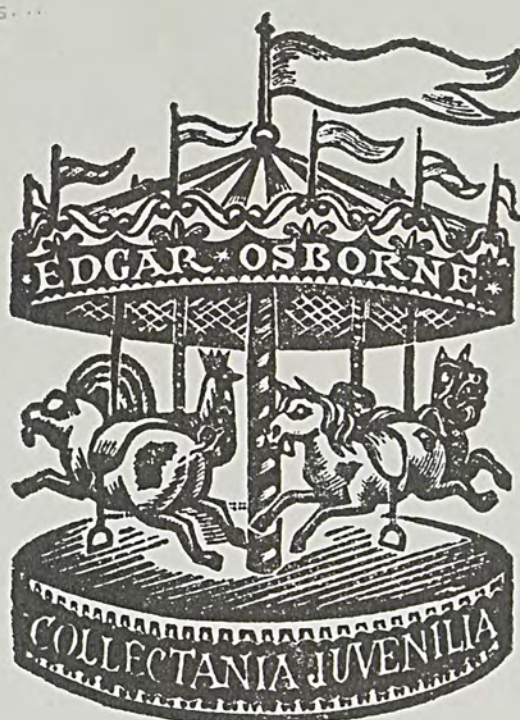
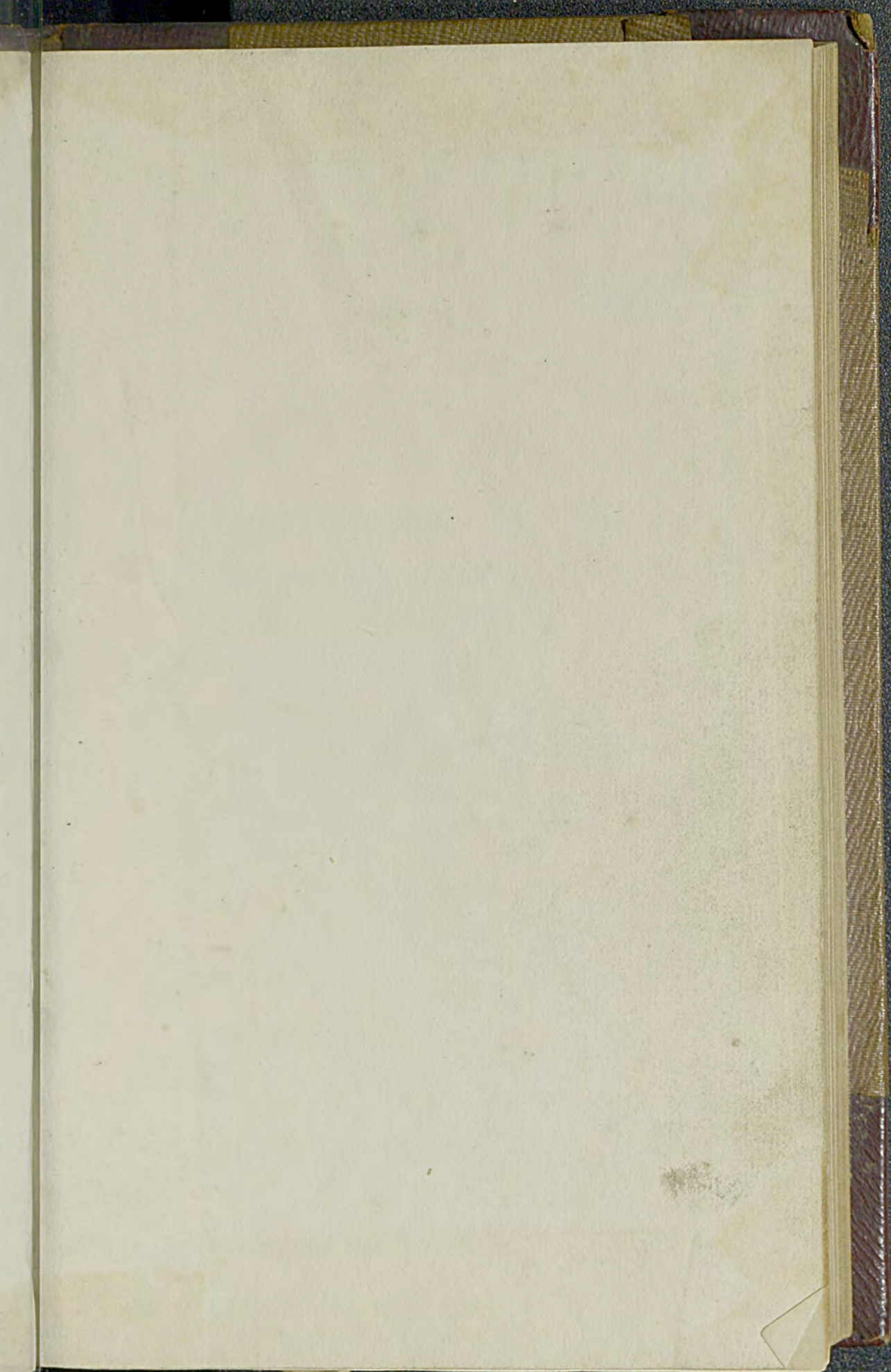
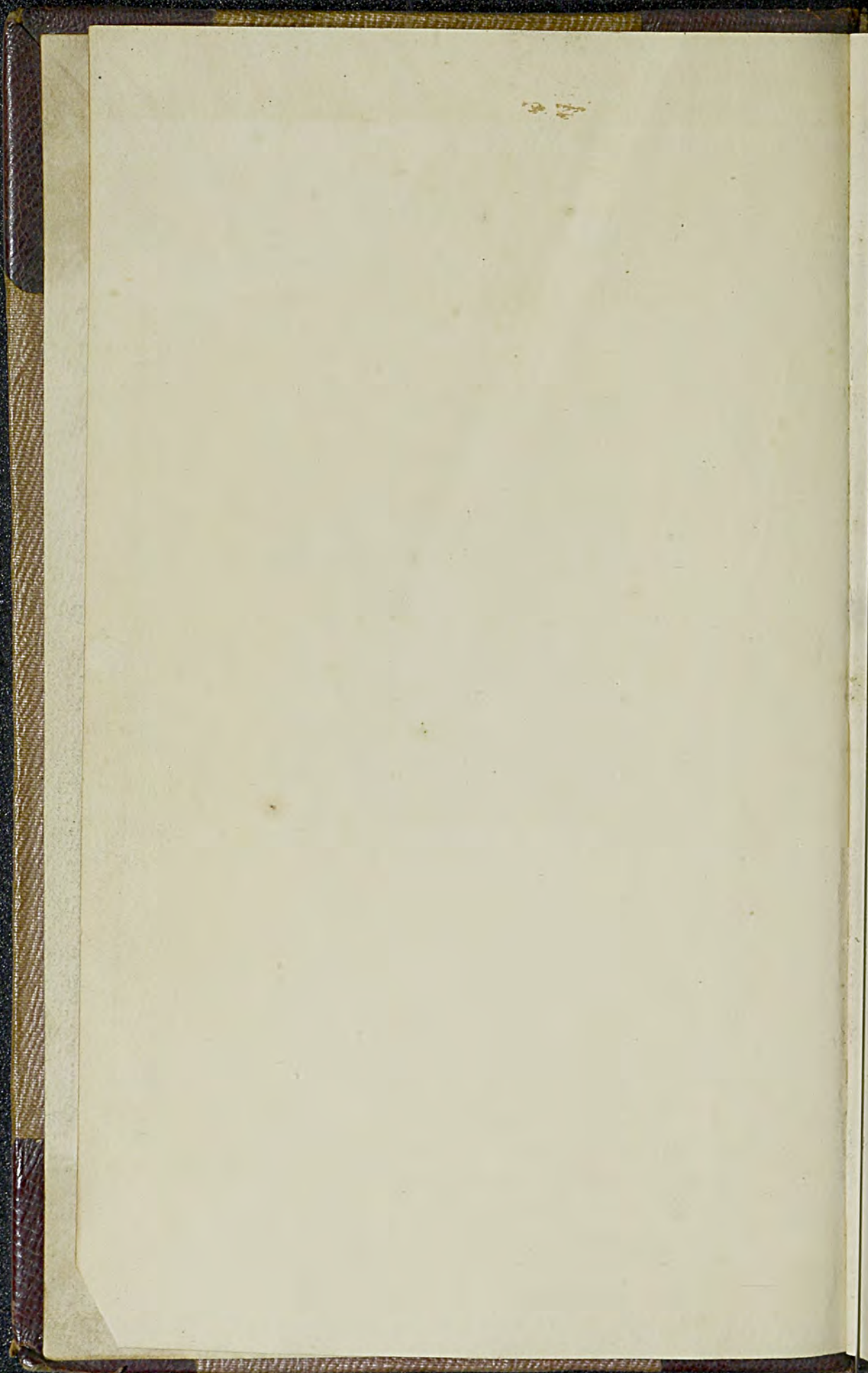


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DESIGNED CHIEFLY FOR THE YOUNG,

BY

CHRISTOPHER VON SCHMID,

CANON OF AUGSBURG,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. II.

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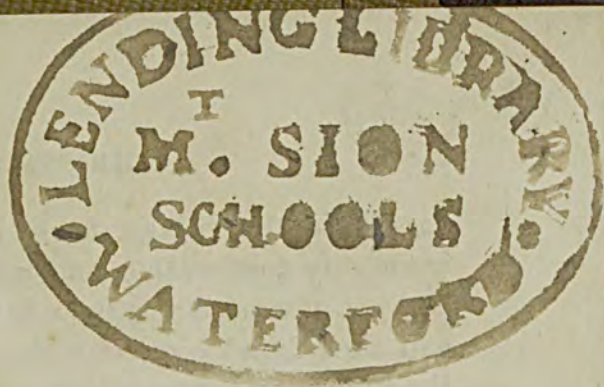
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## CHRISTMAS EVE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CHRISTMAS HYMN.

TOWARDS evening, on the sacred vigil of Christmas, poor little Anthony, an interesting boy, about eight years of age, was plodding his way through a country deeply covered with snow. The poor little fellow's yellow locks, which were reeking wet with the frosty vapour, had no covering but the thin black straw hat, which he had worn since the last summer; and his cheeks were mottled with purple streaks by the frost. He was drest in a kind of military fashion, and wore a pretty little hussar-jacket. In his right hand he carried a stout blackthorn stick, and on his back a little bundle, which contained his entire worldly property. Still, he was merry and light hearted, and heartily enjoyed the beautiful white winter landscape and the hedges and bushes decked with hoar-frost, which skirted the road. The sun went down with a deep red glare. The blades of grass and the branches of the trees, all covered with frost, glittered, as if laden with diamonds, and the pine-tops in the neighbouring wood were lighted up by the golden hues of evening.

Anthony thought he should be able, without any difficulty, to reach the next village, which lay at the opposite side of the wood, and plunged boldly into its dense and gloomy shade. He hoped to spend his Christmas

happily in the village, for he had heard that the villagers were very comfortable and kind-hearted people. But he had not advanced a mile, when he missed the direct road, and thus found himself wandering in the wildest part of the rugged and mountainous forest. He plunged onwards through the deep snow; sometimes almost buried in the holes and pits, which were concealed beneath it. To complete his distress, too, the night closed, and a piercing wind arose; clouds covered the sky, and shut out the stars, which before had twinkled through the pine-tops. It became as dark as pitch, and the snow began to fall heavily once more.

The poor boy now lost all trace of the path, and could neither advance nor return. Worn out with wandering hither and thither, he was unable to proceed a step farther. He stood still, shivering with the frost, and began to cry bitterly. He laid his little bundle upon the ground; knelt down beside it; took off his hat, and raised his benumbed hands to heaven, while the tears streamed down his cheeks.

“O merciful Father in heaven!” he cried. “Oh suffer me not to perish in this wild forest, in darkness and cold! Alas! I am a poor orphan, without either father or mother! I have no friend but Thee! but Thou art the Father of the fatherless! O, suffer me not to perish in the frost—take pity on thy poor child! On this very night was thy Son born into the world—hear me for His sake; and do not suffer me, a poor helpless boy, to die in this lonely wood, upon the very night when the whole world is rejoicing for the birth of the Divine Babe!”

He laid his little head down upon his bundle, and sobbed and wept bitterly.

But, hark! on a sudden, soft music, as if of a harp, sounded from the heights on one side of the place where he lay; and an exquisitely beautiful chant was entoned, which was re-echoed by the rocks around him. The boy almost thought it was the angels of God he heard—he

stood up and listened with clasped hands. The wind had, by this time, fallen; not a breath was stirring; and the music sounded with indescribable sweetness, in the deep unbroken stillness of the forest. He could now distinctly hear these words:—

“ Who'er thou art, O child of wo!  
Look on this shivering babe, and know  
Thy Saviour and thy friend!  
On Him, in all thy sorrows rest—  
Turn to His all-embracing breast.—  
He loves thee to the end!”

It ceased; and all was still once more, save that a few soft tones of the harp still sounded like an indistinct echo. Poor Anthony was filled with wonder.

“ Ah!” said he, “this must be like what happened the shepherds at Bethlehem, when they heard the heavenly hymn on that blessed night. I will take courage, and be of good heart again. It must be that there are some good people living near this, who will give me shelter; for, I hope, they will prove like the angels, not only in voices, but in the kindness and benevolence of their disposition.”

He took up his little bundle, and climbed up the height, in the direction from which the music had sounded. Scarce had he proceeded a few steps through the bushes, when there flashed on him a brilliant gleam of light, which instantly disappeared, but soon after returned, then again disappeared for a while, then returned with greater brilliancy; and, thus, alternately appeared and withdrew. Anthony went on joyfully, and came to a solitary house, which stood by itself in the wood. He knocked twice or thrice at the door: he heard a number of cheerful voices within, but no one answered his knock. He tried if he could open the door; it was only fastened with a latch. He went in, and groped about, for a long time, through the dark passage, searching for the room door. At length he found it—opened it—and was struck motionless with astonishment. The blaze of a number of lights flashed

upon him; and he almost felt as if the garden of paradise—nay, heaven itself, lay before him!

In an angle of the room, between the two windows, stood an exquisitely beautiful landscape—a scene in Spring, the figures of which were all modelled in miniature, exactly after nature—a mountainous district, studded with moss-grown cliffs, pine covered hills, sheep grazing by their shepherds' side; and a little town upon the top of a distant hill. In the centre of this model landscape, was a grotto, within which were seen the infant Jesus, His blessed mother, the venerable Joseph, and the adoring shepherds, while exulting troops of angels hovered in the air above. The whole scene was lighted up with a wondrous brilliancy, the sky was studded with innumerable tiny little stars, and sparkled just as the leaves and moss upon the trees and rocks glitter with the dew-drops on a morning in Spring.

The members of the household were assembled round this beautiful representation of the child Jesus in the manger.\* On one side sat the father, with his harp placed between his knees, on the other the mother, with her youngest child in her arms. Two lovely children, a boy and a girl, stood between their parents, looking reverently upon their Saviour's crib, and holding up their hands as the pious shepherds were represented before the crib, in the model.

At this moment the father struck his harp again, and the mother, once more, sang, with a voice of angelic sweetness, the same hymn, one verse of which had already reached Anthony; the two children joining her with their clear little voices, and their father chiming in with his deep bass

\* It may be necessary to inform our young readers, that the simple, but extremely beautiful usage described here, is universal in all the Catholic countries of the continent—Italy, France, Belgium, the Tyrol, and, indeed, throughout the whole of Southern Germany. The *crib* forms an indispensable part of the Christmas festivity, and few houses are so poor in disposition or in purse, as not to find means to decorate it, if not richly, at least, tastefully. The description in the text is extremely accurate, and may be assumed as supplying an excellent idea, both of the usage itself, and of the religious purpose it is intended to fulfil.

tones, and accompanying them on the harp. They all sang together, the following

## HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS:

My infant God! before Thy throne,  
Whose power adoring angels own,  
    I humbly bow the knee!  
Humbly, with Mary, I adore,  
And with thy angel-choir I pour  
    This hymn of praise to Thee.

Son of the eternal God above!  
My Saviour! ah, what earthly love  
    Can with Thy love compare!  
Thy little lips are speechless now;  
Yet, who can see that infant brow—  
    Nor read this lesson there!—

“Whoe'er thou art, O child of wo!  
Look on this shivering babe, and know  
    Thy Saviour, and thy friend!  
On Him, in all thy sorrows rest—  
Turn to His all-embracing breast,  
    He loves thee to the end!

“And let His heaven-descended love,  
A guiding beacon ever prove,  
    To thine own charity—  
Spurn not the houseless from thy door,  
But shew thou mercy to the poor,  
    As Christ hath shewn to thee.”

Meanwhile Anthony was still standing in the open door, holding the latch with one hand, and his hat and stick in the other. His eyes were riveted on the beautiful little crib, and he stood listening with open mouth to the hymn and the accompaniment. No one observed him; till, at last, the mother perceiving the cold current of air which entered the room through the open door, turned round and looked towards it.

“My God!” cried she, “how has this child come hither through the forest this dark night? My poor boy, you must have lost your way?”

“Ah, yes,” said Anthony; “I have lost my way in the forest!”

They all now turned to the door. The two children felt great pity for the poor wanderer, but they stood still, with a shy look, ashamed of him, as being a stranger. The mother, with her infant in her arms, went up to him.

“Where are you from, my dear little fellow?” said she, in a kind tone. “What is your name, and who are your parents?”

“Alas!” said Anthony, while the tears rushed to his blue eyes, “I have no longer a home—my name is Anthony Kroner. My father was killed in the war, and my mother died last Autumn of sorrow and distress. I am a perfect stranger in this country, and am wandering about the world like a stray lamb.” And he began to tell them of the mishap which had just befallen him in the forest, and how he had heard their hymn, and found his way to their house. He attempted to proceed, but his voice failed him from the excessive cold, the effects of which he began to feel more, now that he was in the warm room. He trembled from head to foot, and his teeth chattered with the cold.

“Poor Anthony,” said the good dame, “you can hardly speak with the cold, and you must be worn out with hunger and fatigue besides. Lay aside your bundle, and sit down—I will get you some warm soup, and whatever supper still remains.”

The two children, Christian and Catherine, by this time overcoming their bashfulness, approached, and compassionately relieved him of his hat, his stick, and his bundle. Catherine laid his bundle on the bench, and Christian hung up his hat, and placed his stick in a corner; and they then conducted their little guest to the table. Their mother, meanwhile, brought him the soup, and a large slice of a cake, and some plum-pudding. They sat down at the opposite side of the table, and smiled, good naturedly, to see Anthony relish his meal so well. The children generously gave him a plentiful share of their Christmas-boxes—rosy-cheeked apples, yellow pears, and huge brown nuts; and even little Lizzie, who was still in her mother’s

arms, offered him her own rosy apple, which she could hardly hold in her tiny little fingers.

The warm soup was of great service to Anthony, and the genial warmth of the room soon restored him. He recovered his gayety and good-humour.

“But what pretty thing is that you have in the corner?” said he, pointing to the crib, which he had been eyeing, during his entire meal. “Why it is Spring, in the midst of Winter! I never saw anything so beautiful in all my life. I must take a nearer view of it.”

He jumped up, and the two children followed him. “But do you know what it all represents?” asked Catherine.

“Oh! that I do,” replied Anthony; “It is our Lord’s Nativity. And, oh! what a charming little child He is! His face is such a beautiful white and red—a mixture of the lily and the rose—and what bright little eyes He has; and what a sweet little smile!”

“But sure that is not the real infant Jesus!” said Catherine. “You know He ascended long ago into heaven!”

“To be sure! I know very well He did,” said Anthony. “Do you think I am a heathen? It is nearly two thousand years since He was an infant lying in the manger; and I know very well, that all this is only made, in order that we may be able to represent it better to our imagination. I suppose that is Bethlehem, yonder on the hill?”

Catherine nodded. “You see now,” said Anthony, “I know it all! I am not so stupid as you thought!”

The children laughed; and went on pointing out to Anthony, every little thing about it, though, indeed, to them every single thing seemed of the last importance.

“Only look here, Anthony,” said Catherine, “at this beautiful white sheep, with the curly wool, and the two dear little lambs round about her! And, see, here is the rest of the flock grazing, and there is the shepherd playing on his pipe. He sleeps, at night, in that nice little red house there, with the wheels.”

“And do you see, also,” asked Christian, “how the little

fountain gushes out of the rock there, just like a silver thread, and falls into the crystal lake? And look, there are two white swans, with long arching necks, swimming about in the lake, and reflected on its calm silvery waters."

"And yonder, is a shepherdess," said Catherine, "tripping down the steep mountain path, with a covered basket on her head. She must be bringing apples or eggs to the manger."

"And look here," interposed Christian, "at the man drawing a sack up the mountain road on his sledge. I don't know what he has in the sack!"

Thus, the children amused themselves, till they did not leave a single snail upon the rocks, or a shell upon the shore of the lake, without its share of observation.

"Well, indeed," said Anthony, at last, "it is all very pretty; but the prettiest of all, is the image of the heavenly babe! This pleases me above all the rest; for it was for the sake of this child, who is here represented, that our Heavenly Father delivered me to-night, in my hour of danger."

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE STORY OF POOR ANTHONY.

THE cottager, in whose house Anthony was so hospitably received, was a forester. While the children were thus prattling together, he sat by the stove in his easy chair, apparently absorbed in thought. His wife sat beside him in a chair, with her baby in her arms.

"Why are you so silent?" she asked, at length. "What are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking of the last verse of the hymn we were singing," said the forester—

"Spurn not the houseless from thy door,  
But shew thou mercy to the poor,  
As Christ hath shewn to thee!"



“You have done what this prescribes, it is true, in giving the poor boy food and shelter : but I am thinking we might do more for him. This, you know, is the Holy Night. We are just celebrating the memory of that blessed night, when the Divine Infant was born for our salvation, and that of the whole human race. And it appears to me, as if God had sent this child to us, in order that we might be the means of saving him likewise.—Our Redeemer came into the world a stranger, ‘not having whereon to lay His head,’ as though He desired to put the hospitality of mankind to the trial. The people of Bethlehem were found wanting in this trial, and thrust Him out among the beasts of the stall. And shall we deal so with this poor child? What do you say, Elizabeth? Speak frankly—what shall we do?”

“Oh! let us take the boy,” said his wife, in a cheerful and joyous tone. “‘Whatsoever ye shall do to one of these little ones,’ said He, who was born to-night, ‘ye shall do unto Me.’ And poor Anthony appears to be a good, gentle, noble-hearted boy. He appears so pious and innocent; and, though he is begging, is so free from boldness and forwardness. He is, undoubtedly, the child of honest parents, for his accent is very correct; and though his red jacket is the worse for the wear, yet it is of very fine texture. What will support five persons, then, will support six. We will take the boy into our family.”

“You are a kind, good woman,” said the forester, pressing his wife’s hand. “God will requite you, and will repay to our own children the kindness which you render to this poor strange boy. But we must first try whether he is deserving of our kindness.”

“Come here, Anthony,” cried he aloud.

Anthony came, and stood before him, firm and erect, like a soldier in presence of his officer.

“So your father was a soldier, and died for his country!” began the forester. “Well, that is melancholy for you; but, still it was an honourable and glorious death for

himself. But tell us more about your parents. Where were you living before the war? How was your father killed? and how did your mother die? How did you come into our forest? Let us hear it all?"

"My father—heaven rest his soul!"—said Anthony, "was a sergeant of hussars. Our regiment was lying in garrison, as long as I remember, at Glatz, in Silesia. I recollect that my mother was always busy at her needle, and used to earn a great deal, for she was very skilful and clever. But, most unexpectedly, my father, one day, came hastily into the house, and cried, 'War is proclaimed—we must march to-morrow!' He was a brave man, and had received the intelligence with cheerfulness; but my poor mother was dreadfully alarmed, and wept bitterly. However, she would not suffer him to go alone—the parting would have been too much for her; and at her earnest entreaty, he at length consented to take us with him. We had marched a long, long way—when, on a sudden, a cry arose 'The enemy is upon us!' My father, and the hussars were ordered to advance. My mother and I remained in the rear; and we were sorely frightened when we heard the firing in the distance. 'Ah!' said my mother to me, 'every shot is a dagger to my heart; for, how do I know whether the ball has not pierced your father's breast?' We wept and prayed as long as the firing continued, but, fortunately, my father came back safe and unhurt. And so it happened several times. But one day, after a battle, a hussar galloped into the village, with my father's horse riderless, and told us that he had been severely wounded, and lay on the point of death upon the field of battle, about a mile from the village.—My mother and I hurried to him immediately. He was lying under a tree—an old soldier knelt beside him, and held him tenderly in his arms, so that his head rested on his gallant comrade's breast. Two other soldiers stood by. My poor father had been shot through the breast, and was as pale as a corpse. We saw that he wished to say something to us; but he was no

longer able to speak. He was only able to turn his dying eyes mournfully upon me, then upon my mother, and lastly to heaven; when, in a few moments, he expired. We almost wept ourselves blind. The body was interred in the nearest church-yard, whither it was followed by a few officers, and a number of soldiers. The trumpets sounded so strange and melancholy on my ears, that I fancy I hear them still. They shewed him the last mark of honour, and fired a salute over his grave. My mother and I were as much terrified by this mark of respect, as if they had fired at ourselves. The soldiers were drying their eyes as we returned from the grave, while my mother and myself almost melted away with weeping.

“My mother was now anxious to return to her own home. ‘It is true,’ said she, ‘I have not a relative alive; but I have still one good friend remaining—she will take us into her house; and I hope there to be able to support both you and myself, by my needle.’ However, we had hardly been a few days upon the road, when my poor mother fell sick. With great difficulty we reached a little hamlet, but no one would take us in; till at last we found shelter in a barn. ‘This is a hard trial,’ said my mother, ‘but the Mother of God, herself, did not fare any better; she, too, was rejected from every door, and driven at last to pass the night in a stable!’ She grew hourly worse. She sent for a clergyman, and prepared herself for death. When night came on, the wife of the farmer, to whom the barn belonged, came to us with a little soup in an earthen bowl, and said to my mother, ‘You are very ill, indeed; I must do something more for you!’ She went away, brought an old stable-lantern, with a small oil-lamp burning in it, hung it up on a beam, and went away. She did nothing more, but bade us good night, and took no further trouble about us. I was thus left all alone with my mother; and sitting down by her side, on a bundle of straw, I wept bitterly. About midnight, she became, as far as the dim light of the lantern allowed me to judge, paler and paler,

and sighed deeply several times. I redoubled my tears. She reached me her hand."

"Do not cry, dear Anthony," said she. "Persevere in piety and virtue—pray fervently—keep God always before your eyes, and avoid all evil, and God will raise up a new father and mother to you."

"So, indeed, she promised me," he continued, "but, alas!" he added, and the tears trickled down his rosy cheeks—"alas! never shall I find so good a mother more!"

"She then looked long and earnestly to heaven," he resumed, "praying in silence; and at length, blessing me with her dying hand, she expired. I could do nothing but weep. The farmer and his wife had promised my mother, to take me into their house, and bring me up as their own child. And in fact they did take possession of the few effects which she left behind, her clothes and a little money; but, before three weeks had elapsed, they turned me out, and told me, I had already consumed three times the value of the effects my mother had left behind her. I went away, and resolved to go back to Glatz, to my old school-fellows, but the peasants could not tell me the way to Silesia; and thus I am wandering up and down the country, and am forced to beg my bread, for what else can I do?"

The good dame was deeply affected.

"Oh, my dear children," said she, with tears in her eyes, "this might be your fate also. You, too, might lose your father and mother; and what could you then do? Pray daily, therefore, to God to spare your parents to you!"

"My dear Anthony," said the forester, "your parents, as far as I see, were very honest people. But have you no written papers to produce?"

"Oh, yes!" he replied, taking out a pocket-book, "my mother gave me these papers, on her death-bed. She bade me take great care of them and not let them out of my hands. But I may let you look at them." They were

the certificates of his parents' marriage, his own baptism, and his father's burial. The last named paper was drawn up by the regimental chaplain, but the colonel had added, with his own hand, a very honourable testimony to the brave and gallant deportment of the deceased sergeant, and to the blameless life of his desolate widow.

"Very well!" said the forester; "this is all excellent. Now tell me, Anthony, how do you like to be with us here?"

"Very much," said Anthony, gratefully; "so much that I feel quite at home in the house."

"Would you like then to stay with us?" asked the forester.

"More than anything in the world!" replied the boy. "Your wife is a kind good dame like my own mother; and you yourself are a brave man, and your moustache is just like the one my father used to wear!"

The forester smiled and stroked his beard, "Well, then, my boy," said he, "remain with us. I will be your father, and my wife will be as a mother to you. But you must be a good son to us, and must love your new brother and sisters, and never do anything to fret them. Do you hear?—you are henceforth my son Anthony!"

The boy remained fixed in amazement, staring at the forester to try whether he were in earnest. He was so used to the harsh reception which he most commonly met among strangers, that he would hardly believe that the forester really meant to adopt him as his child.

"Why, what is this, Anthony?" said the forester, offering him his hand, "Will you not consent?"

The poor boy burst into tears, stretched out his hand to the forester, kissed that of his wife affectionately, and saluted as his brother and sister the two children and even the little infant in the good dame's arms, though she did not know what the whole affair meant. Christian and Catherine were delighted that Anthony was to remain. "We shall be very happy now," said Christian; "we

shall henceforth be three, whenever we wish to make a game!"

"You see, boy," continued the forester in a solemn tone, "you see how God watches over you. The blessing of your good parents rests upon you. God has heard your dying mother's prayer, and your own prayer too, when you knelt down in the snow shivering with cold. He directed your steps hither; he led you to our cottage. If you had not heard our hymn, you would have fallen asleep on your bundle and have been frozen to death; and I should have found you dead in the forest. God ordained your deliverance, too, just at the proper moment. On this holy night, when our hearts were touched by the recollection of the love of our Heavenly Father, who gave His only son for our sake, He guided your steps to our secluded cottage which, of yourself, you could scarcely have discovered, even by day. It is to God, and to his beloved Son, who on this very night nearly two thousand years ago, was born for your sake, and who died for love of you, that you are indebted for a roof to cover you once more. Acknowledge it, therefore, with gratitude; never forget it for your whole life long; and always cherish the liveliest gratitude towards your Lord and Saviour. Ever keep God before your eyes throughout life, and live as a sincere Christian!"

Anthony promised, with tears in his eyes, that he would always do so.

"O Merciful God!" cried he, raising his eyes to heaven; "Faithfully hast Thou verified my mother's dying words, and given me a new father and mother in the place of those whom I had lost. I, too, will fulfil her last words to myself; I will ever keep Thy holy commandments, and especially I will religiously fulfil the fourth commandment towards my new parents!"

"You are a good boy, Anthony!" cried the forester, "Do this, and you shall always be happy!"

The dame then showed the boy a little apartment with

a neat clean bed, and they all retired to rest, happy and contented.

Next morning the children, as soon as they arose, assembled round the crib of the child Jesus, and on this holy day of Christmas, and throughout the succeeding festivals, it was their only enjoyment. But this innocent Christmas pastime was near being rudely interrupted. A young gentleman, named Schilf, a great sportsman, and a frequent visitor of the forester, came one day into the room; and when he saw the childrens' little crib, turned it into the greatest ridicule, and declared he did not know what use it could serve.

"What use!" said the forester. "Pray look out of the window, young sir, if you please! You see the ground is covered deeply with snow; the branches groan under its weight. Not a flower is to be seen, but the icy flowers on the frosted panes of the window. There is not a single apple or pear—not even a green leaf on the fruit-trees around my house; the branches and twigs are all white and covered with hoar-frost, and long icicles hang from the eave. The poor children here are locked up like captives in the house and cannot stir a step beyond the threshold. What great harm is it, then, if in this harsh winter weather, their parents try to make a sort of spring for them within doors? And, indeed, this miniature spring landscape, with its green woods, flowery meadows, sheep grazing by the side of the shepherd, is almost the only amusement which the children have. But in truth this is its least value. Its principal object is this:—We Christians rejoice, at this holy Christmas time, in memory of Christ's appearing among us in human form, to manifest God's love for man; and it is most desirable that our children, according to their capacity, should take a part in this universal rejoicing. Now, I know, not only that the greatest painters have selected this holy subject for their paintings, but that the paintings they produced have been for centuries the admiration of the world; and

I myself, when I was on my travels, often admired the celebrated picture of Jesus in the Manger, at Dresden, which is known under the name of *The Holy Night*.\* Now the objections which you make against my (I admit, very imperfect) representation of the crib of Jesus, will all hold just as well (if we abstract from the value of the picture as a work of art) against this noble piece; and therefore are not worth the trouble of refutation. Besides, such costly pictures are only fit for great lords, and would be thrown away upon children: and I would venture to bet that my children would not exchange their own little crib even for the famous Dresden picture! Leave us, simple woodmen, then, my dear Mr. Schilf, to follow the old customs of our fathers. I remember that in my own boyish days, the crib was my favourite childish toy, and it was not without its blessing to me. And I trust it will bring both amusement and blessing to my children also!"

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FORESTER'S FAMILY.

THE forester, who had adopted this poor orphan, was an upright honest man, and, as he himself expressed it, "one of the genuine old school." He was very pious, charitable, and kind-hearted, indefatigable in the service of his prince, and immovable in his attachment to his person. He followed, literally, and without deviation, all the usages of his grand-father, whom he well remembered, and of his own parents, who had, themselves, observed these same old customs, without the slightest change.

\* The allusion is evidently to Correggio's famous picture, known under the name of *La Notte*. It is in the Royal Picture-gallery, and is the most remarkable among all the pieces of this great master, which form the chief attraction of the Dresden gallery.



His first practice in the morning, was always to say morning prayer with his wife and children ; and their day was invariably closed with public night prayer. "Why should not we," he would say, "commence and conclude our day with the thoughts of Him to whom we are indebted, not only for the day itself, but also for our food and drink, and every blessing which we enjoy? I cannot help thinking, it is an affecting sight, even for the angels themselves, when a father and mother kneel down in God's presence, in the midst of their children, not excepting even the youngest, and raise their hands to heaven in prayer and thanksgiving! Our heavenly Father cannot but look down with a blessing upon such a scene!"

In the same pious and reverent spirit he always repeated grace before and after meals. One day he brought young Mr. Schilf home with him, and as the soup was just being served, he invited him to join them. The young gentleman sat down directly, without saying grace ; but the forester, who piqued himself upon his honest bluntness, said to him, in a tone of great seriousness,

"Oh, fie! my dear young gentleman, that is the way the wild boars in the forest eat their meal! They swallow the acorns, without ever looking from Whom they come!"

The young man tried to excuse himself, by saying, that he did not think grace was of such importance.

"Yes, it is," said the forester. "Whatever makes us better men, is of great importance. Piety is useful at all times ; and, on the contrary, I never knew the want of it produce good fruits, though I have often seen it produce evil ones. You must join us in our prayer, as becomes a Christian and a rational man, or you shall never hunt with me again. I shall not have anything to do with a heathen. I would not like even to eat at the same board with him! But I am sure," he added, in a gentler tone—"I am sure you have not reflected on the matter. You saw some of your fashionable young friends omit grace, and you heedlessly

imitated them, without reflection; and, perhaps, even thought you recommended yourself, by doing so. But, my dear sir, though your name is *Reed*,\* you must take care not to prove *a reed* in reality; always hollow and pithless, and driven about by every blast that blows."

The young man stood up again, and was content to join in their prayer. But it is to be feared, it was less from piety, than from love of sport.

The forester never was so happy, as in the midst of his family. "Why should I leave home to look for pleasure," he would fondly say, "when I can have it better and cheaper there than any where else?" And hence, when his day's labour was over, he always quietly drank his jug of ale in his own house, and, on Sundays, his glass of wine: and spent his time in affectionate converse with his wife, or in telling amusing and instructive stories to his children. When he was in more than ordinary spirits, he would take his harp. "During the long winter evenings," he used to say, "it serves us, in this wild wood of ours, in place of the concert or the opera." In his youth he had learned to play the bugle, also; but, being prohibited this instrument by the physician, he devoted his musical tastes, which were very great, exclusively to the harp; his wife had a large store of beautiful songs, and he used to accompany her with his harp; and even the children had learned some little melodies, suitable to their years, and sang them in concert together, like the wild finches in the wood.

The children went to school in Eschenthal, a village in the neighbouring parish; and as soon as the Christmas holidays were over, and the paths through the forest were once more passable, Christian and Catherine began again to go there every day. Anthony was overjoyed to accompany them, and soon surpassed all his school-fellows. His talents and industry were extraordinary. In the evening,

\* A pun upon the name *Schilf*, which in the original signifies *a reed*.

when the forester came home from hunting, and sat down in his easy chair beside the stove, the children were always called on to tell him what they had learned at school that day, and to shew him their copy-books. Anthony was always able to make the best report of his progress; his copies were always the best written, and he soon became extremely expert in reading. The children were all required, by turns, to read after supper, but every one in the house listened to Anthony with more pleasure than any of the rest.

“He reads most naturally,” said the forester’s wife. “If you did not see that he had a book before him, you would be sure that he was not reading the story at all, but had heard it, and was telling it out of his own head.”

The happiest day in the week with the children, was Sunday. On this day, the forester never went to hunt, and they could spend it entirely in his company. “The six days of the week,” he said, “I devote, without intermission, to the service of my royal master, but Sunday is consecrated to the service of a higher Lord; and indeed, I and my wood-cutters, may well be spared a day of rest, after our six hard days of labour.”

On Sunday the forester and his wife repaired, in the early morning, with the children to the church at Eschen-thal; and this was for the children, especially in the spring and summer, a delightful enjoyment. The path led partly over wooded hills, partly through narrow grassy valleys, shut in by bushy cliffs and lofty trees.

“Oh! how beautiful it is here in the forest!” would Anthony exclaim. “How gloriously the trees gleam in the beams of the morning sun! Do you know, it appears to me, that the forest is more beautiful on Sunday than on any other day. It seems as if the trees all wore a brighter green—the little birds sing far more gaily in the bushes—and then, every thing else is still—not a stroke of the woodman’s axe—not a sound of the waggoner’s wheel—not a shot from the hunter’s rifle—not a sound, but the church

bell in the distance—all is as still and peaceful, as in the church itself!”

“As solemn as in a temple!” the forester replied. “And the forest is the Lord’s own temple. It was He, the omnipotent, who planted these trees around, like pillars, and curved their branches into a verdant arch. Everything, from the mighty moss-grown oak, to the smallest may-flower at our feet, proclaims to us His power and His goodness. Nay, the whole earth, as far as the wide arch of heaven extends, is a temple of His majesty; and we should worship Him, especially on Sundays, in this his temple, and study devoutly these his glorious works. For in this majestic temple, raised by His own hand, we learn His immense incomprehensible greatness and majesty; but in our churches, built though they are by human hands, we learn more intimately His designs and his holy will, and it was for this end the Son of God became man, taught us his law, and instituted an order of teachers to succeed Him. On this day is His religion proclaimed in a hundred thousand temples and churches throughout Christendom, and heard by many millions of men. Do you, therefore, my children, attend piously to-day in church, to every word of the preacher, and impress it upon your hearts.”

With such discourses as these did he entertain them on their way to the church, and on their return he spoke with them about the sermon, and they vied with each other in accounting to him for what they had heard.

At their Sunday dinner the forester was always specially cheerful.

“During the week,” he would say, “I but seldom enjoy the pleasure of dining with you; for I generally make my own hasty meal in the forest, always, thank God, with an excellent appetite. But on Sundays I enjoy it far more than at any other time, not because your mother prepares a better dinner on that day, but because I enjoy the pleasure of sharing it with you all.”

He used to help the children with a most cordial good

will. "Eat children! eat!" he would say, "and thank God for his gifts."

After dinner, he usually took them out to the forest, taught them the names of the different trees, shrubs, and herbs, and expatiated on their manifold beauties and utility. "So beautifully," would he never fail to observe, "has God formed and adopted to the uses of man every thing—even the smallest herb. The forest itself is a book, on every leaf of which you can read the goodness and wisdom of God!"

On the fine evenings of spring and summer, the good dame would prepare their meal under the large lime-tree near the cottage, bringing a table and benches there for the purpose. After supper, they always sang a few pretty affecting evening songs, the forester accompanying them on his harp, and the birds chiming in from every tree, in concert with the melody.

In this delightful circle, the abode of true piety, union, affection, industry, order, and contentment, Anthony was perfectly happy. "God has been very kind, indeed, to me," he would say. "In the whole world He could not have brought me to the society of better people!" To his foster-parents the affectionate boy was all gratitude and dutifulness. As soon as the forester returned from his rounds in the evenings, Anthony would run and bring him his old gray surtout with green facings, (which he used as a dressing-gown) and his slippers; and when the dame was in the kitchen, engaged in her cookery, he would fetch wood to her unasked; or, to spare her a few steps, he would run to the garden for chives or parsley, or whatever other herbs she might require. Many a time he would anticipate her very wishes.

But it was especially to his kind foster-father he shewed this grateful attention. The old man was making new coloured plans of all the forest ranges under his care. The name of the forest was written in large letters on the corner of each leaf, and there was also a wreath of such

leaves as each forest contained. In a short time, Anthony was able to finish large pieces in excellent style, and to decorate them with devices of his own invention, which, both in design and execution, astonished the forester. At one time he would draw an oak, against which was hung a shield, bearing the name of the wood, and near it there was a wild boar crunching the acorns. At another time the name of the forest was engraved on a rock, beneath which a stag was lying—while the top of the rock was crowned with a dark grove of firs.

In short, Anthony gave all his leisure hours to painting or sketching landscapes, animals, birds, flowers, or trees. He was never idle. Every piece of waste paper he met with was turned to account for his favorite pursuit. The forester and his wife loved this good child as well as if he had been their own, and they were pleased to find their own children improved by his example, and becoming each day more dutiful and diligent than they had been before.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

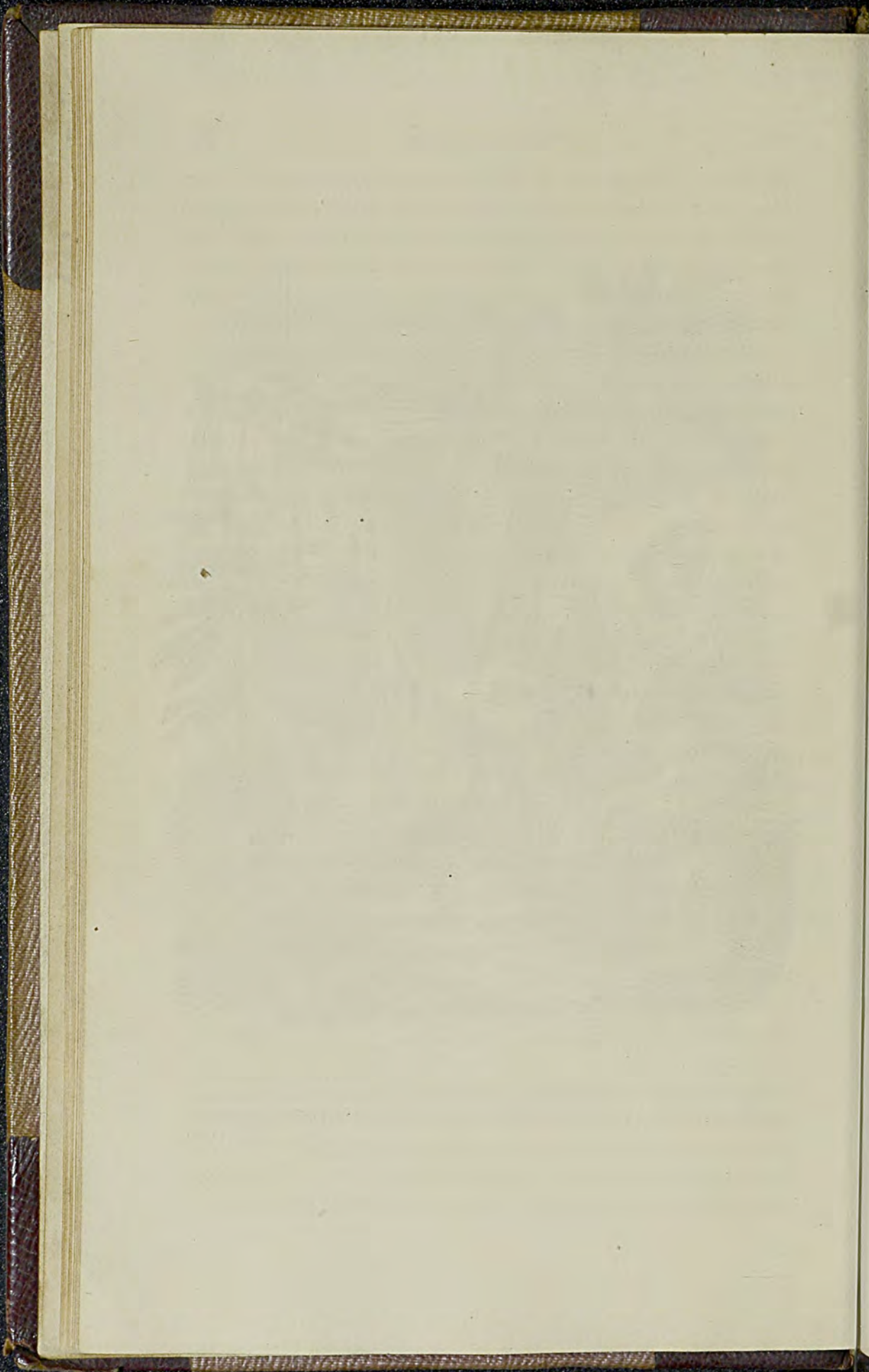
##### ANTHONY'S STORY CONTINUED.

ONE day, the forester sent Anthony with some woodcocks to the castle of Felseck, which was in the neighbourhood and belonged to the prince. The agent had a guest for whom he wished to procure some game. As Anthony was on the way, he passed by a waterfall, which, emerging from among the dark pines, rolled down the rocks in sheets of foam.

At a little distance, he saw a gentleman sketching the waterfall, and unable to resist his curiosity, he peeped over the shoulder of the stranger, and exclaimed in rapture when he saw the sketch—"Oh, how beautiful!—that is painting indeed." Then asking permission to look more



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p. 22.





closely at the sketch, "It seems," said he, "as if that paper was a looking glass, in which the waterfall, with the rocks and pine trees, were reflected in miniature. The water looks bright as silver, bounding from the rocks, and how beautifully the white foam curls over these moss-covered stones. The moss itself is so fresh and green, that it invites one to take hold of it:—how boldly these pines rear their heads towards heaven, and the stag drinking below in the stream, stands as lightly on his legs as if he were ready to bound over the plain; while the stags that I draw, all look as if they were lame—I cannot give them any life."

The painter was charmed with the candid praise of the young boy, and still more with the taste he showed for the art.

"So you are a little painter," said he.

"Ah," said Anthony, "I thought until now that I was not a little, but a great painter, but I find I am neither the one nor the other."

"But I have a great wish to see your paintings," said the gentleman, "I will go to your house and you must shew them to me. Who are your parents? Where do they live?"

"Alas," said Anthony, "I am a poor orphan, but Mr. Grünenwald, the forester, has adopted me as his child."

"You are his nephew perhaps," said the painter.

"No," replied Anthony, "I came as a stranger to his house; he and his wife received me at once, and treated me like their own child."

"That was exceedingly kind," said the painter, "but tell me all about it."

Anthony at once complied, and told his whole history, which the painter heard with great interest. "This forester and his wife," said he at the close, "must be excellent people. Give them my compliments, and tell them that I will see them to-morrow, and thank them in the name of humanity for the kindness they have shewn to you."

The painter, whose name was Rudinger, had been employed for some time at the prince's palace, restoring some pictures, and availed himself of the opportunity to sketch some of the surrounding scenery. The following day, he paid a visit to the forester, whom he soon found to be so much of his own way of thinking, that they were friends at first sight. The painter asked for Anthony's paintings.

"I assure you," said the forester's wife, "they are excellent." But Anthony, who stood at the door, covered with blushes, said, "O sir, they are not worth looking at."

The painter, however, persisting, Anthony at last produced them. Mr. Rudinger looked them over with great attention, and smiled frequently. He was evidently much pleased with them, notwithstanding their numerous faults. "Really," said he, "this boy may become a good painter. Give him to me, Mr. Grünenwald, and he will one day reflect honour on you."

"With all my heart," said the forester, giving him his hand. "For some time past, I have been thinking what to make of him. He will soon be fourteen years old; and he knows all that the school at Eschenthal can teach him. He is too delicate and tender-hearted to make a sportsman of. He resembles his gentle mother, more than his brave father. If you think that he may be a good painter, take and teach him at once. What are your terms?"

"Terms!" exclaimed the painter, "say nothing of them; you have taught me by your example how poor orphans ought to be treated; one good action always creates others, as naturally as one light produces another. They follow one another as a matter of course. Have no more anxiety about him. As soon as I shall have finished my work at the castle, I shall take Anthony to town; and I will spare no pains to make him a first-rate artist."

Anthony leaped with joy. But when the painter's carriage rolled up to the house, a few days after, and the hour arrived for leaving home, the poor child wept bitterly. But the forester encouraged him. "Do not weep, Anthony;

it is not far from this to the town; we can often see you, and you can come home to us on Sundays and holidays. I must make one condition with you," he continued, addressing M. Rudinger, "that Anthony may sometimes come to see us, and especially that he may always spend the Christmas holidays with us. You must allow this."

"With all my heart," answered the painter, "and if you and your wife consent, I will bring him home myself."

They then shook hands, and Anthony having once more thanked his foster parents, they advised him to pay the greatest respect to a man, who, out of pure benevolence, intended to do so much for him. Anthony got into the carriage of his new protector, amidst the blessings of all the family.

The good painter faithfully fulfilled all his promises. It was a pleasure to him to teach one who had so much talent. He often brought him to the forester's, and even spent several days there, sketching the surrounding scenery. He had always something new to say in praise of his pupil. "Between ourselves," said he, to the forester, "he will be a much cleverer artist than I am."

After some years, Mr. Rudinger being at the forester's house for the Christmas holidays, with Anthony, who was now become a fine young man, the good old couple suspected that Mr. Rudinger had something important to communicate, as he remained along with them after supper, when Anthony and the children had retired to bed.

