so the little monkey pleases you, does he? Ay, he is indeed a darling. Thanking you just the same, I would not part with him for all the treasures in the world.”

“Silly woman,” returned Rubezahl; “hast thou not three other children to wear thee out day and night, and leave thee ever poor and miserable? Why, thou canst barely keep life in them as ’tis.”

“True,” replied the woman, “but I am their mother, and must do my duty by them; besides, though children are the cause of much pain and anxiety, they are also a source of great pleasure.”

“A mighty pleasure, truly,” sneered the Gnome, “to drag the cubs about with thee all day, and have them keep thee awake half the night; to be worn out with their teasing and crying, and have to provide them with food, when the food thou’st got is hardly enough for thyself.”

“Ah, sir, there is much truth in this, but then you know not a mother’s pleasures; the dimpled smile of her infant, the first words its pretty mouth utters, in broken accents, richly reward her for all her cares. See this little fellow, how he hangs about me, and kisses me, the coaxing young rogue! Ah, my dear children, would that I had a hundred hands to lead you about, and to labour for you!”

“And has thy husband no hands to labour with?” asked Rubezahl.

“Hands! ay, that he has, and stirring ones too, as I sometimes find to my cost.”

“How!” cried the Gnome indignantly, “does thy husband dare lift his hand against such a wife as thou? I’ll twist the rascal’s neck round.”

“You’ll have enough to do, if you undertake to twist the neck of every husband who beats his wife. Men are a sad set, but I married for better, for worse, and I must go through with it as well as I can.”

“But if thou knew’st that men are a sad set, ’twas surely a foolish thing in thee to marry?”

“Very likely; but Stephen was a brisk, well-looking young man, in a good way of business, I a poor girl, without a farthing. He came and asked me to marry him, gave me, for earnest, a wild man’s thaler, and the bargain was concluded; he took away the thaler afterwards, but the wild man still remains to me.”

“Perhaps,” said the Spirit, laughingly, “thou mad’st him *wild* by thy perverse humours?”

“Ah, whatever perverse humours I might have had, he has long since beaten out of me. Moreover, Stephen is a mere skin-flint; if I ask him but for a groat, he storms, rages, and makes as much noise in the house, as they say you sometimes do in your



mountains, and reproaches me with my want of fortune, and I must bear it all in silence. If I had only had a dower, I'd have brought the house down about his ears long ago."

"What is thy husband's occupation?"

"He is a glass pedler, a hard and harassing business enough. He tramps it about from town to town, with a heavy load all the year round; should any of his glass be broken on the way, I and the poor children suffer for it—but, after all, love's blows break no bones."

"What! canst thou still love a husband who thus ill-treats thee?"

"And why not? Is he not the father of my children? And when my boys are grown up, they will well compensate me for it all."

"A sorry hope, that the children's gratitude will make up for their parents' cares and sacrifices! These same consolatory youths will wring from thee thy last farthing, when, at the pleasure of the emperor, they are sent off to his armies, and then be sabred by the Turks."

"That as it happens; if they are slain, they will die like brave men, for their king, and their native land; but why must they needs be killed? Why may they not return home laden with booty, and make their old parents easy and comfortable for the remainder of their days?"

The Gnome, without pursuing the subject, repeated his offer as to the child; but the mother, deigning him no reply, and having now filled her basket, fastened the little brawler upon the top of it, and Rubezahl seeing this, turned away, as if about to depart. But as the load was too heavy for the woman to lift, she called him back:

“As I have called you,” said she, boldly trusting in his good-natured looks, “I pray you to help me up with my basket, and if you are disposed to go a trifle further, give your little favourite a halfpenny to buy himself a roll; to-morrow his father returns home, and will bring us some white bread from Bohemia, where he has been trading.”

“I will help thee up with thy basket,” said Rubezahl, suiting the action to the word, “but if thou wilt not give me the boy, not a farthing of my money shall he have.”

“As you please,” said the woman, and took her departure.

The farther she went the heavier she found the basket, so that, after awhile, almost sinking under her load, she was fain to stop every few yards to take breath. There seemed something decidedly wrong here: Rubezahl, thought she, is at his tricks; he has no doubt thrust a great stone or two under the leaves; she accordingly rested the basket on a



shelving part of the rock, and turned out its contents, but no stone was there. Then putting back half the leaves into the basket, and tying as many of the remainder in her apron as it would hold, she proceeded on her way; but in a few minutes she found her load as heavy as ever, and was obliged still further to lighten it, to her extreme surprise, for many and many a time had she carried it, piled up with similar loads, and never felt any such fatigue as this. She got home, however, at last, and notwithstanding her weariness, did what work there was to be done, threw the leaves to the goat and kids, gave her children their supper, such as it was, got them to sleep, said her prayers, and then went to bed and fell fast asleep.

The morning sun, and still more the uproar of her nursling, who was bawling for his breakfast, roused the active housewife to her daily work. Having attended to the baby, she ran to the goat's stable with her milk-pail. Oh! what a terrible sight presented itself; the goat, the main source of nourishment for the children, lay stiff and lifeless on the ground. The kids too, their eyes rolling horribly, their tongues hanging out, and gasping convulsively, were evidently on the eve of death. Never had such a disaster befallen the poor woman since she had been a housekeeper. Quite stunned

by the blow, she sank down on a truss of straw, and covering her tearful eyes with her apron, that she might not see the last agonies of the poor kids, she sobbed : “ Miserable wretch that I am, what will become of me, what will that hardhearted man say when he comes home ? I have now lost everything on earth that it had pleased heaven to bestow on me. But no,” she immediately went on, blushing, and almost shuddering at what she had said, “ these poor things, though I loved them, are *not* all on earth that God has given me ; have I not still Stephen and my children ? Let me learn to do without the good things of this world, so long as my husband and children remain to me. The dear baby, I myself can still nourish ; and for the three others, there is water in the well. Stephen will storm, he will beat me ; well, it wont be for the first time, and will be soon over. I have no negligence to reproach myself with. In a few weeks the harvest will come on, and I shall pick up a little money by reaping, and in the winter I will spin till midnight ; by degrees I shall scrape together enough to buy another goat, and then some kids will follow in due time.”

These reflections restored her courage, and she dried up her tears. As she now looked once more at the departed goat and kids, she saw at her feet a leaf that glittered and shone as bright as pure gold ; she picked it up, and finding it also as solid and



heavy as pure gold, ran off with it to her neighbour, the Jewess, who, after a close scrutiny, pronounced it to be really and truly pure gold, and gave her two double dollars for it, down on the nail. The loss of the goat and kids was forgotten in a moment; never in her life before had the poor woman been possessed of so much money all at once. Off she ran to the baker's, and bought a quantity of rolls and cracknels; then to the butcher's, and bought a leg of mutton for Stephen's supper, when he should come home in the evening, weary and hungry. After these and some other purchases she hastened home, full of delight at the treat she was about to give her children, who, when they saw her enter the cottage, all three scrambled round her, little expecting, however, so satisfactory a supplement to their meagre breakfast. Oh! how they danced and shouted when she showed them the nice rolls and the cracknels, and with what a true mother's joy did she distribute them among the hungry little ones. Her next care was to remove the dead animals out of sight, so as to keep the knowledge of this sad misfortune as long as possible from her ill-tempered husband. Imagine her astonishment, when, on looking casually into the manger, she saw there a whole heap of gold leaves. Had the good woman been acquainted with the Popular Tales of the Greeks, she might, without inspiration, have divined that her cattle had died of

King Midas's indigestion. As it was, instinct served instead of learning, and having hastily sharpened the kitchen knife, she opened the goat and the kids, and found in the stomach of the former a lump of gold as big as a golden pippin, and other lumps proportioned to their size in the stomachs of the kids.

Her riches now seemed to her immense, immeasurable; but, of course, with the accession of wealth came its cares; she got uneasy, anxious; her heart palpitated; she did not know whether to lock up the gold in her box, or to bury it in the cellar; she was afraid of thieves and treasure-seekers, yet she did not want the miserly Stephen all at once to know about the matter. And a very judicious precaution on her part, since the extreme probabilities were, that the grasping niggard would take possession of the whole treasure, and she and her children be not a whit the better for it. After meditating the point a long while, she remained as undecided as ever. At last, a thought struck her.

The priest of the village was the protector of all oppressed wives; a man who, as well as from duty as from an honourable desire to defend the weaker side, never failed to interfere very decidedly whenever any tyrannical parishioner of his was wretch enough to beat and maltreat his better-half; by dint of actual penances of a light nature, and the threat of heavier ecclesiastical punishment, in case of continued



disobedience of his exhortations to peace and union, the good priest had restored conjugal quiet to many a house ; even the surly Stephen had been fain, more than once, at his remonstrance, to make an effort and be less morose to his wife. To him, therefore, the anxious woman now repaired, related to him without reserve her adventure with Rubezahl, explained to him her anxious uncertainty how most safely to dispose of the treasure, so that neither Stephen nor any one else should for the present be at all aware of its extent ; and finally, as an undeniable proof of the truth of what she had been stating, showed him the treasure itself, which she had brought at her back in a sack. The good priest crossed himself over and over again, as the wonderful narration proceeded, and crossed himself more than ever when he saw the heap of gold. He then, after cordially congratulating his parishioner on her happy change of fortune, began to pull his night-cap to and fro on his forehead, by way of rubbing up his ideas, so as to discover the best possible expedient for securing to her the quiet possession of her treasure, without any noise or talk about the singular manner in which she had acquired it, and at the same time without allowing the avaricious Stephen to put his clutches upon it.

After considering awhile : “ Listen, my daughter,” said he ; “ I have thought of a capital plan ; we will weigh this gold, which I will then get converted into

money, and take charge of for thee. I will then write in Italian a letter, which shall announce to thee that thy brother, who, we will say, many years ago went to the Indies to seek his fortune, has just died at Venice on his return home, and has left thee all his money, on condition that the priest of thy parish shall have the management of it for thy sole use and benefit, uncontrolled by any other person whatever. For myself, I require neither reward nor thanks ; but thou wilt, I am sure, feel, that to Holy Church thou owest thy gratitude for the blessing which Heaven has thus bestowed upon thee." The worthy woman was delighted with this plan, and readily promised to give a rich surplice for mass ; the priest then weighed the gold with the most scrupulous precision, and having safely deposited it for the present in the church-chest, its happy owner took her leave, and returned home with a light heart.

Rubezahl was no less a defender of the fair than was the priest of Kirsdorf, but with a difference ; the latter professing a general attachment, of course of a purely virtuous and benevolent character, for the whole sex, without any especial predilection for one more than another, which profession he had so uniformly acted up to, that not even the breath of scandal had brought suspicion upon his conduct ; whereas the other, though he had a general antipathy to women, on account of having been outwitted by one



of them, was not indisposed, now and then, to do a kindness to any particular member of the sex in whom he conceived an interest. In the present instance, in exact proportion to the good-will for herself and her children with which the exemplary conduct of the hard-working, enduring villager had inspired the Gnome, was his desire to visit with condign punishment the niggardly brute at whose hands she suffered such sore oppression. He determined forthwith to play him a trick that should at once horribly distress and discomfit him, and place him in such a position that his wife should have completely the upperhand of him, and, if she still desired to do so, pull the house about his ears, as she said. With this intent he mounted a tearing east wind, and dashed off over hill and valley in the direction of Bohemia, and wherever, on highroad or byeroad, he descried a traveller with a pack, down he dropped behind him, and his all-piercing eyes investigated the nature of the man's load. As luck would have it, he came across no one carrying glass, or ten to one, even though it had not been the man he sought, the poor wretch's stock would have been smashed to atoms, Rubezahl's anger involving, for the time, all glass-peddlers in his just indignation against their unworthy brother Stephen.

At length, while soaring above the mountain itself, his infallible eye detected the object of his search.

It was towards the hour of vespers that he saw, coming along the road, a stout active pedestrian, bearing on his shoulders a heavy pack, the sound from which, at every step, indicated that it was filled with glass-ware. The Gnome, on catching sight of him, laughed in his sleeve, and prepared for a master-stroke. Stephen, puffing and blowing, had nearly reached the top of the mountain; but one more rising ground passed and he would begin the descent, at the bottom of which was his home. He increased his speed as well as he could, but the ascent was steep and his burden heavy. More than once was he fain to stop and rest awhile, propping up his load meantime with his knotty stick, to ease its weight, and wiping off the perspiration, which ran in big drops from his forehead. Collecting all his strength, he at length reached the summit of the mountain, along which a smooth straight path led to the descent. Midway on this lay a great fir-tree, beside the stump whence the saw had severed it, and the top of which, left about half-breast high, was as round and smooth as a table, while all around it grew flowering grasses and odoriferous herbs. The whole aspect of the place was so excessively alluring to the way-worn, heavily laden traveller, it seemed so peculiarly adapted for a resting-place, that, depositing his pack on the stump's broad surface, he lay down in the soft grass.

Here, stretched out at his ease, he began to esti-



mate how much net profit his wares would bring him this time, and the result of a close calculation was, that by not expending a single penny at home, and by making his poor industrious wife furnish, not only herself and the children, but him also, with clothes and food by her own exertions, he should clear enough, at the approaching fair of Schmiedeberg, to purchase an ass, and load it with goods for a new journey ; and he already anticipated, with great satisfaction, how very comfortable it would be to have merely to walk by the side of a laden donkey, instead of carrying the donkey's load on his own shoulders. The thought was so exhilarating, that he already saw in imagination a piled-up jackass by his side.

“Once I have got the ass,” he went on, “I shall soon be able to exchange it for a horse ; the horse once in the stable, I shall soon get wherewithal to purchase an acre to grow oats for him ; the one acre may, ere long, be made two, the two swell into four, and in time become a snug farm, and then I shan't mind buying Lisa a new gown.”