"I must tell you," said he, at last, "that Anthony now knows all that I can teach him; he must travel now—he must go to Italy—it will cost a good deal, it is true, but no money can be better employed. I pledge myself that it will one day be returned with interest. The expenses of this journey are too great for a person of your means, but a thought has struck me—Anthony is not entirely dependent on others, though he requires assistance to be able to perfect himself in his art. I shall most willingly contribute as much as I possibly can, for with your example before

me, I have resolved that Anthony should be a painter, without any cost to himself. His works have already paid me very well. I have put this money aside, and I shall now employ it for his travelling expenses, but it will not be nearly enough. Are you willing to supply what is wanting? The amount is considerable, no doubt—but ought we not to perfect the good work we have begun?”

The painter anxiously awaited the result of his application. The forester was wealthy—he was also highly pleased with Anthony's conduct and progress in his profession—he looked at his wife, and the moment she nodded approval, he shook hands with the painter. “If the sum,” said he, “be within my means, he shall have it.”

The probable expenses were computed on the spot, and it was resolved that, next spring, Anthony should set out on his travels.

Next morning the painter took Anthony with him to town. The forester and his wife made preparations during the winter, for the journey of their adopted son. The good man bought clothes, and had his best travelling trunk fresh covered with deer-skin; while his wife and her two daughters worked most industriously to fill it with linen. When spring came, Anthony was invited to spend some time with them before his departure, and during that period he experienced more kindness than ever, and received many prudent admonitions for his future life. The painter would not permit any other person to pack the trunk. Anthony could not suppress his feelings, when he saw the rich store that his kind foster mother had provided for him. “Oh!” he said, “how great has been your kindness to me—I could not be more tenderly treated by my own parents.”

The trunk was forwarded to a celebrated artist, to whom Mr. Rudinger had recommended Anthony, but Anthony himself resolved to travel on foot, his friend, Christian, having made him a present of a little portmanteau, in which he could carry whatever was requisite for daily use.

At last the hour of departure arrived. Anthony wished to go again to Mr. Rudinger and to start from thence. His foster-mother prepared a farewell dinner. It was an affecting family feast. The forester looked around; but all were silent.

“Come, my children,” said he, “be not so sorrowful; and you, my dear wife, dry your tears. It must be so. When our sons grow up, they must leave us to push their way in the world; and the time is near, when you, my daughter, shall perhaps quit your father’s roof. But though mountains and valleys may separate us, we shall be always together in spirit. However sad may be our parting, we shall meet again, here or in heaven, in happiness.”

By such conversation the worthy man succeeded in cheering them. He produced a bottle of good wine, which was always reserved for feast days, and filled the glasses of his wife and daughters. “We must give wine to those who are in affliction,” said he, smiling.

Anthony and Christian held out their glasses without any pressing. When dinner was over the forester raised his glass, “Let us drink to Anthony’s health,” said he—“a good journey and a happy return!”

“God grant it,” exclaimed his wife, while her son and daughter rose at the same time and pledged the toast. They were all deeply affected, but none more than Anthony himself.

“Oh my dear parents,” said he, no longer able to restrain his tears, “how deeply am I indebted to you; what would have become of me, if you had not taken me! I can never compensate you—God alone can do it, may he enable me one day to make some return to you and your dear children, for all your benefits.” “I do not mean to deny, dear Anthony,” said the forester, “that we have done much for you, perhaps, one might say, when I look at my two daughters—too much. For though we have amassed some small provision for ourselves, we may require much more. My hair is now grey, but so long as I live we are

sure of support. If, however, either of my daughters should ever be reduced to poverty, do not forget, dear Anthony, what we have done for you. Will you not promise to be their protector, should they require it?"

"O dear father," he replied, "I would be a monster of ingratitude, if I could ever forget your benefits. Impossible that I could forget them. The fondest wish of my heart, is to be able to prove to you or your daughters, the sincerity of my gratitude." "I do not doubt you, dear Anthony," said the forester, "but it is now time to part." Then rising up, he said, "Kneel down my dear son, that you may receive a father's blessing." Anthony knelt, then the forester raising his eyes towards heaven—his face and his whole figure reflecting at the moment the solemn feelings that filled his breast—gave his blessing to the young man. "May God accompany you in all your ways, may He preserve you from all evil, and restore you to our arms, virtuous and pure!"

The mother and children stood devoutly around, with joined hands and tearful eyes, and with faltering voices answered, "amen." Then the forester raising Anthony, embraced him affectionately. "Go," said he, "and God be with you. Keep Him ever before your eyes, and remember that His all-seeing eye ever watches over you. Remember what you owe to yourself. The goods and pleasures of this earth, cannot compensate for the degradation we inflict on ourselves in seeking them. Always bear in mind, that you were created not for the fleeting hour we spend on this earth, but for an eternity. Avoid not only all evil, but all occasion of evil, and above all, avoid the society of those men, who ridicule the faith of their forefathers, and scoff at religion and morality. Once more farewell—and God be with you." "Anthony," said the weeping mother, "by those tears I conjure you to persevere in virtue; think of those tears of sincere affection when temptation shall assail you; you have been always our joy, oh! never give us any cause of pain. I weep—but I

do not distrust you.—Bitterly, indeed, shall we all weep, should we ever hear anything to your discredit. Never forget the advice we have often given you—never forget us—farewell.”

The whole family accompanied the young man a little way towards the border of the forest. There they took a last farewell, Anthony proceeding on his way, and they remaining on the same spot for some time. Anthony frequently turned and waved his hat to them, and his signal was answered by the forester and Christian in the same manner. The wife and daughters waved their white handkerchiefs, until our young painter, with his stick in his hand and his knapsack on his back, disappeared behind a wooded hill.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE CHRISTMAS-BOX.

ON Christmas Eve, the third anniversary of Anthony's departure, the forester and his son returned home earlier than usual from the forest. The weather was intensely cold. The deep red colours of the evening sky, glared through the cottage windows; the round panes were soon incrustated with frost, and glistened like diamonds in the evening rays. The forester seated himself in his arm chair near the stove. He stirred the fire, the flame arose, and shedding its flickering light through the room, added to the brilliancy of the frozen panes.

“Is there no letter from Anthony?” asked the forester, when his wife entered.

“No,” she replied sorrowfully.

“That's strange,” said the husband shaking his head, “we have always had a letter from him on Christmas Eve.

His letters were always full of interesting details, and were certainly the most agreeable Christmas-box I could receive. What can the boy be about, to prevent his writing?"

Scarcely had the forester uttered these words, when the door opened, and a man appeared at it. His hair was whitened with frost. He had a letter in his hand, and a flat deal case on his back. The case was very wide, and so high that he was obliged to stoop to get into the room with it.

"This must be a looking-glass," said Catherine, pointing to the case.

The man laid it down on the floor, and gave a letter to the forester.

"This letter is from Mr. Rudinger," said the forester, "what can it mean? I fear some misfortune has befallen poor Anthony." But his fears were soon over, for opening the letter hastily he read it by the light of the fire. "What do you think," exclaimed he joyously, "Anthony sends us a picture from Rome as a Christmas-box! He had it sent to the care of Mr. Rudinger, to be set in a rich gilt frame, and forwarded to us without fail on Christmas eve. In Mr. Rudinger's opinion it is a masterpiece. Oh! that I could embrace Anthony this moment. He is a most excellent young man. Here Catherine," he continued, "bring this good man a glass of wine, while supper is preparing. It will do him good; for the evening is intensely cold."

The carrier was thankful for the wine, but declined taking any more, as he was on his way to spend the Christmas holidays with his friends at Eschenthal. The forester wished him joy, and paid him handsomely for his errand.

"Now," said the forester to his family, "come and sit around me. Mr. Rudinger's letter encloses one from Anthony, which I intend to read for you." "Wait," said Louisa, "until I bring you a light." "Yes, yes," said the father, "I can then read with more pleasure—but make



haste." The little family circle then pressed closely round the forester, and listened with breathless attention to Anthony's letter.

"My dear parents, I send you with this letter a Christmas present—a picture, with which I have taken a great deal of pains. It is our infant Saviour in the crib of Bethlehem. I have been assured by several eminent artists, that I have succeeded. I hope it will please you as much as I was pleased with the representation of our Saviour in the crib, which I saw the first evening I entered your house. If it do, you must be happy, indeed. Would that I could accompany my picture and present it to you in person. Italy, it is true, is a lovely land. In this month of November, in which I write, winter has already set in with you—and the roofs of your houses, and your oak and fir trees are, perhaps, covered with a load of snow—while here the orange and lemon trees are charming us with their silver flowers and golden fruit. Still in the midst of all this enjoyment, I sigh for your rustic hearth, by which I passed the happiest hours of my life. It is to you I am indebted for seeing these mild skies of Italy, and also for becoming an artist, if I deserve the name. It was your pious representation of the crib that first awoke my talent. It is always before my eyes, and with all its imperfections it produces on my mind a more powerful effect than any of these splendid masterpieces which we have here. Happy days of childhood, there is no time like you!—all that we then saw was painted with the rich hues of morning—what a pity that you fly so soon!

"While you are reading my letter and examining my picture, I am in spirit among you. I call to mind, with the most tender emotions, the night I was first received, half-frozen with cold, under your roof—how our kind mother soon restored me with warm nourishment; how you adopted me for your son; and how Christian, Catherine, and Louisa gave me share of their Christmas gifts. Oh, beloved father, I kiss with gratitude your venerable hands

and those of my adopted mother. I embrace my brothers and sisters. Even now it is my chief happiness to indulge the fond hope of being able in a few years to assure you, not in spirit and from afar, but in person, how sincerely I am,

“Your grateful and affectionate son,  
“ANTHONY.”

“Rome, Nov. 15, 1756.”

“That’s a letter in earnest,” said the forester, deeply affected; “all that we have done for this young man is but little. It is true, I always had high hopes of him, but he has surpassed them all; I never could have thought he would be the source of so much happiness to me. But here,” said he, smiling, “supper is waiting for us; we can look at the picture when we have finished.”

“Oh, no, no,” all cried unanimously, “now, now!”

“We would much rather see the picture than eat,” said Louisa, “but, to examine it better, I will fetch another light.”

Christian got a hammer and opened the case. All were enraptured when the picture appeared, and were loud in their praise of the colouring and figures.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PICTURE OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE CRIB.

THE forester placed the picture on a table near the wall and set a light on both sides of it. All eyes were riveted on the beautiful images. “Truly,” said the forester’s wife, devoutly clasping her hands, “nothing can be more beautiful. I feel as if I were really at the manger that night. How sweetly and lovingly the child looks on us, to salute us cordially at his very entrance into the world! Mary is kneeling before the crib, she gazes fondly and reverently

on the Child whom she clasps with one arm, while the other is pressed to her throbbing heart; in the pleasure of gazing on that dear child, she is evidently unconscious of the poverty around her. How venerable Joseph appears! how devoutly he raises his clasped hands to heaven! The shepherds too, with their open and honest faces, how reverently they bend on their knees in adoration; while the angels above them, reflect in their forms all the beauty of heaven. But the light streaming from the child, and illuminating every thing around him, surpasses the splendour of the angels themselves. A heart of stone must that man have, who does not feel joy at the birth of his Saviour, nor join his voice with the angels to sing the glory of God!"

Until this moment, the forester had remained silent, standing motionless before the picture, and never taking his eyes from it; but suddenly, as if awaking from a dream, he exclaimed, "Yes, you are right; this divine event, especially when so faithfully represented as it is before us, speaks with peculiar force to our hearts. I wish I could express all the thoughts it suggests, all the feelings it inspires."

Then, drawing his arm-chair to a little distance, where he thought he would have the best view of the picture; "Let us," said he, "my dear children, turn our eyes to the Divine Child in the manger. Forget for a moment His divine origin, and consider Him merely as a child born of woman. Helpless and feeble, and wrapped in coarse swaddling clothes, He reposes on a little hay and straw. But the fond smiles of His mother greet Him, and her tender cares are affectionately lavished on Him; while the faithful foster-father, devoted, heart and soul, to Him, is ready to protect both mother and child with his strong arm, and to support them by the labour of his hands. A good father, an affectionate mother, and a child who, though an infant, repays their love with gratitude—is it not the finest sight that ever appeared on earth,—a sight at which the angels themselves may well rejoice? It is to God we owe this happy union."

“Oh! my children, when you look upon this new-born babe in the manger, say to yourselves, ‘I, also was a child, weak and feeble, and unable to help myself. I should have died for want of food, had not my parents cherished me. But I was welcomed with transports of delight, I had every thing prepared for me. I was wrapped in the linen which my mother had spun and bleached, and made up for me; night and day she was constantly by my side. When I slept, she was beside my cradle, and many a sleepless night have I caused her. My father shared in all her cares, and toiled hard for my support.’ Oh! never forget these cares, and be ever grateful to God for having given you good parents. It is He who lights up the mother’s heart with the flame of His own inexpressible love; it is He who makes your father’s heart swell with parental feeling. O! never be ungrateful to your parents! The son or daughter that could forget all that their mother suffered, and all the trouble their father had in rearing, clothing, and educating them, must be devoid of every feeling of humanity.

“Now my dear children, after having considered the Holy Family, let us look at the angels that float above them, and then upon the animals in the stable. This will shew us the dignity and exalted destiny of mankind. But first of all, let us look once more at the Blessed Virgin, in whose mild face are expressed the most heavenly innocence, and the most tender maternal love. See the noble figure of the venerable Joseph, as he raises his eyes so devoutly to heaven: see then the Divine Infant who smiles so graciously, while His eyes beam like a light from above—and then see the rough coarse heads of the ox and the ass. How stupid and senseless they appear; their necks are thrust forward in such a way as to shew that they have no concern except for their food. They cannot shew any sign of joy. Oh, who can look upon the contrast, without being at once convinced that man is of a superior nature, and a being of a nobler order! The most humble man would think

himself insulted, if one were to say that he was of no more value than the ox that draws the plough, or the ass that carries his burden—and perishes for ever after death. No, man resembles much more the holy angels of God, who know their Creator, and can love and praise Him. No other animal on earth but man, can do that. However he may be like the animals in some points, he more nearly resembles the angels. Although he enters the world with pain and tears, and suffers much while in it, flourishing but for a time, to fade at last like the flowers of the field—although he becomes dust like the animals—it is only his body that fails, for he has an immortal soul, and is truly an angel clothed in flesh and blood. As soon as this earthly clothing drops off, man becomes an angel, provided he has fulfilled his destiny on earth, by living in conformity to the will of his Heavenly Father. It was a happy thought of the painter, to introduce a lamb and a basket of fruit, as presented to the new born Child. All living creatures are subjected to the dominion of man; he tames the strongest beasts and compels them to serve him; the sheep gives him milk and wool; the earth gives him her fairest fruits, ‘God hath made him only a little lower than the angels;’ He has crowned him with glory and honour, He has placed all things under his feet, and made him lord of all His works.

“The very place in which we see this Child and His parents, the miserable crib in the lowly stable, is not without its instruction. Man needs no palace to fulfil his destiny on earth. He can live contented and die happy in the most wretched straw cabin. We see in the crib nothing but poverty and indigence. But to be really happy and worthy of real honour, man needs neither velvet, nor silk, nor gold, nor silver. In all matters of real importance, God has made all men equal. A poor stable shelters the most holy, the most venerable, and the happiest mortals that ever appeared on earth!

“All that I have said to you until now is most consoling to us ; but this is the least important view of our subject. The grandest point of all is the divine origin and high destiny of this Child. For Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High, became man and dwelt in this world, to save man who had fallen, and who would have been lost for ever. In Him was made known the goodness of the Most High ; in Him we see God made man. He was born in the greatest poverty ; He was cradled in a manger ; He had no property in this world, not even a place where he might rest his head, and He died on the cross the death of a criminal. And yet without any earthly help, without money, or the force of arms, He has changed the face of the earth by His wisdom, His love, and almighty power—He has enlightened the human race, and by their redemption and renovation, He has proved his own divine origin. Those thoughts are suggested by the picture in the same manner as in the scripture itself.

“ Remark, too, it is night ; darkness covers the country, and the scene is only illuminated by the light which the Holy Child sheds around him. Thus, at the time of Christ’s birth, the darkness of ignorance and infidelity covered the earth ; but in Jesus Christ arose ‘the light, that enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world ;’ mankind were plunged in slavery and sin, and sunk almost to the level of the brutes themselves ; many of them were even more degraded by their abominations ; but Christ came to convert them, and to make them good men, saints, angels in human form. Before his birth, men were as miserable as they were ignorant and criminal ; but behold them now, how happy they appear, and how rejoiced at his birth. Do not Mary, Joseph and the shepherds, appear raised above all the cares of earth, in presence of their new-born Saviour ? He who came into this world to save men from misery, and to bring them true joy and heavenly peace, begins his great work on this very night of his birth. The words of the

angel were addressed to all men: 'Behold I bring you tidings of great joy, for there is born to you a Saviour who is Christ, the Lord.'

"All men are invited to approach Him; but He makes himself known in the first place to the poor—to the simple shepherds: his mother is poor: his father is a poor tradesman, earning his bread by the work of his hands. Thus does Christ declare even in his cradle, that with Him riches, and honours, and the wisdom of this world, are of no price. He prizes those who are good, like Mary the most Blessed Virgin, and Joseph the just man, and the shepherds who led good lives and feared the Lord. Still he does not reject even the most abandoned sinners, if they are sorry for their sins and resolve to amend. His very name promises pardon; for Mary was ordered by the angel to call him 'Jesus'—and the same order was repeated to Joseph, 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save the people from their sins.' He was to make sinful men his chosen people, a people sanctified for heaven. This is the reason that the heavens are represented as opening over the crib. For Christ has opened heaven, which was shut against men; and has reunited heaven and earth by that heavenly kingdom which he has founded here below. Therefore do the holy angels of God rejoice and sing hymns of praise and exultation—giving praise to 'God in the highest,' and congratulating mankind on that happy lot which Christ has prepared for them.

"Jesus has now accomplished all that His birth announced; notwithstanding all the obstacles thrown in his way by the unbelief and obduracy of men, He founded the kingdom of heaven on earth, and this work stands to this day. Many conquerors have founded kingdoms since that time; but they lasted only a short time, and often crumbled away before the death of their founder; while the kingdom of Jesus—his true kingdom—extends every day more and more, and still enjoys the vigour of its prime. Whole nations entered his fold, and monarchs laid their

crowns at the foot of His cross. Human sacrifices and all the abominations of heathenism disappeared from Christian lands. Temples and churches arose, in which the true God was served with a pure and spiritual worship. Innumerable schools, charitable establishments, and hospitals, were erected by Christians. How many children, how many poor and sick must have perished in misery, in ignorance and crime, were it not for these charitable institutions! Millions of men have found pardon for their sins in the faith of Christ, and have become models of virtue. And still, notwithstanding the increase of impiety and unbelief, there are countless souls who find Him their consolation in life and death, and who make Him the supreme Lord of their hearts. The Gospel, the glad tidings, is still announced to the heathen; whole nations embrace it, and find in it their joy and delight. For this reason, the birth-day of Christ is the most important in the history of the world, and well did our forefathers act in commencing a new era from that day. Each returning anniversary of this day should remind us, that the birth of Christ is the dawn of light and glory to all those who turn their eyes towards Him—the day of real happiness, enlightenment and dignity, for the whole human race. Let us, therefore, my children, join our voices, this evening and to-morrow morning, with the angels' hymn in praise of our Divine Redeemer!"

Thus spoke the forester; his wife, who was much affected, added: "Yes my children, we ought to be joyful. This picture that Anthony has sent to us, is the most valuable present that any person, even a prince, could have made us. The piety with which you have listened to the exhortations of your father, is a most excellent method for sanctifying this evening. We will endeavour to welcome with gratitude, the salvation sent us by God, our Saviour. For the birth-day of our Redeemer, is the birth-day of our life in Christ!"



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE MISFORTUNES OF THE FORESTER.

THE good forester had spent many peaceful and happy years in the bosom of his family since Anthony's departure. His children were now full grown; his own son had become a strong active young man, his daughters were in the fresh bloom of early womanhood; and all were well educated and of the most blameless morals. Soon the infirmities of age began to steal over the good old man, and he was thinking of resigning his situation to his son. The prince, his master, came regularly every year to spend some days at the castle of Felseck, as he was very fond of shooting. He was most affable in his manners, and was always ready to listen with the greatest condescension to the humblest of his subjects, who had anything to say to him. The next time he came to the castle, he had such excellent sport in the grounds entrusted to the forester, that he was highly pleased, and tapped him familiarly on the shoulder, saluting him, "How goes it with you, my good man?"

"Please your highness," said the forester, "I am growing old, and I wish I could transfer my burden to younger shoulders."

"To your son Christian, no doubt," answered the prince. "I see him there beyond; he is an excellent sportsman, and, what is better still, a good care-taker. I have remarked this morning, that all these woods are in good condition. Depend on me, no other person shall ever get your place, and he may now commence business at once. But it is my wish that you retain the office and exercise a superintendence over him for some time. For even the best young men are apt to become insolent or negligent when they are

allowed too soon to wear an embroidered uniform. It is best for you and me, that you retain the office some time longer."

The forester having expressed his gratitude for the kindness of the prince, continued. "There is another point on which I wish to speak to you. My son has at present an opportunity of making a desirable match with the daughter of my old friend Bosh, the forester. The young woman lost her mother a few days ago, and does not know what to do with herself. She is poor—but pious, industrious, modest, and a model of every womanly virtue."

"Very good," answered the prince. "I commend the young man highly for looking for virtue and character rather than lands and gold—I give my cordial consent to his marriage, and I also promise to him the forester's office. I shall give orders without delay to have the agreement written out."

The forester's son, who had been waiting in great anxiety at some distance, now advanced upon a sign from his father and thanked the prince. The marriage took place. The young bride proved a blessing to the family: peace and harmony dwelt under the good forester's roof. It was his delight to fondle his grand children, who appeared to have brought back to his wife a renewal of her youth. The daughters of the house loved the young woman as their sister, and they were all extremely happy.

But a terrible trial was now hanging over this happy house. It took its rise from a circumstance of very distant date—so distant that the forester had almost forgotten it. A young gentleman, named Mr. Schilf, who had often accompanied the forester in his hunting excursions, took the liberty of hunting alone, and even of killing all the game he met with. The forester finding him thus engaged one day, told him that poaching was strictly forbidden, but that if he wished to have the pleasures of the chase, he was welcome to accompany him. "I will be most happy to have your company," said he, "and I engage to

bring you to covers where you shall have as much sport as you please. But I cannot allow you to shoot alone in the covers entrusted to my care."

But the young man persisted in going out to hunt after the prohibition, as he had done before it. The forester met him again and took his gun from him.

"God knows," said he, "I do it with reluctance; but it is my duty, my orders are positive, and I cannot act against them.—If I catch you any more, I must report further, and then it will not be well for you." The worthy forester, moreover, went to old Mr. Schilf, and begged him to forbid his son to hunt. The old gentleman had been in the habit of letting his son take his own way; but this time he was highly incensed, for he feared the prince's displeasure. He threatened his son that he would disinherit him, if he ever went to hunt again, unless the keeper were along with him.

But the young man had long been accustomed to disobey his father. Soon after this the forester heard a shot, and running up, found the young gentleman with a deer at his feet. He reported the fact. Old Mr. Schilf himself went to the prince, and begged for pardon.

"According to the law," said the prince, "he should be sent to the house of correction; however, I shall pardon him. But if he ever lets himself be caught again, I shall certainly send him thither: and remember distinctly, that I shall not be much disposed to choose a councillor or other officer from the house of correction."

The matter was adjusted in this way. But young Schilf conceived a deadly hatred against the honest forester; and though years passed over, burned still with rage against him.

Meanwhile, the prince died after an illness of a few days. The heir was a minor, and was at this time on his travels. A regency was appointed, and many changes took place. Young Mr. Schilf, who was very wealthy and highly connected, was appointed head forester; and arrived in

great state, at the royal lodge at Felseck, in which apartments were assigned to him. He was now the superior of the worthy forester, and annoyed him exceedingly. There was no end of fault-finding; the forester could not do anything right for him.

The prince soon entered upon the government himself. But Mr. Schilf who was very cunning, clever, and persuasive, had the address to enlist on his side the chief commissioner of forests who possessed great influence with the prince, and now became more tyrannical and oppressive towards the good forester than ever.

“You are no longer fit for your office,” said he to him, “I shall see about finding a man who can take better care of this noble forest!”

“Most willingly shall I resign,” said the forester, “I would have done so long since, had our late good prince permitted me. My son, then, is the forester.”

“Perhaps so!” said Schilf, with a scornful laugh. “I must see more about that.” The forester appealed to the royal warrant, in pursuance of which his son had been married.

“Bah!” cried Schilf, “I know all about that.” He was able to explain it away very ingeniously. “It was nothing but a promise dependent on his own good conduct,” said he; “and the young fellow is good for nothing—I shall take care to get a better man than he!”

“Be not unjust to me, Mr. Head-forester,” said the grey-headed old man, in vain endeavouring to suppress a tear. “You once thought yourself injured by me, and therefore you should be doubly cautious about doing me a wrong.”

“What!” cried Schilf, his eyes sparkling with fury; “you remind me yourself of your churlishness! you remind me that you robbed me of my only youthful amusement, and blackened my character at court! you are a rude, insolent churl!—You never had any respect for your betters, but always leaned towards the lowest of the rabble. You allowed your son to marry a girl without a farthing—a

complete beggar—you squandered your nice property on Anthony the beggar-boy—you could not manage your own property—and how could you take care of the interests of the prince with which you have no personal concern? Begone, there is no doing anything with you. I hope that we shall soon have little more connexion, and that you will never come into my sight again!"

The forester went his way. "Hem!" thought he, on his way home, "the head-forester may say what he pleases—my woods are in the best possible order—he cannot, much as he dislikes me, bring anything against me—I defy him!"—However he did not tell them at home, what the head forester had said, in order not to distress them without necessity.

But scarcely had the old man got home from the forest, and sat down to rest himself in his easy chair, when a messenger walked into the room, and handed him a paper from the head-forester.—"Forester Grünenwald," it said, "is hereby, in virtue of the royal mandate, discharged from his office, on account of his age and incapacity; and the forest, until further arrangements, is transferred to the care of the neighbouring forester of Waldenbruch." Not a word of a pension for the meritorious old man, or of another appointment for his son! It was merely ordered in addition, "that the dismissed forester, after the presentation of this order, should not thenceforward fire a single shot in the forest, or appear with a piece, on pain of its being taken from him."

The old man, on opening the paper, was sorely distressed: his hand trembled as he held it. He collected himself, however, and read it aloud for his family, who were all engaged in the room at their several occupations. The old dame and her daughters turned pale with affright—but the young forester glowed with indignation at the head-forester's villany. His wife for a while stood silent, and then burst into loud lamentations; her children, who

were playing about the room, began to cry when they saw their mother crying—a universal lamentation was raised—the venerable old man alone stood calm and composed in the midst of them.

“Do not forget,” said he, “the proverb: ‘The old God is still alive!’ And you, dame, have done your crying, and give our children and grand-children the example of trust in God. Unless He will it, the wicked cannot harm us;—this trial comes from Him, and will eventually turn to our good. Courage then! God is our powerful protector. He will not cast us off, though the whole world should reject us. He is our kind Father, and will never suffer his children to want for bread. In Him we will trust confidently, and be of good cheer!”

“However,” he continued, after a pause, “I shall not omit anything that I can myself do. To-morrow, at day-break, I shall go to the prince. He is as high-minded as his late father; and overpowered though he is with business, so soon after his entering on the government, he will not refuse to hear me. He is just, too, and will not suffer an old servant, who has served his royal house truly and honestly for above forty years, to be thus unceremoniously consigned to famine and destitution. You, Christian, must accompany me; for now we can both be absent without asking the head-forester’s leave. We shall travel on foot: to ride or drive would be too expensive for our present circumstances; and besides, it is not necessary; the few clothes we require, will easily find room in our knapsacks. Take care then, that everything shall be ready in the morning.”

Next morning he arose before day-break, and called his son. “It is too long for me,” said he, “to wait for daylight. There is moon-light, and we know all the roads. Let us go!” The old dame packed up his green laced uniform neatly, and wrapped it in a cloth, that it might lie more safely in the knapsack. Catherine brought linen

and provisions for the journey. Christian's wife and Louisa prepared breakfast, and brought it into the room. The little ones were still asleep.

"And when do you expect to return?" said the forester's wife.

"I cannot tell that myself," he replied. "Hardly in less than eight days."

"To-morrow fortnight," said his wife, "will be Christmas-eve. You will surely be with us before then."

"To-morrow week, please God," he replied. "But however things go, I must spend the Christmas-eve with you."

"God grant it be a happy one!" said his wife.

"Pray meanwhile, and trust in God!" he replied. "He will turn everything to our true advantage." They all accompanied them to the door. It was still night, nor was there the least appearance of dawn; but yet they went along with light hearts, in the bitter cold December night.

The family at home were all full of anxiety for the beloved travellers, and especially for the old father. The first eight days they were able to keep up their spirits. But when, after they had expired, day passed after day, and the weather became harsh and stormy, and the rain almost incessant, they became very uneasy.—"Ah," thought they, "Christian, stout as he is, will have enough to do to bear this: but how will the old man win through!" The two children were perpetually running to the door, to see whether their father and grandfather were not coming.

Thus, another week passed away in sorrow and anxiety. To increase their distress, soon after the departure of the forester and his son, one of the head forester's huntsmen came with an official paper; the old dame was afraid to open it, but she feared it contained nothing good. For the messenger had expressly said, in an insolent tone, "It was folly in the old man and his hot-headed son to go to the court. The head-forester knows what he is doing—be assured

they shall fail, and be sent back in disgrace!" Meanwhile, they all prayed fervently every day, that God would grant the wayfarers a favourable audience of the prince, and bring them home in safety. The children, of their own accord, joined in the prayer.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOW IT FARED WITH THE FORESTER.

IN the midst of these gloomy anxieties, Christmas-Eve arrived. Night fell earlier than usual; for the heavens were quite hidden by dark clouds. The storm howled through the stout old oaks and the groaning pines of the forest—the snow and sleet fell furiously, and the water-spout roared like a torrent falling over a precipice.

"O my God!" cried the old dame after a long look from the window—"they are not coming yet. If they stay away from us this blessed Christmas-eve, I shall say that surely some misfortune has befallen them. I am sick with apprehension. It is weather in which one would not turn out a dog, and the roads are in a most dangerous condition. Oh, that they were back with us once more, let the rest go as it may!"

She opened the window once more, and looked out.

"O God be praised," she cried, "they are come at last!" They all ran out to meet them, and every one put the question: "How did you fare in the city?"

"I trust all will yet be well," said the old forester. "But you must have been anxious about us. We stopt away a long time. But I fell sick on the journey, and could not proceed; and when I got better, the rivers and brooks were so swollen by the incessant rains, that we were detained several days longer. However, God be praised, we are here at last!"



He came in, changed his dress, and sat down in his easy chair beside the stove. His wife brought a flask of wine, a couple of glasses and a lamp. "Take some little refreshment!" said she, filling the glasses: "you both require it badly. Supper will be ready in a moment."

"Well!" said the forester, glancing round by the light of the lamp; "it is a pleasant thing after all, to be at home again among one's own dear family, where one sees nothing but kind and cheerful faces!"

Meanwhile, however, the young forester had told his wife in confidence, that they had not succeeded, but would certainly lose the place. She was terrified, and told it privately to the rest, and the old man saw their faces grow dark all at once, and put on an expression of terror and anxiety.

"Has Christian babbled already?" said he, "well, well, there is nothing to conceal. You must all hear it; but be not too much cast down. To-night a Saviour was born for us. In the recollection of this great joy, we must sink the memory of our trifling cares of earth, or at least we must not take them too much to heart!"

"Well, then," he began, "when we arrived, late in the evening, in the capital, I went at once to old Mr. Müller, one of the Commissioners of Forests. 'He is a very honest man,' thought I, 'he was my head-forester long ago, and has always been my friend. All the other commissioners who knew me are dead or retired; but though he, too, has retired from business on account of his age, yet he can give me the best advice.' And, indeed, the good man, as I expected, received me with the utmost cordiality. I told him my business. 'You have in the head-forester,' said he, 'a very bitter enemy. He has powerful friends here. He is trying to get your post for a young man who was his own servant, and is constantly sending the most injurious accounts of you and your son. I am very much afraid he will succeed, and will deprive honest Christian of his father's succession'—'Ah,' said I, 'it will not go so far as

that! meanwhile, I mean to go in person to the prince'—  
'Do so,' said the commissioner, 'I shall accompany you, but you have come at a most unlucky time. The prince has a great deal of work to do—you will hardly get an audience. You must also wait on the chief-commissioner and his colleagues, but I fear you will hardly be well received there; Mr. Schilf has completely blinded them all.' Accordingly I found that my friend was right. I had many a painful walk. The head-commissioner received me coldly, and speedily dismissed me; the others treated me but little better—every where I saw but black looks, and had to endure many a hard word. And I was refused audience of the prince, as the chief-commissioner was with him at the moment. The head-forester has managed to calumniate me and Christian most grievously. I cannot tell you the details now, and besides it regards things which you do not understand: all we have to hope for is an inquiry; but it is to be feared that it may be entrusted to such hands, that we shall have nothing good to expect from it."

"But these stories," he concluded, "are making us too gloomy, and, on this evening, every Christian should be joyous. It is Christmas-eve.—Let us think of our Saviour's Nativity! That will cheer our drooping hearts!"

He then fixed his eyes on the picture of the birth of Jesus, which Antony had sent to him. It occupied the place of the looking-glass, and was covered with a rich white veil to preserve it from injury. Francis and Clara, the young forester's two lovely children, had for several weeks past, been cheering themselves with the anticipated pleasures of Christmas times. Starting up, and wiping away their tears, they asked their grand-mother to take away the veil, and light the wax candles as on last Christmas-eve, in order to see the picture better. "And you, grand-father," said little Clara, "do you take your harp, while we sing the Christmas carols mother taught us."

"Certainly," said the forester, "we must sing our

Christmas hymn. But tell me first, whether anything particular occurred during my absence."

"Nothing," answered his wife, "except the receipt of another government paper—whatever news it brings us." She then handed him the sealed letter. He opened it—turned pale—and raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "O Lord, thy will be done!"

All looked at him with anxiety and alarm. "What can this be?" asked his wife.

"This instant we must quit this house," said he: "in truth, we should have left it already. The Master of Woods and Forests, orders us in this document to quit on Christmas-eve at latest, in order to enable the new forester to take our place during the holidays. He threatens to send the sheriff's officers, if we disobey. I am astonished that they are not here already; every moment we may expect them, to turn us out."

"Oh God!" shrieked the young woman, "on this dreadful night! Hear how it pours, and how loudly the storm howls! Where can we find shelter from the storm and rain?" Then sinking on a chair, and clasping her two little ones to her bosom—"Good God," she sobbed, "ah! have pity on these poor little innocents!" Her husband stood near her, gazing in speechless sorrow, and with streaming eyes, on her and his children.

"Oh, my God!" said the old woman, sobbing and wringing her hands, "to be ejected with my children and grand-children, from the house where I, and my father and grand-father before me, were born—'tis dreadful!—Ah! kind heaven! let me die in the place of my birth!"

Catherine wept in silence; Louisa trembled like a lamb led to the slaughter. The old man himself, with his venerable face, his high bald forehead, and his thin grey locks falling down on his shoulders, kept his eyes raised in silence to heaven for a considerable time, and at length said, in a calm and collected voice, "Yes my children, so it is—

this house we must leave. I know not any place where we can all find shelter together. We must separate. I did hope to enjoy amongst you a peaceful old age—I did hope to see you all gathered around my death-bed under this roof—but God has arranged it otherwise—may His holy will be done!”

Then looking on his grand-children, he continued, “The sight of these children afflicts our hearts.—Still, God has a father’s love for us. He never sent such a severe trial to us, without intending it for our good. These very evils will turn to our good. ‘When things are at the worst, they must mend.’ Remember the wise old proverb of our fathers, ‘when need is greatest, God’s help is nearest.’ Many a happy Christmas-eve have we spent under this roof—it is the least we may patiently accept one sorrowful one from the hands of God.”

“True, true, my dear husband,” said the old woman. “In God we put our trust; to Him we look up in our great affliction. Oh! many a time have I thought with myself how Mary must have felt, both when she was obliged to spend the night in the stable, and when, like ourselves now, she was compelled to leave her own house at the dead of night, and fly with her Divine Son into a strange land. However great her faith and confidence, I fancied she must have shed some tears, if not for herself, at least for her Son. I know how a mother’s heart feels. Heart-rending, indeed, were her afflictions. But every mortal on earth must suffer. God sends trials to all his children. The events of sacred history are, in a manner, renewed in our own persons. But He who sent comforting friends and guardian angels to Mary in the cheerless stable, and in her lonely flight, will not leave us without comfort. He will help us in His own good time.”

At this moment loud knockings were heard at the door. “Here they are,” said the old forester, “to expel us from our home.” His son, convulsed with passion, glanced at his gun. “No,” he muttered, “they shall not expel my

wife, my aged parents and beloved sisters! The first that lays a hand on any of you, is"—

"No, no, my son," said the father, "do not finish that terrible threat that was on your lips! No opposition, no illegal violence: God is their master and ours. He is our refuge and hope. Should prayer or remonstrance have no effect on those men who are going to turn us out, we shall submit, and seek shelter for the night in the cave where we often sheltered ourselves in stormy weather, when we were hunting. Oh!" said he, rising from his chair, "would that we could all repeat with confidence, the words of the patient man:—

" On Thee relying, undismayed  
Fate's darkest scowl I calmly brave!—  
Were earth and heaven in ruin laid,  
Thy arm, O Lord, could shield and save.  
Be Thou my hope, when life is o'er!  
Come wo, come weal—I ask no more!"

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## CHAPTER IX.

### AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

IN the mean time a louder and more continued knocking was heard at the door. "Go, Christian," said the old forester, "and open the door." Christian did as he was ordered, and in a few minutes there stepped into the room a young stranger—a tall well looking man of genteel appearance, wrapped in a dark green cloak, with a fur cap shading great part of his face. "This is the new forester!" was the terrible thought uppermost in all their minds. But the stranger himself appeared much alarmed, on seeing so many terror-stricken faces and weeping eyes. Taking off his cap, he stood motionless for a few moments, and at length asked, "Is it possible that you do not know me?"

"My God!" exclaimed Louisa, "it is Anthony."

"Anthony!" said Catherine, "can it be possible?"

“How cōuld you think so?” added the old mother, “this gentleman is much taller and stouter than Anthony.”

“It is Anthony himself beyond a doubt,” said Christian. “In the name of heaven, my dear brother, how came you here? I thought you were at Rome, hundreds of miles away.”

The old father rubbed his eyes, as if doubting the evidence of his senses, and advancing slowly at first, at length rushed towards Anthony, and clasped him in his arms, exclaiming, “O Anthony, my son! my son Anthony!” Long and affectionately they embraced each other. He then turned to his venerable mother, and to Christian and his sisters Catherine and Louisa, and embraced them. His joy knew no bounds. The young wife too and her children, whom he now saw for the first time, were objects of his kindest sympathies. If the family had been, a few moments before in the depths of affliction, their happiness was now at its height. This unexpected joy broke upon them like the morning sun, dispelling the dark clouds of woe which had threatened to close over them.

“Oh Anthony,” said the old mother who was the first to speak, “you find us all plunged in affliction. You must have seen us in tears when you entered the room; oh! let me tell you all our misfortunes.”

“I know all already,” answered Anthony, “but your sorrows are over, dear parents, your affairs have taken a happy turn. I have seen the prince, dear father, and he desired to be kindly remembered to you.”

“To me?” said the old man; “how did you get an audience with the prince? I don’t understand you. In truth, I fear, this looks like a happy dream.”

“By no means,” said Anthony, “no dream, but the real truth. Take your chair, dear father, and do you my dear mother take your place, and let me tell you the whole story.”

Then throwing off his cloak and taking his seat between the old couple, while the rest of the family stood grouped around him, he commenced his narrative, which

was of course received with the most breathless attention and anxiety by all.

“ You know, that our present prince, when he was heir apparent, travelled in Italy. There happened to be an exhibition of the works of young painters, while he was at Rome. There was amongst these one picture that pleased him particularly, and on inquiry he learned that it was the work of a young painter named Anthony Kroner. The prince sent for me, and treated me very kindly. He inquired what I asked for the picture, and like a true prince, he paid me more than my own price. In all his visits to the picture galleries in Rome, I accompanied him. I drove with him in his carriage, and was invited to his table. About that time there was a sale of a collection of old and very valuable paintings, and I was ordered to inspect them with the prince. He asked my opinion on all the paintings that struck his fancy, and resolved to buy them. The day for the auction was fixed, but as the prince could not prolong his stay in consequence of his accession to the crown, he commissioned me to make the purchase, and have the paintings sent home safely to him. He fixed the highest price he would be willing to give for each of the pictures, and left me a large sum of money. I was highly pleased with this proof of his confidence, and took great pains to discharge my commission. I was fortunate enough to obtain the paintings at a much lower price than that to which I had been limited. When I had seen all that was worthy of a painter's notice in Italy, I resolved to return home, and hearing that a vessel was about to sail, I embarked with my whole collection, and, after a prosperous voyage, landed safely with my precious treasure. I then hired a carriage to convey the pictures, and, that they might not be damaged, I never lost sight of them until they arrived in the capital. I went without delay to the court and sent in my name. The prince rose from table and received me in his cabinet. ‘ Welcome to Germany,’ said he, with great kindness, ‘ what good things do you bring

from Italy.' 'The pictures,' I replied, 'that your highness commissioned me to purchase for you.' 'How many of them?' he asked. 'All.'—'What, all?' he replied joyfully, 'that surpasses my fondest hopes.' He gave orders that the pictures should be unpacked without delay and hung up. I superintended the work, and among the whole collection, not one painting had been even slightly damaged. The prince was delighted. I then gave him the receipts of the sums I had paid. 'The purchase,' said he, 'is considerably less than the sum I had fixed.' I answered, that I waited his highness' orders to return the amount remaining in my hands. 'Oh,' said he, in the most gracious manner, 'do not mention that: I owe you a debt of gratitude, and if you are satisfied with me, I am perfectly so with you. But you must be fatigued with your journey, and you worked very hard in unpacking—You require some rest.' A room was immediately ordered for me in the palace.—In the evening, as I was sitting in my room, I resolved to visit old Councillor Müller. He was the only man in the palace, except the prince, that I knew; and as I remembered well, he used to visit you when he was head ranger, and appeared to be on the most intimate terms with you. He asked me what business brought me to the palace, and when I had told him, 'You come,' said he, 'at a very fortunate time.' He then told me, dear father, of your position, how the head ranger persecuted you, how you had come in person to the palace, and had been obliged to return without redress or hope, a few days before my arrival. I proposed to go instantly to the prince. 'No, no,' said Mr. Müller, 'it would not do now. You can request an audience to-morrow morning, and I will accompany you. The affair is already in so promising a state that there is no doubt of a favourable reception.' Early on the following morning we had an audience. I introduced your business without delay, and told him with great warmth the circumstances in which I entered your house, and all that you had done for me. I went into the



minutest details. Mr. Müller often interrupted me with 'To the point—to the point!'—but the prince smiling, said, 'Let him speak. It is delightful to witness the gratitude of the son to his adopted parents; we shall know in time the point he wishes to make.' I then touched on Mr. Schilf, and told in plain terms the cause of his hatred of you—'He would have long since been in gaol for poaching,' said I, 'if the late prince had not been too merciful.' 'No, no,' said Mr. Müller, earnestly, 'you forget yourself—you forget to whom you are speaking. Princes cannot be too merciful. Mr. Schilf was at the time a very young man, and had on that grounds some claim to commiseration.' 'Go on, go on,' said the prince to me. I then showed him the letters, dear father, which you had written to me while I was in Italy; these letters I had unpacked the night previous. There was not one of those letters, in which you had not expressed your good wishes for the crown prince who was then in Italy. His highness was not satisfied with having those extracts I read for him, but was good enough to ask permission to peruse them all, and then kindly said, 'I now remember your speaking to me in Italy of this good father of yours. The man who can write such letters and who has educated such a son as you, cannot be a bad man.' 'Your highness must therefore punish the ranger, and give the old man's office to his son,' said I; but Mr. Müller reproved me severely. 'Is it thus you address your prince? Know you not that no one dares speak to a prince in a tone of command?' But the prince himself was not displeased. 'These matters, young man,' said he, 'are not so easily arranged as you think. I must first hear what the head ranger has to say in his defence.' He then called the councillor aside, and conversed with him for some time in the recess of one of the windows. The councillor then sat down to write; and the prince, turning to me, removed all my fears. 'Have no anxiety,' said he, 'all will be well.'

“He continued to speak to me of the pictures, while Mr.

Müller was writing. 'My father,' said he, 'left me a good gallery of paintings, I should like to know what you think of them. They are almost all damaged, and need restoration or new arrangement; I will employ you for that purpose, if you do not object.' 'Your highness confers a great honour on me,' I answered, 'but I cannot undertake the business until after the Christmas holidays. It was on Christmas-eve I first saw my revered adopted parents, and on Christmas-eve I wish to see them again, especially as they are so afflicted, and as I have it in my power to relieve and make them happy. 'You are perfectly right,' said the prince, 'I could not think of interfering with filial gratitude.'

"By this time Mr. Müller, having finished writing, handed the letter to the prince, who signed it. 'Remember me to your worthy father,' said he, 'and assure the good old man that he has nothing to fear.'

"'How familiarly you spoke to the prince!' said Mr. Müller to me, as we were going to my apartments. 'I endeavoured to restrain you, but you paid no attention to me. But your love for your adopted parents excuses you—and, indeed, the straightest road is always the shortest.' I then begged Mr. Müller to tell me what the prince had been saying to him, and what he had told him to write. After many entreaties, he at last told me, that the prince had confessed to him: 'How nearly have I been committing an act of injustice! Here is a deed appointing another man in the old forester's place. But I had so many doubts on the matter, that though the applicants thought their point secure, I never signed it. I must now examine the whole affair more closely.' He ordered Mr. Müller to write to the ranger instructions to the following effect—'That his highness had learned with great displeasure, the unworthy manner in which the forester Grünenwald had been treated by the ranger; who was strictly ordered not to presume to annoy in any manner, either the old forester himself or his son.' This order was sent off by express. 'For,' said the prince,

‘I feel it my duty to set the old man’s heart at ease, as soon as possible.’ Mr. Müller also desired to be remembered to you, and requested me to assure you, ‘that the arrangement of your affairs would not fail to be satisfactory, and that your son should succeed to your place.’”

Many a time during this recital, the old forester and his family were obliged to shed tears. When Anthony had done speaking, the old man rose and embraced him; and then taking the veil from the picture of the Birth of Christ, he raised his eyes to heaven, and with a heart overflowing with gratitude, exclaimed—“Let us join our voices in the hymn of the angels: ‘Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.’”

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

WHEN Anthony had finished his recital, he made many affectionate inquiries about the health of his dear foster-parents. He could not but remark with sorrow, how aged they had become since his departure; the tears came to his eyes when he saw their silvered locks and furrowed brows. But he said nothing, lest he might only increase their affliction. On the other hand, he was agreeably surprised to find Christian, Catherine, and Louisa in the full bloom of youth. “My God!” said he, drawing Christian’s children towards him, “how quickly time flies! Twenty years ago, Christian, Catherine, and myself were just such children as these, and Louisa was still younger; and now their children occupy our places!” He was much pleased with the little ones. “Tell me,” said he to them, “have you received any Christmas boxes?”

"Oh! no," said little Frank, "the ranger spoiled all our sport; he is a real Herod."

His mother reproved him for making such a remark.

"I am sure, Anthony," said little Clara, in her turn, "that it was an angel sent you here; but have you brought us a Christmas-box?"

"Oh, certainly," said he; "I have not forgotten you. But you must wait until my carriage comes. I packed everything in it." The children were now perfectly happy.

Supper was then served, but there was more talking than eating. The children soon retired to bed, but the rest of the family remained together some time longer.

"We must prepare some amusement for the little dears before morning," said Anthony. "We will have a 'Christmas Tree' for them. The Christmas Tree is as customary in some countries as the representation of the crib and stable is in others. Christian must consent, for the sake of his little children, to go this very night and cut down a fir sapling for us in the wood. I have brought with me all that we require to ornament it. I left my coachman and the horses (which were tired) at Eschenthal, and I took the mountain path on foot, but I expect my carriage and trunks before sunrise to-morrow."

Early the following morning, while the children were yet sound asleep, the whole family was busily employed preparing the Christmas Tree. A fine young fir, with its dark green tufted branches, was placed in a corner between the two windows. When the coach arrived, Anthony opened a large trunk, well supplied with every thing that could please a child. He hung up all his little presents on the branches of the Christmas Tree—fine fruit, all sorts of confectionary, little baskets of sugared almonds, garlands of artificial flowers tied with rose-coloured or sky-blue ribbons, and glittering play-things to please every taste. He arranged all very tastefully, and then placed wax lights in small tin lamps, which he hung up in such a way that

they illuminated, without burning, the tree. When all was ready, Catherine and Louisa were going to awaken the children, but Anthony said—"Do not bring them here, until I shall have lighted the lamps—their mother will call them."

The moment the children heard of the Christmas-boxes, sleep fled from their eyes. They feared they would never have their clothes on. The moment their mother gave the word, they were instantly in the parlour, and stood fixed to the ground, dazzled with the splendour and brilliancy that burst on their delighted eyes. For a few moments, they were so overpowered with the unexpected sight, that they could not say a word, but stood there with mouths half open and staring eyes, fixed on that dazzling tree. The rich dark green of the branches, the lights twinkling like stars, the bright red apples, the yellow pears, and the toys and ornaments of all colours, appeared to them like the work of enchantment. They hardly knew whether they were asleep or awake; but at last recovering the use of their speech; they both exclaimed, "oh! delightful! delightful!"

"Such a tree," said Frank, "so full of fine fruit, and in the depth of winter too, is not to be had in any part of our forest."

"Where could such trees grow," added Clara, "but in paradise or in heaven? Mother, was it not our Infant Saviour that sent us this tree?"

"No! not exactly so," answered the mother: "but it is to Him, the Saviour who once lay in a manger and who is now in heaven, that you owe the happiness you now enjoy; for had He never been born, you would neither have had presents nor happiness at Christmas."

"Oh," answered the children, "we must endeavour to love and obey Him; He is so good, and loves children so much. Can any joy be greater than what He brings us now?"

"Very true, dear children," said the grandmother;

“ what man, when he grows up, feels joy like yours at this moment? Innocent children are the happiest beings on earth ; their joys are pure and cloudless. May God preserve you pure and innocent. Ah,” said she, addressing the older members of the family, “ the happiness of more advanced age is too often embittered by care and affliction, by avarice, ambition, and other bad passions, and, worse than all, by the pangs of remorse. True, beautifully, impressively true, are the words of our Redeemer, that ‘ unless we become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ ”

The grandfather then added, “ This custom of ornamenting a Christmas Tree is very beautiful. It was a wise thought of our forefathers, to take every innocent means of recommending our Christian festivals to the love of children, by making them happy on those days. This simple pleasure makes them love the Holidays, and disposes their hearts to share in the spiritual joys prepared for us. No Christmas-eve shall ever pass away in my house henceforward, without its Christmas Tree for the children. It may not be as splendid as this, but it will make them equally happy. It is easy to please children ; a few apples, or pears, or gilded nuts are enough, if you have not better. No good parent will quarrel with the expense, when there is question of the pure happiness of his child. And may not the Christmas Tree, be a powerful help in the education of the child, and spare us the pain of the frequent use of the rod? for children who have once enjoyed a Christmas Tree, will remember it the whole year, and look forward with joyous anticipation to the next, and be more alarmed and kept in better order, by the threat of not having it, than by the severest punishments.”

The parents and the old couple thanked Anthony most warmly for the happiness he had provided for the children.

“ It is a trifle,” he answered, “ and scarcely deserves to be spoken of. But you must now, if you please, accept

a few Christmas presents from me." He then opened his trunk, which was lying in a corner of the room. "This trunk," said he, "you stocked abundantly for me, with all things necessary for my travels, it is but just, that it should not come back to you empty;" then presenting the good old woman with some silks and valuable furs, he added, "It is the duty of a good son to clothe his parents warmly during the hard weather." For the young wife and her sisters-in-law, he brought green sarcenets for dresses, Milan silk handkerchiefs, and other articles of dress. To Christian he gave a superb double-barrelled gun, the stock of which was of walnut wood, richly embossed with silver. "You, my dear father," said he, turning to the old man, "you must not hunt any more, you must now rest from your labours, you require something to strengthen you in your old days, here is a hamper of the best Rhenish wine, and here is a drinking cup." This was a beautiful silver cup, richly gilt on the inside. In the centre of a wreath of oak-leaves, the following inscription was engraved: "Presented on Christmas-day, 1758, to his dear father, Frederick Grünenwald, by his grateful son, Anthony Kroner, in remembrance of the Christmas-eve of 1740." The old forester wept with joy, and pressed Anthony to his heart. Anthony then presented him a roll of gold pieces, remarking at the same time, "Dear father, you spent a great deal of money on me, and it is not just that your children and grandchildren should suffer for my sake." The old man did not wish to accept the money. "It is no gift of mine," said Anthony, "our good prince has enriched me; and his liberality is doubly acceptable to me, because it enables me to give you a slight acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude, which I never can fully discharge." Every one present was deeply affected. "Oh, Anthony!" said the old woman, "who could have thought, on that Christmas eve when we saw you first, that you were one day to make a Christmas-day so happy for us as this; that your

interest with the prince would save us from ruin, and more than repay all the good we ever did for you!"

"It is God that has done all," said Anthony. "He led me to your house, that He might bless you through me. Glory be to His holy name!"

"But you must excuse me," he added, after a pause. "I must leave you for a while."

"Why, how?" they all exclaimed.

"I must go to Mr. Rudinger," said Anthony; "I expect to be in town in time for mass, and then to surprise my excellent master, and to bring him here with me to-night. We will pass the Christmas holidays very happily together."

They all accompanied Anthony to the coach. The same evening he returned with Mr. Rudinger: and the old keeper's lodge, in the centre of that gloomy forest, sheltered, for a few days, as happy a party as ever spent Christmas together.

The sequel of Anthony's story is briefly told. He asked Louisa in marriage from her parents, and was joyfully accepted. "Ah, Louisa," said the mother, "little did I think, when I saw you give your apple as a Christmas-box to Anthony, that he would one day lead you to the bridal altar." The wedding was the most joyful event that had ever taken place under the forester's roof. Anthony purchased a fine house in the capital; where he got plenty of employment, and rose high in his profession, living with his Louisa in the most happy harmony.

Next spring, the prince came unexpectedly to the hunting lodge at Felseck, accompanied by Mr. Müller and a strange gentleman, who was well versed in all things relating to forests. The head ranger was sorely alarmed at this visit, and suspected that it boded no good. "You exceeded my orders," said the prince to him. "Misled by your report, it is true, I did deprive the forester of his place, and arranged to give an inferior one to his son; but



I had not the least intention of inhumanly ejecting the whole family, as you dared to do. Come, let us see the woods."

The district immediately under the head-forester's care, was found to be in the most disordered state. "In the report which he forwarded," said the prince, "and which was drawn up with such care, the forests looked very well. But they appear very different to a person on the spot. There was evidently more timber in several places, than he has returned. The man has deceived me." In fact, the ranger had, as it afterwards clearly appeared, sold large quantities of wood to a neighbouring forge, without furnishing any account. To keep up his expensive mode of living, which was like that of a prince, and to gratify his profligate tastes, he had not only squandered away his own property and plunged himself in debt, but also proved dishonest to his prince. The prince deposed him on the spot, and commanded him to refund the amount. From that time poor Mr. Schilf lived in a small house in the country, with the little that remained of his paternal property.

The woods under the care of the forester, were found in the very best order. The prince paid him a visit, passed a high encomium on his virtues, and requested to be introduced to all the family, with whom he conversed for some time in the most gracious manner. When he was mounting the horse, which a servant was holding at the door, he turned to Christian, "You are forester now," said he, "see that you take good care of your charge." Then turning to the old man, he addressed him, "You are old, but not so feeble as Mr. Schilf represented you. Age has not deprived you of your strength, and I still require your services. You must take another office under me—and the appointment must not be deferred—so farewell—*Mr. Head-forester.*"

# THE EASTER EGGS.

## CHAPTER I.

“ALAS! THERE ARE NOT EVEN HENS HERE!”

MANY centuries ago, there dwelt in a little valley embosomed in mountains, a few poor charcoal-burners. The narrow valley was closed in on every side by trees and rocks. The huts of the poor peasants lay scattered around. A few cherry or plum-trees planted beside each hut—a little tillage and pasture land—a patch of flax and hemp—a cow and one or two goats, constituted all their riches, though they earned a trifle besides by burning charcoal for the iron-works in the mountains. Poor as they were, however, they were nevertheless a very happy little community, for they desired no more. Their hardy mode of life, their constant toil and rigid temperance, secured them perfect healthfulness; and in these poor little huts you might see, (what you would seek in vain in palaces) men above a hundred years of age.

One day when the corn was just beginning to colour, and the heat had become excessive in the mountains, a little charcoal-girl, who had been tending her goats, came running down out of breath, to tell her parents that strange people had arrived in the valley with singular dresses and an extraordinary accent:—a beautiful lady with two children and a very old man, who, though he also wore a very rich dress, seemed, notwithstanding, to be her servant.

“Ah,” said the little girl, “the poor people are hungry and thirsty and very tired. I met them in the mountains, as I was searching for a stray goat, entirely exhausted; and I showed them the way into our valley. We must bring them out something to eat and drink, and see whether, among the neighbours and ourselves, they cannot be accommodated for the night.”

Her parents immediately got some oaten bread, milk, and goat's cheese, and hastened out to meet them. The strangers, meanwhile, had been resting themselves under the cool shade of a bushy rock: the lady was sitting upon a moss-grown stone, and had drawn a white lace veil over her face. One of the children, a very pretty delicate little girl, sat upon her knee: the old servant, a man of most venerable appearance, was employed in unloading the mule which they had with them, and the other child, a handsome lively boy, was giving a handful of thistles to the mule, which ate them greedily.

The charcoal-burner and his wife approached the strange lady with great deference, for her elegant figure, noble bearing, and flowing white dress, proclaimed her to be of high rank. “Only look,” said the charcoal-burner's wife, in a low tone, to her husband; “only look at the beautiful pointed collar, and the fine lace cuffs which just give a half-glimpse of her delicate hands: and, my stars!—her shoes are as white as cherry-blossoms, and spangled with silver flowers!”

“Hold your tongue,” said her husband, “you are always thinking of some nonsense like this. Great folk are entitled to a distinctive dress; but after all, dress does not make a person one whit better, and the poor lady, notwithstanding her beautiful shoes, has had to walk many a weary step and traverse many a rough road!”

They advanced and offered their bread, milk, and cheese to the strange lady. She threw back her veil, and they were both filled with admiration of her beauty, and the noble but gentle expression of her features. She

thanked them warmly, and immediately gave a cup of the milk to the child in her lap: and the tears streamed down her fair cheeks, as the poor little thing clutched the cup fast with both her hands and drank eagerly. The pretty boy, too, came and drank. She then gave them some bread, and afterwards drank herself and ate some of the bread; while the strange man cut huge slices of the cheese, and seemed to enjoy it very much. Meanwhile the cottagers, young and old, came out of their huts, and stood round in a circle watching the new-comers with curious and wondering eyes.

As soon as the old man had done eating, he earnestly begged them to provide, in some of their huts, a little room for the lady for a short time, promising that she should not be a burden to them, but should pay liberally for everything.

“Ah, yes,” said the lady herself, in a soft pleasing voice, “do take pity on an unhappy mother and her two little ones, whom cruel fate has driven from their home!”

The men went together to consult in what house she could most conveniently be received. In the upper part of the valley there was a little stream which burst out from among the red marble cliffs, and fell from rock to rock in a mass of milky foam, turning in its course a mill which hung upon the edge of the precipice. On the opposite side of the stream the miller had built another pretty little house. Like all the other houses in the valley, indeed, it was but a wooden one; but it was extremely pretty, charmingly shaded by overhanging cherry-trees and surrounded by a garden. This house the miller offered the strange lady to take up her abode in.

“My new cottage, above, yonder,” said he, pointing with his hand, “I most cheerfully give up to you, just as it stands. It is perfectly new; no one has ever lived in it yet. I built it as a place to which I might retire when I should give up the mill to my son. How wondrously God (thanks to his mercy!) has provided for you! It was

only yesterday it was completed, and to-day you can take possession of it, just as if I had built it expressly for yourself. I am sure you will like it!"

The good lady was delighted with this friendly offer, and after she had rested herself a little, went up at once. She, herself, carried the little girl in her arms, and the old man led the boy by the hand, while the miller took charge of the mule. To the great joy of the miller, she was delighted with the little house. It was already provided with a table, and a few chairs and bed-steads. The lady had brought on the mule's back, some handsome carpets and coverlets; and thus she was able to take up her lodging at once for the night, thanking God in unison with the two little ones, that, after their long wanderings, He had brought them to so agreeable a retreat. "Who would have dreamed," she said, "that I, who have been brought up in palaces, should ever think myself happy in being able to take refuge in a little hut like this! How kind and condescending to the very humblest should we all be, no matter how high our station! even though we were hard-hearted enough not to do it from motives of benevolence, yet policy itself would suggest it, for no one knows what is before him."

Very early next morning, the lady and her two children came out of their cottage, to take a little survey of the surrounding country, for, the day before, they were too much fatigued to do so; she was charmed with the prospect. The huts of the charcoal-burners lay far below, as if sown in twos or threes in the green valley. The mill-stream wound, clear as silver, midway between the hills, and the variegated cliffs covered with green brush-wood, on which the goats were browsing, presented, in the beams of the morning sun, a picture which no art could surpass.

The miller, as soon as he saw the lady and her children, came out of the mill, across the narrow bridge which led over the little stream. "Well," said he, "am I not right in saying that there is not a prettier spot than

this in the whole valley? It is here the morning sun first makes his appearance: while the huts below still lie (as they do now) wrapt in deep shadow, everything up here is gilded by his beams! And even many a time when in the deep moist valley, the chimneys of the huts scarce shew themselves above the gray mist, we have the clear blue sky here!"

The children were delighted most of all with the mill-wheel, which was constantly turning round so nimbly. The little boy enjoyed above all things the clatter of the mill, and the roar of the water which boiled like foaming milk; but his sister, on the contrary, preferred the sparkling variegated diamonds, as she called them, which fell in the sunbeams from the dripping wheel.

The lady spent the day in settling herself as well as she could in this poor valley. The people vied with each other in providing her with provisions, firewood, earthen cooking vessels, and other little things; and the girl who first showed her the way into the valley, (and whose name was Martha,) came to her as servant.

"First of all, I want eggs," said the lady, as she was preparing to set about her cooking. "But be sure that you pay for them."

"Eggs?" asked Martha, in amazement. "Eggs!—what for?"

"What for, you foolish girl!" she replied—"for cooking of course! Go for them, and take care not to stay long."

"For cooking!" said the girl. "Why, the little birds are not laying eggs at this season; and besides it would be a pity;—it would take, at least, several hundred linnets' or chaffinches' eggs, to satisfy four people."

"What are you talking about?" said the lady. "Who is speaking of little birds' eggs? I am talking of hen-eggs."

"I don't know any such birds," said the girl, shaking her head. "I never saw one in all my life."

“Alas!” said the lady, “so there are not even hens here!”

For my little friends must know, that as our poultry came first from the east, hens were at one time as rare in some countries as pea-fowls are at present. The lady knew well that there could not be any meat procured to help out her humble cookery; “I never would have thought,” she said, “what a gift from God an egg is, until now that I cannot get one. And so it has been in my wanderings with many another thing. Distress and necessity have their advantages in making us recognise God’s gifts in many things which we had never observed before, and in teaching us to be grateful.”

The good lady was obliged to live very poorly: but the people were unremitting in bringing her whatever they thought she would like. If the miller caught a nice trout, or a charcoal-burner a few field-fares, they were sure to bring them to her directly. But there was no one so useful as the old servant whom she had brought with her. She still had a few golden trinkets and some jewels. These she gave to him, and he would go away and remain sometimes several weeks; but every time he returned, he brought all sorts of necessaries for her little house-keeping. The people observed, notwithstanding, that the lady was often very melancholy after his return, and that her eyes were red with weeping. They were very curious to know who she was, and whence she came; but they had not courage to ask herself, and the old man when they asked him, told them so many strange names which they could hardly pronounce, and forgot in a quarter of an hour, that they discovered in the end he was only making fools of them. They then turned to the children.

“Tell us,” said they to the little boy, “tell us what is your mother’s name. We shall not tell any one—whisper it to us!”

“Her name,” said the little boy with a very mys-

terious, but still an honest and open air, "*her name is—mamma!*"

The little girl's answers left them equally in the dark; and they were compelled to leave it to time to reveal the mystery.

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## CHAPTER II.

"THANK GOD WE HAVE GOT HENS HERE NOW!"

ON one occasion the old servant, whose name was Kuno, returned from his travels, carrying a hen-coop on his back, containing a cock and several hens. As soon as the children of the valley saw him coming, they all ran to meet him, for he never failed to bring them something—white bread, almonds, and raisins, a little pipe, a bell for their goats, or some such trifle.

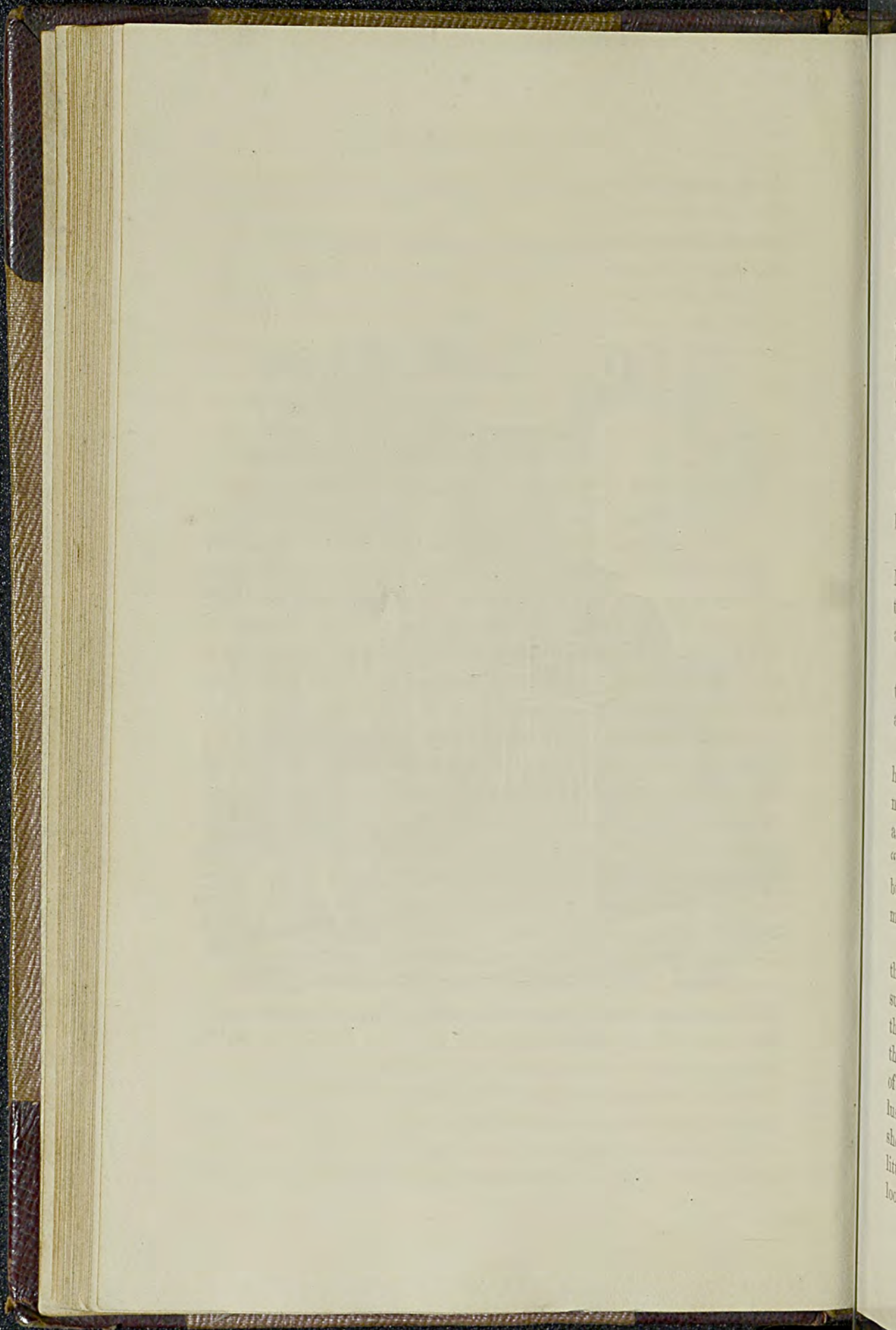
This time the children were very curious to know what he had in the latticed box, which was quite covered with cloth, so that no one could see in. They accompanied him to the door of his mistress, who came out with her children, and welcomed him warmly. "Thank God!" cried the little girl, "we have got hens here now!"

The man laid the coop down, and opened the doors. First came out a stately cock. The children were amazed, "What a strange bird!" they cried, for they did not know what its name was. "Never in our lives did we see such a fine bird. What a beautiful crown he has on his head—it is a prettier red than the red flowers in the corn, and his beautiful brown and yellow feathers, glitter more elegantly than the ripe grain in the evening sun! and see how proudly he carries his tail, which is crooked like a sickle." The hens too delighted them exceedingly. One pair was black, with red combs; another white, with tufts, and a third brown, without any tail. The lady





The man laid the coop down, and opened the doors ; first came out a stateLy cock.—  
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threw them a few handfuls of oats. The hens picked them up most busily, and the children stood, or knelt around them, looking on with delight depicted in their countenances.

When the corn was all eaten, the cock clapped his wings and crowed. The children burst into screams of laughter, and on their way home, the boys did nothing but cry out *kee-kee-ree-kee!* and the little girls imitated them, but not quite so loud. When they reached their homes, they all told of the wonderful birds, which were bigger than ring-doves, or even than ravens, and whose plumage was as beautiful, and more beautiful, than any of the birds of the forest.

“And if you only saw,” said the talkative little Mary, Martha’s younger sister, “what a curious little red cap they have on their head, such as never was seen before on any bird of the forest.”

The old people too became curious, and came to see the strange birds, and were no less astonished at their appearance.

After a while one of the hens began to hatch; and Martha had to feed her every day. One day the lady shewed the nest to the children of the valley, and they were amazed at the number of her eggs. “Fifteen eggs!” they cried. “Why the woodquests lay but two, other little birds but five eggs! How shall the hen ever be able to feed so many young ones?”

When the young birds were beginning to creep out of the shell, the lady wishing to amuse the children, sent to summon them. As it chanced to be a holiday, many of the old people came also. The lady shewed them an egg, the shell of which was chipped. What was the delight of the children when they saw the little bird peck so lustily in order to get out! The lady assisted it out of the shell; and now the wonder was still greater, to see the little bird quite covered over with pretty yellow down, and looking about so briskly with its little black eyes, and

able to run about at once, whereas other young birds come into the world, naked, blind, and quite helpless. "It is an unheard of thing!" they cried, "such birds are not to be found in the whole world."

When the beautiful glossy black hen, with her deep red comb, made her first appearance upon the village green, in the midst of her fifteen yellow chickens, the joy both of young and old knew no bounds. "There is no prettier sight!" cried a charcoal-burner. "And only listen!" said his wife, "how the old one calls her little ones; and how they understand and answer her call! I wish, children, that you were all equally obedient at our call!"

A little boy now attempted to catch one of the chickens, in order to get a closer view of it. The little thing uttered a piteous cry, and immediately the old one rushed up with out-spread wings, and flew in a rage at the head of the boy, who roared and screamed for help. She would have scratched out his eyes, had he not instantly let the bird go. The boy's father scolded him, and his mother said, "See how affectionately the faithful bird protects its young! We might all learn a lesson from her!"

Whenever the hen found a nice morsel, she immediately gave a cry, and the young birds all flocked to her; she would then break it up with her bill, and spread it before them, and every one was amazed that such little things, not much more than a day old, should be able not alone to run about, but to eat also.

On a sudden the sun was partially concealed behind a cloud. The young birds immediately ran under the old one's wings, and concealed themselves there to warm themselves. "That is the prettiest sight of all," said the people. "It is entertaining to see the little heads sticking out here and there under the hen's wings, or a little bird venturing out for a moment, and then creeping in again at the other side."

"How singular are those strange birds!" said the

millar, whose white-powdered coat made him remarkable among the black charcoal-burners, but who was also possessed of a higher order of intellect. "God manifests himself to us, it is true, everywhere in all His works, but when we meet anything extraordinary, His omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness, strike us more sensibly. How wisely is it provided, that these little birds are able to run about and eat so early; for if the old one had to carry food for so many in her bill, like the swallow, she never would be able to feed them! What a wise arrangement that the natural instinct of the young birds, leads them to follow the old one's call! Being able to run about, they scatter in all directions; she would never be able otherwise to collect them, and they should be lost. But what surprises me most of all, is the spirit with which she defends her young so gallantly. I have often been annoyed by these fowl, and set them down as stupid birds, because they would always fly in every direction with fear whenever I passed them, though from long observation they might have known I never did them any harm; but now the brood-hen has completely changed her nature, and will fight a man in defence of her brood. So also, I have often laughed to witness hens fight for a morsel of food, and to see how one that chances upon a large piece, will grudge to share it, and will run away at once with the whole flock at her heels trying to take it from her. But this hen has quite forgotten her greediness; she calls the young ones herself, and never touches a morsel till they are satisfied. I think the poor bird would sooner die of hunger herself, than let her young ones starve! Now, it is God who has implanted in this bird the tender solicitude with which she leads her young about, provides food for them, brings them up, protects them, and shelters them under her wings. So tenderly does God provide for these little chickens! and why should we despond? Will He not be more solicitous for us? Most assuredly He will. Courage, then, my dear

friends! 'God doth all things well.' His providence watches over all His creatures, but especially over man, who is more precious in his eyes than all the hens and all the other birds in the world!"

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### CHAPTER III.

"NOW THERE ARE EGGS IN ABUNDANCE!"

As the good people of the valley had been so uniformly kind and obliging to the strange lady, she had long been thinking of making them some return, and of enabling them to improve the poor fare on which they lived. With this view she had been very sparing of her eggs and young chickens; and when she had collected a good stock of both, she sent Martha to the valley to invite all the housewives to a little rustic feast on the following day, which was Sunday. They came with the greatest pleasure, and in all their holiday finery. The old servant had constructed a simple table with a few benches in the little garden, and here they all took their places.

Martha then brought in a large basket of eggs, which were all the purest and most spotless white, just like snow. The good dames were no little astonished at the multitude of eggs. "Thank God!" said the lady, "we now have eggs in superabundance. It is a very pretty sight to see so many white eggs all together; but I must now shew you how they are to be used in your house-keeping."

A fire had been lighted under a rock in a corner of the garden, and over it hung a pan filled with water. The lady first broke an egg to shew them its appearance before it was put into the hot water. They all observed the clear crystal liquid in which the yolk was floating, like a

yellow ball. She then boiled as many pairs of eggs as there were guests at the table, which was already furnished with salt and long slices of white bread. The lady then shewed them how to open the eggs, and they were all astonished to see that what before was transparent, had become as white as milk, and that the yellow part had become solid; and when, at her bidding, they ate the eggs with their bread, they praised the excellence of the fare. "We have the dish and the food both together here!" said they. "And what a nice pure white and yellow it is! How quickly too, without trouble or expense, an egg is cooked! And for a sick person, where could there be found a cheaper or more nourishing food?"

The lady then broke some eggs into melted lard, and this was a new subject of wonder for the simple guests. "How prettily the yellow is encircled by the white!" said they—"just like the larger white and yellow ox-eyes in the meadows!" The eggs were then laid one by one upon green spinach, which stood prepared in a large flat dish, and this dish too met universal approbation. In this way the lady prepared other dishes of eggs also, and shewed the housewives that the eggs not only furnish in themselves, and by themselves, an excellent and healthful food, but may also be used with great advantage in preparing other dishes, especially puddings of different kinds.

A dish of nice green salad was now laid upon the table, and Kuno brought a plate full of eggs, which had already been boiled hard, in order that they might have time to cool. The waggish old fellow let the eggs fall in jest, so that they rolled about on the stony ground. The women were so terrified, that they screamed aloud, thinking that the eggs would all be spilled about. But what was their amazement when the lady peeled off the shells quite clean, and every egg proved so hard, that it could be cut in pieces! It seemed to them a miracle; but the lady told them how eggs are boiled hard, and laid the nice slices

down upon the salad. Her guests were equally delighted with this dish also.

After dinner was over, she distributed some cocks and hens among the housewives, telling them that a hen would lay in the year from a hundred to a hundred and fifty eggs. "Above a hundred eggs!" they cried in amazement. "What a help that will be to our housekeeping!" They were received with the utmost delight throughout the valley; every house was full of exultation, and every one blessed the good lady, and thanked God for so nice and so beneficial a present.

For a length of time the hens were the subject of daily conversation. The people were constantly observing in them something new which was at once amusing and beneficial. The cock's habit of crowing in the morning, especially gratified the fathers. "He announces the approach of day," they said, "and summons men to their daily labour. It is quite a new life in the valley since the cocks have begun to crow together this way, and the people all go regularly and cheerfully to their work."

"Indeed it is!" said the miller, "and when the cock gives his first crow towards midnight, it is a loud signal to all merry-makers, that it is high time to be going to bed!"

The housewives on the other hand were pleased with the cackling of the hens after they lay their egg. It was always a joyous sound in the house. "We now know it," they would say, "and can go to take possession of the useful present they have brought us!"

Many a time would they all say to one another: "these fowls were really made by God to be domestic birds:—they keep so close to the house, never leaving it far, and always returning when they are called, and even coming home in the evening themselves, and waiting at the door or window till they get admission; and then it is not only that they are most useful, but it hardly costs anything to keep them. They are very fond of bran, or the refuse of vegetables and other offal, which would not be of any



other use in the house; and they even go about outside from morning till night, scraping and searching out food for themselves; and thus turn to man's use many a thousand grains of corn which would otherwise be lost in the harvest or the threshing time. The hens gather them up industriously, and give us eggs in their place. The poorest widow who would not be able to keep any other domestic animal, can at least buy and feed a hen, and the egg this hen will daily lay, is a daily alms for her poor mistress!"

The lady's own children, too, saw (what they had never before observed in their days of abundance,) what a rich gift from God eggs are. How delighted were they now, when in the morning they could have a custard for breakfast; and how much did they relish many a flour-pudding which before had seemed to them very insipid, because it wanted eggs to flavour it! How grateful were they to God for this!

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE COLOURED EGGS—A CHILDREN'S FEAST.

MEANWHILE summer and autumn passed, and the winter came. In this wild region it was very severe. For months together the little huts in the valley lay as if buried in snow; the smoking chimneys and part of the roofs alone appearing above the white covering. Not a bit of the space between the rocks could be discerned; the mill stood still, and the waterfalls hung stiff and noiseless upon the cliffs. Neighbours seldom could meet each other now; and this of course heightened the delight of all, when the snow disappeared, and spring returned once more.

The children of the valley immediately came up to the mill, and brought to the two little strangers, Edmund and

Blanda, the earliest violets and cowslips which they could find in the valley; and as soon as there was a sufficient stock of these sweet spring flowers, they plaited for them a most beautiful blue and yellow garland.

“I must make some return to these affectionate children, also,” said the noble lady. “I shall get up a little rural festival for them next Easter-day; for it is right to make these holidays as agreeable as possible to children. But what shall I give them?—At Christmas I was able to give them apples and nuts which I had brought here for the purpose; but at this season one has nothing in the house but a few eggs. Nature has not yet produced her rich stores. The trees and bushes are without fruits or berries:—eggs are the earliest present of reviving nature!”

“Ah, yes!” said Martha, “if the eggs were not so much all of one colour. White is a nice colour, indeed, but the various hues of the fruits and berries, and the nice red cheeks of the apples are far prettier.”

“Your suggestion is not a bad one,” said her kind mistress. “I will boil the eggs hard, and colour them in the boiling, as may easily be done. The children, I am sure, will be highly delighted with the motley colours.”

The intelligent lady was acquainted with different roots and mosses, which may be used for dying; and she coloured the eggs in a variety of ways; some she made azure, others yellow as citron, others a beautiful rose colour, and some she wrapped in tender green leaves, which left their impress on the eggs, and gave them an extremely pretty variegated appearance. On some of them she wrote a little rhyme.

“Yes,” said the miller, when he saw them, “these coloured eggs are just suited for the festival, now that nature has laid aside her white attire, and tricks herself out in all her varied hues. The good lady does just like our merciful God, who not only gives His fruits an agreeable flavour, but also makes them beautiful and pleasing

to the eye ;—as He dies the cherry red, the plum purple, and the pear yellow, so does she die her eggs !”

The lady now sent Martha round the valley to invite all the children, who were of the same age as Edmund and Blanda, to a little juvenile festival on Easter-day.

Easter-day, this season, proved an extremely beautiful spring-day—a true resurrection of nature. The sun seemed so lovely and warm, the sky so clear and blue, that it was really charming, and imparted new life to every thing around. The meadows in the valley were already a lovely green, and here and there variegated with flowers. Every one enjoyed the scene, and you could not see a single face that did not speak of enjoyment and happiness.

Long before day-break, the lady and old Kuno were upon their way to the church, which lay at a distance of more than two miles beyond the mountains, Edmund and Blanda remaining at home meanwhile, under Martha's care ; and the grown people of the valley, with the elder children, whose strength was equal to the journey, accompanied her to church. Towards mid-day the lady reached home, riding on the mule which Kuno led, but it was long after this hour, in fact, nearly evening, when the cottagers and their children returned.

The moment the lady returned, her little guests who had been left at home, and were anxiously longing for her return, came up full of joy and drest out in all their little finery, and assembled before her door. She came out with Edmund and Blanda, saluted them all affectionately, and brought them into the garden, which Kuno had taken great pains in improving last year, and had extended to the foot of the precipice. The lady sat down on a little bench under a tree, and called the children close to her. They all thronged around, and looked up to her with cheerful and affectionate smiles.

“Now, my dear children,” said she, “do you know why this is so joyous a festival for us ?”

“Oh, yes,” they cried, “because it was this day that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.”

“And, perhaps, you can tell me how it occurred?” she continued. “You know it was for love of us He died and was buried. What came to pass afterwards?”

Martha's little sister looked around the garden, and then at the overhanging precipice.—“Yes!” said she, “His tomb also was in a garden, and was hewn out of a rock. It was closed with a great high stone like a door. He had foretold that in three days He would rise again from the dead. They would not believe Him, but He kept His word. For what befel? The holy angels, as before they had appeared at His crib, now also appeared at His tomb. On the morning of the third day an angel came down from heaven, and rolled away the stone from the tomb. His robes were white as snow, and a brilliancy more dazzling than lightning surrounded him. Other beautiful resplendent angels, too appeared, and Jesus Christ came forth from the tomb with new life, more fair and brilliant than all the angels of heaven! Pious women came to visit the tomb, and as angels had announced to the shepherds of old the joyous message of Christ's birth, so they now announced to the sorrowing women, the glorious tidings of His resurrection. ‘Why seek ye the living among the dead?’ said the angel, ‘He is arisen, as He foretold!’”

“Very well, indeed,” said the lady, “you have attended very well to what I told to you, and to Edmund and Blanda. I will now tell you the rest.—After the disappearance of the angels, Jesus Christ revealed himself first to one of the pious women who had come alone to his tomb. At first, in order not to alarm her, He took the form of a gardener, but He immediately made Himself known, called her affectionately by her name, ‘Mary!’ in his own dear familiar voice; and she fell upon her knees in wonder and adoration, exclaiming, ‘O, my master!’ with a heart full of heavenly joy.

“The rest of the women were returning from the empty tomb, full of joy at the happy news of His resurrection; it was a lovely spring morning, and as they were entering the city Jesus met them, and saluted them in a friendly voice; they fell upon their knees, and embraced His feet with sentiments of joy and adoration. On the same day two of His disciples were upon their way to a village named Emmaus, and in their sorrow and affliction, they could not speak of anything but His death; when he joined them under the semblance of a traveller, explained for them the scriptures in which it was foretold that Christ should suffer and die, and rise again from the dead. They besought Him, when they reached their dwelling, to tarry the night with them, as it was already evening. He complied, sat down with them at table, manifested Himself to them at the breaking of the bread,—and disappeared, while their hearts glowed with joy and adoration.

“On another occasion the apostles, out of fear of the murderers of Jesus, had shut themselves up in a room, when on a sudden He stood in the midst of them, and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ They were astonished, and imagined that it was a spirit they saw. But when He shewed them the marks of His wounds, and treated them with the same familiarity as before His death, they saw that it was really He, and were filled with inexpressible joy. One of the apostles, Thomas, was not present, and refused to credit the rest when they told him that Jesus was risen, and that they had seen Him. But when they were again assembled in the hall with Thomas amidst them, He appeared once more upon a sudden,—and Thomas fell down prostrate before Him, crying out, ‘my Lord and my God!’”

The children had all listened, with great attention, to this simple history. The lady proceeded to explain the nature of the festival, by which it is commemorated.

“I must now tell you,” said she, “what reason we, also, have to rejoice, with all our hearts, in the Resurrection

of our Lord. Jesus Christ has proved to the world, by His resurrection, that His Heavenly Father sent Him into the world to bring eternal life to men. He has given us therein the amplest and most beautiful evidence of a future life, by coming forth from the tomb, triumphant in His own person over death. And what could be more consoling and cheering, than the hope of this new and never-ending life, which He promises us after death? In the fulfilment of the prediction of His own resurrection, He has given us a guarantee of ours. Well might He say, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believeth in me, though he be dead, shall live—Amen I say unto you, that the hour cometh, when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall go forth and shall live!'

She pointed to the garden and the surrounding country.

"My dear little children," said she, "every thing that you see in this sweet spring season, whether here in the garden, or yonder in the valley, or the mountains, confirms what Jesus Christ has said of the resurrection and the new life. Look around! See the trees, which a few days since stood yonder, dry, leafless, and as it were dead, have now found a new life, and deck themselves out once more in fresh green leaves. Thousands of beautiful gay butterflies and insects, which a little while ago were dull and unsightly grubs, creeping about upon the leaves or burrowing in the earth, are now provided with wings and issue forth, like new creatures, from their graves, rejoicing as it were in their new existence. The flowers yonder in the beds, come forth from the dark earth—they too have their resurrection! Jesus Christ reminds us of all these wonders of nature, in the beautiful parable of the grain of corn which is laid in the earth, and there moulders into dust, only to rise again in the form of a rich and beautiful ear. And thus every ear of corn, every flower, every blade of grass unites in proclaiming to man, 'I have risen

from the dead; and so shalt thou, O man, when thou shalt have been laid in the tomb!"

She paused for a moment, and looked around among her little hearers.

"My dear children," she resumed, "I see among you a brother and sister drest in mourning for their mother, who died a few days since. How bitterly did ye cry, when you saw them lay your dear mother in the grave! The tears come into your eyes afresh, when I but allude to it again. But take comfort, my good children. Your dear good mother, too, shall rise again. As the disciples of Jesus, who had been filled with sorrow for the death of their Lord and Saviour, saw Him once again, and were inexpressibly overjoyed at the sight, so shall you, too, once more behold your dear mother, and recognise her beloved features no longer disfigured by death, but illumined with heavenly beauty! How indescribably happy shall you then be! O, weep no more then; dry your tears, and let us all be joyous! For there is a resurrection—an eternal life! Let us rejoice in this thought, and give God praise and thanks for it, for to-day, all pious Christians, throughout the wide earth, rejoice and sing 'Alleluia!—Praise ye the Lord!' Let us, too, join in this hymn of joy!

"But I am keeping you too long," said she, rising from her seat. "Come with me!"

She brought the children to the shelter of the rock, where Kuno had prepared a large oval table upon a nice gravelled spot. The table was covered with a variegated coverlet, and seats of fresh green sods were arranged around it. The children, with Edmund and Blanda in the midst of them, took their places at it. Every eye beamed with joy, and with anticipation of the coming entertainment, and it would not be easy to imagine a sight more interesting, than the little circle of yellow and brown locks and blooming faces which surrounded the table. "A wreath

of the most beautiful lilies and roses," said the lady to herself, "is nothing in comparison with it!"

A large earthen dish, filled with warm custard, was now placed upon the table, and each of the little guests had a nice new bowl, filled with the custard, set before him. They enjoyed it exceedingly. The lady then brought them out through a side-gate of the garden, into the little pine-grove which stood close by. There were nice green plats of grass between the young trees, and here the lady directed each of the children to make a little nest with the moss which grew in profusion upon the rocks and trees round about. They joyfully obeyed; those who were not able to make the nest of themselves, being assisted by the more expert of their companions; and then they all carefully marked their own nests.

She brought them back again into the garden; when lo! they found upon the table a huge cake, made with eggs, and shaped like an immense crown! Each of the children was helped to a large slice, and while they were eating, Martha slipped privately into the grove with a large basketful of coloured eggs, and distributed them through the little nests. The blue, red, yellow, or variegated eggs, presented a very pretty appearance through the delicate green moss, of which the nests were formed.

When the children had finished eating, the lady called them to come and look at their nests—and lo!—in every nest were found five eggs of the same colour, with a verse upon one of the number. What shouts of delight burst from the children at the sight! It would be impossible to describe their joy!

"Red eggs! red eggs!" cried one. "In my nest there are none but red eggs!"

"And in mine there are blue ones," cried another, "as blue as the sky above!"

"Mine are yellow!" shouted a third, "yellower than the cowslip, or the pretty yellow butterfly yonder!"

"And mine are all colours!" cried a fourth, still more delighted.



“ Oh, what pretty hens they must be,” said a little boy, “ that lay such nice eggs! I wish I could see them!”

“ Nonsense!” said Martha’s sister, “ it never could be hens that laid these nice eggs! I am sure it must have been the little hare, that leaped out of the juniper-bush yonder, and ran off, while I was trying to make my nest in it!”

The children all laughed, and said in jest. “ So the hares lay coloured eggs.” And this jest is retained, in many countries, to the present day.

“ What a little thing,” thought the lady, “ is capable of giving people pleasure! Who is there that should not give freely? for it is happier to give than to receive. Who would not be a child? Among grown-up people, those only can hope to experience such pleasure as this, whose hearts are pure and innocent. They alone continue to live in childhood’s paradise—the heaven of innocent enjoyment!”

She then suggested another amusement for the children. Many of those who got only blue eggs, would like to get a red or a yellow one, and the others, in turn, would wish for a similar transfer. The lady, therefore, told them they should exchange with one another, only taking care not to give away the one that had the verses on it. This was a new source of amusement, for in this way, every child got eggs of all colours.

“ Recollect,” said the lady, “ people should always help one another in this way. With a thousand other things, it is just as it is with these eggs. God has divided His gifts in such a way, that men may mutually share them with each other, and thus mutually give and receive each other’s love. Would that in every barter or sale, as in your little egg-traffic, both parties could always gain, and neither lose!”

Little Edmund now read out his rhyme. One of the little village boys who heard him, was astonished at it, for at that time there were very few schools, and many a

one grew up without ever thinking that there was any use in either reading or writing. The little boy at once became anxious to hear what was written on his egg.

“ Oh, a very pretty rhyme !” said the lady. “ Here it is,—

‘ To thee our earthly food we owe,  
Grant us, O Lord, thy gifts to know.’

She asked the children whether they had always remembered this counsel ; and it was not till then they thought of thanking God, at the suggestion of the lady, for the pleasant entertainment and the pretty eggs He had sent them.

And now every child must hear what was written on his egg. They crowded round the lady, and all the little hands were held up to her, each with an egg thrust forward.

“ What is on mine ?” they all cried out together. “ What is on mine ? Tell me mine ! Oh, read mine first !”

The lady was obliged to make peace among them ; and having ranged them in a circle round about her, she read the rhymes one after another. Every one was most curious to know what was his, and they all fixed their eyes steadily upon her while she was repeating the rhyme.

They all consisted of but a few simple and unstudied words, and were inscribed both on the eggs which she had already distributed, and on another set which she afterwards shared among the children. They were as follows :

One thing is needful—only one—  
Love God, my child, and Him alone.

Sin not : for lo ! God’s sleepless eye  
Looks down upon thee from on high.

To thee our earthly food we owe,  
Grant us, O Lord, thy gifts to know !

The faithful soul, in grateful love,  
Mounts to its God, in heaven above.

On God's protecting arm rely ;  
To Him in all thy sorrows fly !

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Doubly accursed the sinner's lot—  
Forgetting God, by God forgot.

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A double blessing their's shall be,  
Who serve their Maker faithfully.

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Wouldst thou eternal life secure?—  
Live ever pious, good, and pure.

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A docile child, its parents' will,  
Is ever ready to fulfil.

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A stubborn spirit, in its train  
Is sure to bring disgrace and pain.

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If thou wouldst live exempt from care,  
Learn but "to bear and to forbear."

---

Think, when thy cheeks with blushes glow,  
'Tis but thy God who warns thee so.

---

Better than pomp and pride of dress,  
The garb of maiden lowliness.

---

The liar's steps shame will pursue ;  
His word is doubted, even when true.

---

Hypocrisy, the coward's sin,  
Though fair without, is foul within.

---

He who would live from sickness free,  
Must eat the bread of industry.

---

Disease, and pain, and wretchedness,  
Walk in the footsteps of excess.

---

A truly good and pious man,  
Assists his neighbour when he can.

Strife, hatred, and vindictiveness,  
Rob life of all its happiness.

---

But gentleness and self-control,  
Bring peace and comfort to the soul.

---

Soft is his couch, his slumber sound,  
Within whose conscience peace is found.

---

They who live righteous here below,  
Alone true peace and pleasure know.

---

Would that my thoughts might ever be  
Fixed upon thee, Eternity!

---

The world and all its joys decay;  
Virtue alone endures for aye.

Every child attended especially to his own rhyme, and continued repeating it to himself in order not to forget it. The lady then interrogated them round about, to try whether each one remembered his own rhyme. Here and there a little help was necessary, but in a short time they were all able to repeat their own without stammering, and many of them could tell even the rhymes of the others also. By degrees almost every child came to be able to say all the rhymes by heart; if they got the first word, they could, with hardly an exception, repeat all the rest; or at all events, if the first half were given them, they were sure to be able to finish the second. Never before had they learnt so much and so easily, though laughing and enjoying themselves all the time.

The old people and the bigger children, who had come home meanwhile, and heard the noisy merriment which was re-echoed in the valley below, came running up to see and hear what was going on. The children ran, full of joy, to their parents, shewing them their eggs and repeating their rhymes. The parents were quite amazed. "At home," said they, "the children hardly learn in half a year, as much as they have here learnt in half an hour.

How true it is that, 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.'

"But how to make it a play for the children"—said the miller, "'tis there the art lies—there is the real difficulty! But this is something like learning!—it is, in fact, a miniature code of morals for children. How happy a knack the lady has with children!"

She now presented coloured eggs and cakes to the rest of the children. "You may eat the coloured eggs at home," said the lady; "but the eggs with the rhymes you must preserve as a keepsake."

"You may be sure we shall not eat them!" they all cried. "We will take great care of them—the rhyme is worth more than the egg."

"Undoubtedly it is," said the lady, "provided you follow the lesson which it teaches you."

She advised the parents to take every favourable occasion of reminding the children of their rhymes. They followed her counsel, and when a child was dilatory in obeying, his father would raise his finger and say,

A docile child, its parents' will,

and the child would immediately supply the rest—

Is ever ready to fulfil,

and at once do what he was directed. In the same way when a child attempted to tell a lie, the mother would remind him of the rhyme about lying; and the child's sense of shame would arrest the lie even upon his lips. It was equally successful in every other instance.

Many a time the children declared that they never had spent so delightful a day. "Very well," said the lady, "be careful to follow the lessons which your rhymes teach, and I will give you a similar entertainment every year. But no naughty or undutiful child shall be admitted, for it is to be a feast only for good children."

O how good and dutiful the children in the valley thenceforth became!

## CHAPTER V.

A PAIR OF EGGS, WORTH MORE THAN THEIR  
BULK OF GOLD.

AMONG the lookers-on at this little festival, the lady had observed a strange lad, whose dejected appearance in the midst of so gay a group attracted her attention. He was about seventeen years old; he was very poorly clad, but his appearance was very engaging, and his complexion fresh and blooming; his yellow locks hung down upon his shoulders and he carried a long walking pole in his hand.

When the crowd had for the most part dispersed, the lady asked him, in a very compassionate tone, why he was so melancholy.

“Alas!” said the youth, while the big tears gushed into his eyes, “alas! my father, who was a stone-cutter, died but three weeks ago, and my mother and my little brother and sister are thus left in the greatest distress. My mother’s brother, who is also a stone-cutter, is to take me and teach me my father’s trade, to enable me to support my mother and advance myself in the world. I am on my way to him just now. I have already travelled twenty miles, and I have about as much more to travel still; for my uncle lives far from this in a different part of the mountain.”

The lady was deeply moved, especially as the fate of the poor stone-cutter’s widow somewhat resembled her own. She gave him some custard and a slice of cake, together with some money for his mother’s support. Edmund and Blanda were deeply concerned for him.

“There,” said Blanda, “bring this red egg to your little sister, and remember me warmly to her.”

“And here,” said Edmund, “bring this blue one to your little brother, and tell him he must come to see us, and we will give him hot milk and nice rich cakes.”

His mother smiled. She also took out a painted egg. “This egg,” said she, “is for your mother.—The rhyme upon it is the best comfort I can offer her.

‘ On God’s protecting arm rely :  
To Him in all thy sorrows fly !’

The egg, therefore, will not be unsuited for her condition, and if she follow its little lesson, it will prove the happiest present the whole world could afford !”

The young man thanked her cordially. The miller gave him a bed for the night, and the next morning, as soon as the highest peaks of the cliffs, which surrounded the valley, were purpled by the sun’s earliest beams, he cheerfully resumed his journey, the worthy miller furnishing his knapsack with a supply of oaten bread and goat’s cheese.

Fridolin (for that was his name,) proceeded steadily through the mountains, over high cliffs and through deep vallies. On the evening of the third day, he was within a couple of miles of his uncle’s house, when lo ! as he was clambering down the narrow path at the foot of a high beetling rock, and looking down with horror into the deep and fearful chasm which lay below, he espied, between the bushy rocks, a horse saddled and bridled, the saddle housings richly adorned with purple, and the bit apparently of solid gold. The horse looked up at him, and neighed as if he were rejoiced to see a human being, and wished to welcome him by this expression of his joy.

“Good heaven !” cried the youth. “How did the poor beast get down into that deep ravine ! He must have had a rider—God grant that no accident has befallen him ! It is a startling thing to see a horse saddled and bridled, in such a place, without a rider—I cannot but be alarmed. I must examine all around !” He endeavoured

to clamber down, but for a long time without success, though he was very expert in mountain climbing; but at last he discovered, between the rocks, a narrow passage which had been scooped out by some wintry torrent, but was now entirely dry. By this means he got down in safety; and there he discovered a man of noble aspect and knightly costume, lying under an over-hanging rock. His glittering helmet and waving plume lay beside him, and his lance a little farther off: but he looked so excessively pale, that the lad could not tell whether he was dead or only asleep. He went up to him, and taking him by the hand, asked him, in a friendly voice, what was the matter with him.

The man opened his eyes, stared at the youth, sighed and endeavoured to speak, but could not utter a word. He pointed to his mouth, and then to the helmet which lay by his side. Fridolin saw that he wanted a drink, and hastened off with the helmet for water. Having seen a few willows deep down in a corner of the ravine, he knew there must be water in the neighbourhood, and accordingly he soon found marshy ground; and pursuing his course for a little while among rocks and brushwood, he at last found a clear little stream, pure as crystal, gushing from beneath a mossy rock. He filled the helmet and hastened back to the thirsty stranger. The poor man drank repeatedly and in long draughts. At last, by degrees, his speech was restored.