He had just arrived at this stage of his airdrawn fortunes when much the same misadventure befel him that happened to Arabian Alnaschar, and to the aspiring milkmaid nearer home. He did not, 'tis true, kick down his own basket, but 'twas done quite as effectually for him by Rubezahl, who,

bestriding, invisible to mortal ken, his whirlwind, dashed round the fir trunk, whizz! whirr! and down went the basket, and smash, crash, went Master Stephen's stock in trade all to atoms. The disappointed schemer was himself knocked down by the blast; as he came to, he heard a loud horse-laugh in the distance, which the echoes insultingly repeated all round him. It was clear to the wretched pedler that this must be the work of some malicious spirit; the sudden rush of wind, in such calm weather, was perfectly unnatural; and he was confirmed in his impression when, on turning round, he found that tree and trunk had utterly disappeared. Unable to control himself, he began to rave at the unseen author of all this mischief. "Rubezahl, vile wretch!" he furiously exclaimed, "what have I done to thee that thou should'st rob me of the bit of bread, I had earned by the sweat of my brow? I am an undone man for life!" He then went to work calling the Gnome all the names he could set his tongue to, in pure desperation. "Devil!" cried he, "since thou hast bereft me of all I had in the world, come and finish thy work; come and strangle me." And sooth to say, the poor wretch at that moment valued his life no more than he did his broken glass; but Rubezahl, who was looking on, highly amused, at a little distance, would not oblige him to this extent, and allowed himself to be neither



seen nor heard. The only thing that remained for the bankrupt pedler to do—for he was determined not to carry the empty basket home—was to collect the broken fragments, and take them to the glass-house, where he thought they would perhaps give him in exchange a few beer glasses with which to recommence business. With feelings resembling those of a merchant whose one vessel, with all its crew and all its cargo, the greedy ocean has engulfed, Stephen slowly descended the mountain, bending, not as before, under profitable glass, but under heavy thoughts, mingled with a hundred speculations as to whether there were not yet some means, and what, of making a tolerable start once more with something better than half a dozen beer glasses. By-and-bye he bethought him of the goats; but Lisa loved them almost as much as her children, and would not consent to part with them; it was only by stratagem he could get them quietly from her. Stephen laid his plan accordingly. So far from letting her know what a loss he had sustained, he would not go home at all this time, but waiting till midnight, would steal into the stable, carry off the goats, take them to Schmiedeberg, and selling them at the fair, purchase a new stock of wares with the money; then, on his return home, he proposed getting up a furious quarrel with his wife for having, as he would insist, lost the goats,

or suffered them to be stolen by her gross negligence; or, he would add, for aught he knew, she had sold them and wasted the money; and in this way, he calculated, he should get rid of the whole difficulty.

Full of this notable device, the worthy man slunk into a copse adjoining the village, and there waited with terrible impatience for midnight to come, so that he might go and rob himself. As the clock struck twelve he left his hiding-place like a thief, scaled the low wall of his own yard, and went on tip-toe, and with a palpitating heart—for he trembled lest his wife should catch him at his tricks—across to the stable. Much to his wonder, he found the door open; but he was glad of the circumstance, as strengthening the case he proposed to make out against his poor wife. On entering the stable, however, he found everything at sixes and sevens; not a living creature was there, goat or kid. He was perfectly overwhelmed. Some thief had been beforehand with him. Misfortunes, says the proverb, never come singly. Seeing his last resource for replacing his lost stock in trade thus fail him, he lay down among the straw, plunged in the most bitter grief.

On her return home from the Priest's, the active Lisa set to work, in the best possible humour, to make every preparation for giving her husband a



good supper, to which she had also invited the worthy Priest, who had promised, for his part, to bring with him a pitcher of his own wine, the pleasant influence of which he calculated would enable Stephen to hear, with less annoyance and irritation than might otherwise be the case, the conditions restricting the use and enjoyment of the inheritance his wife had so fortunately and unexpectedly succeeded to. Lisa, as the day closed in, was every moment at the window, looking out for Stephen; as the evening itself closed in, she grew impatient and uneasy, and running to the end of the village, strained her eyes in the direction he would come in; but no Stephen could she see. 'Twas late at night ere, having long since dismissed the Priest, who duly made his appearance at the appointed time, she retired supperless to bed, a prey to the most painful anxiety. Hour after hour passed, but sleep came not to relieve her tearful eyes; at last, towards morning, she fell into a disturbed doze. Poor Stephen, meanwhile, was passing his time in horribly discomforted, physically and mentally, in the stable; he was altogether in so dejected, so abject a state of mind, that he had not the courage to go and knock at his own door. At last, at daylight, feeling that sooner or later the thing must be done, he crept across the yard, and tapping softly at the window, said, in the mildest of tones: "Open the door, my dear wife; it

is I." The moment Lisa heard his voice, she jumped out of bed, and running to the door, threw it open, and clasped her husband joyfully round the neck. Responding with the most chilling coldness to these conjugal caresses, he put down his basket, and in the most doleful dumps, threw himself into the chimney corner. When Lisa saw what a miserable plight he was in, it went to her very heart. "What vexes thee, dear Stephen?" she asked tenderly; "what is the matter?" He at first made no other answer than sighs and groans; but Lisa pressed him so closely to explain the source of his grief, that feeling it out of his power to resist her affectionate entreaties, he at length related his disaster. When she learned that 'twas Rubezahl who had played this prank upon her husband, she readily divined the benevolent intention which had actuated him, and the whole affair then struck her in so ludicrous a light, that she burst into a hearty laugh. Had Stephen been in his usual temper of mind, Lisa would have found that laughing at him was no laughing matter; but depressed in spirit as he now was, he passed over this apparent levity, and anxiously inquired for the goats. Lisa laughed all the more heartily when she found her lord and master had been poking about and getting nothing for his pains. "What are my goats to thee?" replied she; "thou hast not even mentioned the children. As



to the goats, they're out in the meadow. There, don't disturb thyself any more about the trick Rubezahl played thee; who knows but he may yet fully indemnify thee for all thou hast lost?"—"I shall have to wait long enough for that," said Stephen, in a deplorable tone.—"Long looked-for comes at last," returned Lisa. "Come, pluck up thy spirits, Stephen; though thou hast lost thy glass, and I, to tell thee the truth, my goats, we have still four healthy children, and four strong arms to get a home for them and ourselves."—"God help us!" cried Stephen, disconsolately; "if the goats are lost thou hadst better throw the children into the river at once, for I can do nothing for them!"—"Well, I can," said Lisa.

At this moment the friendly Priest, who in his anxiety about Lisa and her family, had got up early and come to see whether Stephen was returned, entered the room; having listened outside, he had heard the whole conversation, and forthwith proceeded to address to Stephen a long homily on the text, "Avarice is the root of all evil." Having sufficiently taken him to task on this head, and expounded the right use of riches, he gradually informed him that Lisa had succeeded to a valuable property. Taking from his pocket the Italian letter, he translated it word for word, and informed Stephen that he, being the actual priest

of Kirsdorf named in the letter, had entered upon his office accordingly, as trustee of the property, for the sole use and benefit of Lisa and her children; and that he had already received the full amount of the inheritance, and placed it in safe hands.

Stephen all this while stood stock still, with his mouth open, giving no signs of life, except that whenever the Priest, on naming the Most Serene Republic of Venice, respectfully raised his cap, he bowed too, as it were unconsciously. When he came to himself, the first thing he did was to clasp "his dear wife" in his arms, vowing such tenderness and devotion and undying love, as she had never heard of since he was courting her, years ago. And although Lisa knew pretty well what the meaning of all this was, yet, like a sensible woman, she took it in good part, and seemed to believe every word he said. From that hour Stephen was the most attentive, the most tractable of husbands, the most loving of fathers, the most active and managing of farmers; want of industry, indeed, had never been his failing.

The honest Priest converted by degrees the golden leaves into current coin, with which he purchased a considerable farm, whereon Stephen and Lisa lived happily for the remainder of their days. The balance he placed out on mortgage, and attended



to the pecuniary interests of his ward as conscientiously as he did to those of his own church, accepting no other recompense for his services than a surplice, which, however, Lisa had made so fine that an archbishop would not have disdained to wear it.

The excellent mother enjoyed unmixed satisfaction equally from the conduct and from the prosperity of her children. Rubezahl's favourite became a brave officer, and served many years in the thirty years' war, under Wallenstein, with the highest reputation and honour.



#### LEGEND THE FIFTH.

AFTER the time when Lisa was so richly dowered by the Gnome, a long period elapsed without his being again heard of. The gossips, indeed, at their spinning parties, diverted the long winter evenings by relating all sorts of marvellous tales about him, each adding, at fancy, new incidents to her own edition of the story; but mere stories they were, and nothing more, altogether destitute of authority; in a hundred tales, scarcely one particle of truth. The Countess Cecilia, a cotem-

porary and pupil of Voltaire, was honoured with the last interview which the Gnome has granted to a descendant of Adam in our times, and this was just previous to his setting out on a long visit to the interior of the earth, whence it is impossible to say when he may take it into his head to return. This lady, suffering from disordered nerves and rheumatic gout, was on her way to Carlsbad, accompanied by her two healthy, blooming daughters. The mother was in such a hurry to get to the Baths, for the sake of the cure she hoped from them, and the young ladies were in such a hurry to get to the Baths for the sake of the society, the balls, the serenades, the hundred diversions they anticipated there, that they posted on night and day. It was past sunset when they entered upon the Riesengeberg on a fine warm summer's evening; there was not a breath of air; the darkening sky was thick set with sparkling stars; the crescent moon, with her silver rays, shed a soft light on the tall mirk firs; while innumerable glow-worms, playing about under the bushes, presented the appearance of a moving illumination. But the travellers paid small attention to this beautiful aspect of nature. Mamma, gently rocked by the carriage as it slowly ascended the mountain, was sound asleep, and her two daughters and their maid, each occupying one of the three other corners of the coach, were in a similar unsentimental condition. John alone, perched



on the coach-box, slept not; for why?—All the stories about Rubezahl that he had formerly listened to with so much avidity, recurred in detail to his mind, now that he was in the very scene of their occurrence, and with such effect that he would have given his little finger had he never heard them. He now regretted the garret in which he slept at Breslau; for never ghost or goblin ascended thither. He incessantly cast timid, anxious glances all around him; his eye wandered round and round every point of the compass; and whenever it fell upon any object that appeared at all suspicious his flesh crept, a cold perspiration inundated his forehead, and his hair stood on end. Every now and then he would ask the postillion if the road was safe; and though each time the rough fellow replied, with oaths, that it was as safe as a street in a town, still John was not a bit the easier.

By-and-bye, all of a sudden, the postillion pulled up his horses, muttered something between his teeth, and then went on again; in a minute or two he stopped and muttered something again; then went on a little bit, and once more stopped. This he repeated several times. John, who shut his eyes at the commencement of these proceedings, at last opened them by a desperate effort, and looking forward, almost fell from his seat with fright, when he saw on the road, a stone's throw in advance of the carriage, a tall, big

figure, enveloped in a cloak as black as pitch, surmounted by an enormous Spanish ruff; but the most horrible thing of all was, that Black Cloak had got no head! When the carriage stopped, so did No Head: when the carriage went on, so did he. "O-o-h!" groaned John, his hair standing perfectly upright. "Postillion! do you see that?"—"To be sure I do," replied the postillion, in a very subdued tone; "there's no mistake about it; but, silence!"

John sunk down upon the foot-board in a perfect agony of fear. And as in a thunder-storm in the night time, timid people love to get the whole house together, thinking themselves the safer the more there are of it; so John thought he would see whether he could not lessen his own terror by imparting a share of it to his mistresses. Accordingly he knocked, first gently, then loud, at the carriage window. Mamma first awoke; angry at being thus roused from her comfortable sleep, she pettishly cried out, "What's the matter?"—"Please your Ladyship," said John, in a voice scarcely audible, "look there! There's a man without a head walking before the carriage!"—"Idiot," said the Countess, "what silly stuff hast been dreaming about? For that matter," added she, "men without heads are no novelty; there are plenty of such at Breslau, and everywhere else: where's thy head, for instance?"

The daughters, who were now awake, did not feel



sufficiently at ease to enjoy the attic salt of the Countess's pleasantries; full of terror, they pressed close to her side, trembling and sobbing. "Ah! 'tis Rubezahl! 'tis the Spirit of the Mountain!" But Mamma, who believed not in spirits, rebuked the young ladies for their vulgar credulity, and undertook forthwith to prove to them that all ghost stories were the offspring of a disordered imagination; and that there never had been an alleged instance of spectral appearance which was not susceptible of a natural solution. She was getting on swimmingly with her argument, when Black Cloak, who had for a moment withdrawn himself from the watchful eye of John, came out of the thicket into the middle of the road. It was now found that John had, after all, made a mistake; the stranger was by no means without a head; only, instead of wearing it as usual, on his shoulders, he carried it, like a parcel, under his arm. Such an apparition within three yards of the coach was perfectly frightful. The young ladies, and the Abigail, who was in the habit of doing, as nearly as she could, everything they did, screamed with one scream; and then, on the principle of the ostrich, which, when it can run no further, drives its head into the sand, and so, not seeing the hunter, imagines the hunter cannot see him, they pulled down the carriage-blinds; and, no longer seeing Black Cloak, hoped to pass unobserved by him. Mamma clasped her hands

in silent fear, and lost sight of all her philosophical disbelief in ghosts and spectres. John, whom Black Mantle appeared to have selected for especial notice, had just, in the anguish of his heart, commenced the exorcism so dreaded by evil spirits: "All good angels"—when, before he could get out another word, the apparition threw his head at him with so true an aim as to knock him off his perch; at the same instant, the postillion was stretched on the ground by a blow from a cudgel, and the phantom exclaimed, in a hollow, sepulchral voice: "Take that from Rubezahl, the Lord of the Mountain, whose domain thou hast dared to trespass upon! As to the rest, vessel, crew, cargo, all are mine; a lawful prize." The spectre then sprung into the saddle, put the horses to full speed, rattled the carriage over one hill after another, over stock and stone, at such a rate that the noise of the wheels and of the horses entirely drowned the screams of the poor ladies.

Suddenly the party was increased; a horseman rode for a few minutes by the side of the postillion, without seeming to pay any attention to the unusual circumstance of his being without a head; he then rode on in front, as though he were the Countess's courier. The accession seemed not at all agreeable to Black Cloak, who changed his direction, but the courier did the same; and, turn which way he would, the headless postillion saw his troublesome companion before him.



And not a little was his alarm increased on perceiving that the white horse ridden by his persecutor had but three legs, with which, however, it went through all its paces in the best style. Black Cloak began to be exceedingly ill at ease on his usurped saddle, in the conviction that the real Rubezahl was about to make him pay dearly for having dared to usurp his name.

After a little time the cavalier, suddenly backing his horse, brought himself alongside Black Cloak. "Whither away so fast, friend?"—"Whither?" replied the other, with a wretched attempt to seem as though he was not at all afraid; "where dost think? After my nose."—"Oh! indeed!" returned the horseman: "let's see, then, where thy nose is, comrade." So saying, he stopped the horses, seized Black Cloak round the waist, and dashed him to the ground with such force that all his limbs quivered again; for this spectre, it now appeared, had flesh and bones. The horseman then alighted, and tearing open the black cloak and the great ruff, there issued from out them a stout, curly-headed young man.

The knave, finding himself detected, dreading a second time to feel the weight of the cavalier's arm, and convinced that he had now the real Rubezahl to deal with, surrendered at discretion, and entreated pitifully to have his life spared. "High and potent Lord of the Mountain!" cried he, "have mercy on a poor unfortunate fellow whom Fate has been cruelly

kicking about from his infancy ; who has never been permitted to be what he wished to be ; never been suffered to do what he wished to do ; never allowed to play out the part he had studied with the greatest care ; and who, now that his existence among human kind is annihilated, cannot even be a spirit for once and away."

This lamentable ditty had its effect. The Gnome was, indeed, greatly exasperated against the fellow for daring to assume his name and attributes, and had fully intended, after the example of the magistracy of Hirschberg, to have inflicted summary justice on the offender ; but his curiosity got the better, for a time, of his indignation, and he postponed the fellow's punishment until after he had heard his story.

"To your saddle, sir," said he, "and await my orders." He then turned to his own horse, and drawing out from under its ribs the leg which was wanting, rendered it a perfect animal. He next opened the door of the carriage, for the purpose of paying his respects to the travellers ; but all within was still as death : excess of fear had so acted on the ladies, that all the vital spirits had retreated from the outworks of sensation to the chamber of the heart. Every living soul in the carriage seemed dead. The cavalier, who seemed to know exactly what to do, threw open both doors of the coach to let in the air, and then flying off to a spring near at hand,



filled his hat with water, which he sprinkled liberally on the faces of the ladies, and taking out a large smelling-bottle, refreshed their nostrils with its powerful contents, and at last brought them back to life. One after another they opened their eyes, and found, anxiously attending upon them, a well-shaped, gentlemanly-looking man, whose considerate kindness evidently merited their confidence. "I am much distressed, ladies," said he, "that you should have been insulted in my domains by a fellow who, doubtless, intended to have robbed you; but you are now quite safe. I am Lord Giantdale, and, with your permission, will conduct you to my castle, which is at no great distance." This invitation was most welcome to the Countess, who joyfully accepted it. The postillion was ordered to drive on, and he obeyed without reply, for he was horribly afraid. In order to leave the ladies at leisure to recover from their alarm, his Lordship went forward, and resumed his place by the side of the postillion, to whom he indicated the road he was to go, now to the right, now to the left; and the latter remarked, with increased agitation, that from time to time the Cavalier called to him one or other of the many bats that were flying about, and gave it some private message, which Flittermouse at once hastened to convey to its destination, wherever that might be.

In less than an hour a light became visible in the

distance, and immediately after, two, and then four; these proceeded from torches borne by huntsmen, who, riding up at a gallop, expressed much joy at having found their master, whom, they said, they had been anxiously seeking. The Countess was now quite at ease, and finding herself out of danger, bethought herself of worthy John, and expressed to her new friend the uneasiness she felt on the poor fellow's account. His Lordship immediately detached two of his huntsmen to look for the unfortunates who were missing, with orders to afford them all needful assistance. In a few minutes after, the carriage rolled under a large gateway into a spacious courtyard, and drew up before the portals of a magnificent palace, which was all lighted up. Its noble proprietor having assisted the ladies to alight, conducted them through several superb ante-rooms to a grand saloon, where they found a numerous company assembled. The young ladies were not a little disconcerted to find themselves introduced to so brilliant a circle in their travelling clothes, without having had an opportunity to make their toilet.

The preliminary civilities having been gone through, the company dispersed in various groups; some sat down to cards, others danced, others engaged in conversation. There was a great deal of talk, of course, about the recent adventure, and as is usually the case with narrations of dangers passed,



Mamma's history of the affair became quite an epic, in which she was well disposed to have figured as the heroine, and might have succeeded, but that she inadvertently let slip the incident of my lord's applying the smelling-bottle. The evening had not far advanced when the attentive host introduced to the Countess a new arrival, who came extremely *à propos*, being no other than his lordship's physician; who forthwith proceeded to make the most earnest inquiries as to the health of the Countess and that of her fair daughters; having felt the pulse of each lady twice over, he pulled a very long face, and shook his head, in a manner to indicate that there was something wrong. Now, although the Countess's health was not a bit worse than usual, the doctor's grimaces made her fear for her life. In spite of all her infirmities, she felt for her wretched, feeble frame all the attachment we have for a threadbare coat, which we are reluctant to part with because we have so long worn it; and accordingly, under the doctor's direction, she swallowed an immense sedative-febrifuge powder, and a draught; and the young ladies, though as hearty as hunters, were compelled to follow the example of their anxious Mamma. The more you give way to physicians the more you may. Finding the powders and draughts go down so well, Master Doctor insisted upon bleeding them all three in the foot, as an infallible remedy against the

consequences of fear. The Countess readily consented; as to the young ladies, it required all the maternal authority to overcome their objections, but at last they yielded; nor was the blood-thirsty Doctor satisfied until he had breathed a vein also in the pretty foot of the lady's maid. So there they all four sat, with their bleeding extremities in foot-baths, Mama full of fear, the rest full of fury, until it pleased their tormentor to say, hold, enough!

These operations being concluded, the ladies, though considerably weakened, were handed down to the great dining-room, where a splendid supper was served up. The sideboard groaned under the weight of gold and silver plate, of the most magnificent and exquisite description. An admirable band in an adjoining apartment, gave, by its sweet sounds, double zest to the banquet. On the removal of the cloth, a most comprehensive and elegant dessert was tastefully arranged on the table. In the centre, on hills, mountains, valleys, and rocks in marchpane, encrusted with sugar of a thousand colours, the ingenious confectioner, anxious to please the eye as well as the palate, had, by means of small wax figures, represented the whole adventure on the mountain. The Countess, who had hitherto been looking on in silent amazement, could now no longer contain herself. She turned to her next neighbour, a gentleman bedecked with all sorts of orders, who had been in-



roduced to her as Count somebody, a Bohemian Grandee, and asked him what gala-day this was, that such a magnificent banquet should have been prepared. The Count replied that there was nothing more than usual; a mere little supper to a few friends who had dropped in. The Countess was astonished that, neither in Breslau, nor elsewhere, had she ever heard of a man so opulent and hospitable as Lord Giantdale. Nor, ransack as she might the genealogical trees of all the noble families her memory was stored with, could she recal any mention of such a name.

She indirectly endeavoured to obtain from her host himself the information she so much desired; but he evaded all her attempts with such consummate address that she could not accomplish her object. She therefore gave up the point, and turned the conversation to the airy subject of the world of spirits, and when this theme is once started in company, there are never wanting talkers to support it, nor listeners with eyes and mouths wide open.

A well-fed canon related a number of marvellous stories about Rubezahl, and a great deal was said for and against the truth of these narratives. The Countess, who was quite in her element whenever she could assume a doctoral tone, did not fail to put herself at the head of the philosophical party, and was very great on the subject of vulgar superstitions and prejudices; she was especially severe upon a counsellor

of finance, who, paralysed in all his limbs, but still retaining a complete command of his tongue, supported Rubezahl's claims. "My own adventure," said the Countess, with all the tone of settling the question, "is a clear proof that what we hear of the Spirit of the Mountain is pure fable. Were he sovereign of these parts, were he endowed with the noble qualities which folly so liberally bestows on him, he would never have allowed with impunity his name to be dishonoured by the ragamuffin who attacked us this evening. Oh! no; depend upon it, this same Spirit is a nonentity, not half so real as the fellow who called himself Rubezahl in order to frighten us, and who, but for the generous aid of Lord Giantdale, would, no doubt, have had everything his own way."

The lord of the mansion, though he sat by, had hitherto taken no part in the philosophical discussion going on; he now blandly addressed himself to the Countess: "Your Ladyship has completely depopulated the world of spirits. Before your enlightened views, all these creations of the dreaming fancy have disappeared, as a morning mist before the rising sun. You have satisfactorily demonstrated that the notion about this ancient inhabitant of the mountains is an entire fallacy, and his champion, our friend the Finance-Counsellor, is effectually silenced. Yet it appears to me that some objections



might still be urged against your reasoning. How if, after all, it was the, as you say, fabulous Spirit of the Mountain himself who was the author of your deliverance from the masquerading robber? How if it had been my neighbour's whim to assume my features and form, and under that guise to place you here in safety? How if I assured you that I myself have never quitted for a moment the company who are now honouring me with their presence? How if it should turn out that you were brought hither by a stranger, who himself slipped away, and left me, the true Lord Giantdale, to receive you with a hearty welcome in his place? In this way my neighbour would have avenged his offended honour, and would not be the nonentity you suppose him."

This sally somewhat disconcerted the Countess, while the young ladies laid down their forks in astonishment, and looked earnestly at his Lordship, endeavouring to read in his countenance whether he were in jest or earnest. The solution of this problem was interrupted by the arrival of John and the postillion, who had been brought back by the horsemen sent in search of them. The postillion was delighted to find his four horses in the castle stables; while John had like to have died with joy when, on entering the banquet room, he found his mistresses seated at table. He bore in triumph the

*corpus delicti*, the gigantic head, which, hurled by the hand of Black Mantle, had levelled him with the earth. This was put into the hands of the physician, for him to examine, and give in his official *visum repertum* thereupon; and that learned personage, without finding it necessary to have recourse to any anatomical investigation, at once reported the subject to be nothing but a large pumpkin filled with sand and stones, and which, having eyes and a mouth cut in it, with the addition of a wooden nose and a long tow beard, had somewhat the appearance of a grotesque human head.

When the party rose from table and broke up, daylight was already beginning to appear. The ladies found in their apartments sumptuous beds, in which sleep so instantaneously overpowered them that their fancy had no opportunity of recalling their thoughts to the alarms of the preceding night. The sun was high when the Countess, awaking, rung for her attendant, and ordered her to call the young ladies, who were much more disposed to turn on their down pillows and sleep on the other ear, than to rise. But so impatient was the Countess to prove the virtues of the waters of Carlsbad, that the most pressing entreaties of their hospitable entertainer could not prevail with her for even one day's delay, though the girls, exceedingly desirous of dancing at the ball he promised them for



the evening, added their earnest solicitations to his. Soon after breakfast was over the ladies took their departure, and his Lordship attended them on horseback to the boundaries of his domain, where mama and daughters, deeply sensible of the generous reception they had experienced, took a most kind leave of him, and promised to make some stay with him on their return from Carlsbad.

No sooner had the Gnome returned to his castle than Curly Head, who had passed the night in a damp cellar in a most fearful state of anxiety, was brought before him. "Miserable reptile," said the Spirit, "I know not what keeps me from crushing thee under foot, for having dared to enact a farce so offensive to me in my territories."—"High and mighty Sovereign of the Giant Mountains," replied the crafty knave, "I question not your rights of sovereignty; but before you pronounce my doom, deign to inform me where those laws are written, with the violation of which you charge me." The boldness of this turn led Rubezahl to suspect that he had no common man, but rather a singular original, to deal with. He therefore moderated his anger, and said: "Nature has legibly written my laws in the heart of man; but that thou mayest not accuse me of condemning thee unheard, speak: say frankly who thou art, and what could have tempted thee to play thy tricks in such a guise in my dominions?"

The prisoner was delighted to have obtained permission to speak, trusting as he did that a candid narration of the events of his life would appease the Gnome's anger, at least so far as to lead to a mitigation of the chastisement he might have to endure. "I formerly," he commenced, "lived poorly enough, on the fruits of my own labour, in the town of Lauban, where I followed the occupation of a purse maker; they called me poor Kunz, and well they might, for I found honest industry to be an altogether unprofitable business. Although my purses found a good sale, there being a notion current that money did well in them, seeing that I, the maker, was a seventh son, and must therefore have a lucky hand, I experienced no such luck in my own case, for my purse was always as empty as the stomach of a rigid Catholic on a fast day. I would here remark that if my customers really preserved their money so well in purses of my manufacture, this, in my opinion, was in no degree owing to the lucky hand of the maker, nor to the especial goodness of the work, but to the material of which they were made; they were of leather. Your Lordship must know that a purse of leather always preserves and improves money better than one of silk netting; for he who is content with the former is rarely a spendthrift, but one who, as the saying is, draws his purse-strings tight. Open-work silk



and gold purses, on the contrary, are, for the most part, in the hands of rich and reckless men; is it to be wondered at that the money runs out in all directions, as from a sieve; and that, however frequently replenished, they are ever empty?

“My father had strongly inculcated this maxim upon his seven sons: ‘Whatever you do, my children, do it in earnest.’ I accordingly applied to my business indefatigably, but my condition got none the better. Then war and scarcity came upon the land, and we were inundated with base coin. My fellow tradesmen said: ‘Light money, light wares;’ but I said: ‘Honesty is the best policy,’ and continued to give good purses for bad money; the result of course was, that I was beggared, thrown into gaol, kicked out of my guild by my fellow freemen as a discredit to their mystery; and when my creditors got tired of keeping me in prison, was most handsomely set at liberty, with orders, however, to quit the territory within twelve hours, and not to return on pain of death. When advanced some way on my enforced journey, I knew not, cared not whither, I met one of my former customers, mounted on a very handsome horse. When he saw me he burst out into a scornful laugh: ‘Bungler!’ cried he, ‘stupid ragamuffin! ’tis clear thou dost not know thy business; thou can’t make purses, but not fill them; make pots, and

cook nothing in them; thou hast leather, but can'st not gild it.' — 'Hold!' said I to the scoffing gentleman; 'thou art thyself a bad shot; thy arrows fly wide of the mark. There are many things in this world which of right should go together, but which we nevertheless find far enough asunder. One man has a stable, and no horse to put in it; another has a barn, and no corn to thresh in it; a pantry, and no victuals; a cellar, and no wine; and finally, as the proverb has it, one man has the purse, and another the money.' — 'Tis better to have both,' rejoined he; 'and if thou art willing to put thyself under my tuition, I will make thee a consummate master of thy business. Thou already knowest how to make purses: I will teach thee how to fill them; for my trade is that of a maker of money. As, then, thy trade and mine go hand in hand, art thou willing that we, too, should go hand in hand, and make a common business of it?' — 'With all my heart,' said I, 'if you are an authorized master of the mint anywhere; but if you work on your own private account, 'tis a business that smacks too strongly of the gallows for my taste.' — 'Nothing venture, nothing have,' returned he; 'if you won't eat of my dish, let it alone. We must all die once; and some day, if we would not die of hunger, must run the risk of a jump from the tree.' — 'There is this small difference,' replied I,



‘that in the one case we die like honest men, in the other as felons.’—‘Vulgar prejudice,’ said he; ‘all I do is to add a little to the circulating medium; somewhat irregularly, perhaps, but my betters have done so before me, ever since there were governments and a coinage.’ To be brief, the tempter was so persuasive, that I consented to what he proposed. I was very soon proficient in my new pursuit, having attended therein to the lessons of my father, and applied myself to it in earnest; and I very soon discovered that coin-making was infinitely more profitable and pleasant than purse-making. But everything has an end; the superiority of our fabric excited the jealousy of other coiners, at a time when our manufactory was in a most flourishing and prosperous condition. We were betrayed; and the truly insignificant circumstance of our not having worked under a patent preposterously occasioned our being sent by the prejudiced and narrow-minded judges to work for life on the fortifications. In this situation I spent several years, in sore tribulation; until there came to that part of the kingdom a good angel, with full powers to free from durance vile all such prisoners as had stout limbs and sinews. In other words, a special recruiting officer changed my destination; instead of trundling a wheelbarrow in the public service, it became my nobler duty, as a member of a free corps, to fight in the public cause.