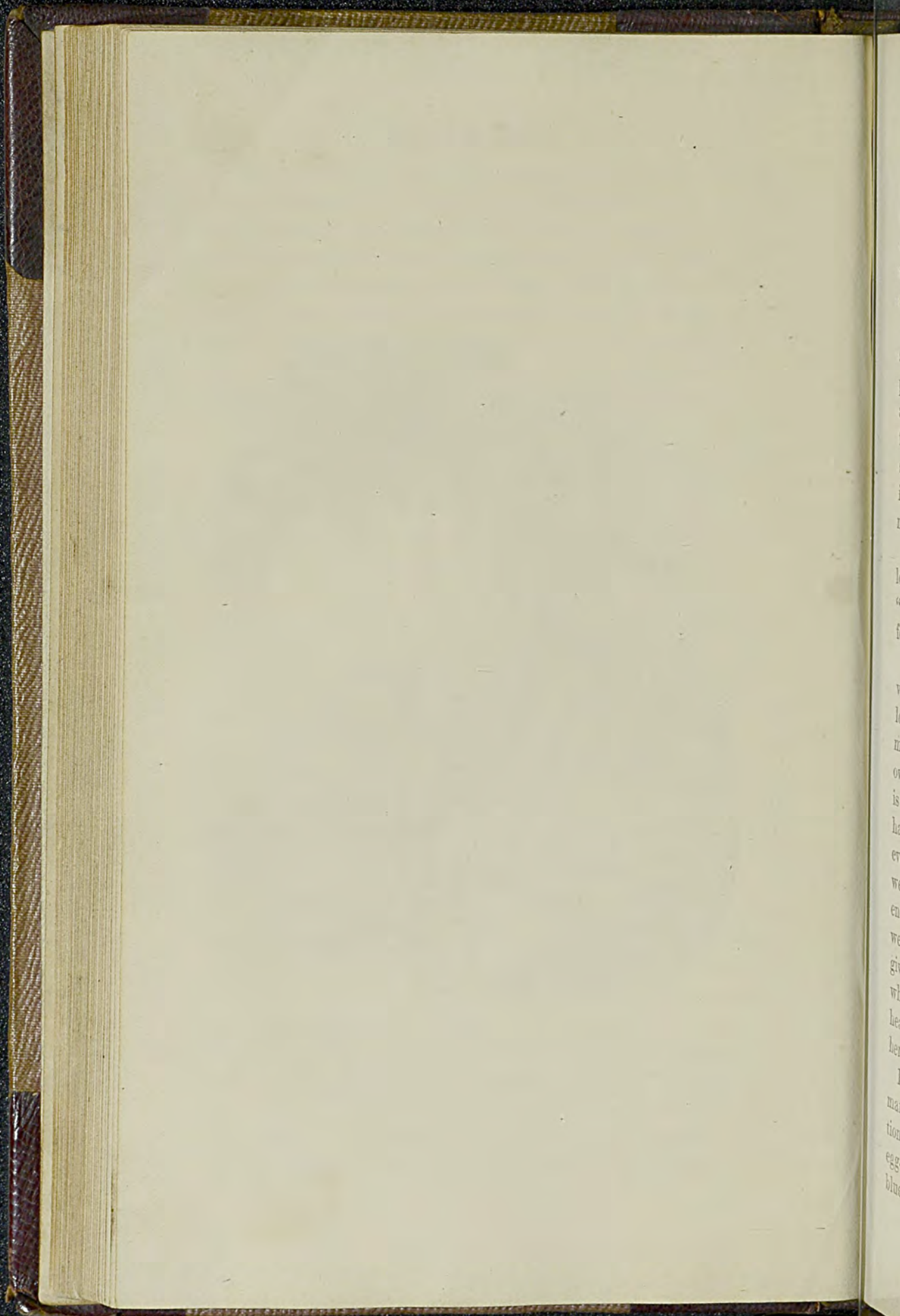
“Thank God!” was the first word he uttered. “And thanks to you also, kind youth,” he continued, in a husky voice, raising his head upon his hand. “It was God who sent you to save me from death. But I am starving—perhaps you have a bit of bread also?”

“O my God!” cried Fridolin, “if I had known it sooner! The oaten bread and goat’s cheese which I had in my knapsack is all exhausted. But stay, stay!” cried he, joyfully. “I have the eggs still, and they will be an excellent strengthening food for you.” He sat down on the





By this means he got down in safety ; and there he discovered a man of noble aspect and knightly costume, lying under an over-hanging rock. His glittering helmet and waving plume lay beside him, and his lance a little farther off : but he looked so excessively pale, that the lad could not tell whether he was dead or only asleep.—p. 92.



mossy ground beside the stranger, took out the coloured eggs, peeled one of them, cut it into long slices, like an apple, with his pocket-knife, and gave them one by one to the man. He ate—then took another draught, and ate again.

Fridolin was going to peel the third egg. But the man said: "Let it alone. It is not good to eat much, especially after a long fast. I have enough for the present; and I never ate with such relish in my life:—it was a feast for a king!—Thank God! I feel myself much stronger now," he continued, rising upon his feet. "Oh, if you had not come, I would certainly have perished this night!"

"But how comes it, noble knight?" said Fridolin, looking closer at his shining mail and embroidered dress. "How comes it that I find you and your horse in this fearful chasm?"

"I am but an esquire," he replied. "For several weeks I have been travelling on my master's business. I lost my way in this wooded mountain. Night overtook me; and suddenly, in the darkness, I fell with my horse over the steep precipice into this ravine. The horse, which is a very active, sure-footed animal, escaped unhurt, but I have sprained my foot so badly, that I cannot walk, nor even mount my horse again. But it is a miracle that we were not both dashed to pieces. I cannot be grateful enough to God for my escape. I bound my wounds as well as I was able; but a violent fever set in, and I had given myself up to die of hunger among these rocks, when you, kind youth, appeared like an angel from heaven. What is your name, and how have you come here into this desert lonely waste?"

Fridolin told him his name and his story, to which the man listened attentively and asked him all sorts of questions. "It is very strange," said he, glancing at the egg-shells which lay scattered on the moss, "to see them blue and red in this way. I never saw such eggs before.

Will you let me examine the whole one which you have put back into your knapsack?"

Fridolin shewed it to him and told him how he had gotten it. He examined it very closely, and the tears gushed into his eyes.

"My God!" he cried, "what I see here is indeed true.

' On God's protecting arm rely:  
To Him in all thy sorrows fly!'

I have just had experience of it. I prayed fervently to God for help in this chasm, and He has heard my prayer. All praise to his mercy; and blessings on the little children who gave you the eggs!—Little did they dream that they would prove the means of saving a stranger's life! Blessings on the good lady, too, who wrote upon it these consoling lines!"

"Dearest Fridolin," he continued, "you must give me the egg. I will carefully preserve it, in order to have constantly before my eyes this pretty rhyme, already so clearly verified in me. Yes, my children and children's children shall be strengthened in confidence in God, as often as they shall see this egg and read this sentence. Perhaps a hundred years hence, my great-grand-children may be telling, how wonderfully their great-grand-father was saved from starvation by a couple of eggs. I shall give you something in exchange for it."

He took out his purse, and gave him a gold piece for each of the eggs that he had eaten, and two for the egg with the pretty inscription. Fridolin was very unwilling to give up the egg, but the man pressed so hard that he yielded at last.

"But see," said the stranger, looking up at the precipice, "evening is falling, and the rocks and bushes above, are reddening in the beams of the sinking sun. Try if you can help me on horseback—I hope to get out of this fearful gulf where the sun never shines, by the same path by which you came down."

Fridolin helped him upon his horse, and led him by the bridle. They found the path a very difficult one, but it led them out at last. How the man was delighted when he once more beheld the sun, and the woods, and mountains around illumined by his dazzling rays!

"We shall soon be at my uncle's now," said Fridolin. "I am a good walker, and your horse will be able to keep up with me. My uncle will be delighted to receive you; he is a very worthy man, and you will be sure not only to find lodging with him, but also to be taken care of till you shall be quite restored."

They reached the honest stone-cutter's just as night was falling. He welcomed the squire cordially, and clapped his nephew on the shoulder for acting so gallantly and so well. The lad made his apologies for not keeping his word, and not being able to send the coloured eggs to his mother, and his brothers and sisters. "What eggs are you talking of?" said his uncle. "I don't understand all this talk of yours about red, and blue, and spotted eggs, or in what they differ from other bird's eggs, many of which are certainly far more prettily and delicately painted; but this I know, that if they were of pure gold, they would have been well bestowed, since the gallant man here has been saved by them from starving, and you have acted like a good boy. You have been like the good Samaritan, and I must be the host. But you are not to pay me," he added, with a smile. "Recollect that."

The squire shewed him the egg with the inscription. "It is very pretty," said Fridolin's uncle, "but you may let him keep it notwithstanding. The gold will be more useful to your mother. Give it me, and I will change it for you!" The boy was amazed at the quantity of coins which he got for it, for, as he had never seen gold before, he did not know what it was, and indeed the yellow metal had appeared hardly worth notice. "You see," continued his uncle, "the rhyme is verified in your mother's case also. It is worth more to her than all the gold,

and it is well that one can recollect it without the egg. Never lose sight of it for your whole life long !”

The squire remained till he was perfectly restored, and when he was going away, made handsome presents to every one in the house.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### AN EGG CASED IN GOLD AND PEARLS.

THE spring and summer passed over in the valley without any remarkable occurrence. The charcoal-burners tilled their little farms, and then went to the forest to burn charcoal; their wives attended to the housekeeping at home, and reared a great number of hens; and the children would often ask, whether Easter would not soon come again. But the noble lady was often very gloomy. Her faithful old servant, who till now had always been at her side, and who in the commencement, used occasionally to make journeys of greater or less extent for her, and upon her business, was no longer able to leave the valley, for his health began to fail; and indeed, when autumn came, and the leaves began to grow brown upon the bushes, he could hardly even leave the house to enjoy what he dearly loved, a little bask in the genial sunshine. His mistress shed many an affectionate and anxious tear for the good old man who was her last support, and she bitterly felt the privation of all intelligence from her dear native land, and her own isolation from the rest of the world, in this secluded valley.

A circumstance occurred, too, which filled her with no little alarm. One morning some of the charcoal-burners came home from the forest and told the miller, that the night before, as they were sitting quietly by their burning heap, four strange men suddenly came upon them, with

iron helmets, and coats of mail, and with huge swords by their side, and long lances in their hands. They said they were retainers of the Count von Schroffeneck, who had come into the mountains with a large train; and they inquired about everything in the neighbourhood. The miller hastened with this news to the lady, who at that moment was sitting by Kuno's sick-bed. The moment he mentioned the name of Schroffeneck, she turned pale and cried out, "O my God! it is my deadliest foe—I am sure he seeks nothing else but my life. I hope the people did not let the strangers know where I am living!" The miller assured her, that as far as he knew, the conversation did not turn on her at all. "The men," said he, "only warmed themselves at the fire, and went away before day-break; but they are still, no doubt, reconnoitering through the mountains."

"Dear Oswald!" said the lady to the miller, "ever since I came to your house, I have always found you a conscientious, upright, honest man. I will, therefore, tell you my whole history, and disclose to you the anxiety which now fills my heart, for I reckon upon your counsel and assistance."

"I am Rosalind, daughter of the Duke of Burgundy. Two noble lords, Hanno of Schroffeneck, and Arno of Lindenburg, were suitors for my hand. Hanno was the richest and most powerful lord in the country around, and had the largest train of retainers, and the strongest castles; but he was wanting in virtue and nobleness of soul. Arno was the bravest and noblest knight in the land; but in comparison with his rival, he was poor, for he had inherited from his generous and disinterested father, nothing but one old castle, and had never attempted to enlarge his possessions by violence. To him, notwithstanding, I gave my hand with my father's consent, and I brought him large domains, and many strong castles as my dowry. Our life was a paradise upon earth.

"But Hanno of Schroffeneck conceived a deadly hate

against me and my husband, and became our mortal enemy, though he concealed his hatred, and made no open display of it for a time. At last my husband was called to accompany the emperor in his expedition against the Moslems. Hanno was summoned also; but he contrived, under various pretexts, to delay his preparations, merely promising to join the army as soon as possible. But while my husband and his vassals were engaged at the remotest extremity of the kingdom, fighting for fatherland, and while the whole Christian host was hardly prest by the powerful foe, the false Hanno invaded our territory, and there was not a soul to oppose him. He laid everything waste far and wide, and stormed one castle after another, till at last nothing remained for me but to fly secretly with my two darling children. My good old Kuno was my only guardian angel upon this perilous flight, during which I was constantly exposed to Hanno's pursuit. He conducted me to these mountains, where I have lived so peacefully in this secluded and unknown valley. Here it was my purpose to remain till my husband should return from the war, and recover our domains from the unrighteous usurper. Kuno used to go from time to time to the great world, to learn news of the war, but he always came back with sad tidings;—the wicked Hanno was still in possession of our lands, and the war was still continuing with varying success at the frontier. But now for nearly a year my good Kuno has been sick, and all this time I know nothing either of my dear country or my beloved husband. Alas! perhaps he has long since fallen under the sword of the enemy! Perhaps, Hanno who is now so close to us has discovered my secret hiding-place—and if so, what shall become of me? Death would then be the happiest fate that could befall me! O! speak to the charcoal-burners, dear Oswald, not to betray me!"

"What, betray you?" cried the miller, "I shall go security for them all—every one of them would die for you! Before the hateful tyrant of Schroffeneck shall lay a finger



upon you, he must first annihilate us all. Be not afraid, noble lady!"

The charcoal-burners repeated the same protestations, when the miller spoke to them. "Let him only come!" they cried, "we will shew him the way with our bill-hooks!"

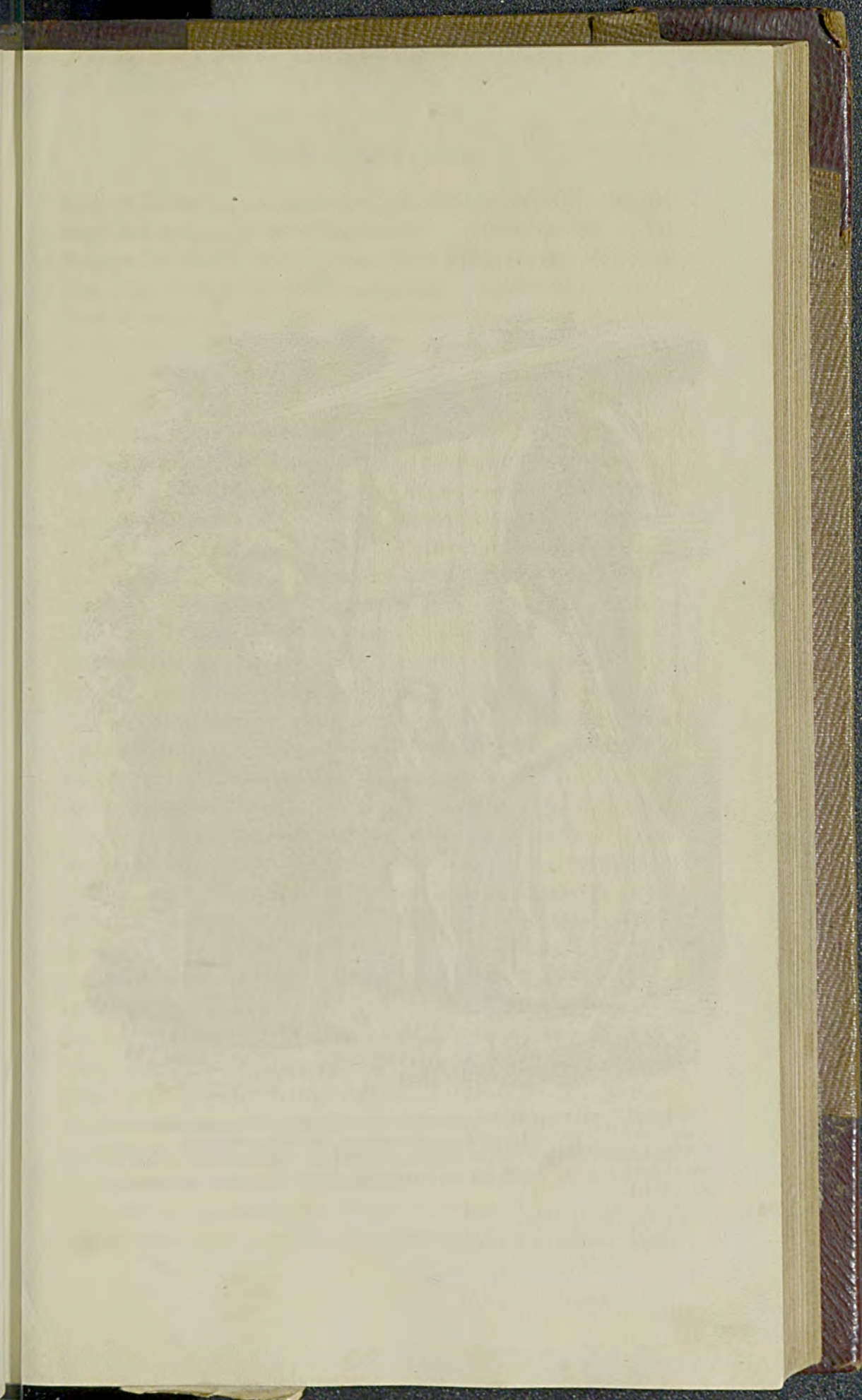
Meanwhile the good lady's days were spent in fear and anxiety. She would hardly venture out of the house, and never let her children from the doors. Her life was very anxious and melancholy. But when all was quiet again in the mountain, and nothing more was heard of the armed men, she at last ventured to take a walk. It was a lovely day, late in the harvest, after a long continuance of rain. A few hundred paces from her hut stood a sort of rustic chapel built of rough pine-boards, and open in front. But it contained a very pretty picture of the Flight into Egypt, which Kuno had once brought home on one of his journeys, to cheer the good lady in her own exile. Behind the chapel rose a steep wall of rock, and in front stood a few pine-trees, which formed a pleasant shade over the entrance. The place had such an air of quiet and repose, that one felt a pleasing melancholy in remaining there. A pleasant grassy path between picturesque rocks and shrubs led to it, and it was the lady's favourite walk. This time, however, she was not entirely without anxiety. She knelt down for a while with her children at the little stool at the entrance of the chapel. The similarity of her fate, with the unspeakable sorrows of the Divine Mother, who was also driven to fly with her child into a strange land, moved her so much, that the tears streamed down her cheeks. She prayed for a while, and then sat down upon the bench. The children meanwhile were gathering blackberries, and amusing themselves by comparing them to little jet black bunches of grapes, till by degrees they had strayed some distance away.

While the lady sat thus all alone, on a sudden a pilgrim appeared among the rocks, and approached the

chapel. He was drest in palmer's garb, with a long black dress, and a short cloak over it. His hat was adorned with scallop-shells, and in his hand he carried a long white staff. He appeared to be a very old, but still a stately, handsome man: his long hair, which flowed down upon his shoulders, and his beard, were as white as snow, but his cheeks still retained all the bloom of the rose. The lady was alarmed when she saw the stranger. He saluted her respectfully and addressed her, but she was very cautious and reserved in her conversation, and looked with great coldness upon him, as though she wished to discover whether she ought to trust a total stranger, of whom she knew absolutely nothing.

"Noble lady," said the pilgrim at last, "be not afraid of me, I am not such a stranger as you think. You are Rosalind of Burgundy. I am well acquainted with the cruel destiny which drove you to take refuge amid these rugged rocks. Your husband too, from whom you are near three years parted, is well known to me. While you have been living in this distant spot, many changes have taken place in the world. If you be anxious to hear about the good Arno of Lindenburg, and if his memory still lives in your heart, I am able to give you satisfactory intelligence regarding him. The war is over. The Christian army is coming home, crowned with the laurels of victory. Your husband has recovered the places that were wrested from him. The wicked Hanno narrowly escaped into the fastnesses of this mountain; but even from this last retreat he must soon be driven. The sole, the ardent wish of your husband, is to find once more his beloved spouse."

"Oh! God!" exclaimed the lady, "what joyful news! from my heart I thank thee, O God," said she, as she sunk on her knees, while the big tears rolled rapidly down her cheeks. "Yes, my good God," she continued, "thou hast seen my warm tears, thou hast heard my silent sighs, thou hast granted my ceaseless prayer. O! Arno, Arno,





“Edmund,” said she, addressing the boy, and telling him at the same time not to be too bashful, “Edmund, repeat for this stranger the little prayer we say every morning for your father.” The boy, clasping his hands devoutly, and raising his eyes to heaven, as in actual prayer, prayed in a loud, impressive, and affecting tone.—p. 101.

may that happy moment soon come, when I shall see you once more, and present to you those children who were infants at your departure, and who now for the first time can call you by the endearing name of father!"

"O stranger!" said she to the pilgrim, "who can doubt whether I still cherish my husband's memory, and have his love still fresh and ardent in my heart? My children, come here," said she, turning to her two little ones, who stood at a distance curiously examining the strange man, but too shy to approach.

"Edmund," said she, addressing the boy, and telling him at the same time not to be too bashful, "Edmund, repeat for this stranger the little prayer we say every morning for your father." The boy, clasping his hands devoutly, and raising his eyes to heaven, as in actual prayer, repeated in a loud, impressive, and affecting tone, the following words: "Dear heavenly Father, look down on us two poor little orphans! Our father is in the wars—O! save him from death. We resolve to be good and pious, that we may give joy to our dear father when he comes back to us. Oh! hear our prayer."

"And you, Blanda," said she to a little yellow haired, rosy-cheeked girl, "repeat the prayer we say every evening for your father, before we retire to rest." "Dear heavenly Father, before we retire to rest, we pray to Thee for our father. May he sleep in peace this night, and be guarded from all harm by thy holy angels. Send down sweet sleep to our mother, that she may forget her great griefs for a while; or, should you not grant soft sleep to her, let it fall softly on the eyelids of our dear father. O may this evening be the last of our mournful separation! May that happy morn soon dawn which shall behold us united once more!"

"Amen, Amen," said the mother, clasping her hands, and looking tearfully to heaven.

At this moment the pilgrim burst into tears and wept aloud. He flung off the pilgrim's garb, hair,

beard, mantle, and frock, and stood before them in the dazzling uniform of a knight, glittering with gold and purple. He was in the full glow of youthful beauty, full of health and vigour. He stretched out his arms towards his wife and children, and in a voice of the most heartfelt emotion, exclaimed, "O! Rosalind, my wife, and Edmund and Blanda, my dear children."

This sudden stroke of unexpected joy had almost overpowered the wife. The children, who when they had seen the pilgrim weeping, looked to their mother as if to beg her to help him, were now, when they heard their own names, startled, and almost frightened at what they believed was a miracle, occurring before their eyes; for they imagined nothing less, than that, as their mother had often told them in the legends she used to relate for them, the old man had changed himself into a beautiful youth—or an angel from heaven; so much were they struck by the appearance of their father, who in reality was the handsomest knight in the whole Christian army. What was their delight when their mother told them, that the handsome gentleman was their beloved father, of whom she had so often told them! The whole family party enjoyed, in this happy meeting, almost an anticipation of the happiness of heaven, and hours fled away almost as rapidly as though they had been moments.

Rosalind learned from her husband's conversation, that he had been coming in all haste with a strong escort, to convey her from this retirement; but that the difficulty and precipitousness of the roads had compelled him to leave his train behind, and to hasten forward alone, on foot, in this pilgrim-garb, which he had often used before; in order to see her the sooner, to satisfy himself, by personal inspection, that she and her children were well, and to prepare her for the joyful news. She now asked how he had discovered her retreat.

"Dearest Rosalind," said he, "this happy reunion is the fruit of your own charity to the poor, especially to the

poor children of this valley. It was to reward you for this, that God has given back their father to your children. Had it not been for your benevolent heart, we should not have met so soon—perhaps we should never have met more, for you were beset on all sides by our enemies, and might easily have fallen into their hands. It was not till the arrival of my party in the mountains, that Hanno finally retreated.”

He shewed her the painted egg with the inscription.

‘ On God’s protecting arm rely :  
To Him in all thy sorrows fly !’

“ This egg,” said he, “ was, under God, the means of re-uniting us. For a long time I had been sending numberless messengers in search of you, but always without success. At last, Eckbert, one of my squires, whom I had given up for lost, he had been so long absent, returned from an expedition. He had fallen into a ravine, and was on the point of perishing with hunger, when a strange youth saved his life by giving him a couple of eggs to eat, and gave him this egg, also, with the beautiful inscription, as a memorial of his deliverance. Eckbert shewed me the egg, and what was my amazement, when, at the first glance I discovered your hand-writing ! We instantly set out, and rode to the great marble works, in which the good youth was employed, and he directed me hither. Had not your kind heart prompted you to give this little feast of eggs to the children—had not your piety inspired you to think of the wants of the soul as well as of the body, and to write these pretty rhymes upon the eggs,—had not you all—you my dear little Edmund, and you my darling Blanda, been so kind to the strange youth, we never might have enjoyed this happy day ! Upon every act of charity, however trifling, there descends a blessing from the Most High, if it be done with a pure heart and without hope of reward. It is a seed which never fails to produce rich fruits ; and under God’s guidance, it often

brings us great blessings, even upon earth. Bear this ever in mind, my children, throughout your lives. Give freely to the poor,—try to promote the happiness of others,—imitate your mother—assist others in their necessity, and God will assist you in yours! Shew mercy, and you shall obtain mercy! Then shall you repose a joyous confidence in God, and the truth—firm as a rock—which is written on that frail shell—the great truth which has this day been fulfilled so signally, shall be still more signally fulfilled in you; for God will never leave you unprotected. Such is the lesson you may learn from this history! I shall have this egg, therefore, cased in gold and pearls, and hung up in our castle chapel as an everlasting memorial of the event.”

Meanwhile, evening had begun to close, and the stars began to appear here and there in the clear heaven. Count Arno, with his lady leaning upon his arm, and the children tripping before them, went to their humble dwelling. Here new joys awaited them. The squire and his deliverer, Fridolin, were already there, and had told the news to Kuno, whom the joyous tidings of his master's return had almost made well again. The good youth Fridolin, first advanced and saluted the lady and her children most warmly and joyfully, as old acquaintances. Next came Eckbert, the squire, who owed his life to the eggs. “Permit me, dear countess,” said he, approaching respectfully, “to kiss the kind hand to which, under God's guidance, I am indebted for my life!”

The count embraced Kuno as his most trusty servant; and shook, warmly and gratefully, the hand of the honest miller, who stood by in full holiday costume, in his blue Sunday coat. They all supped together, in most cordial happiness and contentment.

The next morning the valley was a scene of the most joyous exultation. The news of the arrival of the lady's husband, a great—very great lord, set them all in commotion. Big and little came up to see him; and the little



hut was surrounded by the people. The count, with his wife and children, came out and saluted them all most affectionately; thanking them for all their kindness to his wife and little ones. "Oh, we are not her benefactors," they replied, with tears in their eyes, "'tis she, 'tis she, who is our greatest benefactress!" The count conversed with them for a long time, speaking individually to each, and left them all in raptures with his kindness and condescension.

Meanwhile, the count's train had, with the assistance of some charcoal-burners, discovered a road into the valley. Several knights, and a host of retainers on horse-back and on foot, marched, amid the sound of trumpets, between two wooded mountains into the valley; their helmets and lances glittering in the sunbeams. They saluted their long-lost mistress with heartfelt joy, and their shouts of triumph were re-echoed by the rocks all around.

Count Arno remained for a few days, and the evening before his departure, with his wife and children and Kuno and the rest of his train, he gave all the inhabitants of the valley a great entertainment. The table presented a very motley appearance, with the miller and charcoal-burners scattered amid knights and men-at-arms. At the close of the feast, he distributed rich presents among his rustic guests, especially the worthy miller—Martha remained in the countess's service. He provided specially for the mother, brother, and sister of the good youth Fridolin.

"For you, my dear little friends," said he to the children, "I shall establish an annual festival, in memory of my wife's sojourn among such good people. Every Easter, eggs, of all varieties of colour, shall be distributed among the children."

"And I," said the countess, "will extend this custom throughout our entire dominions, and order that coloured eggs shall be similarly distributed there, in memory of my deliverance." And she kept her word: and the eggs were

called *The Easter Eggs*; and this pretty custom, by degrees, extended throughout the entire country.

The people in other places, who adopted the usage, said, that the deliverance of the countess from her mountain exile, and that of the squire from the abyss in which he was perishing, did not come home to them in the celebration of the yearly festival. "But the variegated eggs," said they, "will for this very reason, remind our children of a greater and more glorious deliverance, which comes home to us all—of our deliverance from sin, from misery and death, through Him who rose from the dead. Easter is the true feast of Redemption; and the amusement which we provide for our children, in this little usage, is quite in accordance with the views of our Redeemer. Charity which would make all, great and little, happy, is the sum and substance of His holy religion, and is the best mark of His true followers. And, indeed, the custom of giving eggs to the children, may beautifully serve to remind parents, and all others, of God's paternal love for men, and may be a pledge to us of the beneficent views of His paternal heart. For the mouth of truth itself has said, 'Which of you, if a son ask his father an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If then you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give—the best of all gifts—the good Spirit, to them that ask Him!'"

## THE BIRD'S NEST.

*A certain German baron*

B PRIVY COUNCILLOR VON FREUHOLD had a fine estate in a most delightful country. On this estate he had a castle, which he visited from time to time, to enjoy the country air for a few days, and relax his mind from his business. Early in the spring he brought out with him, for the first time, his two little sons—two lovely blooming boys. Both of them were exceedingly delighted with the country. The large garden near the house, the green corn fields, and the flowery pasture charmed them. But the most delightful of all was a neighbouring wood full of oak, birch, alder, and blooming thorn, and intersected with numerous paths, gravelled, and kept in good order. It was new life to the two children.

One day the father walked with them to the wood, and shewed them a bird's nest. The neat little nest, and its five tender young birds, to which the old ones (for they were not timid) carried food, were a source of inexpressible pleasure to the boys.

The father seated himself with his two children on a stone bench, under an old oak on the verge of the wood, whence he had a beautiful prospect of a small but charming valley. "I will tell you something about a bird's nest," said he, "and I think you will be interested in the story. The event took place in this very spot." The children were very curious to hear the story, and the father continued.

One fine morning in spring, about forty years ago, a poor boy was sitting under this very oak, watching some sheep. He was reading a little book, and was so deeply engaged, that he scarcely ever looked around him. From time to time he cast a rapid glance at his sheep, which were grazing on the flowery turf between this wood and the clear trout stream yonder.

Happening to raise his eyes, he saw standing before him, a fine young gentleman, of fair and florid complexion, and dressed in green, ornamented with gold. It was the young prince of the land, who at the time was scarcely more than ten years old. The shepherd boy did not know him; he thought that the friendly young person must be of the family of the woodranger, who often came on business to the prince's shooting lodge that lay in the neighbourhood.

"Good morning, Sir," said the shepherd boy, taking off his hat, but immediately putting it on again, "can I be of any service to you?"

"Tell me at once," said the prince, "is there a bird's nest in this wood?"

"That's a very simple question from a young forester," answered the boy. "Do you not hear the birds singing? certainly there are nests enough here. Each little bird has its own nest."

"You must know some of those nests," said the prince in a friendly tone.

"O! a most wonderful little nest," exclaimed the boy with delight. "The most beautiful that I ever saw in my life. It is so nicely woven of yellow straws, so twisted together, and lined outside so softly with moss. There are five eggs in it—as fine a blue as that bright clear heaven that shines through these oak leaves."

"That's delightful," said the prince, "come and shew me that elegant nest. I am most impatient to see it."

"I don't doubt you," said the boy, "but I cannot shew it to you."

"You will not do it for nothing," answered the prince. "I will certainly reward you for it."

"I know not how that may be," said the boy, "but still I cannot shew it to you."

At this moment the prince's tutor came up, dressed in dark green clothes. The boy had not seen him as yet. He was a worthy intelligent man. "Do not be uncivil little boy," said he, "this young gentleman here never saw a bird's nest, though he has read so much about them. He has been wishing this long time to see one. Do him this favour and conduct him to it. He will not take it from you. He will only look at it. He will not even touch it." The boy stood up, took off his cap, and held it in his hand, but at the same time shook his head and said, "I must stand to what I have said. I will not shew the bird's nest." "That is very unkind," said the tutor. "It should be a pleasure to you to give pleasure to others—at least to the beloved son of our prince." HF

"Is the young gentleman the son of our prince," exclaimed the boy, bowing profoundly to show his respect; "I am overjoyed to know the young prince. But the bird's nest I cannot show, even though he were the prince himself."

"Such an obstinate wrongheaded boy," exclaimed the prince passionately, "I never saw in my whole life. But we must find some means to compel him."

"Indeed, you are right, prince," said the tutor. He too was surprised at the firm refusal of the boy. He addressed him, therefore—tell us, my boy, at once, why you will not shew the nest? When you tell us, we will go away and trouble you no more. If you have any good reason, which indeed I can scarcely suppose, tell us at once." "Yes," said the boy, "I can tell you. Michael, who is watching the goats beyond on the mountain, shewed me the nest, and I promised him that I would not shew it to any one."

"O! that's another thing," said the tutor. He was so pleased with the boy, that he resolved to put his honour

to a severer test. He took out his purse and said, "see this gold coin, it is yours if you shew us the nest. You need not tell Michael that you have shewn it to us, and he will know nothing about it."

"Oh! I thank you kindly," said the boy. "No! No! I would be a deceiver, whether Michael knew it or not—and that I will not be. What good would it be to me, that no person in the world knew it, if ~~I~~ and God in heaven knew that I had broken my word, and was a base villain? shame, shame!"

"Perhaps you do not know the value of this gold," said the tutor. "If you change it for copper coin, your straw hat can scarcely hold them all. It will be filled to the brim."

"Would it?" said the boy, looking at the gold coin. "My poor father would be overjoyed if I brought him home so much money." He thought for a moment, and then hastily exclaimed, "No, go away, tempter." He then added, but in a gentle tone—"Pardon me, sir—you act like the evil one in the desert, when he said: 'All these I will give you.' To end the matter—I pledged my word to Michael. What is a man that keeps not his word?" He was going away.

Just at this moment the huntsman who attended the prince, and who had overheard the conversation, came up. Guessing the tutor's intention to try the boy, he put on an angry face, seized the little fellow by the arm, and cried in his deep hollow tones, "You ill-bred ruffian, do you offend the prince, who will one day rule over us? Do you prefer to him the ignorant goat-herd, beyond on the mountain? Shew the nest this instant, or I'll cut off an arm from your body." He drew out his hanger.

The boy grew pale, trembled, staggered, and ran away, crying and screaming, "O pardon, pardon, I beg you."

"Shew the nest, ruffian," cried the huntsman, "or you shall be stabbed."

*The Bird's Nest*  
*Continued.*

The boy raised up his hands—looked with trembling eyes on the naked and glittering blade—but still cried out, “O! I cannot! I dare not! I will not do it.”

“Enough,” said the tutor, ordering the huntsman to desist. “Be not alarmed, good boy, no harm shall be done to you. You have stood out manfully. You are a noble soul. Ask your friend’s permission, and then come shew us the nest. You can then divide the gold coin between you.”

“Right, right,” said the boy, “you shall have an answer this evening.”

The tutor returned with the prince to the royal hunting lodge, whither they had come the day before to enjoy the spring in the country. “The honour of the boy,” said the tutor, as they returned, “is truly admirable. It is a precious stone of inestimable value. That boy is the material of a great man, of a decided energetic character. Thus are virtues often found under the thatched roof which you might look for in vain in the palaces of kings.”

The tutor made some inquiries about the boy from a neighbouring steward. “He is an excellent boy,” said the steward. “His name is George. His father is a poor rake-maker, but one of the honestest men in the country.”

In the evening, when the prince’s last study hour was over, he walked to the window. “Ah,” said he, “little George is waiting on us already. He has his little flock on the verge of the wood, and is looking over very frequently towards the castle.”

“We must know what answer he brings us,” said the tutor. Both left the castle, and proceeded towards the wood.

The little shepherd boy sprang to meet them with the greatest joy. “All’s right with Michael,” said he. “He told me I was a foolish boy for not having closed the bargain at once, and afterwards divided the money with him. But still it is much better that I acquainted him

beforehand. I can now shew the bird's nest with pleasure. Come with me, prince."

George ran forward to the wood; the prince and the tutor followed leisurely. "See that little yellow bird singing so gaily on the alder bough," said George to the prince. "The nest is his, that is the cock. Now let us go gently."

In an open space in the wood, deeply shaded around, stood a whitethorn bush, with its bright green leaves so delicately shaped, and a profusion of white thickly tufted blossoms, gleaming in the full beams of the descending sun.

Little George pointed with his finger to the bush, and said softly to the prince. "Look there—the hen is sitting on the eggs." The prince saw her. She flew off immediately, and he then with the greatest delight inspected the eggs and the little straw nest.

The tutor, upon this, made many beautiful observations. Addressing the boy, he said, "Come over with me under this oak to receive the reward which I promised you. You could not divide the gold with your young friend; so I will give you its value in silver." He took his purse out of his pocket, and here under the oak on this stone bench, paid the astonished boy the amount of the gold coin in bright silver pieces fresh from the mint. "Divide fairly with Michael," said the prince. "Honourably," said the boy, thanking him, and springing off with the money as if he had stolen it.

The tutor afterwards inquired whether George had paid the due portion to the other boy, and learned that he had paid him to the penny. His own share he had given entirely to his father, not reserving even a single piece for himself.

The prince came every day to the wood to see the nest. The two old birds, when they found that he did not molest them, did not fly away from him any more. The prince took the greatest delight in observing how the little birds came out of the shells, how they all opened their yellow



little beaks, and all chirped together, when the old ones brought them food; how the little things grew larger every day, and got their tender feathers; and how, at length, to the great joy of the old ones, they ventured their first flight, and perched on the nearest branch of the tree—the old ones still continuing to feed them.

The prince and the tutor often met the little boy afterwards, as he tended his flock in different spots of the neighbourhood. The tutor observed with pleasure that he always had his book with him, and read it very diligently. "You know well how to employ yourself, dear George," he observed, "come, read a little for me." The boy read aloud, and with great earnestness, but now and then was obliged to spell a few words.

"You have done very well," said the tutor, "in what school have you learned to read?" "Ah!" said George, "I never went to school. It is too far away, and would take up too much of my time. In winter I am constantly engaged spinning at home. My father, besides, could not afford to pay for me. But I have induced my good friend Michael, who can read very well, to teach me how to read. He first taught me the letters, and then taught me to spell. I have already read almost three times over this little book in which Michael learned to read, but it is now so soiled and torn, that many of the letters can scarcely be seen, and for that reason it is very hard to read it."

When the prince met the shepherd boy the next time, he shewed him an elegant new book, bound in red morocco, neatly gilt. "I will lend this book to you for a while," said he, "and if you can read a page of it without any mistake, it shall be yours." George was delighted, and took the book in his little fingers as delicately as if it were a spider's web, and could as easily be injured. The next day he ran to meet the prince the moment he saw him. "Sir," said he, "I can now read for you with-

out mistake any of the first six pages you please of this beautiful book." The prince pointed out a page, and as the boy read it fluently, the prince made him a present of the book, and the poor fellow jumped with joy."

One morning the prince's father came to the hunting lodge unexpectedly—attended by a single outrider. He wished to know how the prince was, and what progress he was making in his studies. At dinner the prince told him of the bird's nest, and of the noble little boy.

His highness listened with pleasure, and admired George's honour. "In truth," observed the tutor, "his honour is like pure refined gold. The boy would make an excellent servant for our young prince—one on whom he could depend. And since God has blessed him with fine talents, it would be good that he should have an opportunity of studying. But his father is very poor; still it is a pity that a lad so talented, and of such noble principle, should never advance higher than his father's trade."

The prince rose from the table, and walking with the tutor to the window, had a few moments private conversation with him. He gave orders on the spot to have the boy sent for. George came, and was greatly abashed when he entered the hall, and saw the grand, dignified gentleman with the stars upon his breast. The tutor told the boy who the gentleman was, and he bowed down to the earth. "My little fellow," said the prince in a friendly tone, "I hear that you take great pleasure in your books. Have you a wish to study?"

"Ah!" says George, "if nothing were wanting but the wish, I would be a student to-day. But my father has no money. That's the want."

"Attend now," said the prince, "I shall try whether we can make a student of you. Our tutor here has an excellent friend, a country parish priest, who takes proper young men into his house, instructs them in the learned

*The Bird's Nest.*

*London*

*1848*

languages, and prepares them for the higher studies. I will entrust you to that priest; I will provide for your expences. What do you think of the proposal?"

The prince expected the boy would be delighted, and would accept the offer with transport. But the little fellow, though at first he laughed with exultation, immediately appeared sorrowful and downcast, and was silent. "What's the matter with you?" asked the prince. "You seem more inclined to weep than to laugh. What ails you—tell us?"

"Alas," says George, "my father is so poor.—What I earn in summer by tending sheep, and in winter by spinning, is necessary for him. It is a very small sum indeed, but still he cannot dispense with it."

"You are a good boy," said the prince, in a very friendly tone, "your filial love to your father is more valuable, than all the costly jewels in my treasury. Whatever your father may lose when you renounce the shepherd's crook and the distaff, for the pen and the book, shall be compensated for him at my expense. Is all right now?"

"The boy was almost transported out of himself with joy. With sincere thanks he kissed the prince's hand, watered it with tears of gratitude, and ran to carry the joyful intelligence to his father. In a short time both the father and son came, shedding tears of joy, and were hardly able to express their gratitude for the great favour bestowed on them."

Here Baron de Freuhold became so affected, that he could proceed no farther. The tears stood in his eyes, and he remained silent.

"Ah!" said Adolphus and William, "the story is not finished yet. What became of George, the shepherd boy, how did he succeed?"

"Dearest children," said the father, "that shepherd boy was your father. The generous prince, (whom you never saw) took me into his service after my studies were

completed. He was so well pleased with my fidelity, that he raised me to a barony, and ~~created me Baron von Freuhold~~. He has been dead now nearly ten years, but his memory shall never die. My gratitude, and the gratitude of his whole territory, accompany him to eternity.

"The little crown prince, whom I met for the first time under this oak, is our present gracious prince. The parish priest of our Metropolitan Church, that truly worthy man, who shews such fatherly love to you, and instructs you in religion, is the tutor.

"My good father, your grandfather, whom I took to my house, where he spent his old age along with me, died three years ago. He took great delight in you, and often amused you, though you now have scarcely any remembrance of the poor affectionate old man. May he rest in peace.

"God has so blessed me, that I have been able to purchase this very property on which I was once a poor shepherd boy. It is our own now."

"Oh!" said little William, "that bird's nest did you a great deal of good. Is the little bird living still? Is it the same that has its little nest there in the wood?"

"Oh! no," answered Adolphus, the elder boy. "Such birds do not live so long. And it was not the bird's nest that advanced my father to honour and wealth; but because he was a studious and diligent youth, he rose from being a shepherd boy, to be a councillor of state, and from the humble occupation of rope-making, to the possession of this beautiful property."

"Give all the honour not to me but to God," said the father. "All that I have is from Him. How could I, the poorest boy in the country, have risen so high? God kindly arranged all. By means of the bird's nest he made me known to the prince, and eventually gave a blessing to my integrity and industry. Make good use, dearest children, of the talents God has given to you. Study diligently, be always faithful and honourable, and

above all, place your confidence in God, and implore his assistance. Thus will God pour abundant blessings on your learning, fidelity, and honour. Oh, may kind heaven grant it," said the father, rising and looking up with emotion to heaven, as he gave his paternal blessing to his two sons, whose bright eyes were bedewed with tears.

To complete this good father's history, we may add, that while he was able to continue his services, he was faithful to his prince, and always told him the true state of affairs, which was a great blessing to the whole country. Both his sons, William and Adolphus, trod in their father's footsteps, and were most honourable and virtuous men. Adolphus became a royal councillor—William an officer, and both were universally esteemed for their intelligence and efficiency. They were their father's joy, and the prop and glory of his old age.

## THE WATER PITCHER.

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### CHAPTER I.

MR. ALBERT FRANK was a very worthy man, and had the highest character among his fellow citizens for honesty, prudence and noble principle. In all his business he was a model of order and punctuality; but in his habits and the general tenor of his life, he was an oddity. He still dressed in the fashion of the last century. On Sundays his usual dress was a large, round, unpowdered wig, a neckcloth of the finest white linen, a frock of cinnamon brown, cut in the old fashion, with large buttons covered with gold lace. The same taste was visible in his house. The furniture of the chambers, the tapestry, the frames of the pictures and mirrors, tables, chairs and sideboard, were all of costly material, but entirely of the old fashion. The writing desk of walnut, with its old drawers, was the very one which had been used by his grandfather, and the cumbrous arm chair still held the place it had held three generations before.

The habits of the family were also in accordance with old custom. They rose early and were in bed early. No candle was ever used in the house of a summer evening, nothing but the lamp in the hall which was kept up during the night. Though Mr. Frank was the richest merchant in the town, he would gather up bits of thread and pieces of torn paper in his counting house, because, as he used

to say, they could be of some use. He thought that his mercantile correspondents used entirely too much sealing wax, a custom which he severely censured, not merely for the large annual outlay in the purchase of the article, but also for the heavy additional postage on the overloaded letters. He also severely reprov'd the servants if the lamp in the hall were not extinguished the moment it was clear day. No wonder then that he was looked on as too parsimonious, and narrow-hearted; and that many who applied to him for relief and got a severe lecture on economy and industry, called him a miser. Still there were others who applied more than once, and received such liberal assistance, that they were surpris'd at his generosity, and gave him a very different character.

His son, Mr. Frederick Frank, a fine handsome young man, had just returned from England, where he had been for some time. He was dress'd in the first fashion, and people said that he and the old man would assuredly fall out. But to their great surpris'e the old father not only had no objection to his son's taste, but on the contrary heartily approv'd it. The first commercial families in the city would be happy to have young Frederick as their son-in-law, but the common report was that the only son of old Frank and the only daughter of the rich Mr. Sax, would be an excellent match. The two fathers had always been on excellent terms, Mr. Sax was, after Mr. Frank, the richest man in the city, and the young lady was beautiful, talented and highly accomplish'd, so that the union was regard'd as certain. Frederick, it was said, paid more attention to the young lady than to any other in the town, and the father also, it was believ'd, was favourably inclin'd. But suddenly the friendly intercourse of the families was interrump't, and all rumours of the marriage ceased. People were utterly at a loss to know the cause. "No doubt," said they, "it must be some oddity of that wonderful old Frank."

The report soon went out, that young Frederick had

given his affections to a young lady, who, even her enemies were compelled to admit, was beautiful and virtuous, but who had not a hundred florins fortune. "Impossible," was the general cry, "impossible, the old fellow will never tolerate such a union." The whole town laughed at the rumour, until it was officially announced that Mr. Frederick Frank and Miss Wilhelmina Grünheim were really to be married on a certain day. Nothing could exceed the astonishment of the whole town at this unexpected news.

The old gentleman very seldom saw large companies, and was seldom a guest at public entertainments. He could not endure these boisterous meetings, and fatiguing pleasures, which were kept up till a late hour of the night. Every person was sure that the wedding would be very private. But far from it; old Mr. Frank invited all his respectable townsmen, and all those with whom he had any connexion. All joyfully accepted the invitation—all except Mr. Sax, his wife and daughter, who left the town a few days before.

The guests all expected a marriage party in the old style. "No doubt," said they, "we shall all be ranged in the old hall, with its old fashioned decorations of fifty years standing. But judge of their surprise when, on entering, they found the hall, in which a banquet had not been given for many long years, freshly painted and decorated in most gorgeous style. Nothing was old but the wine, with the plain crystal old-fashioned glasses. The milk-white table linen, the richest produce of the Flemish looms, were covered with the most costly articles of English manufacture, and the silver plate was in the latest fashion, with all which old Frank, despite the simplicity of his taste, appeared highly pleased.

Indeed, during the whole evening he was the very picture of happiness. His oldest friends never saw him so happy and cordial even in the hey-day of his youth.

Still some of the guests were heard to whisper, "Old men do foolish things. The settlement that his son is



getting is not worth all this extraordinary expenditure. The bride has no money; her very dress and those rich jewels in her hair were given by the old man. The strange old fellow has disappointed us all."

Dinner was served up at a late hour in the evening. The crystal lustre over the table was lighted up, and in the gleam of its innumerable wax lights, the rich silver plate sparkled with a brilliancy that dazzled the beholders. The dessert, of the rarest confectionary and richest fruits and all that wealth could command, was over; the Rhenish wine and glasses had been brought in by two servants on costly salvers—when lo, the old man himself arose, left the hall, and in a few minutes returned with a large common dark green earthen pitcher, and, with his own hands placed it on the table, directly under the gleaming lustre. All eyes were riveted on this strange object. The pitcher was, certainly, elegantly decorated with fresh wreaths of the most beautiful flowers—still it made a very sad figure among the surrounding splendour. "I knew well things could not pass over without some oddity," said a fat old gentleman, who had already tested the flavour of the wines. The remark was overheard by the company, and notwithstanding all their efforts, there was a loud and general laugh.

"Welcome to your amusement, ladies and gentlemen," said old Frank; "I cannot blame you. You have good reason to laugh. An earthen pitcher on the festive board is a mystery. You see it is a plain earthen pitcher. But it is full of the best Rhenish wine, twenty years old—and this old wine shall this day honour the happiest family feast that I, an old man, have ever entered. But however highly I value the wine, I do not value it half so much as that old pitcher. It was the pitcher that gave occasion to this festive party; yes, were it not for it, this wedding would never have taken place. Am I wrong, then, in filling it with the best wine I had in my cellar, and in making it the crown of my festive board?"