I was well pleased with this change. Determined to be a soldier in earnest, I put myself forward on all occasions; I was the first in every attack; and when we were compelled to retreat, I used my legs to such good purpose that the enemy could never overtake me. For a time I got on very well; I received a command in a troop of horse, with hope of still further promotion; but one day, being sent out upon a foraging expedition, I executed my orders with so much enthusiasm that I not only emptied granaries and barns, but, moreover, every drawer, press, strong box, or bureau I could lay my hands on, whether in houses or churches. As ill luck would have it, we were in a friendly country; the people took it into their stupid heads to make a to-do about the affair, and certain officers, who envied my military reputation, odiously charged me with pillaging. I was most unjustly brought to a court-martial, degraded to the ranks, and then whipped through a lane of five hundred men out of a service in which I had thought to make my fortune. I had now no other resource than to return to my original business; but I had neither money to buy leather nor the disposition to work. An idea suddenly occurred to me. I have mentioned that I had formerly sold my purses far too cheap. In justice to myself, now that I wanted the means of support, it was obvious that I ought by all



means to recover the property I had so foolishly lavished ; that I was fully entitled to resume all such purses of my manufacture as should come within my reach. True, 'twas so long ago, that many, nay, most of them, would be worn out ; but this was no reason why I should be a loser ; as they were worn out I must take those which had been bought to replace them. One must indemnify oneself in such cases as best one may. I accordingly examined every purse that I could fish out of people's pockets : some were clearly my manufacture, or at all events, unmistakeably, purses which had been purchased in their place. These I declared a lawful prize. Others I was not quite so certain about ; but ere I could settle the point satisfactorily to my mind, the owner was out of sight, and I could not go running about after people all over the town. By this means I had also the satisfaction of re-entering into possession of a considerable portion of that money which, as I had coined it, was undeniably my own, and which, though it had been regularly proclaimed, was still so highly thought of as to continue in active circulation. This sort of thing went on successfully for some time, and was pleasant enough. I went about to all the fairs and festivals, disguised, sometimes as a gentleman, sometimes as a Jew pedler, sometimes as this, sometimes as that ; and my hand became so expert by degrees,

that I had every prospect of getting back at least a great deal of my long-withheld property. However, until I had done myself full justice, I liked this life so well that I resolved to continue it; but such is the fatality by which I am persecuted that I can never long continue to pursue that calling which best suits my abilities. Being in professional attendance at the fair of Liegnitz, I detected a farmer in possession of what was, I had not the smallest doubt, one of my purses, and which the dishonest fellow had managed to cram full of gold. I attempted to assert my rights of ownership, but failed, the weight being too great for my fingers. Being observed, I was seized with brutal violence, and dragged before the magistrates as a cut-purse, though I by no means deserved this invidious appellation. I had, indeed, taken possession of many purses, but never cut purses from honest people, as I was now most unjustly accused of having done; all the purses I had appropriated having, as it were, spontaneously placed themselves in my hand, as if, by a sort of instinct, they were desirous of returning to their original owner. But this argument availed me nothing with the court; I was put in prison, and condemned not only thus a second time to be deprived of the means of earning my livelihood, but a second time to be cruelly flogged. But the latter injustice I saved myself from, by seizing an oppor-



tunity which presented itself, and withdrawing from the gaol. I was now free, 'twas true; but then came the question, how on earth was I to avoid actual starvation? In this emergency I actually had recourse to begging; but it was a failure. The only people who took any notice of me were the police at Glogau, who, though I did not address them, insisted upon supplying me with food, and lodging, and occupation; but, resenting their impertinence, I got rid of these fellows, though with no small trouble, for they actually followed me for several miles; they could not have been aware that I have ever, on principle, refrained from calling upon the police in any way, knowing how engaged they must be with their public duties. In future I avoided the towns, and rambled over the rural districts like a genuine cosmopolite. As chance would have it, the Countess stopped in the village where I had established my temporary quarters, to have her carriage repaired: mingling in the crowd which forthwith collected to stare at the stranger ladies, I made acquaintance with the oaf of a servant, who told me, in the simplicity of his heart, that he was horribly afraid of you, my Lord Rubezahl; and that this halt for repairs necessitating their crossing the mountains during the night, was a source of the most painful anxiety. This put it into my head to devise how I might turn the timidity of these

travellers to advantage. Determined to play upon their fear of spirits, I immediately went to the house of the sexton, whom I had got acquainted with, and not finding him at home, took possession of his official black cloak and ruff, with a pumpkin I found lying in the press. Furnished with these articles, and a stout cudgel, I betook myself to the wood, and there prepared my costume. You know, my Lord, what use I made of it; and there can be no question that, without your interference, I should have been completely successful in this master-stroke of mine; indeed, the game was already won. After having got rid of the two poltroons, I intended to penetrate as deep into the wood as I could, and then, doing the ladies no personal injury, to effect a little exchange, my black cloak, now no longer of use to me, for their cash and jewels; and then, having wished them a good journey, and recommending myself to their favourable remembrance, to make the best of my way off.

“As to yourself, my Lord, I must confess I had not the slightest idea of your coming to spoil my sport. The world is now so frightfully incredulous that your name no longer serves to frighten even children; and were it not that some ninny like the Countess’s servant, or some old wife at her wheel, every now and then revives your name, we should long since have forgotten even that.



I thought that anybody might be Rubezahl that liked: I have now found out my mistake. I am quite at your mercy; and I hope that the sincerity of my confessions may disarm your anger. Nay, with what perfect ease to yourself might you have the satisfaction of making an honest man of me; 'twould be nothing to you to give me a handful of dollars out of the copper, or to treat me as you did the hungry traveller who, having gathered a score or two of sloes from your hedge, broke one tooth, indeed, with the first, but was indemnified for his loss by finding all the rest of the fruit turned into gold; or suppose it were your good pleasure to give me one of the eight golden nine-pins you have still left (you gave the ninth to a student of Prague who had been playing with you); or the little pitcher, the milk from which becomes gold cheese; or, being as I am a guilty wretch, suppose you were to beat me with such a gold rod as served you once upon a time to castigate the travelling shoemaker, and then let me, as you did him, carry away the instrument of my punishment as a memorial. In any of these ways my fortune would be made. Indeed, my Lord, if you will reflect upon the wants we poor mortals are subject to, you must admit it is very difficult to act with strict integrity when one is in want of everything, and can get nothing by honest industry. The proverb says: 'Necessity has no law.'

“Get thee gone, rascal,” cried the Gnome, giving him a hearty kick; “get thee gone, as fast as thy legs will carry thee, to the gallows, the true summit of thy fortunes.” Worthy Kunz, delighted to escape so cheaply, which he ascribed entirely to his own powers of rhetoric, was in such haste to get out of the presence of his Lordship, that he left his black mantle behind him. He soon lost sight of the castle in which he had been imprisoned, but after that, he did not appear to make any advance; walk on as fast and sturdily as he might, he still saw the same mountains, the same valleys, the same objects. Fatigued by this endless movement without progress, he lay down under a tree to take a little rest, and to wait for some passing traveller to tell him the way; he soon fell fast asleep; when he awoke he found himself in total darkness. He very distinctly remembered that it was under a tree he had fallen asleep; yet he heard not the slightest rustling of leaves, nor could he discern one star through the branches. In his alarm he would have arisen, but he felt himself restrained by an unseen power, the effort he made being attended by a loud noise, like the rattling of chains. Finding that he was in irons, he imagined himself in some dungeon of Rubezahl, a hundred leagues below the surface of the earth, and was hereupon overcome by horrible fear.

After some hours day began to appear; but the



light penetrated very dimly through the grating of a small window in a thick wall. Without being positively certain about the matter, he seemed to have some recollection of the place; he impatiently awaited a visit from the gaoler, but some hours elapsed, and no one came near him. Hunger and thirst beginning to torment him, he set to work making all the noise he could, shaking his chains, dashing them against the walls, and shouting with all his might. He heard human voices outside, but no one for a long time dared to come in; at last the gaoler, having said the usual prayer for driving away evil spirits, threw open the door, and brandishing a great cross, slowly advanced, reciting the office for exorcising the devil, deeming that it could be no other that was making all this racket in the prison; but on taking a nearer view of the apparition, he recognized his former prisoner, the cut-purse; and Kunz, on his part, beheld the gaoler of Liegnitz. He now perceived that Rubezahl had remanded him to the place whence he came. "Thou here?" exclaimed the gaoler, almost as much afraid of his mysterious prisoner as of the personage he had expected to find; "how got'st thou entrance?"—"By the door," replied Kunz, coolly. "Weary of rambling about the world, I am desirous of leading a quiet life, and, as thou see'st, have returned to my old quarters, where, by your leave,

I propose to remain." No one could comprehend by what means the prisoner had returned to his dungeon, or got into his irons. Kunz, who wished to throw a veil over his last exploit, boldly affirmed that he was there by virtue of a power he possessed of passing at pleasure through locked doors and barred gates, and of putting off or on his irons just as he pleased. "For me," said he, "there are neither bolts nor locks." Touched with his apparent tractability, the magistracy commuted his punishment, only requesting him to trundle a wheelbarrow for the service of the King till he should think proper to slip off his irons, when he might go for good and all: but we have never heard that he took advantage of this obliging permission.

The Countess meantime, with her family, arrived safely and comfortably at Carlsbad. Scarcely had she alighted when she sent for the principal physician, to consult him as to her health, and the best mode of using the waters. In a quarter of an hour, there accordingly presented himself the celebrated Doctor Springsfeld, of Merseburg, who would scarcely have exchanged the golden waters of Carlsbad for those of Pactolus. "Welcome, dear Doctor," cried mother and daughters, cordially. "You have preceded us, then," said Mama? "We thought you were still with Lord Giantdale; but why, naughty man, did you conceal from us that you were the Bath physician?"



“Oh, Doctor,” cried Hedwig, “you pierced my vein through and through; my foot hurts me so, instead of waltzing, I shall hardly be able to limp about a little.” The physician was perfectly confounded: in vain did he scrutinize the faces of all three ladies; he could not remember to have ever before seen them. “Your Ladyship,” said he, at length, “doubtless must take me for somebody else, for I am not aware that I had ever the honour of meeting you till this hour. I do not know Lord Giantdale; I never quit Carlsbad during the season.”

The Countess, at a loss to understand this preposterous *incognito* of the Doctor's, at last began to imagine that, contrary to the custom of his colleagues, he wished to decline any remuneration for the skill and care they had already experienced at his hands. Under this impression, she said: “I understand you, my dear Doctor, but you carry your delicacy too far; nothing shall prevent my acknowledging myself your debtor, and proving my grateful sense of the assistance you have already afforded me;” and therewith she forced a rich gold snuff-box upon the Doctor, who, accepting it as a payment in advance, and reluctant to offend so promising a patient, quietly put it in his pocket. He now judged the whole family to be suffering under one of those nervous disorders, which produce such extraordinary effects upon the imagination, and under this impression ordered them gentle aperients.

Doctor Springsfeld was not one of those physicians who know nothing beyond pills and potions ; he was a man who could render himself agreeable to his patients, by no end of stories and anecdotes, professional, political, historical, and miscellaneous, which contributed, in a great degree, to keep up their spirits, and make him popular. On quitting the Countess and proceeding to his usual round, he entertained every one he visited with an account of his singular interview with the new-comers, adding divers embellishments, which tended to make out the whole party to be a set of most eccentric, nay, absurd personages. Everybody became anxious to see them, and the Countess, in particular, became the topic of the day at Carlsbad.

When she appeared with her amiable daughters, for the first time at the rooms, the whole company at the Baths were assembled to meet them. How great was the amazement of mother and daughters, on entering the rooms, to find themselves in the same party with whom they had spent the evening in the castle of Lord Giantdale. The Count with all his ribands and orders, the portly Canon, the paralytic Counsellor of Finance, were all there ; how delightful ! they would thus escape the tedium of a ceremonious introduction to strangers. Not one person in the room but was already known to them. The Countess conversed, now with one, now with another, in an



easy and familiar tone, addressing each by his or her name; constantly referring to the conversation she had had with them at the hospitable board of Lord Giantdale; and not a little surprised to find the whole party, both ladies and gentlemen, who were before so kind and friendly, now so mysteriously, so unintelligibly cold and distant. She at last began to think that this was a concerted plan, and that Lord Giantdale would presently put an end to the mystification by himself appearing. Actuated by this idea, and not willing to allow his Lordship the triumph of having deceived her penetration, she said to the Counsellor of Finance, with a smile: "Come, Counsellor, put your legs in motion, and start Lord Giantdale from his hiding place."

It was a clear case; this last touch proved beyond a doubt that the imagination of the Countess was sadly disordered, and everybody was sorry for a person who appeared so rational, so intelligent, except where the Giant Mountains were concerned. The Countess, on her part, guessing from the signs, nods, looks, and motions, interchanged around her, that it was suspected the disease of her limbs had taken possession of her brain, thought she could not better remove this impression than by a full narrative of the adventure that had befallen her on the mountains. She was listened to with that sort of attention usually paid to a story, for the moment amusing

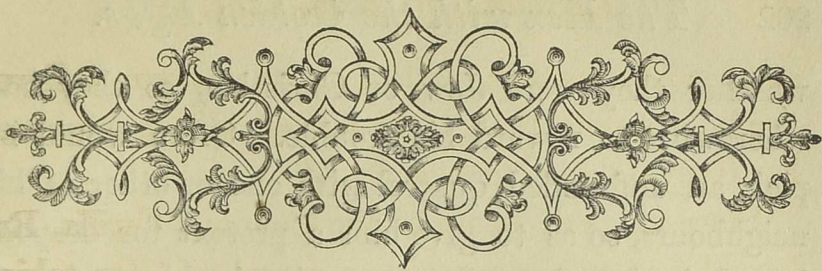
enough, but of which no one believes a single word. All with one voice agreed that "'twas strange, 'twas passing strange," at the same time significantly turning their eyes towards Doctor Springsfeld, who silently replied by an emphatic shrug of his shoulders, and made up his mind not to relinquish his patient before the waters of Carlsbad had entirely washed this adventure of the Giant Mountains out of her imagination. And ere long the Doctor thought the waters had produced this effect; the truth being, that the Countess, perceiving that her story only led to a belief that her head was turned, ceased to speak of it; the waters, however, had the practical result of restoring the Countess to perfect health. This object being attained, and the young ladies having waltzed and flirted to their heart's content, the family set out on their return to Breslau. They failed not to go by way of the Giant Mountains, in order to pay their promised visit to Lord Giantdale. Mama confidently expecting that their noble host would explain the reason why the party whom they had met at his castle, had affected not to recognise them at Carlsbad. But no person in the mountains knew the road to his Lordship's castle, or had even heard of his name. And the lady was eventually convinced, that the Lord Giantdale, who had so kindly rescued and received her, was, in reality, no other than the Spirit Lord of the Giant Mountains. She owned that he had dealt



most nobly by her, and, from that hour, believed firmly in spirits, though the fear of ridicule prevented her from making her belief public.