## CHAPTER II.

## THE YOUNG WATER-CARRIER.

THE curiosity of the guests was wound up to the highest pitch, and all earnestly entreated Mr. Frank to give them a full history of the pitcher. Mr. Frank at once complied. "One evening, last August, I was returning home from my garden. I had just been pulling the last apples from the trees, that I had planted myself, and so happy did I feel at my work, that I paid no attention to the lateness of the hour, and the large heavy masses of dark clouds that were gathering in the heavens. A very heavy rain, accompanied with a cold and violent wind, overtook me before I reached the entrance of the town. I wrapped myself closely in my mantle, and arrived at the main street in the suburbs, near the well, where the stone lion discharges the water from his open jaws, as if he would swallow up all the little girls that go to the spring. There was no person there this evening but a delicate young girl, about sixteen years old, who was very neatly and elegantly dressed, but whom, lest I might offend her modesty," said he, with a smile and an affectionate look at the blooming bride, "I cannot name. That earthen pitcher that stands there now with its wedding wreathes, was under the spring, which, notwithstanding all the majesty of the lion, flowed very tediously. The young girl, fair and blooming as innocence itself, and mild and gentle as patience, waited very composedly until the pitcher was filled. She had gathered a white handkerchief around her head, to protect herself from the rain, still she was shivering with the cold. I could not look upon the angelic countenance of the good child, without the liveliest emotions of compassion.

“‘Good evening, my dear child,’ said I, in a friendly tone. ‘You have not been in the habit of coming for water to this well.’

“She blushed slightly, and made no answer, but intimated by a gentle nod that my suspicions were correct.

“‘That pitcher is entirely too large and heavy for you,’ I remarked.

“‘Indeed, it is heavy enough,’ she replied, with a gentle smile.

“‘Perhaps it is necessity that obliges you to labour,’ I continued.

“‘Ah,’ said she, with a sigh, ‘it is necessity, indeed.’

“‘Tell me candidly, said I, with some earnestness, ‘can I do you any service?’

“‘I don’t know,’ said she, with a gentle voice—‘perhaps you would be kind enough to place the pitcher on my head.’

“I did so. She thanked me as cordially as if she had received the greatest favour, and retired.

“It is too bad, thought I, that a young lady should be reduced to the necessity of carrying water. She is certainly of respectable family, as is evident not only from her dress, but also from her genteel appearance, her elegant accent, and manners. She must have had a good education. Probably, as she comes at this late hour, she belongs to some reduced family, who are ashamed to make their poverty known. I must make all enquiries after her, and do something to relieve her.

“I watched the house where she entered, and learned that it was occupied by a turner, and that in a small back apartment, there was a decent old lodger. The turner had a large collection of articles ready for sale, and as I was taking my evening walk next day, I entered and enquired for some things which I wanted to purchase. The master brought me up to his ware-room with the greatest alacrity, and as I observed a great many doors, I remarked, ‘You have a great deal of room here; I

am sure you must be receiving a large sum from your lodgers.'

"' Ah,' said he, ' all these upper rooms are filled with chairs, tables, and other articles of my manufacture. But on the ground floor I have a neat little chamber, which will be free in a few days, and which I can let to you with pleasure. It is very neat, and has an agreeable aspect into the garden.'

"' I should be very glad,' said I, ' to have that chamber. Perhaps it would suit an old domestic of mine, whom I am anxious to provide for. Can I see it now ?

"' Oh, certainly,' said he, adding with heartless rudeness, ' The old tenant that has it now, is a very bad pay. If you pay me somewhat more, the little room is at your service this moment.'

" This severity disgusted me, but I said nothing. I went with him into the next room, and saw a large collection of really most valuable articles. I asked him the price of a writing desk, and pushed so close a bargain with him, that he could have no profit; to accept his terms would have cost me only a few additional shillings: but I wished to punish him for his severity towards a poor, old person, plainly telling him, ' We must be hard on hard people.' I knew by his look at the moment, that his heart said I was a miser.

" When we came down stairs, I asked him whether I could see the room. ' Perhaps,' said I, ' though the former bargain did not succeed, the second may.'

" He opened the door and introduced me. Old Martha, a decent looking old woman, was seated on her chair, spinning. She burst into tears on hearing the cause of my visit.

"' Oh, now,' said I, ' don't cry. I will not dispossess you. To secure you in possession of this little place, I am ready to pay as much as your landlord can reasonably require. But he must engage not to disturb you during your life.'

“The bargain was closed at once; for I gave the man much more than he expected. I then told him, that I wished to have a few moments’ private conversation with old Martha. He retired in excellent humour, but shook his head as he disappeared. ‘No doubt,’ he meant to say, ‘old Frank is an oddity—now a miser—and in a few moments, a prodigal. No man can fathom him.’”

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE OLD SERVANT MAID.

“OLD Martha was overjoyed,” continued Mr. Frank, “and would have kissed my hand, which I, of course, would not allow. I sat down on the only old chair in the room, and began to speak to her. In a corner of the room, on a bench, I saw the pitcher which I had seen at the well, and which you, my honoured guests, have the happiness of seeing here to-day. ‘That’s a very large pitcher,’ said I—‘but housekeeping, no matter on how small a scale, cannot go on without much water. But is not the well very distant, and you do not appear strong? How do you contrive to get the water?’”

“The old creature felt that she could repose confidence in me, though she now saw me for the first time. She commenced a long narrative, every word of which came from her heart; so that she was eloquence itself.

“‘You see, my dear sir,’ said she, ‘pardon me, I don’t know by what title to address you—I am ready to give you a full history. I know you have a kind heart, and do not despise the poor. It is, alas, too true, I am very poor. But, praise be to God, I have not much reason to complain. An angel girl has taken me kindly under her care. I saw better days, when I was a servant maid with Mrs. Grünheim of Hell-brunn. Her husband—

God be merciful to him—was an amiable, good man, and his death was felt as a general loss. If the people could, they would long since have raised him from the grave. For he was always ready to assist every one with his money and advice. He never received presents—his hand was always open to the needy. It was no wonder then, that he died poor. I was present at his death—as were his wife and daughter—my God, how time flies!—the child was then only eight years old—now she is a woman—the wife and daughter, I was saying, were both standing by the bed-side. O, how the three of us wept—but he consoled us. He implored his wife, in the most moving strain, to place her trust in God, the protector of the widow and the orphan, who would never abandon her. He then pressed her hand in his own icy hands, and made her promise to bring up their only daughter in piety and virtue, to guard her against pride, vanity, and the love of pleasure—to keep her always under her own care, and never to allow her to keep company with vain and silly girls. The good lady followed this advice to the letter, and is now reaping the reward of her fidelity.

“‘ He turned then with faltering voice to his daughter, and exhorted her to ‘love above all things God—her Father, who is in heaven—to embrace with her whole heart the laws of our Divine Redeemer—to read every day, at least, a few lines of scripture or holy books, to be constant in her attendance at Divine Worship—to pray frequently, to honour her mother, to obey her, to confide in her motherly care, and never to keep any secret from her—never to tell her an untruth—but to support her always, and never abandon her in her old age.’ The child promised faithfully—while her tears overflowed on the cold hands of her dying father—she has kept her promise faithfully—God bless her—a better child was never on this world.

“‘ My good master did not forget me. He spoke a few words to me, which I can never forget.

“Martha, said he, you have been in the service of my parents, and have grown grey in the family. I hoped that we could keep you until the end of your days. But God has disposed otherwise. I cannot reward your fidelity. God will undoubtedly repay you here or hereafter.

“I have very little to bequeath to you, he continued, addressing us, but I leave you no debts. And among the little that I do leave, there is not one ill-gotten penny. God's blessing will be on you, you will prosper as well as if I had left you thousands. The prayer of the poor, their grateful ‘God reward you,’ must bring down blessings on you. A few moments after—the good gentleman died—alas, only in his forty-second year. We were obliged to leave the house, and had very little property to depend on. The poor lady was so afflicted for the loss of her husband, that she fell dangerously ill, and her temporal affairs became more and more disordered. I saw clearly that she could not afford a servant maid—though she was ashamed to tell me so. But, as I had a sister, who was ready to receive me, I went to her, and my good lady and her daughter came to Hell-brunn, and lived for several years in a little room not larger than this. Some time ago, she came to this town, and was able to get an unfurnished chamber, with one bedroom and a little kitchen, in the fourth story of a large deserted house. She expected to be able to support herself here by her own labour, as she had done in the village. The moment that Wilhelmina, or as we call her now, Mina, arrived here, she discovered where I was. My sister had already died in great distress, and I had hired this little place for myself. I could not tell how happy I was on meeting my young mistress. She kissed her poor old servant, and we both wept with joy. From that moment she has done more for me than I can tell you. I have on Sundays and holidays, a share of the best that their own poor table affords. Yes, and could you believe it, ever since I lost

the use of my limbs, she comes daily and brings me water from the well, in that very pitcher. She bought it out of her money, because she could not manage a water tub. God will repay her—he repays even a cup of cold water given in his name; a thousand times, I tell her, God will repay her. Hitherto, indeed, she has nothing but sorrows. Her dear mother has been ill for some time past, and poor Mina has no person to help her now. She is very expert, but the best work brings but small profits. She has, also, great taste for embroidery. See there, in that old prayer book, over the pitcher, a little pious picture, which she decorated with her own hands, when she was a mere child, shortly after her father's death. She made me a present of it. It represents a green grave covered with a black cross, under the drooping boughs and yellow leaves of a weeping willow. Whenever I look on that picture, the tears start to my eyes, for the death of the good father, whom the poor child lost so soon. I weep, too, to think that such delicate hands should, from love for me, carry that load of a pitcher. The good God will reward the child.'

“Such was the faithful old servant's narrative.

“I took the old prayer book, which appeared to serve as a cover for the pitcher, and examined the picture. It pleased me much. ‘Is it not beautiful,’ said Martha. ‘I know well that it pleases you.’

“Now,” said Mr. Frank, addressing his guests, “my dear friends, you must pardon me for giving this long story of the poor servant. The way she expressed herself—her manner—is not, perhaps, to your taste; but the matter is good—something the same as the pitcher on the table. I think no one here objects to the Rhenish wine, because it is served in a pitcher. No, no—no person is such a fool. How then could I suspect any of you, of the much greater folly of disrelishing truth, because it comes from an humble source, and without any artful pomp or glitter of words.



## CHAPTER IV.

## WILHELMINA.

“ I REMAINED for a considerable time,” continued Mr. Frank, “ in Martha’s room, in the hope of seeing my dear daughter-in-law; as the hour for bringing the water was near. She did come at last, and was greatly surprised on seeing me. Martha began at once to extol me. ‘ Dear Mina,’ said she, ‘ I cannot contain my joy. I must tell you the good news—the weight that pressed so heavily on me, is removed from my heart. I always feared,’ said she, turning to me, ‘ that I should, some day or other, be obliged to leave my little room. My landlord was not satisfied with his rent, and was constantly seeking more and more every quarter. He threatened to dispossess me, and I scraped together as much as I could from my poor earnings. Mina paid twice for me; but we could pay no more. We reckoned and planned, but there was no chance of success for us, when God sent you here to put an end to our trouble. Dearest Mina,’ said she, ‘ this good gentleman is ready to make up the sum I want, and I shall no longer be under the necessity of taking the money which you so often earned for me, by hard work till midnight.

“ Mina stood there, blushing at these praises; she was the very image of amiable modesty, but I wished to put her virtue to a severe test, in order to know whether it was pure gold—merchants, you know, are exact. ‘ No doubt, my child,’ said I to her, ‘ it is very generous in you to assist old Martha in this way, and I commend you for it. But you carry your kindness too far. Is it not too

much to bring water from the well to a poor old servant-maid? Can you deny it?’

“But Mina stared at me in amazement, and with a gentle nod, answered, ‘O, Mr. Frank, the proof you have just given of your generous and tender feelings, shows that you cannot be serious in what you say.’

“‘In solemn earnestness,’ said I, ‘a huge, shapeless, pitcher, is a very strange object on the head of a young, handsome, and well-dressed lady. You are the laughing stock of the town. To carry water is not fit occupation for you.’ ‘I think,’ answered Mina, ‘that to help a good person in need, can never be unbecoming. Can it ever be unbecoming to do good? Certainly, Mr. Frank, if you thought so, you would not have had the kindness to raise the pitcher on my head, yesterday, at the well. You would have said, ‘Oh, that’s not fit work for a respectable citizen—let other people do it.’”

“‘Oh,’ said I, ‘that was a trifle not worth talking about. It was no more, if you will, than a little civility, which an old man might well pay to a young lady. But to draw water every day—so far—through frost and rain, and all sorts of bad weather, is no trifle. No, no—to become the servant of a servant maid, is carrying kindness too far. There would be no end to the calls for your services, if you were willing to carry water for all that may require it.’

“‘No doubt,’ said Mina, smiling, ‘the most generous good-will could not accomplish that. But that I should walk a few steps for my good old servant, Martha, is, in my eyes, not an act, merely of civility, but a sacred duty. What feelings would I have, if I refused to do it? You cannot conceive what unspeakable services the good Martha—poor though she now is—has done to me and my mother—and what a noble and affectionate heart throbs under those rags. She scarcely could be called our servant—her dispositions made her a friend—a second mother to me. As far as I can remember—yes, farther—even

from my very birth—she has had the care of me. How many long days has she carried me in her arms? How many sleepless nights has she spent at my bedside, to relieve my mother, who placed the most boundless confidence in her? How many thousand walks has she taken on my account? What has she not endured for me, while I suffered the infirmities of childhood? She often spared from her own hard earnings, what could purchase a present for me on my birthday. She assisted my parents in educating me. She told me stories a thousand times, and always told them to instruct me. How earnestly has she warned me against evil, and taught me to fly, with horror, the least appearance of sin; and pictured the beauty of filial piety, of innocence, and modesty, and integrity, in the highest colours, to my youthful mind. But who can tell what she did during my father's long illness? her sleepless nights—her sympathy in our sorrows—her carelessness of her own comforts, in order to spare expense; as she knew that we had but little, and that my father's long illness entailed many heavy charges. And then—the paltry sum that was due to her when she left us—she did not receive even one penny. I could have no feeling, were I so ungrateful as to refuse walking a few steps for so kind a friend. It is no trouble to me. I lose nothing by it. I have always a half hour at my disposal, before sunset, and as my occupations keep me at home all day—an evening walk is good for my health. It is recreation to me. No doubt, it may appear somewhat strange, that a person dressed as I am, should be seen drawing water. I thought so myself, the first time I ventured into the street with my pitcher. I blushed when I met my acquaintances. I was obliged to bear a great many railleries, and it was to escape them, that I usually went out only in the dusk of evening. But what, thought I to myself, what harm can it do to a person to be laughed at for doing a good act? Still—to be very candid with you—were it possible to manage otherwise, I would much prefer not to

carry the water. But the people of the house, here, will not do the least good service to poor Martha. We found, here in the neighbourhood, a young girl, who engaged to bring the water and do other little turns for her, on the promise of receiving a dollar every quarter from my mother. But the girl was careless. Sometimes she was late, and sometimes she forgot it altogether. Just imagine to yourself then, what must have been the condition of poor Martha—left so long without as much water as would prepare her soup, or even quench her thirst. Away, said I, at last, with false shame. They who do good, need fear no shame. Moreover, there is a satisfaction in doing personally, what we are personally interested in. And, besides—but I have said too much already, so good evening to you,’ said she, taking up the pitcher.

“ ‘ O,’ said Martha, ‘ tell the rest now. Your mother gives you the dollar, and you give it to me. It enables me to have a good bowl of warm milk every morning for breakfast. In truth, my dear Mina, not only for that, but for a thousand other things, I am under a debt of gratitude to you, which I cannot fully express. No matter how long I may live, I never can repay you.’

“ ‘ Be silent, my dear Martha,’ said Mina, ‘ you have paid that debt long ago. My only wish is, that I could do more for you, and that our new lodgings were not so confined, and up so many flights of stairs, as to prevent us from bringing you to live with ourselves—we are somewhat better attended where we live.’ The good child wept as she said these words, and taking up her pitcher, turned and quickly disappeared.

“ I now returned home,” said Mr. Frank, to his guests, “ and on my way, my thoughts were completely absorbed in the scene I had just witnessed. The conduct of this young girl, thought I, trifling though it may appear to many, appears to me, the most noble that I have ever heard of in the course of my life. I know not which to admire most, her gratitude to an old servant, whose claims

were no way extraordinary—the modesty of the noble girl, the calm contempt of the world's thoughts and concerns, so unusual in a person of her age—or the industry with which she toiled for the support of her mother. I resolved to become acquainted with the mother of so good a child. I resolved to go see her, and to give her some assistance. I went to purchase some embroidery, and found the mother just what you might expect from the conduct of the daughter. I was struck with the neatness and order visible in her poor apartments. There was not one atom of dust—all—all was just such as pleased me. I requested to see some specimens of the embroidered work, and was charmed with their elegance. From that moment, Mina was constantly employed by me. I know well, that I am reputed by some to be enormously rich, and by others to be a very great miser. But the terms I made with Mina, were not such as might be expected from a merchant, who was either one or the other.”

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## CHAPTER V.

### MISS SAX.

“AFTER some time,” continued old Mr. Frank, “my son Frederick returned from England—and God be praised—to the great delight of his father; for during his absence he had wonderfully improved. I have no difficulty in telling him now, on his wedding day, that he fully realized—yes—surpassed my fondest anticipations. In a short time the whole city, though certainly without the consent of me or my son—had arranged a match between young Mr. Frank and Miss Sax. It was to have been a great festival for the whole town. The two families, Sax and Frank, are the richest amongst us; the two children are

the sole heirs of the family properties, and nothing is wanted, said the general report, to bring the business to a conclusion, but two enormous sums of money. As our gardens lay close to each other, it sometimes happened that both families met and walked together after dinner. My son walked with Madam and Miss Sax, while Mr. Sax and I followed in the rear. This circumstance removed all doubt from people's minds. The marriage was universally considered to be definitely settled.

“One evening, about nightfall, we were all returning home together. Mina, carrying her pitcher, met us. She appeared disconcerted, made way for us in the narrow passage, and stood there, modest and trembling, with her heavy load on her head. ‘Good evening Miss Mina,’ said I, in a friendly tone. A loud laugh from Miss Sax! This ruffled my temper. ‘Miss Sax, why do you laugh,’ said I, ‘is it at me, or the young woman?’ ‘O! heaven save us,’ said she, ‘not at you, but at the young water-lady.’ ‘Why do you call the good child a water-lady?’ I asked, in such a tone as not to let her see that the expression displeased me. ‘Oh,’ she answered, with a smile, ‘I think a young lady with a pitcher of water on her head, rather a strange sight. A pitcher of water and a lady are rather an odd association. The dress she wears, is worn only by respectable people—the business she is engaged in, is done by servants. I cannot but laugh when I see beggary and respectability so oddly associated.’ ‘But,’ said I, ‘I have the very best reasons to know, that she is carrying the water, not for herself, but for a poor, old, helpless woman, who was once in her service.’ ‘If so,’ answered Miss Sax, ‘she must be a very simple soul and her simplicity has duped her into a very strange crime. For a thousand ducats I would not be seen in her dress, going through the streets with a pitcher of water on my head, in danger of meeting, at every step, people of respectability. Let servants get their wages—that is

enough for them—you are under no farther obligation to them—all their claims are settled.' She would have chattered more, but I saw the mother giving her a wink to be silent. A dress-maker happening to pass by at the moment, with a large parcel under her arm, Miss Sax suddenly broke off the conversation, saluted the dress-maker most familiarly, and begged to know to what lady she was bringing the bonnet she had in her parcel.

"This little adventure had very considerable influence on me. I do not deny that I had some notion of having my son married to Miss Sax. Still I had many misgivings on the matter. I could not form a fixed opinion on her character. But I had now got such a view of her disposition, that I was convinced she and I could never agree. That whole evening, Mina was constantly before my eyes. I saw her standing there, so virtuous, so modest, so talented, standing with her pitcher on her head, and giving no other answer to the haughty look, and shameless laughter, and cutting raileries of Miss Sax, than by turning her eyes with more gentleness and modesty to the ground.

"I candidly acknowledge," continued Mr. Frank, "that I began to think a young woman like Mina, would be a most desirable daughter-in-law. Such a noble heart, thought I, is worth a ton of gold—and no amount of gold can supply the want of a noble heart. If Mina were so kind to an old servant-maid, could I be unhappy with her. But I kept my thoughts to myself—I resolved that my son's choice should be free."

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SUITOR.

“THAT evening, when we came home,” said Mr. Frank, “my son was pensive. When we were at supper, he asked me, who was that young woman, whom he had seen now for the first time. He begged me to tell him the whole history of that water-pitcher, with which I appeared to be so well acquainted. I did so, in the same simple strain in which I have now told it to you, without making any remark, but, I was happy to see, not without making a very visible impression on my son.

“After some time, I perceived that something was deepening my son’s spirits. I implored him one morning at breakfast to place confidence in his father, and not conceal his secret, whatever it was. He began—but with very evident symptoms of embarrassment and alarm, to tell me the high opinion he had of Mina—and to give hints of his hopes and fears. ‘Do you know,’ said I, ‘that she has no money?’ ‘Perfectly well,’ he answered, firmly, ‘but it is not money I want.’ ‘And how is Mina disposed towards you?’ ‘Precisely,’ said he, ‘as I am towards her. ‘You must have had some mutual declaration then,’ said I. ‘Never,’ he answered, ‘not one word on any such attachment, not a syllable about marriage ever passed our lips; how could I, without the consent of the best of fathers, speak of marriage or of an attachment to any person, until I had reason to hope that a marriage would take place?’ ‘But are you certain,’ said I, ‘that Mina is sincerely attached to you, and that she, a poor girl, is not looking perhaps for your riches.’ ‘Impossible,’ said Frederick, ‘such intentions



are utterly incompatible with her character. I am convinced she can have no such intentions.'

"He then began to tell me, very eloquently, that Mina's virtues were of more value than all the gold in the world.' 'Frederick,' said I, interrupting him, 'what reason have I ever given you to imagine that your father prized money more than virtue?—come—come to my arms, and receive the assurance of my most hearty approbation of your choice. In small matters, I have certainly been careful about money—but it was in order that you need not look for it in the most important affair of your life. I am delighted with your choice—it is in perfect accordance with my wishes—the fondest wishes of a father's heart. And now, with your leave—you must allow me to be your suitor with Mina's mother. You may follow in half-an-hour's time.'

"I ran—and it was, certainly, no easy matter—I ran up the four flights of stairs, to the little room of the noble widow. Mina was sewing—seated in her usual place. She was a little disconcerted when she saw me. The good mother, too, appeared surprised at such an early visit, and so unusual an hour. I told my business at once—and marked with inexpressible delight, the joyful amazement of the affectionate mother, and of the young woman herself—who, certainly, had no hope of any such proposal. 'Are you aware,' said the mother, 'that I have nothing—absolutely nothing, to give with my daughter.' 'Let not that cost you one thought,' said I, 'Mina is as rich as a king's daughter—rich in the noblest property—piety and virtue. I don't want money. No rich lady for me—I want a good daughter-in-law; and if you and your daughter consent, I am the happiest father-in-law on earth. I must insist, moreover, that you do not give your daughter the value of one penny in money—nothing but one article of household furniture—I mean the big water pitcher in which Wilhelmina carried the water every day to the old servant maid. I firmly believe that water pitcher will

bring more luck into my house than if it were full of gold coin.' Before the mother had time to answer, my son entered. She and I then joined the hands of our children, and wept as we blessed them. It was a happy, blissful moment, of the purest and most unclouded joy.

"We kept the matter a profound secret. My son was obliged to take a long journey. In the meantime I had my house newly painted, and all my silver plate recast in the newest fashion. I did so, partly to give some employment to our tradesmen, who then had not much work, and partly to do all in my power to celebrate with suitable pomp the present happy day. This festival is above all, and I thought I could not do too much to honour it."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### NOBLE CONDUCT OF THE YOUNG COUPLE.

"SUCH, my worthy friends," said old Frank, closing his narrative, "is the history of THE WATER PITCHER, and I am sure you are not surprised that I have given it the place of honour here to-day. It had, as you have seen, a very considerable part in bringing about this union. The clumsy, old pitcher, served as a matchmaker, though it was as unconscious of its influence, as the modest, gentle bride, when she carried it through the streets, in the discharge of a sacred duty to her old servant. Let it, then, wear its garlands, and hold its place of honour. It has won them well, and done more good in the world than many a fat gentleman, though he may have drank perhaps ten times more wine than the pitcher ever brought water from the well."

"Permit me," said he, "to add a few words to my narrative. This water pitcher proves to us all that those whom God has blessed with no wealth—those who have

no money—can yet do many charitable acts. Charity of this kind is most agreeable to God, and brings down on the poor greater blessings than gold. This pitcher ought to be preserved as a family monument; and, in a hundred years hence, the children of the house cannot look upon it without reverencing and blessing the memory of their grandmother. I wish that every young woman, be she rich or poor—be her settlement in life high or low—could present some such simple article to her future husband—suppose a little basket, in which she had from time to time brought bread, or eggs, or butter, to the poor; or a little earthen plate, on which she had laid aside at every meal some broth, or nourishment of some kind, for a sick person; or a work-basket, in which she had put up every day, were it only for a few moments, some sewing or other work to clothe the poor. Unpretending articles of this kind would not, it is true, make such a figure as many costly presents, but it would be the most valuable treasure in the house. No doubt, costly articles of silver plate are a valuable capital, which can be turned to good account should necessity require—but in those little articles I have mentioned there would be a still more valuable capital, payable in the other world.”

“Bravo,” exclaimed the fat gentleman at the foot of the table, who from time to time had cast many a wishful glance at the pitcher—“Bravo, my dear Mr. Frank, you have spoken most eloquently. But for the present, we have heard enough of the pitcher. Let us now test the flavour of the noble beverage it contains. The good wine smells sweeter even than those flowers that crown the pitcher. The flavour tells upon me—here at the foot of the table.”

Whilst the fat old gentleman was speaking, the bride whispered something into the ear of old Frank, who immediately told the company. “I promised the bride not to refuse any request she should make this day. But since the request she has made now, is one which I cannot

grant without the consent of my honoured guests, I take the liberty of submitting the matter to your consideration. The bride was most anxious to have her old friend Martha, to whom she owes many of her good qualities, present here at table, and she begged me to send her an invitation. I went in person, and invited her. She was so ill that she could not come, and I must declare that her absence is a considerable abatement of the happiness of the evening. It was, therefore, resolved that we should send her a portion of all that was provided for our guests. But now the bride comes with another request. Martha has been ordered by the physicians to get some good old wine. The bride thinks that if the poor sufferer were to take only the same small quantity daily which she used to take in her former sickness, this full pitcher would serve her for a whole year, and perhaps keep her alive for ten years to come. I would not have communicated this request to the company, but would have taken the very simple and obvious course of exhausting the pitcher here in honour of the bridegroom and bride, and then sending it replenished to old Martha. But, to be plain with you, I cannot do that; for I have not another drop of wine so good as this: I have long kept it in reserve, especially for this very occasion. My little cask precisely filled the pitcher. There it is before you; you have a right to it—there is no question of that. Still, I venture to propose to you, to take the votes of the company—‘whether we shall drain the pitcher here in honour of the bride and bridegroom, or content ourselves with the wine which we have now, and some others which are coming, and which are very good, or comply with the wish of the bride, and devote the wine to a work of mercy.’ The majority of votes decides.”

“Wha—wha—what!” stammered out the fat gentleman at the foot of the table, who would have brought up the rear of the dissentients. He coughed and hemmed, and was preparing to make a long speech on the matter,

but was received with an universal burst of merriment. The bride's wish was granted by acclamation, and the wine voted to old Martha with unanimous and hearty consent. The fat gentleman was the only dissentient, and he looked so sadly disappointed that the company could not refrain from laughing heartily at his expense. He muttered and grumbled, "I knew well the old man could not do even one sensible act. He was, and is a ——." He muttered the last word so thickly, that even the person by his side could not hear it.

The burgomaster, who came dressed in his robes of state to honour the festival, sat in one of the highest seats, near the mother of the bride. He overheard some of the words of the fat man, and remarked, "I have often heard it said that Mr. Frank was a singular man; that it was hard to know what sort of person he was, and that he himself did not well know his own wishes. But I never heard such remarks from sensible people. Mr. Frank knows perfectly well, what he is doing. I could never see in his conduct, any of those imaginary eccentricities. He retained, for instance, the old fashion, both in dress and in the furniture of his house; but by this adherence to good old customs, and to his abhorrence of ever-changing and expensive fashions, he has amassed the greater part of his large fortune. He was sparing in small things, that he might be liberal on a splendid scale, to his fellow-men. He often managed matters in such a way, that those who were unacquainted with his motives, censured him severely. But he not only gave himself no concern about what people thought of him, but even appeared to take a delight in being misunderstood. But the truth came out in the end. This was exactly the case with the pitcher. For my part, I could not guess what brought it here. I saw the bride blush, the bridegroom's eye beaming with joy, the bride's mother raising her eyes gratefully to heaven, and not a few of the guests almost inclined to laugh. But what a delightful and instructive explanation of his con-

duct have we not received from Mr. Frank? We are charmed with the story of the water pitcher. All of us, with one solitary exception, heartily approve the charitable use to which the good old wine is destined.

“I cannot refrain,” continued he, “from adding another brief, but not unimportant observation. When a man of whose discernment and prudence we have a good opinion does an act that appears strange to us, we must not at once conclude that he is acting imprudently or wrong. We ought to suspend our judgments; time will tell whether he was right or wrong. We should observe the same course with regard to such men, that religion teaches us to hold with regard to many things that God does or permits to happen. At first, his ways are often utterly unintelligible to us; but, in the end, we find that they were just and good. It were well that we could always follow this rule—never to prejudge the conduct of a good and prudent man, and much less the ways of a most wise and bounteous God.”

The burgomaster then raising his glass, amid the plaudits of the whole party, drank to the health of Mr. Frank, the bride and bridegroom, the bride's mother, and all the guests; and thus closed as happy a wedding feast as ever had been celebrated.

When the company had retired, the bride took the pitcher, and gently addressing her husband, “Many a time,” said she, “I brought this pitcher, full of water, to my old friend; would it not be a good thing if I brought it to her this evening, for the last time, with the wine?” The husband took his hat at once, to accompany her. The bride's mother suggested that it would be better to run the wine in bottles. “No, no,” said old Frank, “the pitcher will be more welcome to old Martha. But I will send a servant with bottles to have the wine bottled and sealed in presence of the young couple.”

The bride and bridegroom then walked by the light of the moon through the streets of the town. Oh, what a

transport of joy was it not to the good old servant, now in her eightieth year, when she saw the young pair in their bridal dress enter her humble abode! When she saw the pitcher with its gorgeous wreaths, and heard the whole story, and tasted the restoring beverage; the like of which had never passed her lips. Big tears, bursting from her grateful heart, rolled down her face, as she raised to her lips the rich old wine, which shone in the crystal glass like transparent gold. "God reward you—God reward you"—she repeated again and again. "Truly," said she, in a calm and solemn tone, "truly, this marriage is not unlike that at which our Lord and Saviour was present. When bride and bridegroom celebrate their marriage day, as you have done, it is an invitation to Him to be amongst you. For you, dear Mina, he has, indeed, changed the water into wine. For, when you came here to me so often with the pitcher of water, you never imagined, that the good God would, one day, enable you to present it to me on your marriage day, full of this costly wine. This is the reward of your pious and prudent life. God will pour out greater blessings, still, on you and your husband, whose heart is so like your own. Yes, rich blessings are in store for you. And, even though severe trials should be sent to prove your virtue; though you should be reduced to beggary and be obliged to use the water pitcher, yet, the virtuous dispositions of your hearts would make that water as agreeable as the most costly wine."

As the bride and bridegroom were retiring from the house, they still heard the grateful exclamations: "God reward you—God reward you"—repeated by faithful old Martha.

# THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

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## CHAPTER I.

### OTTILIA AND HER DAUGHTER AGNES.

ABOUT a hundred years ago, there lived in the mountain hold of Falkenberg, the brave knight Theobald and his pious wife Ottilia. The knight was as good as he was brave. He took under his powerful protection all who had any injury to complain of, and never asked even thanks for his aid. To make others happy, he thought, was an ample reward. In Ottilia the poor had a generous friend. She visited the sick in the neighbouring valleys, and opened wide the gates of her castle to all who required and desired relief. Agnes, the only daughter of this virtuous pair, followed from her infancy the example of her parents. When only eight years old, her greatest pleasure was to make others happy. No wonder, then, that this good family was universally respected and beloved, and that no person ever caught a glimpse of the high towers of Falkenberg without a hearty blessing on the good people that dwelt within its walls. The blessing of heaven did visibly descend on Theobald, Ottilia, and Agnes. Their hands were ever open, yet they never knew want: they were as wealthy as any noble family in the land.

One fine summer's day, Ottilia and her daughter took a walk after dinner, in the garden, which sloped down the



side of the mountain. The passage to the garden was by a long flight of stone steps, descending from a door in the castle wall. The garden was well stocked with every thing that could please the eye; here were clusters of budding roses, and vegetables in all their varieties—long rows of pears with their silver blossoms, and blushing cherries peeping from beneath their dark green leaves. The mother and daughter stood, for awhile, near a fountain in the middle of the garden, amusing themselves with the play of the water, which shot up its crystal wreaths in the bright beams of the summer sun, and descended in a thousand diamond drops, glittering with all the colours of the rainbow. Then retiring to a bower, shaded with the trellised and clustering vine, they began to make clothes for a poor orphan girl. No sound was heard in the garden; all was still and tranquil, save, now and then, the sweet song of the linnet on a bough of a neighbouring tree, or the ceaseless and monotonous splashing of the distant fountain.

As they were sitting together, something flew so rapidly into the bower, that they could not know what it was. Both looked around in alarm, and instantly a large hawk darted down, and poised its broad wings at the entrance of the bower. But it retreated when it saw persons within. Agnes sat there so terrified, that she dared not look around her, to know what it was that took refuge in the bower; but the mother, with a smile, said to her, "Do not fear, it is only a poor bird that has fled in here from the hawk; look," said she, pointing, "it is a snow-white little dove. In its fright, it took refuge there behind you." She then took the dove in her hand, and casting an inquiring glance at Agnes, said, "I will roast it for you this evening."

"Roast it?" exclaimed Agnes, seizing the dove with both her hands, as if her mother was going to kill it on the spot. "Oh! no, dear mother, you cannot be serious. The poor little thing flew to me for refuge—can I consent to

kill it? Oh! how beautiful it is; white as the driven snow, and its little feet, red as glowing coral. Its poor heart beats; and its innocent eyes are fixed on me, as if they would say—do not hurt me—No! poor bird, I will not hurt thee. You sought, and you must have my help. I will take the best care of you.”

“Right, my dear child,” said the mother, affectionately. You knew my wishes. I only wished to try you. Bring the bird to your chamber and feed it. We should never spurn the unhappy when they seek our aid. We must be kind to all that are in grief, and have pity on animals themselves.”

By the mother's orders a little dove-cot, with red roof and green lattice-work, was prepared, and placed in a corner of Agnes' chamber, where she fed the dove every day with clean corn and fresh water, supplying it also with sand. It soon became accustomed to Agnes, and grew tame and domesticated. When she opened the door of the little cage, it would fly out and pick the corn from her hand. In a short time it became so perfectly content, that it shewed not the slightest wish to recover its liberty.

At break of day, while Agnes was yet asleep, the dove would fly towards her bed, and give her no rest until she arose and gave it food. Agnes complained to her mother of this annoyance. “But I know,” said she, “how to prevent the restless little thing from disturbing my sleep. I will fasten the cage door every night, and keep it locked up until I awake in the morning.” “Oh, no,” answered the mother, “rather let the dove teach you to rise early in the morning. Early rising is good for the health, and cheers and contents the mind. Surely, you ought to be ashamed if you arose later than a dove.” Agnes obeyed her mother's advice, and always arose early in the morning.

One day Agnes was sitting near the window, sewing. The window was open, and the dove, which had been picking some crumbs at her feet, suddenly flew out, and

landed on the next house. Agnes was alarmed, and screamed aloud. Her mother ran to know what was the matter. "O, my dove," said Agnes, pointing to the roof where it perched, and was basking in the sun. "Call it back," said the mother. Agnes did so, and to her inexpressible delight the dove instantly obeyed the call, and perched on her outstretched hand. While Agnes was thus happy, her mother said, "Be you ever as obedient to me as the dove is to you, and you will make me always as happy as you are now. Will you not make me happy?" Agnes did promise, and kept her word. No daughter could be more obedient.

Another day, after Agnes had watered her flower-knots in the garden; she was tired, and sat on the green bank beside her mother over the fountain. The dove, which was now so tame that it had full liberty to fly where it pleased, came and perched on a stone to drink in the fountain. "See, mother," said Agnes, "how carefully it flies from one moss-covered stone to another; how cautiously it avoids the mud between the stones: how cleanly the little thing is. White is the colour most easily soiled, and yet there is not a single speck on the snowy plumage of the careful bird." "But, see how careless Agnes is," said the mother, pointing to Agnes' white frock. When bringing the water-pot from the fountain, she had not taken good care of her clothes, so that some spots were found on them. She blushed when she saw them, but from that day her mother had never to complain of the slightest soil in Agnes' dress.

She once took a journey with her mother, in which she enjoyed the greatest amusement. In the evening, when she came home, the dove at once flew to meet her, and gave very clear signs of its great joy for her return. "It was sorrowful all day for your absence," said one of the maids, "and sought you in every part of the house. It amazes me, how a little animal like it, that has no sense, can know its mistress and love it so much." "No doubt,"

said Agnes, "I am more than repaid by this gratitude for the few grains of corn I give it every day." "But are you, Agnes," said her mother, "always so grateful? Look back to all the joys you have had to-day. Have you thanked God for them? Oh! let not a poor bird put you to the blush." Before this time Agnes had not reflected much on her obligation of gratitude to God; but, henceforward, she never retired to rest without pouring forth her most ardent thanks to God for all the joys and favours he had bestowed on her that day.

"Dear little dove," said Agnes, one morning early, as she sat at her work, and looked at the bird perched on the edge of the table, with its bright, beaming eyes fixed on its mistress, "I have got many good lessons from you, and I owe you many thanks." "Oh, but the best is to come," said the mother. "The beautiful white dove is a lovely emblem of innocence. Candid, artless, and unaffected—it has no guile, no deceit, no dissimulation. Our divine Redeemer included all those qualities in the words, 'Be simple as doves.' Oh, ever aim at that noble simplicity; avoid guile, deceit, and all sorts of evil. God grant that it may one day be said with truth, 'Agnes is as innocent and candid as a dove.'"

The prayer was heard, for such was the character of Agnes with all who knew her.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ROSALIND AND HER DAUGHTER EMMA.

THE Knight Theobald returned home one evening from an expedition against a powerful band of robbers, who had long infested the country, and kept the whole population in constant alarm. Delighted at the success of his expedition, and with his goblet of wine before him, he

told with great animation how he had captured many of the robbers and handed them over to the law, and dispersed the others so that they could no longer trouble the peace and happiness of the land. The narrative was long. Ottilia and Agnes, though they listened attentively, busily plied their spinning wheels. It was very late, the chamber lights were already on the table, when suddenly a beautiful lady, pale and dressed in black, entered the parlour, with a little girl, also in black, leaning on her arm. The knight and his wife and daughter rose to salute the stranger.

“ God bless you, noble knight,” said the lady, weeping, “ though I have never even seen you before, I come to claim your protection. I am Rosalind of Hohenberg—this is my daughter Emma. My great afflictions are not, perhaps, unknown to you. My good husband died of the wounds received in that great battle fought last year. Oh, what a loss I have had in him ! A virtuous man—a kind and affectionate husband—the best of fathers. You knew him well. Generous to all who asked his help, he left no provision for us here—his treasures are stored up in heaven. We are now in great danger of being deprived even of the necessaries of life. My two neighbours, both rapacious knights, are oppressing me. One wishes to seize my corn fields and pasture lands, up to the very walls of my castle ; the other threatens to rob me of my forests, that come up to my gates at the other side. Oh, how much they are changed ! Avarice, the cause of so many crimes on this earth, has changed my husband’s friends into my bitterest enemies. Too well he foresaw this, and with his last breath he mentioned your name. ‘ Put your confidence,’ said he, ‘ in God and Sir Theobald, and no enemy shall dare touch a hair of your head.’ Oh, realize the words of my dying husband. Alas ! what shall become of me, if I have nothing but my castle walls ! Can the stones feed myself and my Emma ? Should you—which heaven forbid—meet my husband’s fate, and your

lady and daughter be poor and helpless as we, may they find a strong arm to help them in the hour of need!"

Little Emma, who was about the same age as Agnes, approached the knight, and, with tears in her eyes, implored him—"Noble knight, be a father to me, and do not reject me."

Theobald stood with a serious air, his eyes on the ground, and one hand, according to his custom, raised to his lips. "Oh, dear father," said Agnes, crying, "do pity them. When the dove, chased by the hawk, sought help from me, my mother said that we should never reject those who fly to us for aid. She was delighted that I had pity on the dove. And do not this little lady and her mother deserve pity more than the dove? Oh, save them from the grasping claws of these knights—they are wicked hawks."

The knight was deeply affected, and answered with earnestness, "Yes, Agnes, with the help of God I will protect them. I was silent, not because I did not feel for their wrongs, but because I was thinking how I could avenge them, and protect this excellent lady and her innocent daughter." The knight brought a chair for the mother, and little Agnes did the same for the daughter. Otilia went to prepare a supper better than usual for her guests; for in those days ladies even of high birth superintended such matters in person.

Theobald then asked the grounds of the exorbitant claims of the two knights, and was satisfied that Rosalind was deeply injured. "Justice is on your side," said he, "and to-morrow, at break of day, I with some of my retainers shall try what we can do for you. Remain here with your daughter until I return, and you can then bring home with you the good news I expect to have for you." The whole company then partook of some refreshment, and spent a happy night together. In the morning Theobald, accompanied by his retainers, set out for Rosalind's castle.

Agnes was delighted that Emma was to spend some days with her. She conducted her young guest to her chamber, and through the garden, and shewed her all her wardrobe, her flowers, and her dove. In a short time they were warm friends; for Emma, too, was a good and well-educated girl.

In a few days Theobald returned. "Good news," said he, when he entered the hall. "Noble lady, your enemies have renounced their extravagant claims, and all strife is at an end. Though I proved clearly that their claims were unjust, they paid very little attention to me; but they took another tone when I told them, that the slightest injury done to you would be a declaration of war against me. Have courage and hope, lady! no stranger shall reap your fertile fields, nor fell the trees of your paternal forests."

The afflicted lady now forgot her griefs, and tears of gratitude glistened in her eyes. "God, the faithful protector of the widow and orphan," said she—"God will reward you for the favour you have done to me and my child; may He protect you from all evil, and guard you in the hour of need."

She then prepared to return without delay to Hohenberg. Agnes and her young friend were overwhelmed with grief for their separation. The stranger could not be allowed to go without a present; and as she had often expressed a wish to have a tame dove, Agnes brought down her own, and, with tears in her eyes, gave it to Emma. At first she positively refused to take it; but after a warm contest with her affectionate friend, she consented. Agnes gave her the cage also; and recommended the poor dove with as much earnestness, as a mother entrusting her child to a stranger's care.

But Emma was scarcely gone, when Agnes was sorry for having given the dove. "Mother," said she, "it would have been much better, had I given my gold earrings, as a keepsake, to my young friend." But her

mother said, "You can do so, when she comes again. The present you gave was far more suitable on this occasion. Had it been richer, it would not have been so welcome, and might, perhaps, have given offence. To present her the thing most dear to you, however trifling in itself, was creditable to you, and gave her the strongest proof of your love. Do not regret what you have done. See, your good father was ready to risk his life to defend an injured lady, and should not you renounce your greatest pleasure, to cheer an afflicted orphan. Whoever does not learn to sacrifice every earthly good, no matter how dear, for the benefit of his afflicted fellow-creatures, can have no real love for them. Such sacrifices are the noblest that we can offer to God. He will reward you amply for your generous present."

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE TWO PILGRIMS.

LADY ROSALIND now lived content and in peace within the walls of her old castle, which lay in the deep recess of a wooded mountain. Late one evening, two pilgrims knocked at the castle gate, and asked for a night's lodging. They were dressed in the usual style of pilgrims—a long dark brown robe—scallop shells in their hats, and the pilgrim's staff in their hands. The porter sending to his lady for orders, she at once told him to conduct the strangers to the lower chambers, and supply them with a good supper and a goblet of wine. Rosalind and her daughter came down, when supper was over.

The pilgrims told them many tales of the Holy Land. All the inmates of the castle were grouped eagerly around them, but none was more deeply interested in the wonderful narratives, than little Emma. The tears flowed at



each story, and before they were over, she would give the world to visit, even once, that Holy Land, where our Saviour lived and died. It was a pious wish, but her joy was dashed as she feared she could never gratify it.

“Dear Emma,” said her mother, “any hour you please, you can visit that Holy Land, and see the Mount of Olives and Calvary, and the Tomb of our Lord. You have only to read the history of Jesus Christ, and you can follow Him through His charitable journeyings, and catch up His words as they fall from His lips, and witness His Passion, Death and Resurrection. If we profit by His lessons, His example, His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection, we have the Holy Land within our hearts. Yes—did all men study His history, and strictly obey His law, this wide world would become one Holy Land.”

The pilgrims then made particular enquiries about the neighbouring country, and especially about the castle of Falkenberg. They extolled knight Theobald to the skies. “If his castle be not too much out of our way,” said the elder pilgrim, “and if I thought I could find him at home, I could not think of passing without paying him a visit.” Rosalind told him that Falkenberg castle lay directly in their road, and that Theobald, who had just returned from an excursion, would certainly be at home. “I am most happy to hear it,” said the pilgrim. “It is my dearest wish to see him under his own roof. To-morrow, at day break, we start for Falkenberg.”

Rosalind and her daughter sent a thousand kind remembrances to Theobald, Ottilia, and Agnes. Emma gave some money to the pilgrims, which her mother had given her for the purpose, and told them not to forget, on any account, to tell her friend Agnes, that the dove was going on well. As the good lady had learned from the enquiries of the strangers, that they were unacquainted with the country, she ordered one of the servant boys to be ready in the morning early, to conduct them; and then taking her leave, she wished the pilgrims a good night.

Next morning the pilgrims set out. Their young guide was proud of his errand, and insisted on being allowed to carry their wallets. They took no notice of him, but walked on silently. For a while their road was very uneven, up hill and down hill, but at length, having reached the top of a very steep hill, they came on a level road, and began to converse in Italian. Their guide was also an Italian. Leonard was the name usually given him in the castle, but he was much better pleased to be called Leonardo, as in his native land. He was a poor orphan boy, whom Sir Adelind had taken up, and brought with him to Germany. Though long accustomed to speak the German language, he had not yet forgotten the Italian. He listened with delight to the pilgrims, and was just going to say how happy he was to hear once more the sweet sounds of his tongue,—when he suddenly shrunk back, chilled and horrified at what they were saying.

He collected from what he heard, that they were pilgrims in dress only; that this neighbourhood was not so unknown to them as they pretended; that they belonged to that band of robbers which Theobald had punished so severely, and that they were now burning for revenge; that under the cloak of piety, they had resolved to go to his castle and get a night's lodging; but that at the dead of night, when all was still, they were to rise and massacre Theobald and all belonging to him, then plunder his castle and reduce it to ashes.

As soon as the towers of Falkenberg appeared in the grey distance, between two wooded mountains, Lupo, the old bandit, said to his younger companion, Orso, "See the dragon-nest of that horrible butcher, who brought so many of our brave boys to the gallows. A death of the most racking torture awaits him. We'll chain him, and burn him alive in the flames of his castle."

"Yes," answered Orso—"still the mission endangers our necks. If it fail, we are dead. But a chance of getting the knight's bags of gold is worth the risk."

“His life,” said the old robber, with a revengeful scowl. “His murder would give more joy than his bags of gold, though I have an eye to them, too. Once safe out of this venture, and our fortunes are made. We can retire from trade, and live on our money. An idea strikes me just now. What a pleasant thing to dress ourselves in the knight’s most splendid robes! You can have his gold collar, and I his knight’s cross of precious stones. We can then fly to some foreign land, where no one can recognize us, and there pass for gentlemen, and make the most of our money.”

“All very good,” said Orso, “but still I have my doubts about the result.”

“What doubts?” asked Lupo. “Are not all our plans well laid and promising? Have we not associates enough at our call? The moment we hang out at the window of our room the three lights which we have taken as the signal, have we not seven stout and daring robbers, who have been on the watch for us these many nights past? We can admit them through the little garden gate, which is easily opened from the inside. One of those men, who was once a resident in the castle, knows every nook and chamber and turn in it, as well as in his own house. Nine of us, well armed, will have to do with a few men in their beds. Courage alone is required—success is certain.”

The blood froze in poor Leonardo’s veins at this atrocious project, but he did not let them see that he knew what they were saying. He walked carelessly behind them, now and then plucking some flowers, or playing a little tune on a leaf; but all the time he was praying fervently to God, that he might defeat the diabolical scheme of these horrible men. Leonardo resolved to accompany them to the castle, and make their plans known to the brave Theobald.

While they were still arranging the best means of succeeding, the old robber slipped on a narrow footpath, and

had nearly fallen into a deep chasm in the rock. In the fall he was caught by some brambles, and the thorns raising his pilgrim cloak, Leonardo saw under that long dark brown dress, a scarlet doublet and a glittering breast-plate of polished steel. A long, sharp dagger, was also visible. But the boy seemed as if he had not seen them. The old villain suddenly concealed the dagger and pulled down his pilgrim cloak, casting at the same time a hawk's glance at the poor trembling boy.

They now came to the brink of a frightful ravine, through which a mountain torrent, swollen with the heavy rains, roared and tumbled beneath them. Two projecting rocks met halfway over the gulf, and between them lay a long slender plank of fir, secured only at one side. This was their only path. As they approached it, the old robber said in Italian, "That lad may have seen that I am armed, and may suspect us. When he is getting over, I must send him to the bottom. Then we are safe—he can tell no tales."