Since this adventure of the Countess Cecilia, Rubezahl has not been seen or heard of. On taking leave of the Countess, he proceeded to his underground domain. Very soon after this, burst forth the tremendous subterranean fire which destroyed first Lisbon, afterwards Guatemala, and which has since broken out in other places. And so much have the gnomes had to do, in their efforts to arrest the torrents of fire which are overflowing their underground channels in all directions, that not one has had time to come up to the surface of the earth.

**End of the Legends of Rubezahl.**



## The Hen with the Golden Eggs.

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 HERE lived at the foot of the Fichtelberg, on the frontiers of Bohemia, in the days of the Emperor, Henry the Fourth, a stout warrior, named Egger Winnebald. He occupied a fief, which he had obtained by his successes in the Italian wars. Many a town and village had he plundered while in the Emperor's service, and with the booty thus accumulated, he had built three castles, within the circuit of a vast and gloomy forest; Klausenburg on the hill, Gottendorf in the valley, and Salenstein on the river. He went from one to another of these strongholds, attended by a numerous band of horsemen, and unable, and for that matter having no inclination, to get rid of his old habits of plundering, continued to put club-law in force, whenever he had an opportunity. Many a merchant and traveller did he strip without mercy, caring not a straw



whether they were Jew or Christian, so they had wherewith to reward his trouble. Often would he pick an unfounded quarrel with one or other of his neighbours, so as to give him a pretext for despoiling their domains. It was quite in his power to have rested from the fatigues of war, in the society of an amiable wife; but to him repose seemed a disgraceful effeminacy. Popular opinion in those olden times deemed the sword and spear as essential to the character of the knight, as the spade and reaping-hook to that of the peaceful tiller of land, and as little to be laid aside while health and strength remained; and truly Winnebald kept up the principle vigorously. His excesses at length became perfectly intolerable; no one for miles round felt himself safe, and a powerful league was accordingly formed against him, whose members swore, at whatever cost, to drive this insatiate vulture from his nest, and to destroy his strongholds. Having sent him their mortal defiance, they armed their vassals, and by a simultaneous movement, beleaguered his three castles on the same day, giving him no time to take the field against the confederates. Hugo von Kotzau appeared with his forces before Klausenburg on the hill; Rodolph von Rabenstein, with his cavaliers, invested Gottendorf in the valley, and Ulric Spareck, surnamed the Dolphin, environed, with his archers, Salenstein on the river.

When Egger Winnebald saw himself thus closely beset on all sides, he resolved to cut his way, sword in hand, through the midst of his foes, and retreat to the mountains. He assembled his people, and briefly pointed out to them that in their present situation they must either conquer or die. He then placed his wife, who was near her confinement, on a powerful charger, and assigned to her, for her service and defence, one of his bravest esquires. But ere the drawbridge was lowered, and the great gate thrown open, he took apart his esquire, and whispered: "Watch over my wife as 'twere the apple of thine eye; keep with her in the rear, so long as thou shalt see my banner flying, and the plume of my helmet waving on high; but should I fall, fly to the forest, and conceal her in the cavern thou knowest of. At night, when she sleeps, stab her to the heart; better that not a memory of me should be left upon earth, than that my loved wife and child should be exposed to the insults of my enemies."

Having thus spoken, he made a sortie so sudden and furious, that the besiegers at first gave way. But seeing the very inferior force they had to contend with, they recovered their courage, surrounded the enemy, and after a fierce and sanguinary struggle, put Winnebald and all his followers to the sword, not one of them escaping but the confidential esquire,



who, in the confusion, galloped off with his mistress to the cave in the forest.

The unfortunate lady had no sooner entered this retreat, than a sense of her terrible calamity fell lead-like on her heart, and she sank on the ground in a state of total insensibility. Seeing her in this condition, the esquire, calling to mind his master's last request, was about to draw his sword and pierce the forlorn one's heart, but as he hesitated ere he inflicted the fatal blow, her rare beauty excited at once his pity and his love, and he, not she, was wounded. While duty and passion were struggling within him, the unhappy lady recovered her senses ; then, as the consciousness of her sad bereavement came fully upon her, she burst into an agony of tears, wrung her hands, and sobbed as though her very heart was about to break. Untouched by her holy grief, the esquire thus addressed her : " Noble lady, if you knew the fate your husband designed for you, you would not so regret his death. He ordered me to poinard you in this cavern, but your beauty has disarmed me. If you will listen to me, I have that to propose which will at once benefit us both. Forget that you have been my mistress ; misfortune has now made us equals ; come with me to Bamburg, my native town, where I will marry you ; all kindness, respect, and love shall be yours, and your child I will bring up as my

own. Renounce the rank in which you were born; 'tis your only chance of safety; your husband's enemies would treat you with the utmost indignity were you to fall into their hands; nor can you escape doing so, forlorn and helpless as you are, unless you avail yourself of my protection in the way I propose."

The poor lady's hair stood on end at what she now heard. She was equally shocked at the barbarous order left by her husband, and at the temerity of her attendant, who had thus dared to avow his insolent love. But the reflection that she was quite at the mercy of this unworthy man restored her presence of mind. She saw that her only safe plan would be to affect to receive his declaration in good part. She therefore, after seeming to weigh his proposition for a minute or two, regarded him with a smiling aspect, and said: "Thou hast said well, Rupert; thy master has indeed forfeited all claim to my love, and I accept thy offer. Give me a few days to recover my agitated spirits, and then I will be thine."

The amorous esquire, who had anticipated no such easy conquest, was transported with joy at his success. Having exhausted his entire stock of eloquence in thanks and acknowledgments, he prepared a bed of moss for his mistress in the interior of the cave, and himself lay down across its entrance to guard her repose, and, as soon



happened, to snatch some for himself. But the beautiful widow had no thought of rest, though she assumed its appearance. As soon as, from unequivocal indications, she was certain that her knavish attendant was sound asleep, she arose, silently approached him, and drawing his sword, by one thrust put a period for ever to his sleeping and waking dreams of love. Stepping over the bleeding corse, she hastened into the forest, where she wandered about as chance directed, utterly unknowing whither she was going, only intent upon avoiding the open country, and whenever, in the distance, she perceived any one of human kind, to retreat still deeper into the wood.

Three days and three nights did she thus wander about, a prey to all the bitterness of grief, with no other support than a few wild fruits. To aggravate her wretchedness, she felt that the moment was approaching when she would become a mother. Exhausted by fatigue, she seated herself under a tree, and weeping and sobbing bitterly, loudly bewailed her condition. Suddenly she beheld before her a little old woman, who seemed as though she had risen out of the earth, and who thus addressed her: "Noble lady, what is it makes you weep? Can I do aught to relieve your distress?" The unfortunate lady felt a momentary relief in hearing the sound of a human voice; but when, on

raising her eyes, she beheld a hideous old woman, with trembling hand and palsied limbs, leaning with difficulty on a rough stick, who seemed rather herself in need of assistance than in any degree able to afford it to others, she turned away her eyes, and replied, in a low disappointed tone of voice: "Good mother, why should you desire to know the subject of my tears, since it is not in your power to afford me any assistance?"—"Who knows," replied the crone, "but I may be of use to you? At any rate, you may as well tell me the occasion of your grief."—"You see," replied the widow, "how it is with me; the time of my confinement is closely approaching, and I am wandering amid these wilds, alone and friendless."—"As to that," returned the old woman, "I can, I am afraid, be of little assistance. Never having been married myself, I know not how to aid ladies in your situation. But come with me to my house, I will do all I can for you." The poor lady, in her distress, was glad to take the will for the deed, and under the guidance of the apparent senior of all the virgins of her time, reached a miserable cabin, where she found very little better accommodation than under the shelter of a tree. Here, however, with the aid, such as it was, of the Sybil, she, in an hour or two after, safely gave birth to a daughter, whom she herself nursed and tended as best she



might under such adverse circumstances, and whom, in honour of her chaste hostess, she named Lucretia. But notwithstanding this piece of politeness, the lady in the straw was restricted to such a very miserable dietary, that the strongest dishes the grooms in her castle used to regale on would now have seemed perfectly Sardinapalian delicacies; she got nothing but cabbage soup, without butter, or even salt, and black bread, which the old woman cut in slices as thin as a wafer. This Lent provender did not at all satisfy the young mother, who had a first-rate appetite, and conceived a great desire for something solid: a mutton chop, or a steak, or a roast fowl; and this last wish really did not seem so impracticable, for every morning she heard a hen announce, by the usual cackle, that she had laid an egg.

For the first nine days she submitted in silence to the meagre diet which her hostess inflicted; on the tenth she threw out a gentle hint touching a little chicken broth. The old lady turning a deaf ear to this, she at length spoke out: "Good Madam," said she, "your soups are so poor and so sour, and your bread so hard, that altogether they make my gums sore. Do pray give me something more nourishing; I'll pay you well for it. There's the hen, which makes such a noise in the house: roast that for me, that I may get up the strength necessary to

enable me to proceed on my journey with my child. Look at this string of pearls round my neck : when we part I will divide it with you.”—“ Noble lady,” mumbled out the toothless old crone, “ it becomes not you to criticise my table ; no mistress of a house will endure this from a stranger. I know perfectly well how to make soups, and to make them nice and tasty too ; I should think I’ve cooked as often as you, at all events. My soups I particularly regard as faultless, and they are especially adapted for you. As to my hen, you’ll certainly not have that ; ’tis my friend, my sole companion in this solitude ; it feeds out of my dish, and goes to roost on my bed. Keep your pearls ; I will receive no reward for what I have done.” The lady in the straw, seeing clearly that her hostess was offended, said no more, and, by way of appeasing her, did her best to eat with apparent relish the soup that was placed before her. Next morning the old woman took her large basket and hawthorn walking-stick, saying : “ All our bread is gone but this loaf, which I will share with you ; I am going to the baker’s to get a supply ; look well to the house during my absence ; take great care of my hen, and think not of killing her ; her eggs are yours, if you can find any ; but she is very much addicted to hiding them. Await my return for seven days ; the nearest village is not, indeed, more than a league distant, but for me that



is a three days' journey. If I don't come back in seven days, you may give me up altogether." So saying, she set out at about the speed of a tortoise: at noon she was still within a bow-shot of the cottage, and her guest, who every now and then followed her with her eyes, did not lose sight of her till the close of the day.

Lady Winnebald, now mistress of the kitchen, searched eagerly for some eggs to vary her soup and dry remnant of bread; for seven days she looked into every nook and corner of the house, and examined every bush and hedge about it; but not one solitary egg could she discover. On the eighth day she began to be impatient for the old woman's return; still more so on the ninth. Almost all her provisions being exhausted, she resolved to wait three days more, after the expiration of which term, in case of the non-appearance of the old lady, she determined to take possession of all her moveables, as of a property abandoned by the lawful owner. The three days passed on; she entered on her self-constituted rights, and in the state of want to which the young mother was reduced, she resolved to exercise her first act of ownership on the hen who so maliciously secreted her eggs: it was condemned, without appeal, to be executed next morning; and lest it should escape meantime, was imprisoned under a large basket.

Before sun-rise on the succeeding day, as she was sharpening a large knife to kill the bird she destined for breakfast, having already set the pot on the fire with water to boil, the hen announced in her usual manner that she had laid an egg. The universal legatee, delighted with this unhopd-for addition to her scanty means of subsistence, flew to the basket, and there found the treasure so long looked for. "This will do for breakfast," said she; "and 'twill be ready so much sooner." The execution of the hen was for the present postponed. The egg was thrown into the pot; on being taken out 'twas heavier than lead, and when the lady broke the shell, she found, to her immense astonishment, that the yolk was one solid mass of gold!

The joy of this discovery effectually superseded all feelings of hunger; her first thought was to feed and caress the hen. Fervently did she thank heaven that she had learned the great value of her acquisition before the pot had received so precious a treasure. This alchymist of a hen gave quite a new turn to her ideas respecting her old hostess, whom she had at first taken to be merely a decrepit mortal, and whom afterwards, when forced to live on her vile soups, she had looked upon as a beggar of the poorest class; now she considered her to be either a beneficent fairy, who, taking compassion on her, had bestowed upon her this invaluable gift;



or, on the other hand, as a sorceress, laying a snare for her. It was obvious there was magic in the business; the cautious widow, therefore, while intent upon quitting her present abode, was anxious to avoid taking any step that might be offensive to an invisible power which seemed disposed to favour her. She was long undecided whether to take the miraculous hen with her, or to set it at liberty. The eggs the old lady had permitted her to appropriate; and in three days she had become possessed of three large lumps of gold. The question was, whether, if she took the hen, it would be deemed a theft; or whether she might not lawfully adopt it as an understood supplement to the old lady's donation. After a protracted dispute between her wishes and her scruples, the latter, as usual, gave way; and having adjudicated the hen to be clearly her property, she put it safely in a small coop she found, and wrapping her child in her apron, and tying it to her back gipsy fashion, she quitted the lonely cottage, in which no living thing now remained but a solitary cricket that was chirping in the fireplace.

The wanderer directed her steps towards the village where the old lady had said she was going to buy bread, expecting every moment that she would appear and demand her hen. Within an hour she reached a well-frequented road that led

direct to the village. Curiosity induced her to enter the baker's shop, and make some inquiries about the old lady who sometimes came there to purchase bread; but not a soul in the house knew anything about her, nor had ever seen such a person. She repeated her inquiries to a number of the peasants, who had collected around her, who were all quite astonished, for not one of them had ever seen or heard of the solitary cottage in the wood. At last an ancient crone said she remembered to have heard from her grandmother of a "Woman of the Woods," who once in a century made her appearance for the purpose of performing some good action, and then disappeared. This explained the whole affair; our widow at once saw that it had been her good fortune to come to that part of the Fichtelberg just at the time when the periodical advent of the unknown enabled her to receive from her beneficent hand the aid she so much needed. The hen became now doubly dear to her; for while she fully appreciated the gold egg which she found every morning in the coop, the bird became also extremely valuable as a memorial of the benefactress who had rendered such timely aid, and given her such a priceless treasure. As her heart expanded under this feeling, she experienced no small regret that she had not, while it was in her power, made any advance towards a



more social and generous intercourse with so noble a friend; owing to which ill-timed reserve it is that we can now never learn to what class in the world of spirits her benevolent protectress belonged.