At these terrible words a deadly chill shot through poor Leonardo's frame. He drew back several paces from the frightful abyss. "I am afraid," said he—"my head is dizzy." "Don't be afraid boy, come here to me and I will help you over," said the old villain, rushing, with outstretched arms, to seize him. But Leonardo screamed and fled, and had made up his mind to plunge into a thicket if the robber came near him. "Ah," said the poor fellow, trembling every limb, "let me go; both of us would fall into the flood. And though I got over safe, how could I come back? Let me go home; you don't want a guide now. When you are over the bridge, Falkenberg is near you; you want no guide."

The young robber, who did not much like to cross the dangerous plank, at once ascribed the poor boy's terror to the same cause. "If the simple body," said he in Italian, "suspected any thing, I will consent to be flung down this gulf; and, suppose that he had seen your armour and

dagger, what then? he does not understand our language, and, of course, does not know what we were plotting. Besides, no one would pay any attention to his childish prattling. Let the poor scamp take to his heels."

"Well, be it so," said the old robber; "but for greater security we must cut this plank, and then, though the fellow should know, he cannot baffle our plans. There is Falkenberg. There is no bridge or ford over this stream for several leagues at either side of us. News cannot come here until our work is done."

The two bandits then took their wallets from the boy, and allowed him to go away, without one kind word for having conducted them. They passed the bridge, and when they were at the other side, old Lupo shouted aloud, "You were right, lad; that was a dangerous passage. It is crazy from age, and almost rotten. Lives would certainly be lost on it; so it is much better to break it down, and then people must build a more secure one."

The two bandits then pulled down the old planks. They tumbled with a loud splash into the foaming flood, and were whirled rapidly over the rugged precipice. As soon as the pretended pilgrims disappeared behind the rocks on the opposite side, Leonardo ran with all his might to bring the terrible news to his lady. Not one soul in the whole neighbourhood he knew to whom he could safely entrust his secret, with any hope of putting the doomed victims on their guard.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### FEARS AND HOPES.

NOTHING could be farther from Lady Rosalind's thoughts within the secure walls of her castle, than the awful fate that was descending on the noble Theobald. Since the

departure of the pilgrims, Emma's mind was entirely captivated by their narratives, and she asked her mother a thousand questions about the Holy Land. The day was given to their usual occupations; but at the approach of evening, when the sun was descending, and a refreshing breeze cooled the air, they descended from their mountain castle, to view their lands in the adjacent valley. Every thing promised an abundant harvest. Some fields waving with golden corn, gave rich hopes of an overflowing granary; while others, gleaming with the brilliant hues of the blue flax-blossom, rivalled the summer sky in beauty. The mother and daughter felt doubly happy, because they looked upon these fields as a recent present from heaven, and fervently thanked their God for his bounteous favours.

Leonardo, reeking with perspiration, and almost out of breath, rushed down to his mistress. "O lady," said he, clapping his hands, "horrible news! They are not pilgrims, but robbers and murderers, these men that I went with; they are murdering Theobald and all his family, and plundering and burning his castle." The frightened boy could say no more; he sunk down exhausted under a tree by the road side, and remained for some time insensible and unable to utter a single word.

Rosalind and Emma were overwhelmed with grief. "O God of heaven," exclaimed the mother, "what shocking intelligence! Oh, noble knight, generous lady!"

"And my own kind Agnes," said Emma, trembling and pale as death. "Can I live if she and her good parents are murdered?"

"Run, Emma," said the mother, "run to the castle. I and this poor boy will follow as soon as we can. Run with all your might, and give the alarm to our retainers. They must start instantly for Falkenberg, to defend them. Let them drive, though they were to sink their horses to the earth."

Emma sprung swift as a roe up the steep side of the

mountain, and rushing into the castle gate, alarmed all the domestics by her cries. They rushed into the court, and she told them that fire and sword were descending on devoted Falkenberg. The news fell like a thunderbolt on the whole family; they cursed the pretended pilgrims, and could not feel more warm were their own castle in flames over their heads.

Rosalind arrived shortly after, accompanied by Leonardo, of whom she had in the mean time learned all the particulars. "Why are you standing here in idle sorrow," said she; "start—run—save them."

"Impossible, my lady," said an old grey-haired groom. "The two villains have too great a start of us; they are in Falkenberg already. It is almost evening now, and Falkenberg is not less than fifteen leagues distant. How could we travel so rapidly in a dark night, over a bad road, torn up now by the winter floods? The best horse in the stable could not bring me to Falkenberg before day-break; besides, our farm-horses are bad roadsters, and all the war-horses were sold after my master's death. There is not in the whole country, far or near, a single horse that could well stand half the journey."

The good lady wrung her hands in an agony of grief. "Oh, God," she exclaimed, raising her hands and eyes to heaven, while her tears flowed copiously, "there is no help but in thee. O, have pity on the good people who had pity on me! Pray, Emma, pray that God may blast the project of the villains."

Emma wept, and clasping her hands, prayed fervently—"Gracious God, assist them as they assisted us." Her prayer was echoed by all the attendants, who sympathized sincerely in the sorrow of their lady.

"My good men," said Rosalind once more, "it may be almost impossible to reach Falkenberg before midnight, but at least make the attempt. A few words could save their lives. A moment may decide all. If poor Leonardo were not exhausted, and almost killed, he could run as

swift as when he won the race sometime ago. Martin," she said, turning to a little boy, "you run swiftly; start at once. The footpath is one-third shorter than the road. Arrive in time at Falkenberg, and a hundred florins are yours."

"Impossible, my lady," said the boy. "Who could travel these dark nights over a rough mountain path, without falling over some precipice."

"Besides," added Leonardo, "there is no crossing the river; a man could not do it without wings."

"Wings," said Emma, while her eyes danced with joy. "A plan strikes me for sending word to Falkenberg. Knight Theobald told me, that if I did not keep my dove closely locked, it would certainly go home. The distance is great, but it will find its way. Let us fasten a note on the dove's neck, and it will soon be in Falkenberg."

"Oh, thanks be to God," exclaimed the mother. "I think he has heard our prayer. It was your good angel, Emma, that put that thought in your head."

Emma ran and brought down the dove, while her mother was writing the note. They tied it firmly to the red collar that Emma had placed on the dove's neck. She then, accompanied by her mother and all the domestics, brought out the dove, and let it off outside the castle walls. The dove shot up straight into the blue sky, and after sailing two or three times over the castle, turned towards Falkenberg, and was soon out of sight. There was not a soul in the castle of Hohenberg that did not praise the happy thought of their young lady. Hearty prayers followed the poor dove. A vessel laden with gold could not have more sincere and anxious benedictions.

Rosalind and her daughter were now a prey to harrowing suspense. "Will the dove find the way, and be there in time?" asked the mother. "Oh, if the hawk should pounce on it, or if it fail on the way, or arrive too late, or not be seen and admitted should it reach Falkenberg, how dreadful are the consequences?" The mother and daugh-



ter sat down near the window that looked towards Falkenberg, and as they gazed with anxious eyes on the surrounding prospect, their hearts were raised to heaven in silent prayer. The mists of evening began to fall, and filled them with the most gloomy forebodings. They shuddered at the thought, that a lurid glare in the distance, reflecting the flames of Falkenberg, might too soon tell them that the dove had not arrived. They never stirred from the window, nor closed their eyes during the whole night.

Midnight soon came. A frightful storm howled through the forest, and the sky towards Falkenberg became dark as pitch. Suddenly, to their great horror, it grew bright. They trembled, and prayed. "Oh, God," exclaimed Emma, "the flames are ascending higher and higher every moment; oh, look, how the storm agitates them!" They would have fainted, had they not soon discovered their mistake; for, to their great joy, they saw that it was the full moon, shooting her fiery rays through the murky heavens, and at last rising like a large shield over the summit of the mountain. Still they remained at the window; but they saw no traces of that fiery red that is usually reflected in a dark sky from a building in flames. At length daylight returned; and with joyful and hearty thanks to God, they welcomed the beams of morning, which closed so harassing and anxious a night.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE RESCUE.

ROSALIND and Emma were now satisfied that the murderers had not succeeded in burning Falkenberg. Still they were uncertain whether Theobald and his wife and daughter might not have been murdered. Many a time

did Rosalind exclaim, "Oh! what would I not give for good news from Falkenberg: I would give up all I have in this world." "And I would give all my money, too," said Emma. But the fate of Falkenberg was as yet a mystery to them, and their only resource was to wait patiently for news.

The evening before, Theobald, Ottilia, and Agnes were, after sitting down to table, happy and unsuspecting, as they always were. The rays of the descending sun shone through the round windows, and lighted up with their ruddy hues the old baronial hall. The warder announced two pilgrims. "Take good care of them," said Theobald, "and after dinner I will see them myself. Let them come up and give us an account of their pilgrimage. In the mean time, let them have dinner and a goblet of good wine to make them eloquent." The warder retired, and Agnes was indulging in the joyous anticipation of an interesting narrative. Alas! little did they dream of the frightful fate that hung over them!

As they were sitting happy and contented there, Agnes suddenly exclaimed in wonder, "Oh! my little dove." And indeed there it was at the window, with its little wings expanded, and picking at the glass, as if to ask leave to get in. Agnes opened the window; the dove flew in, and perched on her shoulder. "Look," said the mother, "what a beautiful red collar it has got; and there is some paper tied to it—a letter I believe. What singular tricks come into children's heads!"

Theobald examined the paper closely, and saw written on it the words, "Read quickly." "A pressing message this," said he with a smile. He opened the paper—read it. "God of heaven," said he, turning pale, "what is this?" "What?" asked the mother and daughter, in the greatest alarm. Theobald then read aloud:—

"Most noble Knight—The two pilgrims who are with you this night, are two robbers of that gang against which

you were lately engaged. The elder is called Lupo, the younger Orso. They have armour and sharp daggers under their pilgrim's dress. This night they intend to murder you and your wife and daughter; to pillage your castle, and then give it up to the flames. They intend then to put on your dress, your knight's uniform, the golden chain and the diamond cross, and thus to deceive others. Seven other villains are lurking in the neighbourhood for the concerted signal—three lights from the strangers' room—upon which they are to enter the castle, and aid their associates. The two robbers are to open the garden gate, and admit them. Heaven grant that the dove may arrive safe, and that you all may be saved. I had no other means of sending word to you. Do not forget to send instant news of your preservation to your grateful

“ ROSALIND.”

“ Oh God !” said the mother, with great emotion, “ how wonderful are thy ways ! The dove is a messenger from heaven to us, as it was once to Noah. Oh Agnes, let us bend the knee with the same feelings as they did in the ark : our preservation is not a whit less miraculous.”

Theobald, too, knelt; and clasping his hands and raising his eyes to heaven, devoutly thanked God for this great goodness. Then ordering his wife and daughter to retire to another chamber, he buckled on his armour, and girding on his sword, ordered two of his bravest soldiers to be ready at a word.

Word was then sent to the pilgrims to come up. They entered the chamber with a gentle air and a thousand salutations; and Lupo, with an humble look and in a low and respectful tone, thus spoke to Theobald: “ Most noble Lord and Knight, we come direct from Hohenberg, and bring you a thousand kind remembrances. O how happy we feel to see, face to face, that noble knight whose heroism is known all over the world—who has the constant prayer of the widow and the orphan, and the

oppressed, and whom the good Lady Rosalind praises and blesses as her most generous benefactor! Oh, what a noble lady she is! She treated us in the most princely manner. And her amiable daughter Emma—the little angel—was melted even to tears with the pious stories of our pilgrimage. But we have time enough to tell you and your noble family all the news from Hohenberg. For the present, we discharge our commission by assuring you that the mother and daughter, and that beautiful little dove too, are as well as you could wish them.”

Theobald at all times hated flattery; but it roused him now to such a degree that he could scarcely restrain himself. Still he suppressed his anger, and in a solemn but calm tone asked, “Who are you?” “Poor pilgrims,” they answered; “we are returning from the Holy Land to Thuringia, where we were born.” “Your names?” said Theobald. “Herman is my name, and my companion’s is Burkhart.” “What do you want in my castle?” continued Theobald. “This night’s lodging”—they replied, “we start in the morning at cock-crow. O how happy our poor friends will be to see us!”

“Liar!” roared the knight, in a thundering voice. “You are not Herman and Burkhart,” said he, drawing his sword; “but you are Lupo, and that young villain is Orso. You are not returning from the Holy Land, you are robbers and cut-throats—not pilgrims. Germany is not your native place, you are not going to Thuringia. You come here to rob, and burn, and murder, and not for a night’s lodging. But I pay you in your own coin—fire and sword shall be your punishment—aye—do you think your pilgrim dress, your crosses, and your shells deceive me? Here, servants, strip them at once, and let us see them in their own dress. Disarm them, chain them, and throw them into the dungeon.”

The servants seized them and pulled off the pilgrim’s dress, and there they stood armed to the teeth in coats of mail. “Horrible hypocrisy!” exclaimed the knight, “to

disguise the black murderer's heart under the dress of piety, that crime alone well deserves death." The two robbers were then pinioned and cast into the dungeon.

When they found themselves alone, "How could that knight," asked the younger, "know everything so well? He knows even what we were saying on the road, about taking his clothes, and passing ourselves as knights. Can it be that the boy understood us, and betrayed the plot?"

"If so," answered the old fellow, "he must have flown in through the castle window. I never took my eyes off the castle gate, and not one soul entered after ourselves. There is something wrong here—the knight must have a league with the devil."

The old villain then became so inflamed with rage that he poured out awful imprecations on the knight. "That cruel Theobald," said he gnashing his teeth, "is the ruin of us all." The obdurate villain did not seem to know that his own evil deeds were the cause of his ruin.

But Orso soon began to murmur and weep and upbraid Lupo. "O! that I had not followed your bad example!" said he, "you promised me a long and happy life, and what awaits me now but a death of tortures? You told me that our life was not wicked, and that God pardons crime in this, and sometimes even in the next life. But the sense of my own conscience told me a very different tale and always threatened me with impending judgments. O! that I had not listened to that voice! What good can all my ill gotten treasures do for me now? Had I supported myself by the hardest labour in the forest or the road, and kept my conscience clear, how happy would I not be in comparison with my present state! But the hand of the most High and all-seeing judge has seized me and plunged me into this dark dungeon. All is over with me here below. O! that I could find mercy hereafter! that I may serve as a warning example to young persons, and prevent them from being led into sin and crime, through

a desire of wealth and pleasure, to be in the end miserable as I am now !”

In the mean time the servants were engaged by order of their master, in another important affair. When night fell and the stars were glimmering in the sky, they hung out three lights from the room in which the pilgrims generally resided. The warder and seven others of tried fidelity were posted in the court-yard, near the little gate through which the robbers were expected to come. They waited for a long time—but no one appeared. The castle clock had tolled midnight—the moon arose and gilded with her golden beams the frowning battlements of the castle : the servants began to become restless. “Is all our trouble lost?” said they to themselves, “the villains the moment they see us will fly and make through the woods.”

“Oh ! I know a plan for enticing them in here securely,” said the warder, starting off at the same moment, and returning in a short time dressed out in the pilgrim’s cloak and cap. “They cannot know me now,” said he, “and you can remain behind that buttress until they come in.” The servants once more patiently resumed their position.

A gentle tap was heard at the gate. The warder opened it cautiously, one of the robbers was standing there, and mistaking the warder for the pretended pilgrim, asked in a whisper, “Is all right?”

“All right,” answered the warder in the same low tone ; “make no noise—come in gently.”

One after another, the seven robbers slipped in to the court yard. They carried with them pitch torches and other combustibles, and every man had his sword drawn. When the last man entered—the warden locked the door and took out the key, and instantly gave the signal to the servants.

They sprung upon the robbers, and each secured his man. At the same moment the castle gate was thrown open and the Knight appeared, accompanied by a troop of

his domestics, bearing blazing torches and glittering swords. The light from the moon and torches, made the place as bright as day-light. The robbers were struck powerless by the fear. They had not time to use their arms. They were easily overpowered, and bound with fetters, and flung into the dungeon to receive the reward of their villainy.

“Such is the fate of the evil doer,” said the knight; “he that digs a pit for his neighbour, falls into it himself.”

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE OLIVE BRANCH.

LONG and wearily did those hours pass in Hohenberg, where Rosalind and her daughter were anxiously expecting news from Falkenberg. Many a time did poor Emma run up the winding flight of stone steps, to the top of the tower, and strain her eyes to catch a glimpse of the expected messenger. Dinner hour came, and yet no news—and so violent was the depression of the mother and daughter, that they thought the hours would never pass away. At length, about nightfall, as Emma was looking out through the narrow windows in the tower, she saw, coming up the narrow road that led to the castle, a carriage—attended by a body of armed troopers. She flew at once to her mother, “Themselves are coming, they are safe,” said she; and both ran to meet their welcome visitors.

Sir Theobald, his wife and daughter, had started at break of day, to bring the good news in person, and to thank their preservers. Theobald sprung from his horse when he saw Rosalind and Emma, and his wife and

daughter following him from the carriage, all expressed their warmest thanks for the happy escape from destruction. Words cannot give an idea of this meeting, nor of the joy, the gratitude, the emotions—that beamed on the faces of the two happy families as they entered the castle.

The evening was celebrated with all the pomp of a festival. The plot, and its discovery and defeat, were the sole topic of conversation. Leonardo was brought up, and obliged to tell every single word he had heard the robbers say on the road. He did so—and when he came to that place where the young robber pleaded so hard that he should not be flung into the precipice, “I wish,” said he, “to appeal to your mercy in behalf of that man—let his punishment be merciful, since he was merciful himself.” All applauded this good thought of the boy.

When dinner was over, Sir Theobald seized his silver goblet, “Here,” said he, “is to the good Emma! it is her happy thought of THE CARRIER-PIGEON that we ought to thank for our own lives, and the preservation of old Falkenberg.”

“Praise be to God,” said Rosalind, “that we have much reason to be pleased with our children. But they must not be too proud of their good deed. For, that poor boy, Leonardo, who almost killed himself with running, deserves more thanks than they.”

“You are certainly right,” said Theobald, filling his goblet, which he tasted and then presented to the boy. “Drink to our health!” said he; “you shall be my page; for your fidelity ennobles you and gives you a title to honour.”

“Deeply,” said Ottilia, “ought we to cherish the memory of the good Adalrich, for, if he had not taken that orphan boy into his protection—where would we and ours be now?”

“Certainly,” said Rosalind, “the favour which my



husband did to that boy, has been paid back to us one hundred fold, in your preservation. But has not Theobald been more generous to me and my orphan daughter? The prompt relief he gave us against our enemies, could not go unrewarded. He preserved us, and God preserved him. God could not forget Ottilia's and Agnes' affectionate solicitude for me and my daughter. To Him alone be praise and glory!"

"Yes," concluded the knight, "to God, here, as always, the first acknowledgment is due. He has mercifully looked down on us; and by the agency of an innocent little pigeon, has wrought great wonders in our favour—eternal praises to His name! But we must not be ungrateful, nevertheless, to our generous friends. What my sword could not have effected—to secure my castle against fraud and treachery—that Emma has achieved by the aid of her little pigeon. Women, nay, even children, may effect great good, provided, like Rosalind and Emma, they be but of right heart and place their whole trust in God. And as Emma is now mistress of this castle, and has thus, in her very childhood, without a sword being drawn, secured to the empire an important frontier fortress, I shall request the emperor to grant her, as her armorial bearings, 'a white pigeon with a green olive branch.'"

"It is an admirable idea," said the lady Ottilia, "and we must see that it shall be carried out. Meanwhile, I also must not forget my dear Emma." She made a sign to her daughter, who left the apartment, and after a little the pigeon flew in. Agnes had brought it in a little basket, but had not yet said a word about it to her little friend. The bird at once flew to Emma and perched upon her hand. To her great amazement, it carried a gold olive branch in its beak.

"My dear Emma," said Ottilia, "this gold olive branch—the emblem of deliverance from peril—must be to you a little token of our gratitude. It was my mother's

bridal gift to me, for it was in time of war and distress, and I have worn it as a hair-bodkin, for which it was intended. My mother, when she handed it to me, repeated a simple old rhyme, which is appropriate to this occasion also, and has been fulfilled in your history.

' In every peril, let this olive be  
Emblem of God's protecting power to thee :  
Even as to Noah, in the days of yore,  
So let it be, till life shall be no more.' "

# HOW HENRY OF EICHENFELS CAME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CARE OF CHILDREN, AN ANGEL'S TASK.

IN the beginning of the last century there dwelt in an old but stately castle, beside an immense forest, the Count Frederic von Eichenfels, and his countess Adelaide. They had but one child, a delicate, lovely boy, called Henry, whom they loved with indescribable tenderness. But before his little lips were able to lisp his father's name, the count was called away to the war. The pious countess remained in the castle, and her only comfort in her husband's absence—her only enjoyment in her own loneliness—was her darling little Henry. She had resolved to devote herself entirely to his education, and her heart pined for the happy moment, when, with her beloved boy in her arms, she should be permitted to run to meet her dear husband upon his return.

One evening she was sitting in her apartment, with her little son in her arms; Margaret, the children's maid, was at her side, and was holding a bunch of fresh flowers to the child to play with. He laughed, and stretched out his little hands, and his mother smiled with pleasure at the child's delight. But on a sudden, a servant, who had attended the count to the war, entered the room, and brought the melancholy tidings that his lord was seriously

wounded, and desired to see his wife before his death, which, perhaps, was close at hand. The countess turned deadly pale, and could scarcely hold the baby in her trembling hands. The messenger seeing her terror, held out some hopes of her husband's recovery, but could not conceal from her that she must travel day and night if she wished to be sure of seeing him alive. She resolved to set out instantly.

"Alas! dear little thing," she cried, bathing him with hot tears, "you know not why your mother weeps! Poor babe! you are losing your father, without having known him. Oh, how I am grieved that I cannot take you with me upon this long and painful journey to the camp!"

"Margaret," she continued, turning to the maid, "to you I commit the most precious thing which I leave behind me. Be scrupulously careful of my child—never leave him an instant alone, even while he is sleeping; watch him as tenderly as if I were myself present; bring him out every fine day, especially in the morning, to the fresh air in the garden; sing for him, talk to him, shew him flowers and other pretty things, but never give him into his little hand any thing that can hurt him, or that he might chance to swallow; above all, never be tempted to beat him, or get out of humour on account of his childish helplessness. The charge of children is an angel's task. Be thou a good angel to my child! The housekeeper, into whose hands I entrust every thing, will tell me, when I shall return, whether you have attended to my instructions. Promise me that you will never forget them, in order that at least on this one point I may be without anxiety. I shall be reckoning the hours till my return. Should you restore the child in health and spirits to my arms, I shall know how to reward you, and I shall bring you home a present which I am sure will delight you."

Margaret promised this. The countess kissed the child, blessed it, and with eyes uplifted to heaven, and fervent prayers for its safety, placed it in Margaret's arms; and

then hurried down to her carriage, amid the tears and lamentations of her servants and retainers, and drove off amid the darkness and the rain, which was falling heavily.

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## CHAPTER II.

### GREAT MISFORTUNE FROM SLIGHT DISOBEDIENCE.

MARGARET was a poor orphan girl; her heart was innocent and pious, her spirits light and buoyant, her features agreeable, fresh, and blooming. The countess had thus been induced to select her to take charge of little Henry; and the good, pious girl, rigidly followed her instructions, which were before her mind every hour; for she loved the noble lady as her greatest benefactress, and was most affectionately attached to the dear little babe, whom she looked up to and respected as her future master.

One day she was seated at her knitting beside the wicker cradle where the child lay sleeping. She had entwined upon the top of the cradle, which overarched the little sleeper's head, a wreath of roses, that he might see them on his waking; a fine white veil was spread over him to keep off the flies, and his little rosy cheeks bloomed brighter than roses, through the transparent veil, as he slept.

A troop of wandering musicians came to the castle gate, and began to play. All the servants assembled, and called the musicians into the hall, with the view of having a pleasant evening's music and dancing, as the family were from home. Margaret was very fond of music, but remembering the countess's words, she sat quietly beside the cradle. George, the assistant-gardener, came running into the room.

“Oh, Meg!” said he, “come down, come down! You can’t think what sport we have—such splendid music I never heard. One of them has a dulcimer, which he beats as though he would knock it to pieces; a little boy has a triangle, out of which he takes excellent music; and a tall young fellow, with an enormous thick beard, blows a bugle till your ears ring again! Come down quickly!”

Margaret said she could not venture to leave the child for an instant.

“Don’t be so childish,” said the thoughtless lad, “you must not be the only one to play the saint. The child is sleeping, and you can’t be of any use to him in doing that. Come, come—don’t be so shy! You shall be back in a quarter of an hour. You can’t refuse one dance with me!”

Margaret, though with a beating heart, allowed herself to be persuaded, and went down. But she had little pleasure, and a great terror soon came over her. She wished to go, but the others detained her; at length she tore herself violently away, and hastened back to the cradle of the dear charge.

But what was her horror!—the cradle was empty, and the child was nowhere to be seen. She recollected herself, however, and consoled herself with the hope that some of the people of the castle must have taken the child, and put it into some other bed to frighten her. Still the thought that the countess might hear it, filled her with alarm. She hurried from room to room, but no trace of the child was to be found! A mortal fear seized her; she ran down, and cried out to the dancers, “The young count is not in his cradle; which of you has given me such a fright, and taken the child away?” But no one knew any thing of him, and not a soul had entered the room! They all stopped dancing, and the musicians went off without ever waiting for their pay. Every one in the room hurried away in alarm. Every spot was searched. It was now found that besides the child, various things of value were

missing. What was it possible to think but that the child had been stolen?

The general merriment was now changed to weeping and wailing; it was like a funeral. "O my God," cried the housekeeper, "the poor countess! What will become of her when she shall hear it! It will be her death!" Margaret was in despair. In her first agony of desperation she would have rushed out, and perhaps flung herself into the water, had they not restrained her.

"My God!" cried she, overcome by grief and anguish; "who would have thought that so slight a disobedience could lead to such fearful consequences!"

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

WHILE the entire household, filled with terror and despair, and drowned in tears, were assembled in the child's apartment, and Margaret, half distracted, with dishevelled locks and wandering and terrified eyes, was sitting beside the empty cradle on the ground, which was strewn with the roses which had adorned the cradle, the door suddenly flew open, and the countess entered.

The count's wound had not proved so dangerous as it was feared at first; and the moment he was out of danger, the countess, yielding to his persuasion and the impulse of her own maternal heart, had set out for home, in order to see her beloved child the sooner. She had but just stepped out of her carriage, and at once hastened up to press her darling to her heart.

They were all horror-struck at the sight of the countess. Margaret uttered a loud shriek. "O God," she cried, "take pity upon me and upon her!" The countess was terrified

when she beheld the pallid faces, the eyes red with weeping, the despair of Margaret, and, above all, the empty cradle. No one could reply to her questions. A thousand sad forebodings, a thousand fearful fancies flashed like lightning through her soul. She trembled for the life of her child; and when, at last, she half heard, half anticipated, the sad tale, she felt as if heaven and earth had fallen around her—she swooned away, and would have sunk to the ground had they not all rushed up and supported her.

“O my God! my God!” she cried out at last, when consciousness returned; “what a fearful affliction thou hast laid upon me! Alas, my child! my child—my darling child! Ah, my husband, my dearest husband, this stroke will pierce thy heart more deeply than the sword of the enemy! Oh, my dear, dear sweet Henry, where art thou now? into what hands has thou fallen? Oh, what a fearful thought that thou mayest perhaps be corrupted by these robbers, and allowed to grow up without instruction and without virtue! Alas, I cannot dare to think of it. Far better that I wept over thy little grave! Thou wouldst then be a pure angel at the throne of God, and I should have the comfort of seeing thee once more; but now I am without this only, this best consolation. Alas, what can—what must be thy fate among such men!”

She paused, exhausted by the very violence of her grief.

“O God!” she resumed after a while, falling on her knees, wringing her hands, and raising her weeping eyes in agony to heaven; “O merciful God—our only comforter in all our sorrows—my child is torn from my hands; but from Thine he cannot be torn! I know not in what gloomy forest, what hideous robber’s den, he is hidden; but thine eye sees where he is. I can no longer instruct him in virtue; but Thou, Thou alone, canst do it. Thou hearest the cry of the young ravens—oh, hearken to the



voice of my child, who must weep, and cry, and pine for his lost mother! And oh, grant to me and to my husband grace to bear this bereavement. Though the negligence and wickedness of men has been the immediate cause of robbing us of our angelic child, yet Thou hast permitted it—Thou hast ordained it—and to Thee will I offer my child with trustful, though with bleeding heart; for sure I am that even out of this affliction, happiness shall one day, under Thy directing hand, come forth!”

With pious thoughts like these the afflicted mother consoled herself, but poor Margaret was inconsolable. She fell at the countess's feet, and begged for pardon. “Ah,” cried she, wringing her hands, “if I could ransom the child from the robber's hands with my blood, I would gladly give the last drop of it for his sake. Let me be put to death—I shall gladly die!” But the countess forgave her. “Your sincere repentance deserves pardon,” said she; “nothing shall be done against you. But you now see how well-meant and prudent my orders were. You have learned what dreadful misfortunes may be occasioned by disobedience, giddiness, and love of pleasure. Our whole pleasure in this world has fled for ever, like the crushed and leafless roses which lie strewn upon the ground!”

As soon, however, as the countess found, when the first shock had passed, that it was but an hour or two since the child was carried away, she dispatched a number of people in all directions to search for him. The messengers returned, one by one. Margaret ran to meet them as they arrived; and wept afresh at each new arrival, when she saw, even at a distance, their downcast looks. At length, when the last messenger returned, without having found the slightest trace of the child, she almost wept her eyes out; and though she gradually grew more composed, yet her face continued deadly pale, and she moved about like a ghost. Every one felt for her. At length she disappeared, and no one knew whither she had gone.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE ROBBERS' DEN.

THE fact was, that the child had been stolen by a hideous old gipsy, with pitch-black hair, and a deep-yellow complexion. The woman, under the disguise of telling foolish peoples' fortunes, and predicting future events, was a thief. Under this pretext she had before made her way into the castle, and carefully examined the arrangements of the interior. She was in concert with the oldest of the three musicians, and while he attracted every one into the hall by his noisy music, she effected an entrance through a little wicket in the garden wall, which the young gardener had carelessly left open: thence, by a winding staircase little frequented, she got up to the room in which the infant lay, caught up the child, collected rapidly every thing upon which she could lay her hands, and escaped with them through the garden into the neighbouring forest.

There she lay with the child concealed in a thicket until it was quite dark, and it was only then that she set out and carried the child away. She followed the most retired and private roads, having prepared herself beforehand with provisions for the journey. In the daylight she hid herself in the underwood or corn. Thus she proceeded many miles, till she reached the mountains. Here, deep under the earth, there was a frightful cavern, which had been a branch of an abandoned and now ruinous mine. The entrance was so well concealed by rubbish and brambles, that it was almost impossible to discover it. After creeping for a long time through stones, thorns, and briars, the gipsy reached an iron gate, which she opened

with a key ; and, at length, after traversing a narrow passage nearly a mile long, she entered the cave.

It was a robbers' den. Here they used to hide themselves, secure from the pursuit of the officers of justice ; and here they concealed, in huge massive chests, their ill-gotten treasures—heaps of rich dresses, costly furniture, gold and silver, diamonds and pearls. The robbers, frightful-looking fellows, with savage faces and shaggy beards, were all seated when the gipsy entered, drinking, smoking, and playing cards. They were delighted when they learned that this child was young Count Henry of Eichenfels, and loaded the gipsy with commendations for her successful capture ; for they had long been anxious to get into their power some such child of noble parentage.

“ Well done, grandmother,” said the robber chief ; “ we are now perfectly safe. If any of us be taken prisoner, and get into peril of his life, he need but threaten that the rest of us are bound by compact to put this child to a most painful death. They will then be sure to spare his life, and, perhaps, to set him at liberty.” He ordered the old gipsy, who was the cook and housekeeper of the gang, to take good care of the child, and secure its life.

Thus the poor boy grew up in this frightful den, till he acquired the use of reason and of speech. The recollections of his early childhood had disappeared. He knew nothing of the sun or moon, or of all God's beautiful earth. No ray of daylight ever penetrated this abode of horror. A lamp, which burned night and day, was suspended from the gloomy reeking roof of the cave, and illuminated the rugged walls with its dull red glare. There was no lack of provisions : the robbers brought large supplies of bread, meat, vegetables, and especially all sorts of provisions which were easily preserved, and also wine in abundance. A huge cask of water in a corner of the cave, which they filled from time to time, served the place of a fountain in this subterraneous household ; but, as the water had to be conveyed a great distance, the old gipsy used it very spar-

ingly, and always cautioned the boy to close the cock very carefully. A heap of rushes (which, however, was spread with sumptuous coverlets,) was the robbers' bed.

The gipsy did not let the child want; she gave him abundance to eat, but she never taught him any thing good. He did not learn either to read or to write, and he never heard a word about God from the lips of the wicked men. There was only one of the robbers, a young man named William, (the child of honest parents, whom love of gambling had brought to this fearful mode of life,) who took pleasure in conversing with the boy, and when he came back from an expedition would be sure to bring him some little toy. He gave him a variety of prettily carved and painted little wooden figures—a sheep-fold and a number of sheep, with the shepherd and his dog; a garden filled with all kinds of trees, laden with yellow and red fruit; a looking-glass, and such other childish toys. One time he brought him a little flute, and taught him a tune upon it; another time he brought him a bunch of painted flowers, and taught him the way to cut them out of paper, and to paint them different colours. In these occupations the little fellow spent many an hour; but his favourite plaything was a little portrait of his mother, which the old gipsy had carried off from the castle. It was exquisitely painted, and was in a gold and crystal case set with diamonds. The gipsy, however, would only let him have it on very rare occasions, when she was in special good humour.

William would often look at this portrait—it reminded him of his own mother, and he was frequently obliged to brush the rising tear away. "Poor child," he would say to himself, "it was a terrible thing to tear thee away from such a mother! Oh, how different would thy lot have been with her from what it is in this horrible abode! And thy poor mother!—how must she weep for thee! Oh, if I dared it, how gladly would I carry thee back to her in my arms! But, alas! I am myself a prisoner here—a

hundred times would I have run away, did not my pretended friends suspect me, and watch me too closely."

He held frequent conversations with the boy, told him many things which delighted the child, and awoke in him the first glimmering of reason: but of God and eternity he never dared to speak to him; the rest of the robbers would not suffer this, because they were afraid of every thing that could awaken their conscience.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE ATTEMPTED FLIGHT.

As the boy grew somewhat older, he became very curious to know where the men were always going, and he frequently asked them to take him along with them; but they always repulsed him hastily and rudely, and put him off to another time. It happened once that they were all away on a plundering expedition; the old gipsy, who was no longer able to move about, remained behind; but she was a dreary companion for the merry-hearted boy. She was always very cross, and on account of a disease in her eyes, she would sit for hours together, behind a green screen, picking old linen, or counting money, without saying a word; and then again she would fall asleep, and snore for several hours in succession.

On this occasion—as she had fallen fast asleep, the boy took courage, lighted a taper, crept into the narrow passage, by which the robbers always went out, and groped his way onwards till he came to the iron gate. But he failed to open it, for it was closed fast with a massive lock. He was returning with a heavy heart, but the passage through which he had come had several narrow offsets, through which one might wander for hours under ground. The little fellow went into the first of these which

he met on his return. He had wandered a long way, and his taper was nearly exhausted and just about to go out, when he thought he saw a burning light at a distance. He went towards it full of curiosity, the red glare became larger and larger as he approached; and at length grew so large that it appeared to him like a huge tall fiery figure. He went boldly forward, however, and at last came to a cleft in the rock, through which the morning was shining brightly into the cave, and which afforded an easy egress! With one joyous bound, the boy stood in the free air of heaven!

His feelings, as he found himself, after escaping from his dismal, dark, subterranean abode, now for the first time under God's fair bright heaven, in a splendid country studded with wood-crowned mountains, it would be idle to think of describing.

It was a glorious summer morning. The sun was just rising; the morning sky was all one blaze of light, and a deep ruddy glow was diffused over forest and mountain:—the earth was covered with rich grass and flowers: the birds were singing; and calm and tranquil in the valley below lay a clear lake, which mirrored back, with singular distinctness, the glow of the morning sun, and the green summits of the mountains.

The boy was as if thunderstruck: he was stricken dumb with astonishment. He felt as if he had awakened from a long deep sleep, and was still under its influence. He could but gaze around him; for a long time he was unable to find words to express his astonishment:

“Where have I come?” he cried, at last. “What a space—what an immeasurable space—is here around me! Oh! how beautiful, how glorious is all this!” And he fell into new wonder at a lofty oak tree, or a cliff covered with pines, or a green bush loaded with wild roses.

The sun now rose, in a mass of golden clouds, over a distant pine-clad hill. The boy riveted his eyes upon it. It appeared to him as if a fire were blazing up, and he

really imagined that the clouds, which he now saw for the first time, were taking fire. With fixed gaze he watched it, till at last the sun, covered with a thin veil of light morning haze, floated up over the mountain like a globe of the finest gold. "What can it be?" cried the wondering boy. "What a wonderful light!" he continued, standing with fixed eyes and outstretched arms; till at last, dazzled by the overpowering glare, he was forced to withdraw his eyes.

He now began to move about, but would scarcely venture to walk a step, for fear of crushing the beautiful flowers, with which the ground was everywhere strewn. By and bye, he saw a lamb which was lying under a wild rose-bush. "Oh! a lamb—a lamb!" he shouted joyfully, running up and seizing it. The lamb started, got up and bleated. The boy drew back in alarm. "What is this?" he cried. "It is alive!—it can walk—it has a voice! Mine are dead, and dumb, and motionless. What an astonishing thing! Who can have given it life?" He tried to have a talk with the lamb; asked it all sorts of questions, and at last was amazed that it would always answer him, only with the same unintelligible cry.

At this moment a young shepherd, a fine blooming youth, with rosy cheeks and yellow hair, came up in search of the lamb, which he had missed out of his flock. He had seen the little fellow long before, and did not know what to make of him. The boy was at first alarmed at the sight of the youth; but on his saluting him in a very friendly manner, he took courage.

"Oh! how handsome you are!" he cried, looking into his face. "But tell me," he added, stretching out his arms all around him, and pointing to the sky and to the earth, "does all this great, great immense cave, (for such he fancied it to be) belong to you? Won't you let me stay here with you and your lamb?" The youth did not understand the child, and at first thought he was mad; but when in reply to his question "how he had come

there?" the boy told him he had crept out of the earth, and spoke to him of the old grandame, and the men with the beards, the mystery was unveiled to him, and he was very much alarmed. But he took compassion on the boy, and taking him on one arm, and the lamb upon the other, he ran off as fast as if he had had the robbers upon his track.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HERMITAGE.

THERE dwelt in the mountain an old and very venerable hermit, who was about eighty years of age, and whose fame for wisdom and sanctity, under the name of Father Menrad, was spread far and near. The hermitage, which was within a short distance, lay close beside the lake on the side of a mountain, and resembled a little paradise. The little cell, almost hidden by the clustering branches of a vine, and thatched with moss-grown reeds, stood in the midst of shady fruit-trees, in the centre of a garden which was full of the most beautiful flowering shrubs. Along the hill behind this little vale, stretched a vineyard, and on one side a stripe of corn land; and in every available spot amidst the rocks, stood a tree laden with the richest fruits, or at least a shrub covered with delicious berries—on a rock, which far overhung the lake, rose the chapel with its painted spire, and a stairway, hewn out of the rock, led up to it.

When the young shepherd opened the garden-wicket, and came in with the boy, the venerable old man was sitting on a wooden bench under an apple-tree, in a spot which commanded a most magnificent view across the lake. A large volume, which he was reading with the utmost devotion, lay open before him on the table. The



few hairs which covered his bald crown, as well as his bushy beard, were white as snow; but his cheeks still retained all the bloom and freshness of youth.

He stood up with the utmost cordiality, and saluted both his visitors. He listened with the most lively interest to the young man's tale, and taking the boy compassionately into his arms, asked him what was his name. He soon suspected that he was the child of respectable parents, stolen, for some purpose of their own, by the robbers. "Leave him with me," said he to the young shepherd, "and do not say a word about it, as yet, to any one. I hope his parents may yet be discovered; and, meanwhile, he is perfectly safe here from the pursuit of the robbers, for they avoid my cell as they would a house on fire. They have no hope of gold or silver with me, and they hate good counsel and instruction, which are often more valuable than either."

Then turning to the little boy, "Welcome, dear Henry!" said he, "I will be a father to you, and take care of you, till I shall be able to restore you to your father and mother. You must always call me your father henceforward."

The old man now offered them a repast of bread and milk; and as soon as the shepherd had taken a little refreshment, he grasped his crook, in order to return to his flock. Henry tried to prevent him, and clung weeping to his dress. But when the lad promised to return soon, and made him a present of the lamb, he gladly consented; and his delight in the present, upon which he set an extraordinary value, was beyond all bounds.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE SUN AND THE FLOWERS.

As soon as the lad was gone, the kind old man placed the boy beside him on the bench, that he might converse with him.

"Is it possible, dear Henry," he began, "that you know nothing at all about your father and mother?"

"O yes," said Henry, "I have a beautiful mamma, here in my pocket; look here!" He drew out the miniature which he had placed in his dress; it was carefully covered in a beautiful case of crimson satin. The poor little fellow had never seen his mother's portrait by sunlight before; he was astonished at its distinctness and beauty, and the brilliancy of the diamonds which encircled it, almost dazzled his eyes.

"Oh, how bright it is with you!" he cried, looking around him. "But tell me," he continued, fronting to the sun, "who is it that lighted that beautiful golden lamp up yonder, that makes every thing round about so bright? I cannot even look at it, it is so dazzling—the one in our cave was dull and miserable in comparison with it. And how does it happen that it is constantly rising higher and higher? When I saw it first, it came out behind the trees, and in a little time it was so high up yonder that I would never be able to reach it, though I stood on the tops of the very highest trees! How is it made to move so freely and so speedily? I cannot see any trace of a cord; what is it that moves it? or who can climb up yonder to supply it with fresh oil?"

Father Menrad told him that this large and beautiful light was called the Sun, and that for thousands of years

it had been running its course, and blazing on and on, without ever needing a drop of fresh oil!

“That is very strange, indeed,” said Henry. “But what beautiful flowers you have!” he resumed, jumping up and running to the flower-beds, which looked like so many baskets laden with flowers. “Oh, what a charming red, and yellow, and blue, they are painted, and how delightfully the numberless delicate little leaves are cut out, each perfectly matching the other! This cannot be paper; no, no—even silk is nothing compared to it! Was it you who made all these flowers? You must have taken a long time to it. The fibres of some of them are finer and more delicate than any thing in the world. What sharp scissors and keen eyes they required! I have made nice flowers myself in my time, but I never could make anything like these!”

Menrad told him that no man could make such flowers, and that they all grew out of the earth themselves. But Henry would not believe this. “It is impossible,” said he; “I will sooner believe that you made them all yourself!”

The hermit showed him one of the seed-vessels of the poppy, shook out into his hand the tiny little round seeds which it contained, and told him that every one of these little seeds contained a multitude of such large purple flowers, which grew out of the seed if one sowed it in the ground; and that all the other flowers came out of similar little seeds. The boy looked at him, to try if he were serious.

“Such a large beautiful flower, out of one of these tiny little balls!” said he incredulously. “These seeds, then, must be made with far more skill than the finest gold watch in the world!”

“So they are,” said Menrad.

“And who was it that made them?” asked the boy. “I think it would have been easier to make all these flowers, than one single such seed!”

He looked at the flowers once more, and never stopped going from one bed to another, and could not satisfy himself with gazing. At length he began to feel the sun too hot. "How hot that lamp is," he said. "It is so far away, and yet makes one so warm. It is a wonderful light!"

Menrad brought him again under the apple-tree, which overshadowed the table and the bench. "Oh, how cool and pleasant it is here," said the boy, looking up at the tree. "The tree is like a green screen, which protects one not only against the light, but also against the heat. How large it is, and what a multitude of leaves it has! And the trunk, too, I see, is made of wood! Well, after all, I don't think you can have made all these leaves and flowers; it would, indeed, be too great a task!"

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## CHAPTER VIII

### PLANTS AND TREES.

MEANWHILE the old man went into his cell, and prepared a little dinner. After a repast of bread and milk, he produced butter and honey, and a nice little basket of apples, for the boy; and for himself some roots and herbs, a large yellow melon, and a little flask of red wine. Henry enjoyed it very much. "But where is it," said he, "that you get all these good things? Do you, too, rob occasionally?"

While they were eating, Father Menrad told him how wonderfully every thing grew. "Look," said he, taking up an apple which he was going to peel and cut for Henry; "this apple I got from the tree above our head. Out of its dry branches there come forth, from time to time, whole baskets-full of such beautiful apples."

“Is this possible?” asked Henry, looking at Menrad with a puzzled air.

Father Menrad took the boy by the arm, bowed down one of the branches, and showed him the little green apples. “You see here,” said he, “how they come forth from the branches; and they by degrees grow bigger and bigger, till at length they become large, and red, and yellow, like those in the basket here. But the big tree itself,” said Menrad, cutting the apple at the same time, “came out of a little pippin, like this one which clings to the knife. I myself knew this tree when it was such a little pippin. Every little pippin like this contains such a tree, nay, an immense number of such trees; and out of one single pippin could be obtained more apples than the whole world could contain, or than a man would be able to count, though he should live a thousand years.”

“It is out of a similar little seed, too,” continued Menrad, showing the boy a grain of corn which he had brought from his cell, “that the bread here comes. It is the same as with the apple-pippin, or the flower-seed: out of one single grain of corn we could get thousands of loaves, like those on the table.” He described to him how this took place, pointing out to him, as he spoke, his own rich corn-field, where a little before there had been nothing but clods of earth. Henry jumped up, and to his great delight found little grains of corn in every one of the ears.

“And thus it is,” continued Menrad, “with all the green things which you can see far and near. Each and all of them—the grass here at our feet, the blooming rose-bushes yonder, the numberless ears of corn, the vines which cover the cell and the hill behind it, the massive oaks and pine-trees upon the mountain, and this humble moss on the branches of the apple-tree—were produced, with all their leaves and flowers, from little seeds similar to those. All that you see here upon the table—milk and butter, which are produced from grass—honey, the pro-

duce of flowers—the bread which nourishes, the wine which strengthens us; every root, and herb, and fruit, around us—the cress, the radish, the fine large melon—the twigs of which these pretty fruit-baskets are woven—the wood of which our trenchers and goblets are made—the very table, and the bench on which we sit—all, all we are indebted for to such little seeds as these. It needed but that I should plant them in the earth, in order that the apple-tree here, and the thousands of ears of corn yonder, should come forth from the earth, adorning my dwelling, which before was a desert waste, with every thing that is rich and beautiful, and supplying me in superabundance with every necessary of life.”

In the eyes of poor Henry, all these were downright miracles; and, as heretofore he had looked around on every thing with wondering eyes, so he now listened full of astonishment to the recital of the old hermit.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SPRING AND THE RAIN.

MEANWHILE the sun was hastening to its setting: the flower-beds in the hermit's garden lay in deep shade. Some of Menrad's favourite flowers had been a little withered by the heat of the sun's rays; and, although he expected rain in a short time, he prudently resolved to give a little water at least to these special favourites. Taking up his watering-pot, he led the boy by the hand to a spring, which gushed in a full stream out of a high moss-grown cliff.

Henry clapped his hands in amazement. “Oh, what a quantity of water is there,” cried he, “running out of the stone. Every moment I think it must cease, but it still continues to flow on as briskly as ever. Who can

have poured such a quantity of water into the rock? and where did they get water enough to fill it? You should close the opening, and be more sparing of the water, or it will soon run out!"

Menrad told him that the water had been flowing in one ceaseless stream as long as the sun had been shining; that it never left off, and required no filling; and that the entire lake, which Henry had taken for a huge mirror, was nothing but water. All these were wonders for the little boy.

Menrad returned, after filling his watering-pot, and began to water the flowers.

"Oh! what are you doing?" interposed Henry. "You will destroy your flowers—the paint will be all washed away!"

Menrad replied with a smile, that flowers and roots, corn-stalks and vines, shrubs and trees—all of which had a sort of life, as well as men—required to drink water just as much as man himself. "But then," said Henry, "who could ever carry water enough for all those plants? or who could climb up yonder, and water the trees on the top of the mountain?"

"All this is cared for," said Menrad; "how it is, you shall see, sooner perhaps than we imagine," he added, with a glance towards the clouds.

In point of fact, a cloud did come over the top of the mountain, and it began to rain, at first very gently, and then with great violence. This was a fresh source of wonder to Henry. "What an admirable arrangement!" he cried. "This saves a great deal of trouble; the water falls so beautifully, in thousands and thousands of drops, just as if it came from a watering-pot. But who was it that made the cloud (as you call this wonderful thing) come yonder? and who brought up so much water to it? and how is it that it moves about so freely, and does not fall down?"

"All that you shall hear by and by," replied Menrad.

But the little fellow continued to gaze at the cloud, till at last it disappeared, and the sky became clear and blue once more.

Amid wonder at all these new objects, and delight and astonishment at every thing he saw, the day passed rapidly away. For hundreds of things, to others, from habit, entirely indifferent—a green and gold butterfly sitting upon a rose-leaf—a speckled snail crawling up a tree after the shower—the glittering drops, which hung like diamonds upon every leaf—a grasshopper chirping its cheerful tune upon a branch, and hopping merrily from branch to branch—the hermit's goats returning from the mountains—all were most wondrous appearances in the eyes of the little novice, and gave rise to a thousand questions and replies.

At last the sun sank at the opposite side of the lake. "Ah! woe is me!" cried Henry, in alarm; "the sun-lamp is plunging into the water; it will be put out, and all our pleasure will be at an end! Though we should light a lamp immediately, it will be of little use in an immense wide space like this!"

Father Menrad quieted his alarm. "Don't be afraid," said he. "We shall be going to sleep soon, and after this we need no light. Before we shall have done sleeping, the sun will have risen again on the opposite side between yon mountains. And thus enlightening and warming all things, it continually plies its course in an unbroken circle, without ever resting a moment in its career."



## CHAPTER X.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION, AND ITS SOLUTION.

HENRY returned to his old questions, which the hermit had wisely avoided answering directly, at first preferring rather to excite the boy's curiosity farther.

"Yes," said Henry, "but what makes the sun move constantly in this way? And who was it that made this great, great vault above us, and painted it so beautiful a blue? Who shut up in the rock yonder, such a quantity of water, and made it flow out so constantly, and in such abundance? Who guides the course of the clouds, causing them to float about thus freely in the air, and moisten all the plants of the earth with those countless glittering rain-drops? Who taught the birds to warble such beautiful airs without a flute to play upon? Who has hidden the flowers and plants in these little seeds, so that in their proper time and place, they come forth at our bidding, cover the ground far and wide with a carpet of flowers and herbage, and load us with so many rich presents? Who has directed all so beautifully?"

"Do you really think then," said Father Menrad, "that there must be Some One who has arranged this beautiful order of things?"

"O certainly," said Henry, "it must undoubtedly be so. Any person who could doubt it, would be devoid of reason. The men in the cave had to labour a long time, when they wanted to enlarge it but a very little; and once, when the arch threatened to fall in, it cost them a great deal of trouble to support it. And yet, under this huge majestic vault there is not even a single pillar! Our lamp in the cave could not light itself, and, unless we chose to

sit in darkness, we were obliged to take great care of it, and keep it regularly supplied with fresh oil. The water-butt, too, always required to be renewed, unless we wished to suffer from thirst. I well know, too, what pains it costs, and what skill it requires, to cut out a single flower. I well understand, therefore, that all this which we see around us, cannot be the work of human hands. But WHO it is that has made it all, this it is that I desire to know."

Now—that the boy was thus vividly touched by the greatness, beauty, and arrangement of the world, that he was almost overpowered by the multitude of the benefits which met his eyes in all directions, and burned with desire to know who was this great Benefactor, from whom all these blessings flowed—now was the moment when the venerable sage could best speak to the boy of God, and of His power, His wisdom and His goodness. With deep reverence, his voice trembling with emotion and his eyes filled with tears, he told Henry that he was right in saying there was ONE who had done all this, and that this all-mighty, all-wise, all-bounteous Being, who had called all things into existence, and given life and being to man also, was called GOD OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

As the child had felt, that morning, when the sun first rose upon him, and gilded everything all around with its glorious beams, so did he now feel; nay, still more was his spirit overpowered with wonder. The thought of God arose like a sun within him, illumining and warming his inner soul, and showing forth the whole world to him in a more beautiful and more amiable light, as an embodiment of the benefits of a loving father.

"Yes, dear child," continued Menrad, when he observed the boy's emotion, "it was God who made all that you behold. It was He who fashioned that beautiful blue vault which we call heaven. It was He who lighted up the sun, and who guides its mysterious course, wherein it not only reveals to us the wonders of God's works, and

gives us light to pursue our occupations, but also ripens and matures the fruits by its genial rays, as the meat is cooked by the fire. It is He who makes the plentiful stream to flow from the earth and the genial shower to trickle from the clouds, supplying us with drink, and all things with refreshment. It was He who spread beneath our feet the variegated carpet of grass and flowers. He gave the flowers their brilliant hues and their rich perfumes. From the rude clod of earth He gives us bread in abundance, and He makes the hills flow for us with generous wine. For us He loads the boughs of the trees with fruits of every kind. For us He converts the green vallies almost into fountains of milk, and makes the rocks and the hollow trees flow with honey. He created the tree which cools us with its shade, and warms us with its fire-wood—He teaches the birds their lays with which they enliven us. He clad the lamb, which now lies at your feet, with soft wool, from which your dress and mine are made. He gives us everything we need, for clothing and for shelter. He made all fair to behold, in order that we may take delight in his works, that we may love Him and desire to come to Him in a land far more beauteous than that which you behold around us here, and where we may hope for still greater happiness. And though we see Him not, yet does He everywhere behold us, and hear our voices and even know our thoughts. With Him we may speak at every instant. He directs all our destinies. He delivered you from the cavern, and conducted you hither to me. He is our greatest Benefactor, our best Friend, our most loving Father!”

Henry listened with the utmost attention and the most profound emotion, to the pious old man, never once withdrawing his eyes from him. As they thus conversed together, night had fallen before the boy perceived it. The moon, which before had lain hidden in the heavens, like a small and scarcely visible cloud, now shone out in the fullest splendour, and encircled by numberless twinkling stars, rose high above the lake which lay below like a vast

mirror, and seemed to display within its almost infinite bosom a second heaven with another moon and stars—not a leaf was stirring, solemn silence reigned around; a new feeling, one which he had never experienced before—a feeling of devotion, of reverence, of the presence of God, awoke in Henry's heart. And then seizing the auspicious moment, the venerable old man folded his hands, and with his eyes raised to heaven, repeated a prayer before the boy; and he too, for the first time, raised his little hands to heaven, repeating every word after him. The tears flowed plenteously down the poor boy's cheeks, to think that God, whom he had never known till now, had, nevertheless, bestowed so many blessings on him. And when the old man had concluded his prayer, Henry, to his great delight, added of his own accord, the following words:—

“I thank Thee, moreover, my good God, that Thou hast delivered me from the gloomy cave, and brought me to this good man, who has told me so much that is beautiful and inspiring regarding Thee!”

Father Menrad then took the boy by the hand, and led him into his cell, where he prepared for him a bed of soft moss, spreading a coverlet over it, and covering the boy with his own cloak.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### A JOURNEY INTO THE MOUNTAINS.

FATHER MENRAD kept the boy the whole summer, in order to complete the work of his instruction, and to break him off many improper expressions and habits, which he had contracted in the bad company to which he had been accustomed. He hoped, too, that the delicacy and paleness which the child had contracted in his subterranean abode, would be best dissipated by the simple food and healthful air of his mountain dwelling, and that his parents

would be the more delighted in receiving him back again. And so it proved. Henry soon recovered his bloom, fair and delicate as that of the rose in the beams of the morning sun.

About the middle of the autumn, Father Menrad, whose native place was far distant, and who had been a great traveller in his earlier days, resolved to take up his pilgrim's staff once more, and return to the busy haunts of men, in order to seek out the parents of the boy. He had requested the father of the young shepherd who had first brought Henry to him, a pious and prudent peasant, who lived in a secluded spot among the mountains, to take charge of the boy during his absence; and to his cottage he now resolved to bring Henry.

On a fine bright autumn morning, just as the morning star was rising, he awakened the little fellow, and conducted him to the chapel, where he offered a fervent prayer that God would bless their journey; and then, when they had breakfasted and provided some refreshments for the journey, Menrad set out, and Henry accompanied him in the highest spirits. Their way lay by solitary foot-paths, which were never trodden but by the alpine goat-herd or the chamois-hunter; and at noon they arrived at a precipitous rock, on the top of which, high above their heads, a few goats were clambering. Here they sat down in the shade to rest themselves, and to take a slight repast.

The goat-herd's son came up to kiss the hand of the venerable hermit. "Oh!" cried Henry, springing up in amazement, "oh, see here, a little man like myself! Oh! this is delightful! I had no notion that there were any little men but myself in the world! Oh, won't you come along with us?"

The boy offered to carry Father Menrad's knapsack, and they all journeyed on together. Henry became so absorbed in conversation with the little goat-herd, that he could hardly attend to anything else.

They came to a little green valley, embosomed between lofty cliffs, where a flock of sheep, belonging to the man to whom they were going, was grazing. Henry was delighted beyond expression, with a pair of little lambs, only a couple of days old, and caressed them with a thousand endearing expressions.

Meanwhile the hermit was looking round in all directions for the shepherd. At one side of the valley, at the foot of an over-hanging cliff, from which a little streamlet flowed, he saw a shepherdess seated, with a crook in one hand, and in the other, to his great astonishment, a book, in the perusal of which she seemed entirely absorbed. He went up to her. She was drest in white, and wore a green hat: the expression of her features was very soft, and they wore an air of subdued melancholy. She had never seen Father Menrad before, but she at once recognized him from description, and stood up to salute him reverently, and with evident pleasure and cordiality.

“ You cannot have been long tending this flock ? ” said Menrad. “ When last I spoke to the owner of it, he did not say anything about you. ” She told him that she had been tending sheep for some time in the mountains, but that she was only three days in the employment of her present good master.

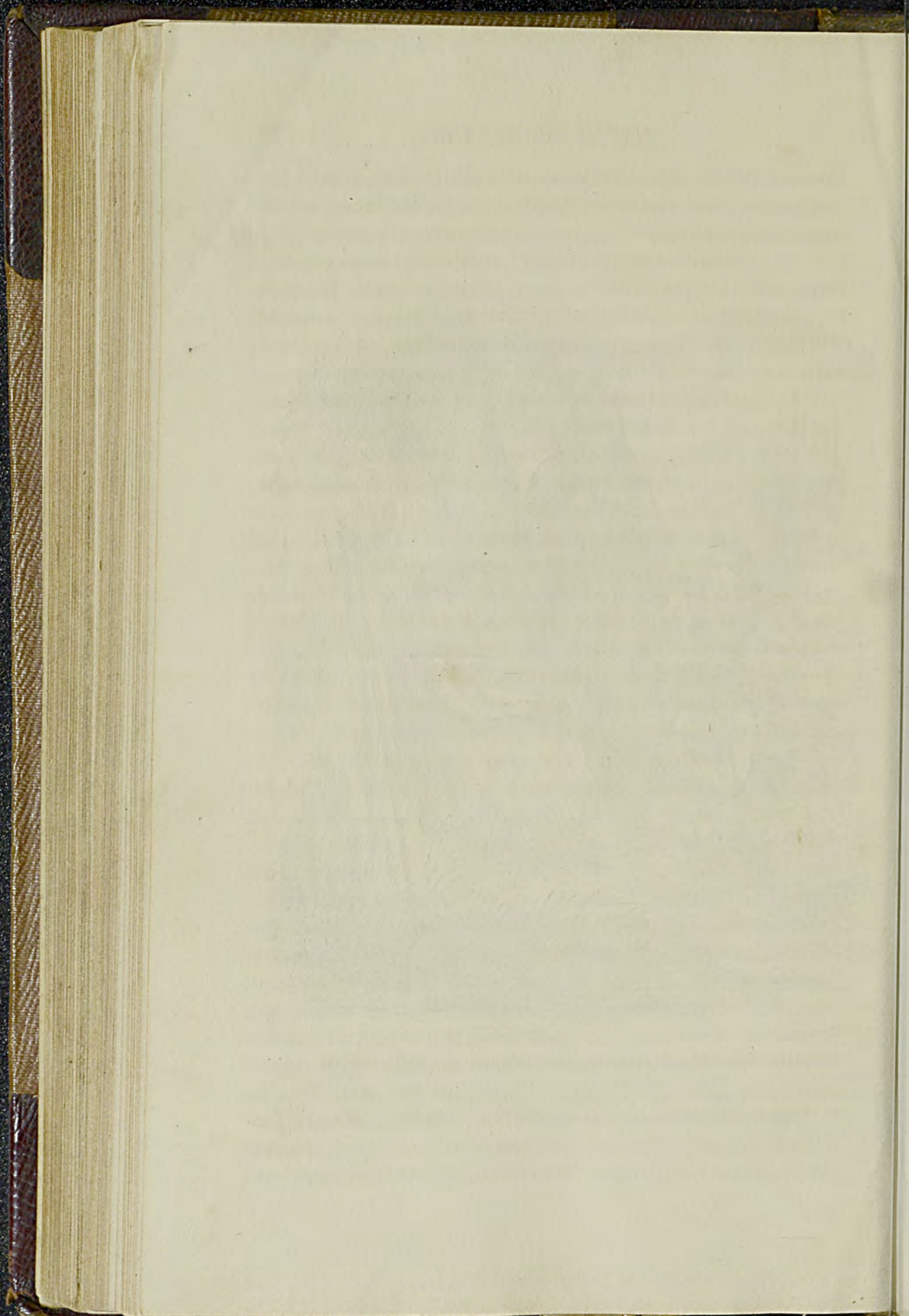
“ Whence do you come then ? ” asked he, “ and why are you sad ? ”

The girl burst into tears. “ Ah ! ” said she, “ I am from a very distant place. A youthful indiscretion has plunged me into the greatest misfortunes. I was in the service of a most kind family. I once thoughtlessly left unguarded, for a few minutes, their only darling child, of which I had the charge. It was carried away by robbers. My grief and remorse made it intolerable for me to remain with my good mistress, and to witness her affliction, and I fled into the mountains. Here I now live in solitude, praying every day that God may repair the evil which I have wrought, that the lost child may be recovered, and



BERNARD

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his mother's unutterable woe may be changed into joy once more. God will surely have pity on my tears, which none but He and these rocks around me can behold!"

"Ah!" said Father Menrad, with deep emotion, "I think God has this instant heard your prayer." He took out the portrait of Henry's mother, which he had brought with him on his journey, to facilitate the discovery of the child's parents.

"Do you know this portrait," said he, showing it to the girl.

"O my God!" cried the girl, half in terror, half in joy, "it is the portrait of the countess von Eichenfels, the mother of the lost child!"

Little Henry had run up at the cries of the girl. He stared with wonder at this new figure. "Why are you crying?" he compassionately asked. "Perhaps you are hungry? Here is some bread and a couple of apples—take and eat them!"

"Look," said Father Menrad, to the girl. "This is the child that was stolen along with the portrait." The girl felt as if her heart would break with sudden joy.

"Yes, Thou good, merciful God!" she cried, falling upon her knees, and raising her hands to heaven. "Thou hast heard the prayers which I have sent up day and night to Thee! O, look down mercifully on my gratitude also! Thou seest it, though I am not able to express it!"

She clasped little Henry in her arms, while the hot tears gushed from her eyes. "God bless and save thee, dearest Henry," she cried, "as He hath given thee back to us once more. Is it thou, indeed, or am I but dreaming? Yes: it is thou: thou art as like thy father as one dew-drop is to another. Oh! how will thy mother rejoice! Rejoice thou also, for we shall now go to thy father and mother!"

"God be praised!" cried Father Menrad, wiping his tears away. "Thy holy Providence, O Lord, visibly watches over this child. Thou driest the tears of this poor

girl, who wept without ceasing in prayer to thee. Thou restorest to these good parents their darling child; Thou crownest my very first step with success, and sparest my old age a protracted search. Eternal praise to thy gracious mercy!"

He then went, with Henry and Margaret, to the cottage of the worthy farmer, which was about half a league distant. The little goat-herd, who had been carrying Menrad's knapsack, gave it up to Margaret, and undertook the care of her sheep during her absence.

"Are these my father and mother?" asked Henry, when the farmer and his wife met them cordially at the cottage door. He was very sorry when he heard that they were not. "They are so kind," he said. "My own parents could not have been kinder. I would have readily stayed with them."

Menrad, Henry, and Margaret, after taking some slight refreshment, pursued their journey under the guidance of the little shepherd, the son of the worthy farmer. Towards evening they emerged from the mountains into a wide valley, and took up their abode in a large village, whence, at day-break next morning, they set out in a farmer's waggon, which the young man drove very skilfully, and hoped to reach Eichenfels in three days.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THE first day their journey was very prosperous. The driving, and the quick succession of villages, castles, and hamlets, which, as it were, flew by the carriage, were a source of unceasing delight to Henry, who, whenever he saw a castle upon a distant mountain, was perpetually asking whether that was Eichenfels.

But towards evening upon the second day, they came to a dense forest. The roads were hardly passable; and, to make it worse, a fearful storm arose, and the rain fell in torrents. Night fell, and it became excessively dark; and they were compelled to stop for the night at an inn in the midst of the forest, which was in very bad repute for honesty. They took some supper nevertheless, and retired speedily to rest, in order to start very early next morning. Wearied out with their journey, they all fell asleep very soon; but Menrad, who took little Henry into his own room, remained up till near midnight, reading and praying on his knees at a little table, on which a taper was burning.

On a sudden, a great uproar arose outside of the house. A number of rough men's voices were heard, and a violent knocking at the doors and windows. Every one in the house arose, terrified, from their sleep. As Father Menrad came out of his room, Margaret ran to meet him. "O my God!" she cried, "I fear it is the robbers come to seize the young count again from us!" Menrad bade her be silent, and went down. The people of the house seemed very much alarmed, and said they were afraid to open the doors, but the men outside continued to knock violently, and threatened to beat in the doors.

"The doors cannot shelter us against them," said Menrad, who was a very courageous man, "but God will be our shelter and our protection. We are all in his hand. Let us try whether we cannot deal gently with the men!"

He opened the door: and four stout armed men, with enormous beards, walked insolently in, one of them with a blazing torch in his hand. "We must inspect all the rooms and closets in the house," they said, "our master, with several attendants, will be here immediately, and the whole house must be at his disposal." Menrad asked who their master was: and what was his astonishment and delight, when he learned that it was Count Frederic von Eichenfels, Henry's father! The count, his atten-

dants told him, after he recovered from his severe wounds, declined to retire from the army, and continued in the campaign till peace should be proclaimed. Peace had just been proclaimed, and the count, with those of his retainers who had not perished on the Turkish frontier, were now upon their return home.

The news of the peace filled every one with joy, and every one bustled about to provide for the accommodation of the brave warriors. They, in their turn, now became very civil and friendly, and pleaded the inclemency of the weather, as an excuse for their former rudeness. "In such a fearful storm and torrent of rain," they said, "it was hard to blame a soldier, if he felt indisposed to stop quietly at a house-door at midnight." They also said that they would undoubtedly have lost their way and passed the house, had not the burning lamp served as a guiding-star, and brought them back to the road again.

This little circumstance of the lamp, by which he had been praying so late, being the means of guiding the count to the inn—was very affecting for the pious old man, who was wont to find in all things, traces of God's providence; and he thanked God from his soul, for this happy providential dispensation.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### A FATHER'S JOY.

MEANWHILE the count arrived—a tall, stately man, with noble features, but of a mild and interesting expression. He at once invited Father Menrad to his room, begged him to be seated, and produced some of his own wine, offering the first glass to the venerable old man: he pledged his health, touching glasses after the good old German fashion.

“ You are heartily welcome, reverend father !” said the count. “ After such a ride, and in such tempestuous weather, it is pleasant to find oneself under shelter of a roof, and in a comfortable room. But the sight of your pious, honest countenance is far dearer to me : it does my heart good, and I am impelled to open my whole soul to you. All my people, as you see, are full of joy ; and happy in the prospect of visiting their home once more, after so many bloody adventures. But I, their commander, (as so often happens in this world,) am the only sorrowful person among them all. I fear that all is not as it should be at home ! My wife, it is true, is well, but I am very anxious about my only son. For a long time, my wife has written nothing very definite about him ; and in her very last letter, she told me I should never see him more in this world. You, Father Menrad, are acquainted with many knights, for you were yourself a valiant soldier in your time ; you are travelling, too, at this very time, and, perhaps, have come from a distance. Do you know anything of how things are at Eichenfels ? If you have no good news to tell me, you can, at least, give me consolation.”

“ I am able to give you,” the hermit replied, his face beaming with joy—“ I am able to give you the happiest intelligence. Your son is well, and the most charming child I ever saw in all my life.”

“ You know him then ?” eagerly enquired the count.

“ Well,” replied Menrad. “ But the boy has had many adventures, while you have been at the wars.” He recounted to the astonished count, all that he knew of the boy’s history ; showing him, for more complete confirmation, the beautiful portrait of the countess.

“ That is she to the life !” cried the count. “ But is she still as blooming ? Alas, the poor lady has suffered, bitterly suffered. But where is our boy ?”

“ Here in this house !” replied Menrad.

“ Here !—in this house !” cried the count, starting up,

and overturning the chair in his eagerness. "Oh, dear father, why did not you say so at first? Oh, lead me to him at once!"

Menrad took the taper from the table, and the count followed him into the room to his son's bedside. The little fellow lay sleeping, as softly as innocence itself, and beautiful as an angel. The count could not satisfy himself with gazing.

"This is a providential event," said Menrad. "God gives a blessing to his children while they sleep."

The tears rushed to the count's eyes. "O my God," he cried, "when I went to the war he was but a pining baby, and now he is a beautiful boy! O my dear good wife, it is only now I understand your letters, and appreciate your tenderness in sparing me this unspeakable affliction. Henry, dearest Henry!" he cried, taking his hand and softly kissing him, "awake, and look up; your father is here!"

Little Henry rubbed his eyes, stared at his father, and for a time could not shake off the sleep.

At length he cried, with the liveliest joy and affection, "Ah, is this my father? Oh, is my mother with you also?"

The count took the boy in his arms, and wept tears of joy. "Dear child," said he, "God's providence has wondrously delivered you. I cannot thank Him enough for restoring you to me."

"Nor I," said Henry. "O my good God! How good and merciful he is to us, in affording us such happiness!"

The count was delighted; and now that the boy was awake, and fully aroused, he was inexpressibly charmed by his natural and lively questions and answers. "Oh, Menrad," he said, "how much gratitude do I owe you. My whole dominions would be a poor return to you for the instruction you have bestowed upon the boy."

Meanwhile Margaret had entered the apartment, and stood respectfully at a distance. The count saluted her

kindly, gave her his hand, and spoke cheeringly to her. "But, as for the robbers," he added with vehemence, "they shall suffer for their misdeeds!" Even at that late hour he gave instructions to the most courageous of his retainers, to search them out in their hiding-place, and bring them in chains to Eichenfels. He then spoke to his son once more, and would have remained with him all night, had not Menrad reminded him that they all needed repose, in order to reach Eichenfels fresh and in good spirits early to-morrow.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### A MOTHER'S CONSOLATION.

MEANWHILE the pious, noble-minded countess, was living in the castle of Eichenfels, a prey to grief and melancholy. She had received early intimation of the peace, and was in expectation of seeing her husband soon; but she often burst into tears at the thought. "O my God!" she would say, "how wretched am I! What fills all the world with joy, is to me a source of unspeakable woe. Every poor soldier's wife rejoices in the return of her husband, and I cannot think without horror of the coming of mine. Oh, what sorrowful tidings await him! How shall I ever tell him the sad history of the loss of our child? Ah, never more shall either he or I enjoy one happy hour in this world!"

An indescribable melancholy hung over her at every moment. Nowhere could she find peace or rest. At one time she would flit from room to room, at another she would go to the castle-chapel, and again she would wander about in her garden; but wherever she went, she prayed fervently to God. In prayer, and in the reflection that God ruled the destinies of men, and was able to turn

the most untoward events to a happy issue, did she find her only consolation.

“O merciful God,” she prayed, as she sat bathed in tears in the inmost recess of her garden, “Oh, have pity on me; have pity on my husband; put an end to my bitter sorrow, as Thou alone canst do! Oh, grant that our meeting may be a happy one. With the wisest purposes hast Thou separated the father, the mother, and the child, and dispersed them through the wide world. Oh, give us back our dear child, and unite all three once again! Who can number the tears thou hast dried up? Oh, dry mine also! Thou art, indeed, most merciful; Thy dearest task is to change sorrow into joy. O Father, Father, dearest Father!—sinner though I be, yet am I still thy daughter—still may I confidently call thee Father, in accordance with the command of thy beloved Son. Far more tender is Thy love for me, than mine for my child. Oh, hear me, then, hear me; and reject not Thy child—Thy daughter—who has no resource but in Thee!”

While she was praying thus, she heard a footstep. She looked up, and lo! Margaret, who had just arrived with the rest of the count's retinue, was coming down the long gloomy garden walk, directly towards the arbour. A ray of hope beamed upon the heart of the countess as she saw Margaret, and marked her cheerful countenance; it was as though she saw an angel from heaven.

“O dearest countess,” cried the girl, “I bring you most joyous tidings of your dear Henry. He is living, and you shall soon see him again.” She had hardly had time to commence her tale when Father Menrad entered the arbour, to prepare the countess for the coming of her husband and her son. The prudent man had the skill to bring all happily around; and the countess, full of the joyous hope of seeing her husband and son in a few days, accompanied Father Menrad into the apartment in which she used to live with her little Henry.

But, lo! when she opened the door, her husband, lead-



ing Henry by the hand, rushed to meet her. She could but utter the words, "Oh, my husband! Oh, my child!" and sank into the count's arms. For a long time she wept in silent emotion, bedewing alternately the cheeks of her husband and of her child with tears of joy. "Now, I will die in peace," she cried at last, "as I have lived to see this day! Oh, how wonderfully has God disposed all. I trembled at the thought of meeting you, my dearest husband, without our beloved Henry, and now you yourself bring him to me in your arms at the first moment of our meeting! My whole life, O Lord, will not suffice to thank Thee for having brought this terrible history to so happy a conclusion. Never again shall I shrink from sufferings: Thou knowest how to bring them all to a happy end. My darling Henry, what a stout boy you have grown meanwhile! And oh, dearest husband, what a happy re-union has God prepared for us all! He separated us from one another, and has wondrously brought us together once again. To Him be honour, praise, and adoration!"

All three wept tears of joy and of gratitude to God. Margaret's tears flowed in common with theirs, and even Father Menrad was so deeply moved, that he could not restrain his tears.

When the first tumult of their joy had somewhat subsided, Henry began to relate his history to his mother. The vivacity with which he told it, drew tears and smiles alternately from his mother. He described with especial vividness his feelings on his first entrance into the external world, after his long sojourn in the cavern; but his joy and emotion were still more profound, when he recounted the memorable moment in which Father Menrad first spoke to him of God; the bright tears rushed to his eyes while he spoke of it.

"In truth," said the count, "I could wish that my childhood had been passed in such a cavern. We are too much habituated to the sight of God's majestic works.

Oh, that like Henry, we could see God's works all at once, and just as we arrived at the use of reason! What an overwhelming impression they would make upon us! Good God! how we should stand amazed at thy power—how we should admire thy wisdom, and rejoice in thy goodness! At the sight of thy beauteous heaven, and thy wondrous earth, we could not fail to reflect that what so moves our heart must surely proceed from a Beneficent Heart above!"

"Yes," said the countess; "just as Henry felt on issuing for the first time from his subterranean abode into God's beauteous earth, so shall we feel when from this earthly life we shall be transferred to heaven. And I imagine that, just as Henry's toys—the flowers, and lambs, and trees, in which he took such delight in his cave—were but faint representations of those glorious works of God, so all the beauty and all the pleasures of the world are scarce a shadow of the rays of heaven. The only joy on earth which can give us a foretaste of the joy of re-union with departed friends in heaven, is the joy of seeing once again after a sorrowful separation, the friends whom we love; for at this present re-union I feel as happy as though I were already in heaven itself."

"The feelings of the noble count and his pious lady are very beautiful and edifying," said Father Menrad, "but the plain lesson which Henry's history teaches is, that the wisdom, goodness, and bounteousness of God, shine forth so clear and so unmistakable, both in heaven and in earth, that even a child may see their traces, and discover the Creator in the creatures of His hand!"

## CHAPTER XV.

THE REWARD OF THE GOOD, AND THE PUNISHMENT  
OF THE WICKED.

AFTER some days the count's retainers returned to Eichenfels with the troop of banditti, whom they had luckily found all together in the den. The robbers were all chained together in pairs; and a cart, with the chests which contained all their ill-gotten treasures, on the top of which sat the old gipsy, brought up the procession. The robbers had made no search after Henry when he fled; for, finding the iron gate close, and not knowing the crevice through which he had escaped, they had concluded either that he fell into some of the immeasurably deep shafts of the old mine, or had been buried alive by the falling in of the roof of some of the passages.

They were very much astonished, therefore, when on their arrival at Eichenfels, they saw the young count standing before the gate along with his father, and they could not conceive how he got out of the iron gate.

"We thought," muttered the captain peevishly, "that no one in the world could outwit us, and yet a child must here outdo us in craft, and bring us into chains and captivity. This is too bad; but it proves to me, what I never would believe, the old proverb—'When the thief is ripe, the limping beadle may seize him.'"

The dulcimer-player, who was also one of the gang, thought within himself, that they had stolen this child in order that he might afford them a means of escape, whereas it was precisely he who had led to their destruction. "The people are right," said he, "when they say—'The evil

doer always in the end finds that he has made a false calculation.' ”

William, the young man who had always been so friendly and kind to Henry, and whose heart was not corrupted, did not conceal his satisfaction. “ God has willed,” said he, “ that the child should escape, and I am glad he is alive, though this will lead to my own death. God displays here also his power to shield the innocent, and to punish the guilty. Every thing goes to verify what my poor father once said to me, and my mother many a time repeated, ‘ That though the wicked man could creep into the centre of the earth, God’s avenging justice could find him, and visit him with his merited punishment.’ ”

When Henry saw poor William in the gang, loaded with chains, his heart was deeply moved, and he begged earnestly of his father to spare the poor man who had been so kind to him. His father said that for the present he could promise nothing, but that he would deal with him as mildly as lay in his power ; and when, at the trial, it appeared that the young man had never shed blood, and was rather a servant of the robbers than a robber himself, he was not executed, but condemned to perpetual imprisonment ; and the count commuted the sentence into confinement in a house of correction, till he should have given signs of amendment, when he might return to his own family.

“ See,” said the count to him, as he was led away after sentence, “ as no evil escapes unpunished, so every good act is rewarded. You owe to your kindness to my son the alleviation of your sentence ; and, moreover, what you have done to my child, I will repay to your poor mother. Conduct yourself well, and place it in my power to send you back to her soon.”

The rest of the gang suffered the bloody punishment of their deeds of blood. The old gipsy was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment and labour. The plunder, wherever it was possible to discover the owners, was restored to them,

the rest was applied to the endowment of an orphan's house; and the count, in gratitude to God, added to this a large sum of money, and the pious countess all her trinkets and ornaments.

Margaret remained in the countess's service as before, and after all her sorrows had many a happy day at last. The young gardener had been dismissed long before for his giddiness and negligence, and then gave himself up to drinking and dissipation, till he died prematurely of consumption. The young mountaineer returned to his parents, laden with rich presents from the count.

The count would gladly have detained good Father Menrad for life in his castle. He did remain for a while, but could not be induced to exchange his hermitage for the count's castle. "I wish to devote the rest of my life entirely to God," said he, "and this I think I shall best do in solitude. I have lived long enough in the world to know what it is. The best thing we can do in this world is to prepare ourselves for a better one!"

At his parting, which was a very sorrowful one, the venerable old man blessed the count, the countess, and little Henry, who could hardly be torn from him. The whole family accompanied him to the carriage at the castle gate. He took his place. "Farewell!" said he, looking tenderly towards them all, as the carriage was just driving off—"Farewell, and may the peace of God be with you!—We shall meet in heaven."

## THE FOREST-CHAPEL.

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CONRAD EHRLIEB was a fine, handsome youth, full of health and spirits; he had served his apprenticeship to the coppersmith's trade, attentively and regularly, and had already spent three years as a travelling journeyman. Decently dressed, with a heavy knapsack on his shoulders and a knotty walking-stick in his hand, he was passing, on a warm summer's day, through a thick forest, when he missed his way. For nearly two hours he wandered up and down in the forest, and at last did not know whether to go backward or forward. The sun was already descending in the west, when, at length, he saw, illumined by its golden rays, the spire of a little chapel rising high over the dark fir-trees. Advancing towards it, he soon fell in with a well beaten footpath, and arrived at the little chapel, which stood on a beautiful green hill in the forest.

His father's last advice to him had been, "Whenever time and circumstances permit, never pass by an open church: for it is built for the worship of your Creator, and its spire is like an outstretched finger that points to heaven. It will afford you an opportunity of raising up your heart to heaven, and of prostrating yourself in presence of your greatest benefactor; and, perhaps, you may see there some picture or other work of art, that will please your eye and affect your heart, or, perhaps, read some inscription that may give you confidence and courage, and strengthen you in virtue."

Conrad now remembered this advice of his father, and entered the chapel which stood open. The sombre arches, the grey walls, the narrow windows with their small round panes, and the ancient altar, carried him back a hundred years into the olden times. The deep stillness that reigned in this heaven-consecrated place, invited him to meditation. He knelt down on the bench nearest the door, and prayed for awhile. Before he took up his knapsack again, he advanced towards the sanctuary to get a nearer view of the altar, which appeared to him a splendid monument of ancient art, when he saw on the pew that stood before the altar, a neat little prayer book bound in red Morocco, and ornamented with gold edges. He opened the little book, and stood like one petrified with astonishment, for, on the first blank leaf he read his own name, written with his own hand! He felt as if he saw the letters only in a dream, and could scarcely believe his own eyes.

He turned over the leaves of the little book. The beautiful frontispiece—the Divine Friend of youth blessing the little ones—the well conned prayers, and several familiarly remembered verses, in the little book, came to the aid of his memory.

“Yes,” said he, deeply affected, “this little book was once mine; this name was written with my own hand. That was my writing when I was going to school. But how on earth this little book came here into this lonely chapel, in the heart of a deep wood—is to me incomprehensible!”

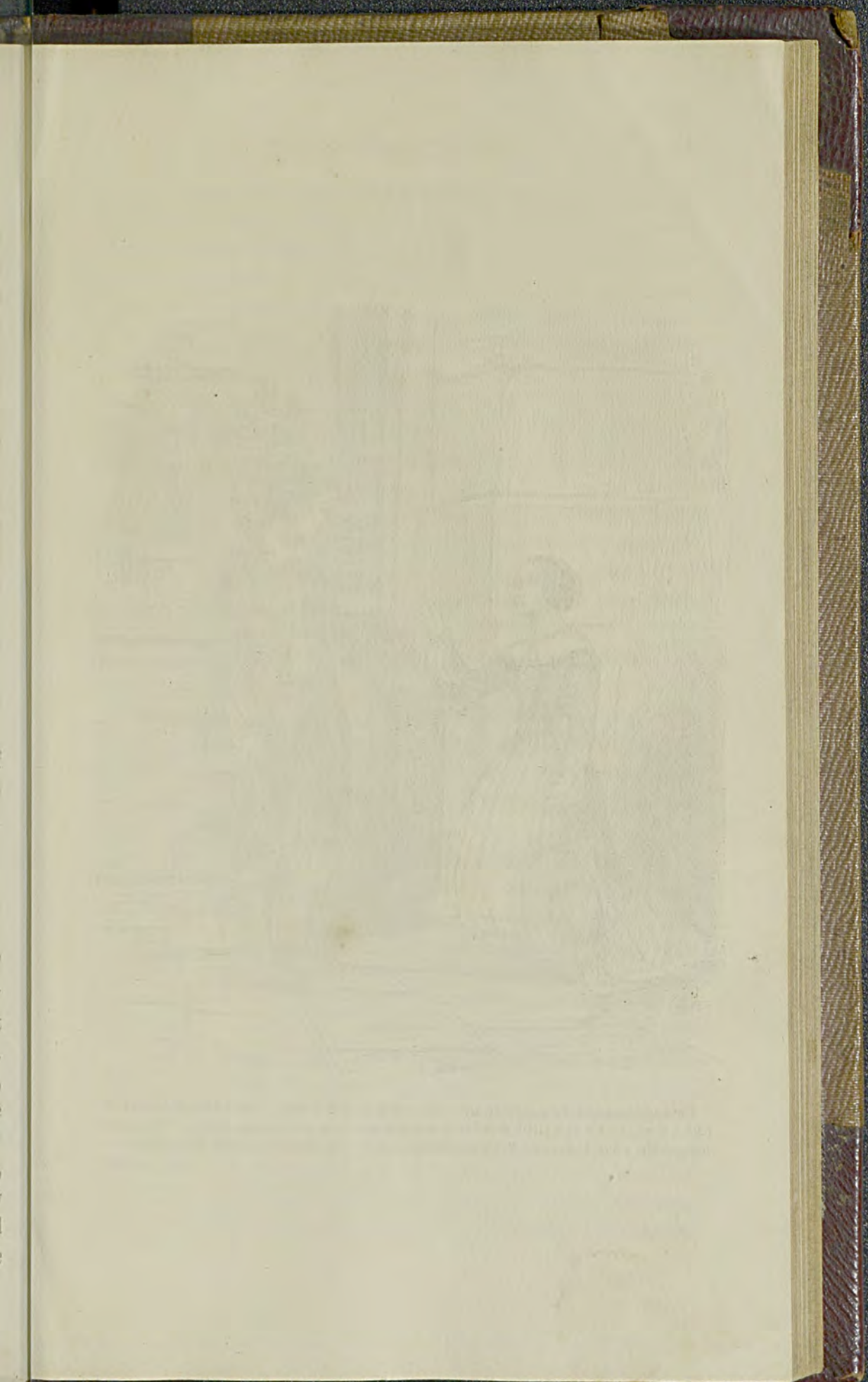
A thousand reminiscences of his childhood were awakened in him. A violent yearning for his beloved family agitated his heart. Warm tears gushed down his cheeks. “O thou amiable, good God!” he exclaimed, as he knelt down at the seat, “what good parents Thou gavest me; what happy days did we, when children, spend under our father’s roof! O how happy was I then, when our kind, affectionate mother, as she sat at her work-

table, kept us, for whole hours together, standing at her knee, and told us of Thee and of thy beloved Son; and when our dear, good father, after having been occupied the entire day in his office, came home in the evening, and amused and instructed us with various entertaining, and often marvellous stories. How happy were we, my little sister and I, when we played together in our fine spacious garden; or, laboured there at our various little tasks to please our parents! But this sad war has long since driven us from our beloved home, and torn us from each other. Our good mother died long ago in exile, and her affectionate hand, from which I received this little book, is already mouldering in the grave. For many years I have not heard any account of my good father; perhaps, grief has brought him also, before his time, to the grave. I know not where my poor sister is wandering—whether she is still alive, or what is her lot. Separated from all my dear relations, I now live alone in the world. But Thou, O great, all-seeing God! knowest whether my father and sister are still alive; or, if there be even one of them alive—Oh, do thou yet bring us together. Have pity on me, O merciful God! Hear now the prayer which my father offered to Thee, when I saw him for the last time; fulfil that blessing, which, with confidence in Thee, he gave me at his farewell!”

In such terms as these did Conrad pray, for a long time. He arose at length from his knees. “I dare not,” said he, “carry away the little book with me. I know not whether I can still consider it as my property. But surely some person has left it here, and, perhaps, will come before night falls to take it away. It is best for me, to wait here for some time. Perhaps, I may get some more certain information.”

He sat down thoughtfully in a corner of the chapel, and began to read the little book. But he had scarcely read two pages, when a modest, pretty, and neatly dressed girl, about sixteen years of age, reverently entered the







Conrad stepped forward, with the little book in his hand. She had not observed him before, and was a little startled when she saw him so unexpectedly. "It must have been you, fair maid," he modestly said, "that left this little book here."

chapel, advanced towards the altar, made a deep reverence, and looking hurriedly around her, said aloud, with a sigh, "O my God!—no, it is not here!—I had rather I had lost anything in the world!"

She knelt down before the altar, and prayed devoutly for a few minutes, and was then going to return, when Conrad stepped forward, with the little book in his hand. She had not observed him before, and was a little startled when she saw him so unexpectedly. "It must have been you, fair maid," he modestly said, "that left this little book here."

"Oh yes!" said she, brightening up when she saw it in his hand. "There is a name written in it—Conrad Ehrlieb."

"You appear to be very much attached to this little book," said Conrad. "May I ask you why? The name Conrad Ehrlieb is not strange to me. I can give you some intelligence of him."

"If you can do that," said she, "you will make me happy beyond expression. That Conrad Ehrlieb interests me most nearly. Several travellers said they saw him somewhere or other. But their information, alas, was never confirmed."

"I must tell you briefly something of my history," she added, "perhaps, you can then ascertain whether you know Conrad. My father was an officer beyond the Rhine. War, and the hostile occupation of the country, compelled him to abandon our dear fatherland. His prince, who had himself lost everything, had it not in his power to give him any assistance. The situation of my good father was very wretched. My mother died of grief in exile. My father felt her loss doubly, because the care for his two children, my brother and myself, obliged him to wander about, looking for employment. A burgher of the town where my mother died, a worthy coppersmith, who had no children, offered to take my brother for awhile. I travelled on with my father—far, very far. My father fell sick on

the journey, and after a few days died unexpectedly. I was then a child six years old, still too young to feel my whole loss. A kind-hearted woman had compassion on me, and took me into her house. It is now nearly ten years since the death of my father, and since that time I have heard nothing of my brother. My father, on the night of his death, had urgently implored the master of the house in which he died, to send an account of his death and his last blessing to my brother, and to entreat the humane coppersmith to be as a father to the poor orphan; and with a hand trembling in the agony of death, he wrote on a slip of paper, the name of the town and of the burgher with whom my brother then was. But by an unfortunate accident the paper was lost. A maid, who could not read, had found it when she was cleaning the chamber of the dead man, and had torn and thrown it away as of no value. Alas! many thousand times have I since then thought of my brother! We made inquiries after him in all quarters; but all our inquiries were unavailing. That little book is all that now remains to me of him. Though I did not receive it from his own hand, his name is there in his own handwriting, and on that account it is to me a most precious memorial. I found it in the trunk that contained our little all. When my father was sending away his son, and had packed up his stock of clothes, the little book was forgotten; and thus it came into my hands."

At this moment, Conrad, whose eyes were already filled with tears, as his heart was bursting with emotion, cried out in a trembling voice, "O God, how wonderful art thou! My dear girl, is not your name Louisa?"

"Yes," said she, in amazement, staring at him with wondering eyes, "my name is Louisa Ehrlieb."

"O then, a thousand and a thousand times welcome, my dearest sister!" cried he. "It was I who wrote these lines—that is my name. I am, indeed, your brother, Conrad Ehrlieb!"

The girl was almost overpowered by this unexpected meeting, and her brother was scarcely less agitated. For a while, both stood speechless, till at length, they both burst into tears of joy; and with hearts full of pious emotion, embraced each other, most affectionately, before the altar.

When they had recovered from the first joy of their meeting, and were somewhat composed, the brother told his story.

“O, my dear, good sister,” said he, “now I remember perfectly well, how I took my farewell of you. A strange gentleman, who, like my father, was compelled to fly and had two children with him, offered to carry you with him to the next town, and my father resolved to go there on foot, as there was no room for him in the carriage. I remember well how delighted you were, when you were permitted to travel in a coach, and how I cried when my poor father placed you in it. You were at that time very little; and I have never since thought of you except as a child. Since then, however, you are grown very big; and you appear very blooming and healthy. I never would have known you, dear sister! O praise be to God, that I have found you once more!”

“Ah!” continued he, “my heart is full even to bursting, at once with joy, for having found you again, dearest sister, and with sorrow, since it is now certain, as I always apprehended, that our good father is no more. O, you cannot conceive how many sorrowful hours I spent, when I and the honest coppersmith, who so kindly received me, ceased to receive any letters from my father. My master instructed me perfectly in his trade. But I was often obliged to listen to persons who reproached him with his folly, for having taken charge of me. My father had deceived him, they said, and had not kept his word, to take me back and pay the expenses of my support: he had wished only to get rid of me, and thus basely abandoned his own child. You can imagine how such

imputations afflicted me, although I never believed them. For how could I believe them? O, you know how good and pious my father was. I will write immediately to the worthy coppersmith, my master, and tell him that I have found you, my dear sister; but that our beloved father died shortly after I had been entrusted to his care. My master will rejoice that he was not deceived in my father; and that he really was an honourable, yes a truly Christian man."

"That is indeed true," said Louisa. "Never in my life can I forget how, on the night he died, he had me awakened and carried to his death-bed, and how he there blessed me and yourself, dearest brother. He appeared as pious and devout as if he were already in glory. That image of my dear father's death-bed, will ever be before my soul!"

"Oh!" said Conrad, "when I was coming into this chapel, I was thinking with unusual earnestness of our good father. I felt as if I saw before me his noble figure, such as when he stood before me, the last time, with pale and sorrowful look, and bade me farewell. Yes, it was almost as if I had seen him yesterday: though since then many years have passed away. It was the morning after that day on which you were sent away in the coach. On that morning my father set out very early on his journey. I accompanied him to the next town. The church door lay open. On that occasion he warned me never to pass by an open church. He entered with me. The hour was so early, that there was as yet no person in the church. My father knelt with me at the foot of the altar, and prayed in tears. I wept and prayed also. Then he stood up and said: 'Dear Conrad, I have commended you and our dear Louisa to God, and given you up entirely to Him.' He then advised me to keep God always before my eyes and in my heart; to follow faithfully the heavenly doctrine of Jesus, and never to do wrong. 'I may not live much longer,' said he, among other things,

‘and you see me now, perhaps, for the last time. But whenever you are in a condition to do so, take your good sister to yourself like a brother.’ I gave him my hand before that altar, that I would do all he had told me. He then bade me kneel down, looked up devoutly to heaven, and gave me his blessing. He then raised me, kissed me, gave me some money, and with a voice choked with weeping, said, ‘God be with you!’ When we came out of the church, his eyes still red with tears, he gazed upon me once more with an air of inexpressible grief and affection, and said sobbing: ‘Live ever so, that we may meet again in heaven:’ then suddenly turning away, he hastened round the corner of the church—and from that moment I have never seen him more. Here, in this lonely chapel, that sad farewell has now come back afresh on my heart. That fervent prayer of my good father in the village church, was present to my senses. It was as if I saw him still kneeling before the altar. I wept involuntarily as you just now saw, and prayed fervently from my heart, that God would have mercy on me, and after so many years of anxious expectation, enable me at last to get some trace of my good father and you. Oh, how consoling is it, that my dear father did not forget me, that even in death he so affectionately remembered me and blessed me!”

“Oh, my kind, kind father!” exclaimed his sister, bursting into tears. “Yes, he is in heaven now, and his blessing rests visibly on us, his children. Yes, dearest brother, it is, indeed, most remarkable. It was before the altar of that church my father bade you farewell, and here, before the altar of this chapel, we, his children, are restored to each other’s arms. Surely it is the work of God! God has heard my father’s prayer in that church, and your prayer in this chapel. O praise be to God, that you have remained faithful to the advice of our revered father, and have kept God before your eyes! thanks be to God that you did not pass by this chapel; perhaps we would never have found each other.—O let us both kneel down this instant

before the altar, and give thanks to God, that He has so happily brought us together once more."

The brother and sister fell on their knees before the altar, and thanked God with their whole hearts, and with warm tears, for His kind providence in their regard.

"Tell me now, dearest sister," asked Conrad, "how, under heaven's will, you came here, and how you have found your way so far into the forest?"

"We are not so deep in the forest as you think," replied Louisa. "The borders of the forest are near us. We are here on a hill. About fifty paces hence lies a sweet valley, thickly peopled. The path to this chapel is much frequented. In spring and in summer, when the weather is fine, I always come here on Sunday evenings, and also on other days, when I have finished my work early. It is a singularly beautiful walk, shaded by two rows of fruit trees. A young friend of mine, a prudent and intelligent daughter of one of our townsmen, always accompanies me. She was with me to-day also—but she had not time to return with me, when I came back here in search of the lost prayer-book. For that little book is my favourite prayer-book. I always bring it with me, though I can repeat it all by heart. Oh! how often have I thought of you, my dear brother, here in this little church, and prayed to God that he would send you back to me! My prayer is not in vain. By this trivial accident—my leaving my prayer-book here after me—God has led me to you, my dear brother. The loss of the book appeared to me no ordinary misfortune, but is now my greatest happiness!"

"Just so," said her brother, "has it happened to me, in my wandering in this wood. I was very much troubled at having lost my way—and how great is my happiness now in finding you! Such is always the case:—it is through sorrows that God leads man to joy. But where do you reside now, dearest sister?"

"About a quarter of an hour's walk from this," said Louisa, "below in the valley, lies Schönbrun, a beautiful



market-town. It is there that the generous lady who has received and supported me resides. She is a widow, and has no children. Her husband was a very wealthy merchant. She loves me most tenderly, and treats me as if I were her own child. But let us come see her. Take your hat and staff—I will carry your knapsack, for you must be very tired. Come, my foster-mother will be overjoyed to become acquainted with you!"

Both started on their way. But Conrad would not allow his sister to carry the heavy knapsack. Conversing affectionately by the way, they proceeded to Schönbrun. When they arrived at the neat, well built, and elegantly furnished house of Louisa's friend, the good lady could not believe that the young stranger was Louisa's brother. Many of the curious neighbours came to see them. One said, "It is really Louisa's brother; he is very like her;" but another, with a dubious shake of the head, muttered, "Trust—appearances—Who?"—But Conrad opened his letter-case, and dispelled all suspicions, by reading his apprentice indentures, his passport, and a testimonial from his parish priest. When the good woman had heard how the brother and sister met, she wept tears of joy.

"I have given over my house for ever, to Louisa," said she, "it shall still be hers, should she continue honest, and virtuous, and well conducted, as hitherto, unlike those silly frivolous young girls, who, shameless in dress and air, do nothing but ornament their persons, and run after dangerous amusements. And you too, Conrad, must be assisted for her sake. God has blessed me with this world's wealth, and I cannot spend it better than in making men happy. A copper-smith is wanted here just now. Our former one died about half a year ago, and his house is advertised for sale. I will purchase it for you, if you are found able to finish your work in a creditable and workmanlike fashion."

This offer the good lady made in the joy of her heart. Some of her relatives, who, though very wealthy, still

were more greedy after gold, than the beggar for his charity soup, endeavoured to dissuade her. But she was noble and firm enough to keep her word. Conrad became one of the most distinguished burghers, and best citizens of the town. He married Louisa's young friend, and Louisa herself was also very happily married.

Conrad did not forget his kind master. He not only wrote him letters from time to time, as an expression of his grateful feelings; he proved his gratitude by acts. When his good master, now advanced in years, and no longer able to work, lost his wife, and by the reverses of war was brought very low in his circumstances, Conrad resolved to take him to his own house, went in person to bring him, and constantly treated him with as much reverence, love and gratitude, as if the good old man were his own beloved father. The same filial gratitude Louisa always showed to her foster-mother. And many a time would the good old people say: "God has not blessed us with children of our own: but these good children make us so happy, that we could not have more joy and consolation in our own sons and daughters."