In this village the widow hired a cart and a yoke of oxen, with which she proceeded to Bamberg, where she arrived quite safe with her child, her hen and fifteen eggs, and took a house. She lived at first very retired, directing all her attention to the education of her daughter and the cherishing of her hen; but after a time, her eggs having multiplied, she purchased lands and houses, vineyards and castles, and lived in excellent style on her rents; she gave alms to the poor, and made rich presents to the neighbouring convents; so that the fame of her opulence and her good works spread far and wide, and attracted the attention of the Bishop, who came and made her acquaintance, and exhibited great friendship and esteem for her. Meantime, as Lucretia increased in stature, her charms became daily more conspicuous, and her beauty and modesty were the subjects of general admiration.

About this period (1057) the Emperor convoked the Germanic Diet at Bamberg. So encumbered was the town by the numerous trains of the Princes and Prelates who flocked thither, that our widow, to withdraw herself from the crowd, retired with her daughter to one of her country houses; but the

worthy Bishop spoke so highly of Lucretia to the Empress, that she expressed a desire to have the young beauty as one of her maids of honour. Now as Henry's court was far from being a model of correctness, the anxious mother would have willingly, with all due thanks and respect, declined this honour; but her Majesty insisted still the more, and the Bishop supporting the request with his influence, she at length gave way. The fair Lucretia was accordingly sent to Court, furnished with a splendid wardrobe, and received in charge from the Empress her work-box, with the additional privilege, in common with five other young ladies of quality, of bearing on gala days her Majesty's train. Whenever she made her appearance, every eye was fixed upon her; and it was soon unanimously voted by the courtiers that she was, beyond any comparison, the loveliest lady of the Court.

Every day was a festival, and the round of ever-varying pleasures, contrasting so forcibly with the retired life she had led at home, perfectly enchanted Lucretia. Besides her salary as Work-Box Lady, our maid of honour's tender parent set aside for her as pocket-money the revenue arising from sixty golden eggs, so that not a wish of her heart, as far as finery went, remained ungratified; and as to love, it had not yet found a place in her young heart. All her thoughts were upon balls and drawing-rooms, and



parties, and fine dresses, and amusements, and herein she fully gratified her utmost desires, outvying in splendour, as in beauty, all her youthful companions, who, though of course they hated her most cordially, were fain to keep their envy and malice to themselves, and to profess the utmost fondness for “dear Lady Lucretia;” “dear Lady Lucretia” happening to continue very high in the Empress’s favour. The young knights and nobles were, to a man, equally loud in their expressions of admiration; and they were perfectly sincere.

For a girl, in the first instance the least vain in the world, under such circumstances not to become intoxicated by the incense constantly offered up to her, were still more extraordinary than for a hen to lay golden eggs. Her appetite for flattery soon became insatiate, and the nature of the adulation she received, in its due course generated in her mind ideas of the most accomplished coquetry. She conceived the design of annexing to her train every noble and noblet of the Court; nay, she would willingly have had the whole German nation prostrate at her feet. She concealed these projects of universal conquest under an appearance of the greatest modesty, which the more effectually enabled her to attain her object. She set at pleasure every heart in flames, which incendiary disposition, by the way, was all she inherited from her father. Once secure of her

conquest, she ever treated the aspirant with the greatest coldness and contempt, taking a malicious pleasure in beholding the throes and pangs of his disappointed passion. Her own heart was defended by a wall of brass, which none of her paladins could force, or produce any effect upon. However ardently beloved, she loved not in return; whether it was that her hour was not yet come, or that her ambition had not found wherewithal to satisfy it, or that coquetry had closed her heart against sentiment. The more consummate masters in the science of the female heart, indeed, discovering that the fortress was impregnable, made a timely retreat, without hazarding the dishonour of a defeat; but plenty of inexperienced youths took their places, who were, one after the other, made the victims of their silly credulity, while she herself remained heart-whole.

For some years past a certain Count von Klettenberg had attended the Emperor's Court, who, notwithstanding a slight bodily defect, was the most popular man with the ladies there. One of his shoulders was shorter than the other, whence he was called Ulric the Unequal; but the beauty of his face, and, with that one exception, of his form, his noble air, his wit, and his amiability were such, that the fair sex overlooked this imperfection. Ulric enjoyed great consideration at Court, and above all, as we have just said, was a general favourite with the



fair sex, to whom he always had something agreeable to say; the Empress herself took a pleasure in his conversation. In the way of giving novelty and piquancy to those Court festivals, that are so apt to become insipid from their uniformity, his resources of fancy were inexhaustible. Whenever the bad weather kept the Court within doors, or the ill-humour of the Emperor banished the courtiers from the royal presence, Count Ulric's gaiety and inventive powers were called into requisition, always with entire success, to chase away dull care.

Though constantly in the society of the ladies, Ulric, till now, had escaped the arrows of Cupid. Passing gallantries had, of course, formed the amusement of many an hour, but as to serious passion, he knew not what it meant. Like the proud Lucretia, he wished to enslave the hearts of others, but himself to remain free. Chance having brought together two persons so worthy and so qualified to enter the lists with each other, it was not long ere the contest commenced.

Lucretia was fully determined to make a conquest of the Count; and as he had the reputation of being the most inconstant lover in the whole Court, she felt it was necessary for her purpose to set about the business in a very different way from that which had been adopted towards her other admirers, whom she had been wont to change just as she did her clothes;

the Count was a fish of another description, who must be played with cautiously, if she desired to have the honour of effectually hooking him. On his part, Ulric was simply ambitious of having an affair of gallantry with the beautiful maid of honour, in order that, by eclipsing all his competitors, he might show how superior he was to them in the art of love, in the knowledge of the female heart. With these respective views the belligerent powers opened the campaign.

The lady experienced no small triumph, nay was, with all her airs, not a little flattered when she saw the darling of the Court, he who hitherto had shown himself proof against all serious impressions, doing homage to her charms. Now would she take full vengeance for his past indifference. His eyes, which heretofore had never rested on Lucretia, were now constantly fixed upon her alone; he followed her everywhere, as the day the sun. Every *fête* which he gave had immediate reference to her, no taste but hers was consulted in all his arrangements; he hesitated at no expense to carry out her suggestions, and did she disapprove of any contemplated feature, it was at once abandoned, even though the Empress herself had given it her sanction. It soon became obvious to what goddess all his sacrifices were offered, and it was openly said among the courtiers, that the Court had become a horn which played just



what tunes Lucretia pleased, and no others. Pretty faces throughout the palace became exceedingly pinched and yellow with spite and envy, at the progress of an amour which at once annihilated any idea their fair owners had formed of achieving, or of having achieved, the conquest of the Count. And so it was; the Count gave up, in favour of the lovely Bamburger, all his other little affairs of the heart, and she set the rest of her admirers at liberty, reserving all her artillery for the Count.

A month passed on, and the affair had proceeded to the satisfaction of both parties. But now approached the time when the one or the other was to be held up to public ridicule, while the conqueror was to shine in all that brilliancy which so signal a victory must confer. In the outset, the vanity of the Count had designed nothing more than a display of his superiority to all his competitors, after which it was his purpose, leaving Lucretia to wear the willow, to fly to other conquests. His rivals were indeed dismissed, but meantime Dan Cupid, who seldom permits people to play tricks with him unpunished, had turned the Count's jest into downright earnest, by inflicting that wound in his heart which he at first only feigned to be there. The fair Lucretia had really and truly made a conquest of him, and he was now as fast chained to her triumphal car as the most sentimental of her other admirers. Her aim

was accomplished. The victim was secured, and her own heart remained untouched. Now then to complete the thing. Her triumph up to this point was manifest to all, but she reflected, were the prisoner to break her chains, to throw off her authority by his own act, the laugh would be turned against her. To obviate this danger, her plan would be to dismiss him while he was yet her slave, and have thus all the *éclat* of making what prisoners she chose, and of getting rid of them just when she chose. Chance assisted her views.

Count Rupert von Kefernburg, whose estates lay contiguous to those of Count Ulric, came at this time to Goslar, where the Emperor was holding his Court, for the purpose of introducing a cousin of his, a raw country girl. He here beheld Lucretia, and, the common destiny of all the knights and nobles who, from the four quarters of the empire, repaired to Court, fell desperately in love with her. His physiognomy was such as by no means to recommend him to the fair sex, and, moreover, a negligence on the part of his nurse when he was a child had furnished his back with a superfluity, which had led to his receiving the distinctive appellation of Rupert with the Hump. In those times the art of the tailor had not arrived at its present perfection, in the way of disguising such defects, which, accordingly, as they could not be concealed, were in many cases, without



offence, made use of to distinguish the sufferer from others of the same name, and in this way historians have transmitted the record of them to posterity. The epithets of the Limper, the Stammerer, the Squinter, the One-eyed, the Gross, and most inexpressible of deformities, the *Moneyless*, still figure gravely on "the high historic page," side by side with more dignifying appellatives.

The Lord of Kefernburg, though his appearance did not warrant him in expecting any great degree of success with the fair, was endowed with so large a share of confidence in his own merits that the hump on his shoulder was altogether countervailed, as far as he was himself concerned, by the pleasing influence of the largely-developed bump on his head which covered the organ of self-esteem. He therefore, without the slightest distrust as to the result, set about the siege of Lucretia's heart; and as it happened at this moment that this Janusian Temple, which had been for some time closed, was once more thrown open, his homage was, to all appearance, graciously received, and Goslar at once became to Rupert a perfect terrestrial paradise. The worthy Count little suspected that in reality the hardened coquette was only making use of him as a means of at once gratifying her vanity and her vengeance.

Ulric was now in the situation of a prime minis-

ter who feels his credit totter, but wanting the spirit to send in his resignation, postpones it from day to day, till he is overtaken by an ignominious dismissal. Could he have resolved to break at once with his fickle mistress, he might perhaps have so managed as even now to have concealed his discomfiture and have turned the tables completely on the lady. There was the round, rustic Thuringian, Count Rupert's cousin, who might have been made excellent use of by the accomplished Ulric, in just the same way in which Lucretia meant to employ Count Rupert himself; but all his skill in love manœuvring was thrown out by the deep passion which had now taken possession of his heart; it had happened to him as sometimes befalls actors who on the stage have to make love frequently to the same person: the sentiment he at first but feigned became a strong, an all-absorbing reality. The moth may fly at the candle many and many a time with impunity, but it is at last caught in the flame, and, despite its convulsive struggles, is only freed by death. The appearance even of so contemptible a rival as Rupert served to open Ulric's eyes to the violence of his own passion, and the entire absence of it on the part of Lucretia. In vain, like the wounded tiger of the fable, did he endeavour to wrench out the arrow that had pierced him; he but aggravated his own agonies



by the attempt ; Lucretia enjoyed her triumph, as she cruelly smiled upon his competitor before his face.

By way of *coup-de-grace* to her victim, she one day gave a magnificent entertainment, whereat, while the dessert was enlivened by charming music, vocal and instrumental, some friends, instructed by her previously, pressed round her and begged that she would give some name to this happy day, by which it might ever be remembered. "It is for you, my kind friends," said she, "rather than for me, to do this." But as they continued to urge her, she at last exclaimed, with malicious emphasis : "Well, then, we will call this day, Count Ulric's Defeat !"

For a time the unfortunate lover gave way to despair ; but common sense constantly reminding him that at all events despair would do no good, seeing that the fair ones of that day were not given to sentimentality, he resolved to keep up his spirits and make a vigorous effort to recover the position he had lost. "Vanity," said he to himself, "is Lucretia's ruling passion, and 'tis that I must work upon, cost what it may." He accordingly became once more the heart and soul of the Court, taking the lead in all the entertainments that were got up, and himself vying with the richest nobles there in the costliness of his own *fêtes*, all of which were avowedly given in honour of Lucretia, who readily

bestowed upon him a smile or two in acknowledgment of the compliment, and accepted without hesitation the rich gifts he lavished upon her. For instance, a rich merchant of Augsburgh had just offered the Empress a jewel of very great price he had brought with him from Alexandria, which she had declined as being too expensive. To purchase this, Ulric pledged one half of his territories, and then humbly placed it at the disposal of the mistress of his thoughts, who quietly took it, wore it that evening at a party, rewarded the donor with a few tender glances, and next morning deposited it in her jewel-case, where it remained as little heeded as the Count himself. Ulric, not discouraged, essayed by new gifts, new entertainments of the most gorgeous description, to make himself agreeable to her, but all in vain. Meantime, his lavish expenditure ere long compelled him to pledge the remainder of his estates: his honours and his honour were now all that remained to him; and on these no usurer would have advanced a single farthing.

So outrageous, indeed, had been his prodigalities that the Empress herself, when it was too late, condescended to recommend him not thus madly to dissipate the inheritance of his ancestors. The Count could not resist this opportunity of speaking to her Majesty on the subject



nearest his heart: "Most gracious Lady," said he, "you are aware that I passionately love Lucretia: truly may I say that I cannot exist without her. The whole Court has seen her treatment of me, has witnessed her cruel and contumelious falsehood. I have endured that which would have exhausted the endurance of most men, yet cannot I resolve to renounce her. To propitiate her I have expended all my patrimony; from time to time she has bestowed on me a deceitful smile, but her heart remains closed against me. What I would entreat of your Majesty is that you enjoin Lucretia to give me her hand, if she can assign no sound reason for refusing it." The Empress promised she would speak to Lucretia in his favour, and endeavour to prevail upon her to reward his love with a due return.

But ere she had had an opportunity of talking with the proud Lucretia on the subject, Count Rupert requested an audience, and addressed her in the following terms: "August Empress, a lady in your train, the charming Lucretia, has deeply engaged my affections, and I have been fortunate enough to secure hers. I have, therefore, come to entreat that your Majesty would be pleased to dispense with her further attendance, and bestow her hand upon me, that, as her husband, I may take her home with me."

Her Highness felt no little curiosity to know what

claim Count Rupert could have to a heart which, she understood, was already the just property of another, and was, moreover, indignant that her favourite should have been carrying on a love correspondence with two nobles of the Court at one and the same time, a circumstance highly discreditable in itself, and which in those days was exceedingly calculated to bring on a duel, *d'outrance*, no lover being disposed to relinquish his supposed claims without bloodshed. However, as both parties had appealed to her, she consoled herself with the hope that both would implicitly submit to her decision.

Having dismissed Count Rupert, and retired to her private apartment, she sent for Lucretia, and on her arrival thus addressed her, in an angry tone: "Young lady, what confusion is this you are creating at my Court with your mischievous flirtations? Two noblemen, within a few hours the one after the other, have applied to me for your hand, each of whom assures me he has received from you a favourable consideration. What means this? Do you imagine that you are, with impunity, to play such tricks as these with knights and nobles? first accepting their homage, and then contumeliously discarding them? Think you it becomes a modest girl to have two lovers at once in her train, both of whom she amuses herself with



rendering alike confident of success, though caring, as it would seem, for neither? This cannot be permitted to continue. You have given Count Ulric, and you have given Count Rupert, such encouragement as to authorise them in demanding with confidence your hand. I will not speak in favour of the one more than of the other; but one of them you must elect for your husband, or incur my severest displeasure."

Lucretia turned quite pale; she had never anticipated that her little caprices would reach the notice of the Empress. She threw herself at the feet of her mistress, seized her hand, which she bathed with tears, and as soon as she had somewhat recovered from her consternation, said: "Be not angry with me, mighty Sovereign; if my poor attractions produce any disorder in your Court, the fault is not mine; I cannot help it. Do not the courtiers cast their bold glances at all your ladies? How, then, can I prevent their being directed to me? I have given none of them any such encouragement as could warrant their asserting the possession of my heart, which is still entirely at my own disposal. I trust, therefore, that your Majesty will not compel your poor servant to wed a husband for whom she entertains not the slightest inclination."

"You speak in vain," replied the Empress;

“such pitiful evasions only confirm me in my determination. I know how deeply your basilisk glances have infused the sweet poison of love into the hearts of my knights and nobles. You must now suffer the just penalty you have incurred, and yourself wear the chains wherewith hitherto it has been your sport to enslave your lovers, for I will not rest until I have provided you with a husband.”

When the humbled Lucretia found that the Empress was thoroughly in earnest, she did not venture to offer any further opposition, lest she should still more highly irritate her mistress. But she now had recourse to dissimulation. “Madam,” said she, “your will is my law; I submit to your commands. Your Majesty has left it to me to choose between the candidates; as they so equally possess my esteem, that I cannot give the one a preference over the other, will your Majesty permit me to propose to each of them a condition, I undertaking to accept for my husband the first who shall present himself, having fulfilled that condition; and, on the other hand, having your royal word that I shall not be compelled to wed either until the condition is performed.”

The Empress, softened by this apparent submission on the part of the crafty Lucretia, consented to her request. Having passed her word, as desired, she smilingly asked: “Well, and now



what conditions are these on which the competitors are to win or lose thee?" The audacious girl could hardly conceal her triumphant laughter as she replied: "Madam, I simply require that the one and the other shall get rid of their little superfluities: Count Ulric must bring his shoulders, and Count Rupert his back, to a proper level, ere I consent to receive the marriage ring from either; and I have your Majesty's royal word that until they have effected this condition they shall not be entitled to claim me for a bride."

"Perfidious serpent!" exclaimed the enraged Empress, "quit my sight; you have deceived me by an unworthy artifice, but I have given my royal word, and I will adhere to it." Lucretia, having been thus ignominiously dismissed, her Majesty threw herself back on the sofa, and for a short time gave way to vexation at having been thus foiled by a chit of a girl. She then sent word to the respective candidates of the disagreeable result of her intervention. Ulric was quite inconsolable at the intelligence; more especially he felt in its full force the bitterness of malice with which the insolent Lucretia had cast at him reproachfully a defect which he himself hardly ever thought of, so little did he deem it noticed by others. "Could the shameless creature," cried he, "find no gentler pretext for dismissing me, after having ruined me

as she has done ? Was there any necessity for her thus to accompany a condition impossible for me to fulfil, with the sting of her adder's tongue ? Have I deserved such treatment at her hands ? ”

Full of mortification and despair, Ulric quitted the Court without taking leave of any one, and the courtiers inferred from his abrupt disparition that he was meditating some signal vengeance on the arrogant Lucretia. But little cared she about the matter ; she waited quietly, like a spider in the centre of its web, for some new victim to be entangled in her snares. Count Rupert, less sentimental than Ulric, extricated himself from the trammels of the coquette without difficulty, and without having, like his rival, deposited his whole fortune in her jewel-case, a circumstance which in no degree troubled Lucretia, who, to do her justice, was not at all avaricious. Indeed, 'twould have been strange had this been her vice, possessed as she was of plenty of golden eggs, and in the bloom of beauty. Not Ulric's presents, but Ulric himself, sacrificed on the altar of her vanity, had afforded her gratification, and she was, consequently, very hurt and indignant at the reproaches daily made her by the Empress, and re-echoed by the murmuring of the whole Court, which charged her with having been the ruin of Ulric in a pecuniary point of view. For it to be said that she had broken



his heart, was exceedingly exhilarating and satisfactory; but that people should suggest she had undone his pocket, was shocking, intolerable; so she resolved to divest herself of these ill-acquired riches, and that in such a way as should at once flatter her personal vanity and place her credit high in an influential quarter. She founded a convent for girls of noble family on the Rammelsberg, not far from Goslar, and endowed it as richly as Madame de Maintenon did her ghostly Elysium, St Cyr, in like manner with other people's money. Such a monument of devotion was at that period quite enough to invest anybody with the odour of sanctity, and to disperse from before the eyes and memory of the world far greater sins than Lucretia had been guilty of. She forthwith was cited as a perfect model of all the virtues; even the Empress was disposed to pardon her, when she saw how good a use she made of the wealth she had acquired from the Count. In order in some small degree to indemnify the poor man, she obtained for him from the Emperor an *order of sustenance* on a rich monastery, which she designed to send him as soon as she could discover the place of his retreat.

Meantime the Count himself pursued his despairing way o'er hill and dale, now forswearing for aye deceitful love, now half resolved to return and once more gaze on the beautiful form that so enslaved

him. At length, disgust with the world overpowered for awhile every other sentiment, and he determined, after having made a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, to shut himself up in a monastery. But ere he passed the confines of Germany, he had to sustain a terrible struggle with Love, who resisted with all his might the attempt to dislodge him; the image of the haughty Lucretia ever presented itself before him, do what he might to banish it from his thoughts, following him like a tormenting fiend. Reason urged him to detest the ingrate; but his heart revolted against the dictates of reason. Absence, so far from mitigating his passion, increased it; every step that led him from the object of his love seemed to pour a fresh drop of oil on the flame, and the charms of the beautiful but insensible Lucretia seemed to grow more and more wondrous, the farther they were removed from his vision. Often did the desire well nigh overcome him, to retrace his steps, and seek his salvation, not in the Holy Land, but at Goslar. He, however, proceeded on his journey, but with a heavy heart and lagging footsteps, as a ship which labours against a contrary wind.

In this pitiable state of mind he wandered through the mountain-passes of the Tyrol, and had nearly reached the frontiers of Italy, not far from Roveredo, when he lost his way in a forest, where, after considerable search, he could discover no place of shelter



for the night. He accordingly alighted, and turning his horse to graze under a tree, himself lay down under its branches, for he was sore wearied, more indeed by wear and tear of the mind, than by the journey itself. Ere long, sleep, that gentle consoler of the unhappy, "weighed his eyelids down," and for awhile "steep'd his senses in forgetfulness." By-and-bye, feeling himself shaken by a hand as cold as death, he started; and on awaking from his deep slumber, saw bending over him a lean old woman, who was examining his face by the light of a lanthorn. At this sight an awful fear for a moment pervaded him, for he thought he beheld a spirit; but resuming courage, he half arose, and exclaimed: "Who art thou, woman, and why comest thou here to disturb my repose?"

The old woman replied: "I am herb-gatherer to the Signora Dottorena, of Padua, who lives hard by at her villa; she has sent me to gather certain herbs and roots, which have peculiar virtues when plucked at midnight. Finding you lying here, I supposed you were a traveller who had been assassinated by robbers, and shook you by the arm to see whether you had any life left in you."

During this explanation the Count had entirely recovered himself. "Is the villa of thy mistress far off?" said he.

"Just down there, in the hollow," replied the

crone ; “ I have only this moment come from it. If you request of her a lodging for the night, it will be granted, but beware of infringing on the laws of hospitality ; my lady has a charming daughter, who is extremely susceptible of tender impressions, and whose piercing eyes can hardly fail to reach your heart. Her mother watches over her with the utmost care ; and were she to observe that any of her guests expressed too much tenderness for the Signorina Ughella, she would instantly cast some spell upon him, for she is a great enchantress, whom all the powers of nature, all the spirits of the air, obey.”

To this the Count paid very little attention, all he desired was a comfortable bed, wherein he might forget his cares for awhile. He immediately bridled his horse, and disposed himself to follow the old woman, who led him through the underwood, down into a pretty valley, watered by a swift rivulet. By an avenue of tall elms the traveller soon approached the wall surrounding the villa, the tall roofs and terraces of which, seen beyond, under a bright moon, looked charmingly amidst the wild forest scenery. The old woman opened a wicket leading into a pleasure garden, tastefully laid out, to which the splashing sound of a number of fountains gave additional freshness. Several ladies were promenading one of the broad walks, enjoying this freshness, and the lovely aspect of nature, on a fine calm summer's night.



The old woman, recognizing her mistress among the group, advanced and introduced the stranger, whom the Signora Dottorena, at once perceiving him to be no common person, received with the utmost politeness, herself conducted him into the house, and had an elegant supper served up for him.

While engaged with this welcome refreshment, the Count had ample leisure and opportunity to contemplate his hostess and the ladies composing her society, who, meanwhile, remained in an adjoining apartment, the door of which was thrown open. The mistress of the mansion had indeed passed her zenith, but her countenance was still beautiful and most striking. In her dark eyes, dignity and wisdom sat enthroned, and her fine voice sounded like music, as she discoursed with her listening friends in the soft language of Italy.

The Signorina Ughella, her daughter, possessed a form and features more perfect than the fancy of the most imaginative artist could design. All her motions were full of tender grace; and her black sparkling eyes were indeed such as mortal man could hardly withstand. The train of this noble pair consisted of three young ladies, who might well have induced a comparison with the nymphs of chaste Diana, as depicted by Raphael's pencil. With the exception of John Bunclé, whose rare fortune it was, into whatever bye-nook or out-of-the-world place he found

his way, ever to meet with a party of ladies, all of them so many chaste Venuses and beauteous Minervas, never was mortal so unexpectedly blessed in this way as was Count Ulric von Klettenberg, when he found himself thus transported, from an uncomfortable, supperless night's lodging under a tree, in the depths of an unknown wood, to a mansion which seemed the abode of the loves and the graces. Small as was his faith in magic, yet the unexpected apparition of the old woman, amid the shades of night, in the solitude of the forest, the caution she had given him, and her then introducing him to this magnificent place, so curiously inhabited, had made such an impression upon him, that he involuntarily anticipated something or other supernatural. It was, therefore, with some degree of mistrust that he presented himself to the ladies in the drawing-room; but he very soon became satisfied that neither Signora Dottorena nor her daughter, nor their three companions, had any other witchcraft about them than what is conferred by superior personal charms, combined with superior intellect. He speedily grew ashamed of his absurd suspicions, and in their place conceived sentiments of grateful esteem for the amiable group who had given him so kind, so generous a reception. As to Love, who seemed the divinity of this temple, he had now no further power over Ulric, who comparing the glowing beauties of



the young ladies surrounding him with those of the irresistible Lucretia, his heart still unhesitatingly gave the palm to her.

After a night's repose, which was most welcome to him, he would early next morning have taken his leave of the ladies and continued his journey, but the Signora pressed him to stay with such winning grace, and the Signorina Ughella begged him, with so enchanting a glance, not to refuse her mother's invitation, that he could not but comply.

The time passed on very pleasantly, amidst a variety of amusements, in all of which the practised courtier had full opportunities of displaying his accomplishments. Sometimes the ladies entertained him with a concert, wherein they exhibited their thorough knowledge of music, and charmed the ears of the German *dilettante* with sweet strains from Italy. Occasionally, between whiles, one of the fair ones would honour the Count with her hand in a *pas de deux*, and as he was pre-eminently noted in his own circle for his proficiency in dancing, he had thus peculiar opportunities for showing himself off to the best advantage. His company appeared to be as agreeable to the ladies as theirs was to him, and the conversation daily assumed a more friendly and intimate tone.

One morning, after breakfast, as the Signora was walking with her guest in the garden, she led him

into an arbour. From the day of his arrival she had observed in the stranger a vein of melancholy, which the charms of her little Tempe had failed to remove. The Signora, though wise and learned, was still a woman, and all her wisdom and learning had not raised her above the ordinary weakness of the sex, curiosity; and although, according to the testimony of her herb woman, all the spirits of air were subject to her commands, they had, it should seem, given her no information relative to her guest. She neither knew who he was, whence he came, nor whither he was going, and having a vast inclination to be enlightened on these various points, she availed herself of this *tête-à-tête*, to turn the conversation in that direction; and the Count no sooner saw what she aimed at, than he proceeded fully to relate the story of his life, detailing the rise, progress, and result of his passion for Lucretia, and, in short, opened his whole heart to his new friend.

Highly gratified by this confidence, the lady in return gave him a full, true, and particular account of her own history, whence he learned that sprung from a noble family in Padua, but early left an orphan, her guardians had compelled her to marry a very old, but very rich physician, who, though deemed a profound master of all the secrets of nature, died shortly after from the effects of a drug he had taken, for the purpose of restoring him



to youth, herein less successful than Count Cogliostro, who, as they say, by some mysterious process, contrived to retain a vigorous life for three hundred years. On the old doctor's death, his widow inherited his large fortune and valuable manuscripts. Feeling no disposition to a second marriage, she had amused herself in her widowhood with the study of her late husband's writings, and had by this means acquired not only a rare acquaintance with the more hidden secrets of nature, but also such a knowledge of physic, and thereby, after awhile, so high a reputation, that the University of Padua had conferred upon her a doctor's degree, and appointed her to a public professorship of medicine. But the occult sciences had ever been her favourite study, which, coming to the knowledge of the ignorant vulgar, great and small, had obtained for her the reputation of something like sorcery.

She spent each summer with her daughter and a few friends, in this pleasant villa, in the Tyrol, which she had purchased for the sake of having ready access to a variety of plants and herbs peculiar to the Alps. The winter she passed at Padua, engaged in her public duties. Her house there was closed against all male visitors, her lecture-room excepted, which of course was open to the disciples of Hippocrates. In the country, however, every agreeable and well-conducted guest was welcome.

The Signora having concluded her own narrative, reverted to the Count's unfortunate attachment, and seemed to take a deep interest in his fate. What excited her utter wonder was the constancy with which he persisted in adoring so ungrateful a woman. "Noble sir," said she, "it is not easy to devise a remedy for your ills, since you would endure the pangs of despised love rather than enjoy the sweets of revenge. Could you but resolve to hate the perfidious creature, it were easy for me to provide you with the means of holding her up to ridicule and scorn, and repaying her doubly all the evil she has inflicted upon you. I can prepare a powder, which, diluted in water, would have the property of producing in the heart of whoever takes it, an irresistible passion for the person from whose hands it has been received. Let the coquette who trifles with your feelings but moisten her lips with this beverage, and she will in a moment be overcome with a resistless love for you. Then repulsing her with all the scorn she has cast upon you, mocking with her own bitterness of insult her sighs and tears, you would be amply avenged in the eyes of the whole Court; but woe be to you if, yielding to her fascinations, you should weakly consent to unite your fate with hers; instead of a loving wife you would find a fury, who would pierce your heart with a thousand stabs, more venomous, more fatal, than those of adders; for as



soon as the effect of the powder has subsided, there remains in the heart only an invincible rancour against the object so lately beloved."

Ulric, after a moment's reflection, replied: "Revenge is sweet, but sweeter still the love which attaches me to the unkind Lucretia. Deeply as I feel the wrongs she has done me, I cannot hate her. I will fly far from her, forgiving her the misery she has occasioned me, and bearing her image in my heart till I die."

"Every country has its different notions," said the Signora; "an Italian would never forgive such indignity as that you have endured. However, as you take this more generous course, and I am very far from reproaching you for doing so, why not retrace your steps, and once more throw yourself at the feet of your mistress; obdurate as she seems, she may relent. You may, peradventure, find this better than the perilous and unprofitable journey you contemplate."

The Count liked this advice, though he felt ashamed so suddenly to abandon the resolution he had adopted, and ere he could collect his thoughts for a reply, the Signora had quitted him with a smile of peculiar meaning.

A few mornings after, Ulric, while walking with his hostess and her fair friends, announced his intention to take his leave of them the next day, and this time she made no objection to his going. In the

evening, when they were all assembled in the saloon, the ladies were in higher spirits even than usual, not excepting the Signora herself, who rarely laid aside her gravity, though always cheerful. On this occasion, however, she went so far as to express a wish to dance a *saraband* with her visitor. The Count exerted himself to maintain his reputation of a first-rate dancer; and so pleased his partner, that when the step was over she requested him to repeat it, and so once again, until he was in a complete bath of perspiration. The Signora then, for the sake, as she said, of its greater coolness, hastily led him into an adjoining apartment.

The moment they had entered it, she closed the door, and taking off, without a word said, the Count's doublet, and throwing back his collar, applied her agile hand to the highest shoulder, which she rubbed and pulled about vigorously, as though she were twisting a piece off. This operation occupied but a few seconds, and the lady having then opened a drawer and thrown something into it, led Ulric to a mirror: "Behold, Count," said she, "the condition on which Lucretia promised you her heart and hand, is fulfilled; I have rectified the trifling defect which derogated in some degree from the elegance of your figure. Resume your courage, banish all melancholy, and fly to Goslar; the capricious Lucretia has no longer any pretext for refusing you."



For a long time Count Ulric stood silently viewing himself in the glass, excess of wonder and joy having deprived him of utterance. At length, he threw himself at the feet of his benefactress, seized the hand which had operated so great a change, and poured forth a torrent of words, expressive of his heartfelt gratitude. The Signora then led him back into the saloon, and Ughella and her companions clapped their hands for joy, that their amiable friend had been relieved from his only blemish.

The extreme impatience of Ulric to commence his journey did not allow him to close his eyes that night. Not Jerusalem now, but Goslar, was to him the promised land. Day at length appeared; he took an affectionate leave of the ladies immediately after breakfast, and then vaulting on his good horse, and giving it the spur, galloped off towards the haven of his hopes. His passionate desire to breathe once more the same air, to be once more beneath the same roof, to sit once more at the same table, with Lucretia, deprived him of all ordinary precaution. 'Fair and softly goes far,' says the proverb; Ulric did not go fair and softly, but furiously and senselessly, and the consequence was, that as he galloped down a steep hill, near Brixen, his horse stumbled, and the rider got a fall, which broke one of his arms. This disaster sorely afflicted him, for he feared lest Lucretia, before his return, should be-

stow her hand upon some more fortunate rival, and thus prevent the possibility of his demanding the fulfilment of her promise. As some security against this catastrophe, he wrote to his patron, the Empress, giving her an account of his fortunate adventure at the villa, of the accident which delayed his arrival, and entreating her, meantime, while preserving closely the secret of his approaching re-appearance, to prevent Lucretia from marrying any one else.

It happened that whatever her other great qualities, the Empress did not possess that of being able to keep a secret. Accordingly the Count's missive was no sooner perused, than its contents were communicated to her Ladies of the Bedchamber; and when the Lord Chamberlain, who had set up pretensions to the hand of the fair Lucretia himself, suggested a doubt of the authenticity of the document, her Majesty put the matter beyond question by showing him the original letter. The news in due course reached Count Rupert, to whom it immediately occurred that he might, perhaps, in the same way, get rid of his incumbrance, and thus, having fulfilled the condition imposed by his mistress, return ere Ulric had recovered from his accident, and forestal him in demanding the fair one's hand. Having made a calculation of the time which a judicious surgeon occupies in healing the wounds of a patient who



is likely to pay, he found that he might manage to go to the Signora's, make himself agreeable (that of course he should do at his first appearance), get her to dance a *saraband* with him and remove his hump, and be back ere Ulric's medical attendant would, in all probability, allow him to move.

No sooner said than done; he at once had his horse saddled, and travelling with the speed of a bird of passage flying to a warmer climate, soon made his way to the house of the lady he sought, for she was well known all around. In default of the herb-woman as chamberlain, he introduced himself under the *incognito* of a knight errant, and received the same friendly welcome which had been accorded to his predecessor. But his over-free manners, his arrogance, his assumption, his dogmatic tone of conversation, very soon disgusted the Signora, who, however, contented herself with keeping him at a distance by cold politeness.

Several times already there had been a concert, interspersed with dancing, in the evening; and Count Rupert, on each occasion, had hoped that the Signora would invite him to join her in a *saraband*, but she seemed to have quite lost her taste for it, and merely looked on. Vainly did the Count seek to conciliate her favour, after his fashion, by overwhelming her with gross and clumsy flatteries; she was not at all affected by them. Meantime it was his fortune,

on one or two occasions, to detect the Signorina Ughella glancing at him with her great, sparkling black eyes, with an expression, as he readily conceived, of tenderness ; and he, who fancied himself a regular lady-killer, could not resist this apparent opportunity of making a conquest. His Countship was indeed far from handsome, but he was the only male personage in the house, and Donna Ughella, who had a very tender heart, was dying of ennui. Rupert forgot for a moment the haughty Lucretia, and Ughella became the lady of his thoughts.

Mama was not slow in perceiving this incipient affair, and determined to punish as he merited the would-be violator of the laws of hospitality. One evening she proposed to the worthy Paladin to dance with him. Rupert, who had begun altogether to despair of obtaining this favour, was delighted, imagining that the time was at length arrived when he should be delivered from his hunch. He went through his best paces, and danced away until he was well nigh exhausted, the lady, meanwhile, exhibiting not the least fatigue.

The *saraband* at last concluded, the lady, beckoning her partner, walked into the cabinet, whither she had conducted Count Ulric, and Rupert joyfully followed. The door being closed, the Signora turned back the patient's collar ; then going to the chest of drawers, she opened one, and took out of



it a large substance, as big as an ostrich's egg, which she thrust into Rupert's bosom, exclaiming: "Insolent wretch! take that as a punishment for having set at naught the sacred laws of hospitality."

Having said this, she took a flask containing some strong narcotic fluid, and sprinkled its contents upon the face of the Count, who immediately sunk insensible on a sofa. On recovering his senses, he found himself surrounded by impenetrable darkness; the lights were extinguished, and there was profound silence. In a few minutes, a door opposite him opened, and there entered a lean old woman, bearing a lanthorn, by the light of which she examined his face. In her he immediately recognised the Signora's herb-woman, whom Ulric had described in his letter. Starting up, he mechanically cast his eyes over his chest, and found to his horror that the superfluous hunch which had been taken from Ulric's shoulder had been annexed to his own person, forming a counterpart to the protuberance on his back. Half frantic with rage, he seized the old woman by the throat, and yelled out: "Excrucible scarecrow! where is the vile sorceress thy mistress? Tell me, that my sword may avenge this outrage! Speak! or I strangle thee!"

"Noble sir," gasped the crone, "waste not your anger upon a poor servant, who has had nought to do with the injury that has been inflicted on you.

The Signora is no longer here; she departed with all her household the moment she had quitted the cabinet. Attempt no pursuit, for even were you to overtake her, something still worse than what has now happened would befall you. Endure with patience what cannot now be helped. There is still hope for you: the Signora has a compassionate heart, and what she has distorted she can, if she pleases, make straight again. If, after the expiration of three years, you return hither, she will, doubtless, have ceased to bear you ill-will; and if you humble yourself before her, will make your figure straighter and better than ever it was." This prospect somewhat calmed the fury of the poor o'erladen Rupert, who thanked the old woman for her consolatory suggestion. Early next morning, he mounted his horse, and took the road to his native place, intending to remain there till the expiatory period was passed, after which he hoped the Signora would relent, and make him more perfect than he was before.

Ulric, meantime, having recovered, proceeded in triumph to Goslar, confident that his august protectress had taken care to protect his interests, and keep the beautiful Lucretia unmarried. As he traversed the streets on his way to the castle, the whole town was in motion, everybody rushing to behold with his own eyes the astonishing change



which had been effected in the person of Ulric, now no longer "the Unequal:" an embassy from the King of Abyssinia would not have excited more general curiosity. The Empress received him most graciously, herself leading forward Lucretia, attired as a bride, and presented her to him, as a prize he had fairly won by fulfilling the extraordinary condition the young lady had herself imposed. His dream of bliss was somewhat disturbed, when the Empress asked him what dower he proposed to bestow upon Lucretia. A good deal confounded, he replied, that his good sword was now all the wealth he possessed, but with that he trusted he should win both riches and honour, at the expense of the Emperor's enemies. "And will you accept him upon these terms?" said the Empress, turning to Lucretia. The Count tremblingly awaited her reply; but since his return to Goslar, the sentiments of Lucretia had undergone a total change.

"Count," said she, "I must confess that I have put your attachment to very severe trials; but since nothing has been able to alienate your love from me,—since for my sake, you have been willing to attempt even that which appeared to be an impossibility, it is just that I should no longer refuse to be yours. My heart, and the trifling fortune I may one day inherit from my mother, are all it is in my power to offer you; if you still love me, your

love is all I desire in return." Such generous sentiments from Lucretia astonished the Empress and the whole Court; Ulric, moved even to tears, seized the hand of his mistress, pressed it to his heart, and exclaimed: "Receive my earnest gratitude, my immutable love; and rest assured, that ere long my good sword shall secure for you a position worthy of you."

The Empress immediately sent a request to the Bishop, that he would personally bestow the nuptial benediction on the now happy pair, and herself undertook all the preparations for the wedding, which was celebrated at Court the next morning, with the utmost magnificence. In a few days, after a long struggle between love and duty, Count Ulric, in fulfilment of his promise, proposed forthwith to join the Emperor's army; but Lucretia would not permit him to depart: "Dear Ulric," said she, "during the honey-moon, at least, you must not oppose my wishes; when that is past you must, I suppose, take your own way, as you men always do; at present, I require you to accompany me to Bamberg, on a visit to my mother, whom it becomes you, as a dutiful son-in-law, to pay your respects to."

The wedded pair next day set out for Bamberg, and great was the rejoicing in the house of Mama on the arrival of these beloved visitors. The only



thing that annoyed the Count in his new residence was that every morning the sweet sleep he was enjoying by the side of his Lucretia was broken by the shrill cackling of a hen in an adjoining apartment. He at last lost all patience with his inconvenient neighbour, and vowed to twist its neck about if ever it fell into his hands. "Nay," said his wife, "that will never do; that hen lays an egg every morning that we could ill spare." Not a little was the Count astonished to hear one formerly so profuse and prodigal, talk of an egg as the wife of a peasant might do. "I have sacrificed my whole estate to you," cried he, "and you now hesitate to sacrifice a pitiful hen to my repose! It is impossible you can have ever loved me."

The young wife patted her spouse's cheek: "Learn, naughty grumbler," said she, "that the hen which so disconcerts thee is our best friend. Every morning it lays a golden egg in my mother's chamber, where it has its meals from her own hand, and where it takes its nightly roost. For nineteen years has it daily paid us this important tribute; and hence thou may'st judge whether, in accepting thy presents heretofore, I was actuated by any mercenary consideration. I took them not on account of their intrinsic value, but as so many proofs of thy devotion, a devotion thou shalt find repaid thee. When we married, thou acceptedst me with, as it seemed,

but slight expectations; I thee with nothing but thy true heart and thy good sword. Thou may'st guess how long thou needest to remain without thy redeemed patrimony; I without a dower to increase it."

The Count could hardly believe his ears, so Madame, as soon as they were dressed, took him into her mother's room, and telling her what an incredulous person she had to deal with, requested that ocular demonstration might forthwith be given him, in the shape of a new-laid golden egg. Mama, who was up feeding her valuable friend, at once desired the Count to look for himself in the coop; and there, sure enough, lay a fine large egg, and in the egg, sure enough, when he broke it, he found a fine large golden yolk. Mama then unlocked her great chest, and begged Son-in-Law Ulric to give a look at its contents. He did so, and almost fell back in pure bewilderment when he saw it was filled well nigh to the top with golden eggs. There was wealth enough to buy half a dozen baronies; and in a short time his patrimony was redeemed and trebled in extent, by the benevolence of the kind mother-in-law, without its having been necessary for him once to put hand to sword-handle in the Emperor's service; on the contrary, he allowed lance and war harness to rust in their respective corners, and passed his days in peace at home with his



Lucretia, who proved, by her whole wedded life, that it is quite possible for a very skittish mistress to make a very excellent wife.

As to poor Count Rupert, when he went back at the end of three years to the Signora, he had the door shut in his face. After the expiration of three other years, however, at the intercession of Count Ulric and his lady, between whom and the amiable circle at Raveredo there had arisen a most delightful intercourse, not only the additional protuberance, but the original superfluity, were removed; and Count Rupert, whom misfortune had rendered a wiser and a better man, became a frequent and a favourite visitor at the mansion of the fortunate owner of the Hen with the Golden Eggs.

End of the Hen with the Golden Eggs.





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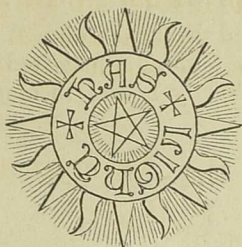
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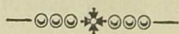
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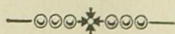
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