The brother and sister resolved to repair the old chapel in the forest, at their own expense; and Conrad planted four lime trees on the beautiful hill on which it stood. The old painting, which had become faded from age, and which an eminent painter had highly praised, was cleaned and restored, and then appeared uncommonly beautiful. Every one that entered the chapel was delighted. It was white, neat, and elegant; and the blue sky, and the green branches of the lime trees shone through the mirrored clearness of the windows. The solitary altar gleamed like the whitest marble, and was chastely ornamented in gold. But the most beautiful ornament was the painting. Every one admired the uncommon beauty of the colouring, and the sweet grace of the figures. It represented the holy family. The Blessed Virgin was sitting, with her Divine Son on her bosom, at the door of her house, whose

walls were overgrown with vine-branches. The holy Joseph was presenting to the child a neat little basket, of clustered grapes. Both the parents gazed with eyes full of tender devotion on the child, while He was devoutly raising his little hands clasped together, and looking with inexpressible piety to heaven. On one side you saw the outline of a table, on which lay the materials of feminine industry—on the other were seen the implements of the carpenter's trade—and under the painting was inscribed in large golden characters:—

“To souls like these, even here, is given  
A foretaste of the bliss of heaven.”

# THE JEWELS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MARSHAL VON HAINBURG.

MARSHAL VON HAINBURG, a gallant veteran of the highest military and political reputation, had withdrawn from public life, and resided upon his estate in the country. His wife was no more—both his sons had fallen in battle—his only daughter had died while she was an affianced bride—he lost all relish for the pleasures of the great world, and resolved to devote the rest of his days to God in rural retirement, and to live solely for the welfare of his vassals.

Anxious as he was to live in great privacy here, yet he received visits occasionally from the nobility of the neighbourhood. He was extremely hospitable. His old castle of Hainburg, a stately and well-preserved edifice, stood upon the summit of a mountain, in the centre of an extremely beautiful country. Deep in the valley, not far from the castle, lay a pretty village of the same name; and behind the castle arose a thickly-wooded mountain, stocked with every variety of game. It was the favourite resort of all lovers of the chase; and especially during the great *battues* of the autumn season, the castle, large as it was, was hardly large enough to accommodate all his sporting visitors.

Early one autumn, almost before the woods had begun

to lose their rich green hues, his nephew, Adolphus von Wildberg, a young officer, arrived at Hainburg. He was a great favourite of his uncle, who admired his generosity, vivacity, and spirit; perhaps not the less, because the young man would often ask the benefit of his experience in military tactics, and never failed to listen with marked attention to the stories and observations of the venerable veteran.

One day, just as the young man had returned from the chase with the old ranger, and was telling with great glee how fortunately he had succeeded in killing the monstrous wild boar which had been making such fearful havoc in the country-people's fields, a hussar came galloping into the castle court, with an order for Lieutenant von Wildberg to join his regiment instantly, at the latest upon a day named in the order—the enemy having quite unexpectedly declared the truce at an end, and already marched across the frontier. The hussar told them that he had been informed in all the villages that the enemy's cavalry were ravaging the district which lay between the castle and the metropolis, but that he had not himself seen any trace of them upon the way.

Far from being disheartened by this intelligence, the young man was overjoyed; but his old uncle appeared very much dejected.

“To-morrow, at day-break,” he said, “I shall set out along with you;” and he gave orders that his clothes, linen, and money, should be packed up without delay. Adolphus thought that he might still remain, as yet there was no danger. But he cried—“No, no; I annoyed the enemy too much when I was in command. They would take me prisoner, and treat me with indignity.” He repeated the orders for packing up, therefore; and the whole establishment, including Adolphus, were busied in the work.

The marshal no longer retained his old courage; age and sickness had made him nervous and timid.

“ I am greatly troubled,” said he to Adolphus, as he brought in a handsome mahogany casket, “ about this box. Tell me what I shall do with it? It contains the trinkets of my deceased wife and daughter, and, what I prize above them all, the badge of my order. I am afraid to bring these precious things with me. We might be plundered by the enemy on the road, and I should regret far beyond the loss of all these diamonds and pearls, the loss of my splendid star, which the prince himself once fastened upon my breast. Still it is not safe to hide those treasures here in the castle, for it may be seized and searched by the enemy, and even burned to the ground in revenge against me. The best plan will be to hide the casket and the jewels in the rocks of the neighbouring mountain forest. It is well that Hubert, the old ranger, who lives in the forest, is here now. Call him at once, Adolphus; I can rely thoroughly upon him. To him and you I confide the whole affair. I shall not myself accompany you; for as I have not for a long time gone into the forest, my going might excite suspicion.”

The marshal had a written inventory of all the jewels. He examined one by one whether they were all in the casket, placed the list in his pocket-book, and gave the casket into Adolphus' charge.

Adolphus put it into his hunting pouch, and went into the forest with the ranger. Deep in its recesses arose, from the midst of a dense thicket, a mass of high craggy cliffs. At the foot of one of these precipitous walls of rock stood an old moss-grown stone cross, which marked the spot where, a hundred years before, a valiant knight had been struck down by an arrow of the enemy. In this cliff there were numberless rents and clefts; and in one of these, which was marked by an overhanging rowan-tree, they concealed the casket, closing up the crevice with a mossy stone which fitted it pretty accurately, and returned home to communicate to the old man the gratifying intelligence.

The following morning the marshal set out in all haste

with his nephew, and they arrived safely in the capital without encountering the enemy. Both officers and men were busily engaged, and strained every nerve to prepare themselves as soon as possible for the march. Adolphus was kept running about the live-long day. Two days afterwards he marched with his regiment in high spirits, and the marshal resumed his old quarters in his beautiful town mansion.

The war soon took another direction, and carried its desolating course into the more distant provinces of Germany. The roads between the city and Hainburg castle were quite free from the enemy, and perfectly safe, and the marshal's heart began to yearn after his dear paternal halls; but his health did not permit his undertaking such a journey. He was anxious, however, to get his casket and jewels once more into his own keeping, and despatched his valet with a letter to the old ranger, to bring it to him. After some days the trusty servant returned late in the evening, and old Hubert came with him, that he might deliver into his master's own hand the casket which he had entrusted to him. The old man was delighted, and hastily opened the casket, to see if his cherished order-cross was still in its rich case, and was satisfied with a very hasty glance at the rest of the trinkets.

"Thank God!" he cried, "that I have it once more; I was very uneasy about it."

He asked old Hubert to tell him all that had occurred while the enemy were in possession of Hainburg and the surrounding district. The old man drew a melancholy picture of the misery to which the district had been reduced, and of the famine which was apprehended.

"Oh, then," said the generous and kind-hearted old man, "I am still more rejoiced that I have recovered these jewels. I shall say to my steward, 'Order that these stones shall be made bread!' and I shall only reserve to myself the stone of my order-cross, which nothing shall induce me to part with."

For several months the old man had scarcely ever left the house, except that on Sundays he attended service in the nearest church. The whole week over he never laid off his dressing-gown, and his cross was never taken out of its case. One morning, however, he ordered his valet to bring him his full-dress uniform. "This is my birthday," said he, "and I am sure my gallant and kind old brother-officers will come in full dress, as though it were for a royal parade, to offer their congratulations."

The valet assisted him in putting on his rich gold-laced scarlet uniform, and the old man took the cross of his order out of the case, to fasten it upon his breast. But when he looked at it, he cried out in a voice of amazement, and indeed of alarm, "What can this be? Is it that my old eyes are grown dim, or has the splendid stone in the centre of the cross lost its brilliancy, perhaps from the dampness of the place in which it lay so long concealed?" Before he had time to examine farther, the officers walked in to offer their congratulations. With tears in their eyes they expressed their delight to see him, at his time of life, looking so healthy and so well as he did in his gorgeous uniform.

After the officers had withdrawn, an old general, an early friend of the marshal, made his appearance, supported upon his crutch. They had both been cadets together, and still maintained the closest and most intimate friendship.

"Guns and blunderbusses, my dear marshal!" cried the blunt old general, the moment his eye fell upon the cross; "what have you done with your order-cross? Have you sold the noble centre diamond for the benefit of your poor *protégés*, and put a false one in its place? Benevolence is a very good thing, but that is carrying it too far. You should not have done so. We should hate every thing false or fictitious, in things as well as in words. You never can wear your cross with honour again."

The marshal told him that it was only that moment



he had himself noticed the change which had taken place in its appearance; for he could not bring himself to believe that the real brilliant had been exchanged for a false one. "I have proved too well," said he, "the honesty of the man in whose charge this stone remained for some time, to entertain the slightest doubt of it. I am more inclined to believe that some unknown accident has dimmed the brilliancy of the stone."

"Very likely, indeed!" cried the general. "Rest assured you are deceived. Let us call in a jeweller at once."

The principal state jeweller was called in. "The stone is a false one," said he at the first glance. "It has been substituted for the genuine one, which I know well. You did me the favour many years since to show me that magnificent ruby; and among all the many stones which have passed through my hands, I have never seen a finer one. Its brilliancy was quite extraordinary—a bright dazzling red, like a burning coal; it was a genuine carbuncle. I valued it, as I told you at the time, on account of its rare size and beauty, at a thousand florins—an amateur would readily have given a thousand dollars for it. It is a shocking fraud, but very skilfully executed. There needed no trifling dexterity to polish the stained glass, and insert it in the gold setting, without any trace of injury."

After a long conversation on the genuine ruby and the false substitute, the general and the jeweller withdrew, and the marshal sat down in his considering chair, and thought over the whole affair. "Who can have been guilty of this crafty theft?" thought he. "Could it have been the old forester? No; that is not possible. Were he still alive, I would have summoned him here; but it was only last month I received with great regret the intelligence of his death, and of his dying message of thanks to me for all the kindness he had experienced at my hands. But were it possible that this honest man could have stooped to such dishonesty as to rob me, would he not rather have taken some of the other trinkets? or would

he not have taken the setting as well as the stone, or even the whole casket? Where could the old man, who had spent his life in the woods, and never been in any large city, have been able to find an artist sufficiently clever to aid him in carrying out such a fraud? Simple as he was, he would yet have shrewdness enough to conjecture that any jeweller whom he might employ would be surprised to find a poor forester in possession of so valuable a stone and of an order-cross, and would not fail to report further regarding it. In short, it is impossible that my honest old Hubert can have been the thief. Could it have been my nephew Adolphus? That is equally impossible. He is too noble-minded for that; and besides, the moment he and the forester had concealed it in the rocks, he travelled with me direct to the city, and immediately took the field with his regiment, where he has been ever since—and with great reputation too—engaged with the enemy.

“The whole affair remains a mystery to me,” he concluded, standing up and putting the cross aside. “I cannot for my life explain whether the beautiful ruby has been fraudulently exchanged, or whether it has naturally undergone some mysterious process of alteration. In vain I puzzle my brains about it. There are many things here on earth, and in every-day life, which we see with our eyes, but cannot understand; and we should not be surprised that in the world beyond the skies, and in things which we do not see with our eyes, nor feel with our hands, there should be so many mysteries, to us incomprehensible. And it would be foolish, solely on the ground of our not understanding the *how*, to doubt, or still more to deny the *what*! However, heaven unravels every mystery some time or other, and I have no doubt we shall yet know the fate of my ruby. There is an old and simple, but very true saying—‘It is a long lane that has no turn!’”

## CHAPTER II.

## MATILDA.

IN the following summer, old Count von Waldon, to whose son Marshal Hainburg's lamented daughter had been betrothed, made a journey to Carlsbad, for the purpose of recruiting his health. At the magnificent *table d'hote* of the great hotel in which he took up his quarters, he chanced to sit next to a young lady of rare and extraordinary beauty and accomplishments. He entered into conversation with his amiable neighbour, and found that all her replies evinced a very clear and cultivated understanding; but to his great amazement he observed upon her finger the bridal ring of his son's deceased bride. He thought he could not be mistaken about it—a small, but beautiful light-green emerald, encircled with little diamonds, and exquisitely set in the purest gold, sparkled upon it. But to remove all possibility of mistaking the identity of the ring, he begged permission to examine it more closely. The young lady drew it off her finger, and handed it to him. It was the very ring; and even the initials of his son's name, "A. V. W." (Arthur von Waldon), were traced upon it.

"Where did you get this ring?" asked the count.

The young lady blushed, and gave an evasive reply.

"You need have no difficulty in telling me," said the count; "I knew this ring long before it came into your hands. If I knew the hand from which you received it, it might, perhaps, lead to a very agreeable discovery."

The lady looked up joyfully. "I received it," said she, "from my affianced husband, Adolphus Victor Weller, an excellent young man, the son of an eminent merchant in Leipsic."

“That name is entirely unknown to me,” said the count. He asked no further question, and became absorbed in deep thought.

Next to the young lady sat a venerable matron, seemingly her mother or her aunt. After dinner the count asked one of the guests who the lady was, and was told that she was the widow of Colonel von Lilienthal, a most admirable lady, extremely rich and charitable to the poor. The count paid her a visit for the purpose of testifying his respect, telling her that he had known her husband, and sincerely deplored his death. He took occasion to congratulate her on her happiness in having so amiable a daughter.

“She is only my adopted daughter,” said madam von Lilienthal. “She is an orphan. Her mother is a long time dead, and her father, Captain von Hellmuth, fell gloriously fighting for his country.”

At this moment a party of ladies, with whom madam von Lilienthal had engaged to walk after dinner, came up to call her away, and the conversation was interrupted.

The count immediately hastened to his apartment, and wrote to the marshal, that he could not but approve his charity in selling all his useless trinkets for the benefit of the poor, but that he felt very much to see so precious a memorial as the well known bridal ring, pass into strange hands. The marshal shook his head when he had read the letter.

“I never sold this ring,” he cried. “It must be still in the casket. Before I gave it in charge to the old forester, I went carefully over the list of the trinkets, and crossed out those which I took out of it.” He examined it again. The ring was marked in the catalogue, but there was no trace of it in the casket. “This is surprising!” said he. “The disappearance of the ring is just as strange and unaccountable, as the abstraction of my precious ruby. It is clear, nevertheless, that the same thief has stolen both. Yet he must be a very singular

thief, to take precisely the most valuable, and the least valuable among the trinkets, and to leave all the rest untouched. I trust, however, I shall now find some trace of him." He wrote upon the spot to a mercantile house of his acquaintance in Leipsic, for some information about a merchant of the name of Weller; and as the physicians had just ordered him to visit the medicinal baths of Pyrmont, he directed the answer to be forwarded to that place. He received an immediate reply, that nothing whatever was known in Leipsic of any merchant, whether father or son, of this name. The marshal then wrote from Pyrmont to the city-court of police, to examine Miss Hellmuth, as to the present residence of the so-called merchant Weller, and also as to her own father and former connexions.

As the robbery amounted to more than a thousand florins, it was thought necessary to examine the matter to the bottom. A commissary of police came to Madam von Lilienthal's house. The lady, and still more Matilda, was thrown into consternation at his arrival. The latter almost fainted away. She was unable to tell where the person to whom she alleged she was betrothed, and from whom she had gotten the beautiful ring, was then to be found; she could not even distinctly describe his appearance. Nay, she was unable to answer the first searching questions proposed by the commissary, as to where her father, the captain, had lived before the breaking out of the war, with what officers and other gentlemen there, he had been on terms of intimacy, and what persons she herself knew there. She was driven to admit that she was not the daughter of any captain, but of Hubert Hell, the ranger at Hainburg!

Madam von Lilienthal, her adopted mother, who was present, turned pale at this acknowledgment. "O Matilda!" she cried, "I never could have believed you capable of deceiving me so!"

"This is, indeed, a very bad business," said the com-

missary. "The girl is an impostor. And now, since the name of the person from whom she pretends to have gotten the ring, is evidently false; since she has gained entrance into this family under a false name; since not only the ring, which is found in her possession, but also that valuable ruby, have clearly been stolen out of the casket which her real father, Hubert Hell, the ranger, had so long in his possession, and since the robbery is to such a large amount, it is my duty to take this girl, Matilda Hell, into custody, and subject her to a judicial examination."

The magistrate called in a constable, who had remained in the antechamber, and requesting Madam von Lilienthal to accompany him into another room, enquired from her how Matilda had conducted herself since she had become a member of her family. The lady gave her the highest character. "She was recommended to me," she said, among other things, "by a very venerable man; but her own sweet amiable face, was to me a recommendation in itself." The commissary asked her the name of this man, and she told him it was Dagobert, the old hermit in the mountains, whose hermitage lay but a few miles from her property. "Matilda," she repeated, "has fully justified the commendations of the pious old man. Since her coming to me, her conduct has ever been amiable, industrious, obedient, and trustworthy beyond all exception. The only thing with which I was not satisfied, was, that she did not like to speak of her alleged father, the captain, that she could hardly tell anything regarding him, and always turned the conversation when he was spoken of. But be this as it may, I have adopted her once for all; she is commonly reputed my daughter, and has appeared with me in the highest societies. I trust, therefore, that the court will not have her thrown into the common prison."

"O no," said the commissary. "In consideration of her adopted mother, the unfortunate girl shall be confined in a very nice apartment in our court-house, where we

usually confine citizens, for the lighter and less disgraceful offences against the law."

The magistrate returned with the lady into the room, where Matilda had flung herself despairingly into a seat, and sat wringing her hands. "You must now come with me, young lady," said the magistrate, ordering the constable to follow them at some distance behind. Matilda took leave of her kind foster-mother, assuring her, with tears, that she was guiltless of the robbery of the ring. The poor lady, herself, was in tears, and Matilda followed the commissary, casting a melancholy look back after her kind benefactress, her eyes red with weeping.

As soon as Matilda had been led into her prison, and the heavy iron-bound door was closed and bolted upon her, she threw herself upon her knees and prayed. "O my good and merciful God! Thou knowest that I was entirely ignorant of this unlucky ring's being stolen. It is true, that although he seemed to me to be a good and noble-minded young man, I have been grievously wrong in forming an intimacy with a stranger, without acquainting my father about it. Still more fatal my error in affiancing myself after my father's death, to this stranger, of whom I knew so little, and accepting a bridal ring from him. But my worst fault has been that I suffered myself to be introduced to the generous Lady von Lilienthal under a false name. For these imprudences hast Thou, O Lord, brought me to this prison for my correction; and though no crime rests upon me, well do I merit this chastisement! But do Thou pardon me these faults! Thou art good and merciful:—grant me to come forth out of this trial purified like gold in the fire, and restore me to the arms of my beloved foster-mother!"

The court, however, did not credit Matilda's asseveration of her innocence. The robbery of the ring and the valuable ruby, being to an amount beyond a thousand florins, was called "a criminal case," and occasioned a tedious investigation. A vast number of written deposi-

tions were taken. The chief subject of inquiry regarded the character of the deceased forester, and the sort of education which his daughter had received from her childhood. Not a word transpired which was not to their credit. Warrants were issued for the arrest of the so-called Adolphus Victor Weller, but no trace of him could be found anywhere. All the local courts of police were directed to inquire from the goldsmiths and jewellers of their respective towns, whether a ruby of great brilliancy and weighing from six to eight carats, had been offered to them for sale. It was in vain. Even Madam von Lilienthal was summoned, and required to depose to what she knew of the old hermit, and what he had told her of Matilda. It was deeply regretted that the old man had died a short time before the discovery of the stolen ring. Inquiries were made, however, through the local courts of the district in which he had resided, whether he really was so pious and venerable a man as reported, or possibly might not have been a crafty hypocrite, and, perhaps secretly in league with the old forester, or even with banditti. The answer was, that the most searching inquiries had failed to detect anything to his discredit.

Matilda was examined over and over again; but no contradiction could be detected in any of her replies. She persisted in declaring that her father had never told her a word of any casket having been entrusted to his keeping; that she could not have imagined that the ring was stolen; that she never would have thought of giving herself out as a captain's daughter—on the contrary, that all her ideas and feelings revolted against it—had she not been urged to it by the old hermit, who came to her father's house after his death, and whom she then saw for the first and last time in her life. "His tall, venerable figure," she said,—“his grave and wrinkled features—his snow-white hair streaming down upon his shoulders—his long white beard—his brown habit which swept the ground—his impressive and commanding words—so filled



me with reverence and awe, that I trusted him. No doubt it was (as I now plainly see for the first time) very imprudent and inconsiderate in me to trust the assurances of two strangers, the young man and this old hermit; though, indeed, I had not the slightest ground to distrust their integrity; but, on the contrary, being a poor and perfectly unfriended orphan, relied implicitly and confidently upon both."

Many a bitter tear did she shed. "Alas!" sobbed she over and over again, "alas! in what a maze of sorrows may one youthful indiscretion involve us!"

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ADOLPHUS VON WILDBERG.

MEANWHILE Adolphus von Wildberg was still in the army. He had been wounded and taken prisoner; and nothing being heard of him for a length of time, it became doubtful whether he was still alive. But one evening, after the conclusion of the peace, he returned quite unexpectedly to Wildberg. Before going to his father's castle, he went to the old seneschal, and begged him to prepare his parents for the unexpected good news. "Be careful how you do it," said he; "in half an hour I shall follow you with my dear young college friend, your son Frederic."

The joy of the parents was beyond description. Adolphus was obliged to tell every thing that befel him in the war, and every one listened to him with the utmost interest. His mother invited the seneschal and his son to remain for supper, in order to hear the end of Adolphus's extraordinary story. They all went to the supper-room, and sat down at table; but they were all

so curious to hear, that they almost forgot eating altogether.

When Adolphus had finished his history, he asked for the news of what had occurred in Wildberg, and in Hainburg and the neighbourhood.

“The most remarkable thing,” said the old seneschal, “is the trial of unfortunate Matilda Hell—a very intricate case, which excites the greatest interest throughout the country.” He then told the story, and added at the end: “The greatest curiosity is felt, as to what the sentence will be. The prisoner obstinately denies the fact; but it will not avail her. Having confessed (when she could not avoid it) one glaring lie—the falsification of her name—she deserves no credit in any other statement, especially as the stolen ring has been found in her possession. The rack will soon teach her to confess the truth; and then her head shall surely fall under the headsman’s axe!”

“That would be frightful,” said his son Frederic, “especially as it is still probable that the girl may be innocent. The rack is not a true means of testing a prisoner’s innocence. Many a person has confessed his guilt upon the rack, and yet has been innocently executed. And what is a thousand florins in comparison with a human life? When I was a boy, I once witnessed the execution of a woman for stealing a hundred florins. The wretched creature’s pallid face—her bandaged eyes—her bare neck—the flashing sword—the jets of blood—the falling head, and the blood-stained trunk, are still before my eyes!—I shudder with horror when I think of it, even still!”

Adolphus stood up hastily. “I am ill,” he cried, and ran out hurriedly, and without a light, to his room. He paced rapidly up and down in the dark. “Horrible! horrible!” he repeated. “A deadly anguish comes over me! I alone am guilty of this sad event. Poor Matilda is innocent—I have behaved most dishonourably to the generous girl. The poor desolate innocent child, not yet

eighteen years old, trusted to me. I must rescue her—she shall not die! Sooner shall I perish than permit her to suffer more!”

At this moment his mother came in with a light, to see how he was. “What is the matter—what is the matter with you?” she cried. “Your horror at this history is most extraordinary. I cannot comprehend it.”

“Ah!” said Adolphus, “Frederic’s picture of the execution, which I witnessed along with him, horrified me so!”—

“No—no!” said his mother, “that is not the true cause. You have seen too much blood shed in the war, to be so deeply affected by an old tale like this. You must have some closer interest in the forester’s daughter. You grew pale the first moment the seneschal mentioned her name, and began to speak of her. I observed you closely. If you be in any way connected with the misfortunes of the poor girl, confess it candidly to your affectionate mother. We will then devise means for the girl’s liberation; and even if you should have been guilty of so great a fault, I hope to prove a mediator with your father also.”

“You are right, dearest mother,” said Adolphus. “I am the cause of all this unhappy affair.—It was I who not only took the ring out of the casket, and presented it to Matilda, but also exchanged the ruby for a false stone!”

“The ruby too!” cried his mother—“that magnificent and cherished stone, upon which your uncle, the marshal, set such a value! How could such an unhappy thought come into your head? I can not imagine it—I almost faint when I think of it!”

She sank down upon the sofa, and called Adolphus to her side.

“I will confess the whole truth to you,” said Adolphus, “and I must begin with the ruby, which was the occasion of my taking the ring also. Although my indiscretion undoubtedly cannot be justified, yet, I think I shall be

able to advance something which may palliate it. Black as my transgression must appear in the eyes of the world, still, the circumstances may give it a lighter colour."

He began his story. "While my uncle was still living at court, and I with him, and when it was well known he meant to retire for ever to live upon his estate, a French merchant, who dealt in jewels, pearls, and every kind of trinkets, came to him, and said that a Russian prince, whose young wife had taken an extraordinary fancy to this precious ruby, wished to purchase the stone at any price whatever, and as the marshal would never be likely to appear at court again, much less at any military parade, and as the jewel therefore was quite useless to him, it seemed probable he might be induced to sell it, if he got a good price for it. My uncle grew very angry at this proposal. 'Are you mad?' he cried, to the merchant. 'The stone, which is in my cross, is beyond all price in my eyes.'

"On the day before I went to Hainburg the last time, to visit my uncle, as I was making preparations for my journey, this merchant, who, on his business-tour, always spends a few weeks every year in the city, came to my room, and told me in great confidence, that he had a proposal to make to me, which, he was sure, I would not decline; that the ruby could easily be exchanged for another fine red stone, which any person, seeing it in the cross, would take to be genuine, and that he would be able to make the substitution in a way which would baffle detection. I did not like the proposal; but a few days after my arrival at Hainburg, my uncle gave the casket to me and the old forester to conceal in the forest. It occurred to me then, that it would not be so bad a plan to sell thus advantageously the stone, which perhaps might lie many years hidden in a crevice of the rock, and to put to good safe interest in the bank, the large sum of money it would produce. 'Who knows,' I thought, 'what may be the end of this war! Perhaps this invasion may

deprive us, for many a day, of all return from our estate, or even transfer it altogether into the enemy's hands, so that we may never see it more.' Many a time my uncle has said to me, 'You, Adolphus, are my sole heir. All that I have is yours, for I cannot live long now, and henceforward I shall have but few wants, but you must employ it all for the use of our family.' Regarding the sale of the ruby as plainly for the benefit of the family, I secretly abstracted the cross. The next evening I went with my uncle to the city. I immediately sought out the merchant who had offered to purchase the ruby, and found him still in his room at the hotel, and he succeeded in inserting a false, but very brilliant, stone in the place of the genuine one, paying me the stipulated sum of a thousand florins, in cash. And this sum I placed in the bank, not reserving a farthing of it for myself."

"It was very rash and daring," said his mother, "to do this without the knowledge of your uncle. But still, properly speaking, it was not a theft, as you must, one time or other, inherit your uncle's property. But how came the ring into the hands of the forester's daughter? Did you take it out of the casket at the same time with the cross?"

"No," said Adolphus, "that did not occur till later. You shall hear immediately. During my last residence in Hainburg, a few days before my departure I saw the forester's daughter, barely for a moment, in the house of the head-forester, where she was leaving a partridge which her father had shot. I was charmed with her innocence, her beauty, her vivacity, her rustic simplicity, and the intelligence displayed in her conversation. I regretted that I could not speak longer with her, as she was hurrying home; but I compared her in my mind with many of the noble ladies of my acquaintance, and I could not but allow that the contrast was decidedly in her favour: and it was then I saw fully the difference between unstudied nature and artificial accomplishments. The

next day, as I was shooting with her father, I said a few words in her praise, and congratulated him on the possession of such a daughter. But my advance was ill received. 'I am always afraid,' said he to me, very bitterly, 'of young noblemen, who cast their eyes on maidens of humble rank. No such person shall ever enter my door, nor shall I ever permit my daughter, during the shooting season, to set her foot within the castle. Would that I could shoot down, without mercy, these birds of prey which pursue innocent doves to their destruction!' As he spoke, the old man cast a fierce and menacing look upon me; but still, I found means to see and to speak with his daughter; the next day he went to the city to deliver some deer, and I ventured to go to the hunting lodge, not pretending, however, to know that he was gone to the town. I told Matilda that, as her father had not asked me to hunt that day, I had resolved to ask him. She appeared extremely abashed; and I at once perceived that her father had instilled into her mind, great distrust, nay, even fear and horror of men of rank. By degrees, however, we got into conversation. I told her I was but the son of a respectable merchant, and that I wished to marry her; but I cautioned her not to speak of it to her father as yet, as I still had some arrangements to make beforehand. She broke off the conversation, and begged me to leave the house before her father should return. I complied with her entreaty; but I repeated my desire to lead her to the altar as my affianced bride."

"What! you, a young baron," cried his mother, "to marry a forester's daughter! This is a still more censurable indiscretion than the abstraction of the ring! But tell me how did the ring come into your hands, and into those of the girl?"

"It was some time later," said Adolphus. "I had not the ring yet in my possession, nor did I even know that it was in the casket. But let me go on.—On the very next day came the news, that the war had again broken out.

I was ordered to join my regiment; and had hardly time to conceal the casket with the aid of the old forester. But in the course of the campaign, our regiment of hussars was ordered to escort a long train of ammunition waggons, to a distant fortress. Our route passed not very far from Hainburg. I saw the castle plainly in the distance, but as my uncle was not there, I had no desire to visit it. On the other hand, a wish arose to see Matilda once more; and I was also desirous to replace my uncle's cross, lest if it were missed, the good old forester should be brought into suspicion and disgrace. I asked the commanding officer's leave to visit, for a few minutes, a dear friend and hunting companion in the neighbourhood. He gave me permission, fixing the hour at which I was to join the expedition again. I found the casket all safe and untouched in its hiding place; and as I was moving the trinkets a little about with my finger, in order to make room for the case which had contained the cross, I observed the beautiful green emerald ring. I took it out as a mere trifle, to give it to Matilda as a bridal ring. I failed, however, of seeing her on this occasion, and returned, without delay, to join my party. At last we succeeded in escorting our waggons safely to their destination, though the enemy often forced us to halt, and impeded our march very much; and we returned by the same route. I now visited Matilda, but I found her in mourning and in the deepest affliction. Her good old father had died a few days before, after having just made a long journey to visit my uncle in the capital. She felt quite desolate and almost in despair; and she was full of terrors at the idea of living alone in war-time, in this remote and unprotected hunting lodge, buried as it was in the forest. She had not a single relative, and the war made it almost impossible for her to seek assistance and protection from my uncle, who had always been so good a master to her deceased father. I consoled her as well as I could, and gave her hopes of finding a safe retreat for

her in some respectable and pious family. I promised to marry her, and in ratification of this promise, I gave her the ring. It had the initials A. V. W., and I was delighted that these initials corresponded with those of my real name, Adolphus von Wildberg. But having already told her that I was a merchant's son, I allowed myself to be led from this falsehood into another, and told her that my name (pointing to the initials on the ring) was Adolphus Victor Weller. I expressed my regret that I was obliged to leave her at the instant, as I had been called into service by the chances of conscription; but I assured her that in a few days a venerable man would come to her, and bring her to some safe home."

Adolphus's mother was very much displeased, that her son should have given so valuable a gem to the forester's daughter. However, she simply said: "Young count Arthur von Waldon had given that ring to your uncle's daughter, Emily, (now dead,) to whom he had been affianced." For the present, she said no more; she did not wish to interrupt his story, for she was very anxious to hear the end. Adolphus continued.

"In that mountain forest, not far from the road which our party had taken, lived an old hermit named Dagobert, a most remarkable man, nearly eighty years of age. He had been a soldier in his time, and by his courage and resolution had risen to be sergeant; but his wounds having disabled him for service, he had taken up his solitary abode in the hermitage in these mountains, which chanced to be unoccupied. Throughout the surrounding country, he was universally regarded as very pious and extremely prudent. In the palace and in the cottage he was equally held in confidence; and his counsel was often effectual when the case appeared utterly hopeless. Many a dispute and difference he had reconciled. My uncle honoured him as a gallant old soldier, and I had often seen the worthy old man at the castle of Hainburg. It was to this man I resolved to recur, and to confide my secret. When



he heard it, he shook his head several times, and his brow contracted, as he said at last: "We cannot alter what has been done—that must be just as it is. The question is, what is to be done just now? Our first care must be for the friendless forester's daughter. Luckily, I think the present is a most favourable moment for it, and I trust I shall be able to bring it about successfully. A few miles from this lives the widow of Colonel von Lilienthal. She came home to her estate last week from the city, as there is but little to fear from the enemy since the last battle. She is a most charitable lady—a true mother of the poor; and she takes an especial interest in the widows and orphans of officers who have fallen in battle. The moment I heard of her arrival, I went to her; and she told me she wished to take into her house, not so much as her attendant, but rather as her future companion, the orphan daughter of some officer; and if I, as I had been acquainted with so many officers, could find such a young lady, who would consent to be prepared for such a duty, she begged me to give her further intelligence. 'It will be very well, and almost necessary, however,' said he, 'to say that Matilda is the daughter of an officer. Now, the old forester was an inferior officer of militia, and, for aught that I know, a captain. We must, at all events, promote him to the rank of captain; and, to prevent people from remembering the old forester too easily, we must add a syllable to the name Hell—we shall call her Hellmuth. But leave it all to me,' said the hermit, 'all shall be well.' I begged him not to mention me in the affair, and to write the result to me; and, springing upon my horse, I galloped away to overtake my carriage.

"After some time, old Dagobert informed me that Matilda objected very urgently to change her name, and to pass herself off as a lady; but that, at last, on his representing that in her sad and friendless condition, there was no other resource, she had consented; and Madam von Lilienthal had received her with great pleasure. All

the rest of the history—the fearful suspicion which has led to Matilda's imprisonment, and whatever else may still befall her—all this, dearest mother, is already known to you. Ah! if the apprehensions expressed this evening by the old and experienced seneschal, should prove well-founded, it would be frightful! We must provide against this terrible misfortune. Matilda must be saved!"

"It is a sad history," said his mother, "and it is hard to be of any assistance in such an affair. We must consider how to save at once her life and your honour. But hush! the seneschal and his son are just going home; your father is coming up stairs. Let me only speak in the first instance. I shall do my best to bring the story before him in the least painful way."

His father walked into the room, and asked Adolphus how he felt now.

"Alas!" said his mother, "poor Adolphus, whose return made us all so happy, is himself in the very extreme of misery." She then at once commenced the history, and introduced, with all a mother's tenderness, every circumstance she could think of, which tended to extenuate her son's conduct. She concluded by saying: "The sale of the precious ruby cannot by any means be considered a theft; for Adolphus well knew that his uncle had named him his general heir, and had expressly left the cross to him. Besides, the poor dear boy never thought of himself in the affair, but solely of the interest of the family, and put the amount to interest, without applying a farthing of it to his own uses. And, as regards the ring, it was of no great value. It may be justified as a mere act of juvenile indiscretion on his part, to make a present of a trinket which he would have inherited in the end."

"The world," said his father, who had silently listened until now, with a very serious countenance, "the world will not look so lightly on the affair. It will create a great sensation at court and in the country, when it shall be heard that the poor girl who is in prison for the theft

is entirely innocent, and that the young Baron von Wildberg stole not only the ring, but also the ruby. What are you disposed to do, Adolphus?"

"What can I do?" said Adolphus; "I feel unutterable remorse for my folly in acting so imprudently, and I cannot conceive how I could be guilty of such mad conduct. But it is equally fearful to think that I have drawn the poor girl into a fate so unmerited. I have no choice but this,—either, at the sacrifice of my honour (at least in the eyes of most men), to confess my guilt, or to leave Matilda to her fate. I am resolved to present myself before the court, to proclaim her innocence, and take all the guilt upon myself!"

"That is a noble resolution," said his father, "and atones, in my eyes, for all your past transgressions, grievous as they are. If we have erred, no effort should be regarded by us as too great to repair the error as far as it is possible. However, we cannot yet decide anything till we shall have heard what your uncle the field-marshal, who is the prosecutor of the girl, and who, doubtless, will be greatly incensed against you also, will say to the story. For the present, it is enough to write provisionally to the city court." He rang the bell, and ordered the servant to go for the seneschal. He came immediately, wondering very much what was the cause of this late and unexpected summons.

"I have just received the clearest evidence," said Adolphus's father, "that Matilda Hell is entirely innocent. The person who, under an assumed name, gave her the ring, has confessed freely and voluntarily."

"Innocent!" cried the seneschal, "I never could have dreamed it. Yet God be praised that it has been discovered in time, and that the court is freed from the guilt of an unjust sentence. But the fellow who gave her a stolen ring under a false name—he is a finished villain! I wish he came before me! I would teach him how to steal!"

"Hush, hush!" cried Adolphus's father, who, notwith-

standing his seriousness, could not repress a smile; “quietly—he may hear you.”

“Yes!” he replied, “I wish he could hear me! To his face I should tell him, he is a liar and a thief!”

“Well, well—enough of this,” said Adolphus’s father, “we must let this pass. I wish you to write, without delay, to the city magistrates, that facts have been discovered which place it beyond all doubt, that Matilda is free from all participation in the theft, and entirely innocent; that a more detailed statement, which it is not possible to furnish as yet, shall soon be forwarded; and that the court, as the case is so urgent, must meanwhile rest satisfied with this provisional information, and suspend all further proceedings against the innocent prisoner. You must, this very night, send off this notification, by express, to the proper court, drawn up in due form, and with the proper seal and signature.”

The seneschal promised to comply, made his bow, and retired. Adolphus breathed more freely, though he still was not without concern whether the information would arrive in time.

“I hope all will yet be right,” said his mother, greatly relieved; “but Adolphus’s marrying the girl is out of the question.”

“The marshal will be opposed to it also,” said his father. “I am sure he will be extremely displeased by Adolphus’s entire conduct, and we shall have a hard battle with our hot-tempered and hasty old veteran, whose military badge Adolphus has dishonoured.”

## CHAPTER IV.

## MATILDA'S CAPTIVITY.

MATILDA had now lain twelve months in a little cell in the highest story of the court-house. At first she had found it hard enough to exchange the splendid tapestried apartments in which she had lived for these four bare walls. Not a single mirror or picture was to be seen. An old-fashioned oak table, an equally old leather-bottomed chair, a clumsy press-bed, and a dingy earthenware stove, constituted the whole furniture. The little round window was closely barred up with iron rails, and her only prospect of the distant landscape, lay over the roofs of the houses of the city. The uninterrupted solitude made her feel more sensibly her separation from all affectionate intercourse with her noble patroness and second mother, and her isolation from all human society. The whole live-long day she never saw a soul. The old maid-servant of the court-house keeper, who spoke so little, that at first Matilda thought she was actually dumb, brought her every day her scanty dinner and supper, and a pitcher of water, but she never came into the room; the door was always fast barred, and the provisions were pushed in through a little opening in the wall, which was again immediately closed. A still greater privation to Matilda it was, that she had neither books nor work, and for the first days of her confinement she wept bitterly, and prayed without ceasing.

By degrees she became more and more accustomed to this quiet, solitary life, and found that it was not without its blessings for her. "I have not lost everything," she said; "I have many an enjoyment still. From this lofty

place I can see the sun rise every day, and at night I see the sweet moon and the golden stars; between the roofs of the houses an occasional fruit-tree raises its head, and the green wooded mountains in the distance, and the broad blue river which flows through the fertile valley, are very beautiful. It is true, I am torn from all intercourse with men, but then the constant every-day conversations about nothing, used often to leave both my heart and my mind empty; and the flatteries which I so often received in society, would, in the end, have rendered me vain, and could only have made me either an accomplished fool or a very miserable creature. How little trouble it costs me to forget those chattering young ladies and silly flatterers! And then, I can still continue in spirit my communion with the good and noble-minded. How many a wise saying of my parents, or of my noble patroness, have I remembered here with pleasure, and felt as though it came from their own lips! And, what is best of all, I can constantly enjoy the most familiar intercourse with God—appeal to Him in my trials and sufferings—trust in Him—pray to Him! Oh, how true it is ‘Suffering teaches us to pray.’ It is in suffering that we first learn to know God, and it is with this end that he brings it upon us. Sorrows come from God, and lead to God. When I brought it strongly and vividly to my mind, and laid it truly to my heart, that it was God who brought this trial upon me, and in this firm faith and confidence threw myself upon His mercy—when I resigned myself thoroughly to Him, and as it were sunk myself in Him—how happy did I feel in Him! All my terrors, all my cares disappeared; my consolation was beyond description!”

She begged the maid to bring her a pious book. She complied readily, and brought her her whole library—an old prayer-book, and the *Epistles and Gospels for all the Sundays and Festivals of the Year*. In the prayer-book Matilda found many psalms with which she was long familiar, but now, in her affliction and deep depression,

she felt as if she read them for the first time. "It is only now that I rightly understand them," said she—"only now that they go truly to my heart. No one who has not been in necessities and sorrows, like David, can fully understand and sympathize with these outpourings of his pious and heaven-relying heart. Experience—necessity, which teaches us to pray—is an excellent interpreter of the Scripture—no learned professor can explain the psalms so well. Now, for the first time, in my affliction, am I able to send up to heaven sighs such as David's—now, for the first time, do I find in many a word a precious balsam for my sorrow-stricken heart! How often have I pronounced, yet never felt as now—'O Lord, incline unto mine aid; O Lord, make haste to help me! In thee, O Lord, I hope; let me not be confounded! Deliver me, O Lord, deliver me; incline thine ear unto me, and deliver me. Be thou, O Lord, my protector, my place of strength, whence I can set myself free! Yes, Thou art to me a strong citadel—Thou art my refuge! Have mercy on me, O Lord, for my soul is troubled exceedingly. I have tired myself with my groanings; every night I wash my bed—I water my couch with tears. Turn to me, O Lord, and deliver my life! Help me for thy mercy's sake!'"

The words of instruction, too, which David addresses to the suffering and afflicted, went deep to her heart. How often did she repeat the words—"The Lord is nigh unto them who are of contrite heart, and them who are of an afflicted spirit doth He help! Commend thy ways to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will assist thee. He will bring forth thy innocence as the morning light, and make thy righteousness clear as the bright noon-tide. God is our refuge and our strength, our Deliverer from all the sorrows which befall us; wherefore we fear not, even though the earth tremble, and the mountains sink down into the depths of the sea!"

She read the holy Gospels with great piety. "It is beautifully ordered," said she, "that on the festivals of

the Christian year the most important events in the life and passion of Jesus are represented to us, and the portions of the evangelical narrative which regard them extracted for us. In the Sunday Gospels we have all the most important parts of the doctrines and history of Jesus." In this way she read the whole history of our Lord.

Many a word of His was to her, in her present condition, a pearl of inestimable price. With what emotion she read His invitation—"Come to me, all ye who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you." "O Lord!" she prayed, clasping her hands, "I too am weary, and heavy laden. I come to Thee—oh, refresh me!" And in a like spirit she received deep in her heart His promise—"Ye shall weep and mourn; but your mourning shall be turned into joy, and no man shall take your joy from you any more!"

Many a trait, too, in the conduct of our Redeemer, even though she had always heard or read of them with devotion, now made a deeper impression than ever upon her heart. She read, for example, with the greatest consolation, how the ship in which Jesus was sailing with his disciples upon the sea, was caught in a fearful tempest, and the waves rose high above the ship, and the disciples cried out—"O Lord, save us, we perish!" And how Jesus said to them—"Wherefore fear ye, O ye of little faith?" and then arose, and commanded the wind and the sea, and immediately a great calm ensued. "Ah," she said, "it is not upon sea alone that storms come upon us. Human life is not exempt from them, and men may be, as I am now, in danger of perishing. But there is One who can command them; and, therefore, will I not be fearful, or of little faith. Full of faith and confidence, will I cry out to Him—"Save me, O Lord!" and He will hush the storm!"

The Lessons, too, extracted from the Apostolic Epistles, which she had read but little until now, brought her abundant instruction and consolation. "Many of these short passages," said she, "are to me, as it were, entire letters



addressed to all men, and especially to myself. How consoling are St. Paul's few brief words—how they raise our hearts to heaven!—‘I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us!’” “Ah,” said she, “these Epistles, as well as the holy Gospels, are found in every house—nay, in every cabin. What a treasure men possess therein, did they but know how to estimate its value!”

Some time after, the courthouse-keeper's wife came to the little opening in the wall, through which they used to hand in Matilda's food, and said to her—“My maid tells me you are very fond of reading. I bring you a little book, therefore, ‘The Imitation of Christ.’ It is well called a golden book, for it is really more valuable than gold.”

Matilda derived great consolation from it. Many of its chapters accorded with her state of heart as perfectly as though they had been written expressly for her. She could not satisfy herself reading it. Many a time the tears rushed to her eyes, and she looked up to heaven with gratitude.

In accordance with her wish, she was now supplied with work. They gave her yarn and knitting-needles, afterwards a spinning-wheel, and at last, on her stating that she understood it, fine needle-work. They were astonished at the quantity of work she executed. She divided the hours of the day between prayer and work. She read alternately in one or other of the books of devotion, and then turned to knitting, or spinning, or sewing. She had no clock in her room it is true, but she had a view of the church clock, the figures upon whose dial shone like gold, especially in the evening. It reminded her of the adage, that ‘The morning carries gold in its mouth;’ and she, therefore, devoted the morning especially to prayer and reading. From this time forward she never felt the time hang heavily on her hands.

Her little cell, too, came to look more cheerful in her eyes than at first. "The walls, it is true," she said, "are bare and naked, but they are a nice pure white. The prospect from my window is as beautiful as could be conceived. And what need have I of a looking-glass? My poor mother warned me many a time not to be looking so often in the glass—'It only makes girls vain,' she said; 'it is far better to contemplate in God's word the condition of our soul!' Nor have I any occasion for paintings, much as I used to admire them formerly; I can represent the entire of the sacred history to myself, as vividly as any painter could depict it upon the canvass!"

The poor girl often enjoyed great comfort and even happiness in her sleep. Her heart was pure and innocent; her thoughts during the day were ever engaged in pious and holy things; and thus her dreams were always pleasant and cheering. She now felt that sleep, which makes us forget our sorrows, and gives us new strength to bear our sufferings, is a great benefit from God; and this benefit is tenfold increased by consoling and instructive dreams, like those of which we read in the holy Scriptures. She afterwards delighted in telling these dreams in some evening party of confidential friends.

On one occasion, the winter being unusually severe, the sky was hidden with dark clouds, the roofs of the houses were covered with snow, the river was blocked up with ice, and the mountains in the distance were veiled in deep mist. Poor Matilda had spent a sad and gloomy day. "I see well," said she, "that our souls do not enjoy perpetual sunshine—they have their clouds and mist, their chills and their frost!" The next night she dreamed that the little window of her prison gradually widened, till it formed a large and lightsome circle; the iron bars disappeared. She heard the sweet notes of the harp and the organ. In the centre of this brilliant circle, amid clouds of purple and gold, arose the sun, majestic and resplendent beyond all she had ever before beheld. It disappeared—the circle

grew dark ; and now, in the darkened sky, the lovely moon arose, and myriads of stars began to twinkle. The earth was still covered with ice and snow, but they melted quickly away. Balmy fertilizing clouds poured out rain and dew—the fruit-trees put on their rich attire of leaves, and flowers, and fruits—the mountain forests were decked anew in their freshest green—and the river, released from its icy chains, flowed freely once more, in the genial sunshine, through the valley beneath. Throughout these varying scenes, the music of the harp and the organ—now soft and slow, now bold and powerful—never ceased for a moment, and on a sudden arose a chorus of voices of indescribable sweetness—“Sun, moon, and stars, praise ye the Lord! Day and night, praise ye the Lord! Ice and snow, clouds and mist, dew and rain—praise ye the Lord! Fruit-trees and forest-trees, fountains and rivers, mountains and valleys—praise the Lord!” Matilda awoke. “What a heavenly song!” she cried. “Yes, all creatures praise the Lord, and proclaim to us His benevolence, His omnipotence, and His Majesty!” From that day forth she looked out through her little window upon the sun, moon, and stars, with new pleasure, and new reverence of the Creator. Clouds and mist, ice and snow, no longer were distasteful to her, for she recognised even in them the wisdom and goodness of God.

One evening she retired to her bed in deep dejection. She knew she was to be re-examined on the following day, and these examinations were very painful to her ; because the whole object of the artful and ingenious questions proposed to her was, to prove the utter wickedness of her father, the old hermit, her Adolphus, and herself. “O my God!” she sobbingly cried over and over again, “how is all this to end at last? What will be my fate, and how will this melancholy and complicated affair terminate?” She fell asleep full of anxious thoughts ; but on this occasion also she was consoled by a delightful dream. When she lived at her father’s cottage in the forest, she wa

always awakened in the morning by the music of the birds; and in order that this enjoyment might, at least to the extent of a single songster, be continued to her, Madam von Lilienthal permitted her to keep a lark in her window. She dreamt that she was still sleeping in the beautiful apartment which the lady had assigned her; and, lo! she fancied that the lark began to sing, with a human voice—

“Cheer thee, cheer thee, lonely one!  
Trust thy cares to God alone.  
Heaven-sent sorrow ever tends,  
To the wisest, happiest end!”

Matilda awoke. The morning sun was already beaming into her window. The little song had been familiar to her from her childhood, and she had sung it a hundred times; but it gave her great comfort notwithstanding; she went to the examination perfectly free from anxiety, and the presiding judge expressed his satisfaction with her excellent and intelligent replies to his inquiries.

At length the official letter was received declaring that Matilda was innocent, and that the person who had given her the stolen ring was discovered. The judge who had so often examined her immediately hastened to her cell, to bring her the joyful intelligence. He told her, however, that although she had nothing more to fear, he regretted she must still remain in her cell, though no longer under such close confinement. They would be obliged to await further proceedings in the case. Probably the thief would be given up, and in that case it would be necessary that he should be examined in her presence.

Matilda was in part overjoyed, in part deeply dejected, at this intelligence. “Ah!” thought she, “it is not possible that Adolphus can be a villain and a robber! With what eloquent piety he consoled me for my father’s death when last I saw him! With what deep emotion he spoke of eternal life, and of the meeting of friends beyond the grave! How earnestly he begged me to pray for his safe

return from the wars, and for our happy union! Yes; I will not doubt him!—he must be a good man!”

Anxious and afflicted she lay down to rest, and once more she was visited by a cheering and consoling dream. She dreamt that she saw plainly upon her finger once more the ring which had occasioned all her troubles, and which had been taken from her before the trial. It was the very same emerald, encircled with little diamonds. She thought her good angel whispered into her ear—“These little diamonds, like dewdrops, signify the many tears thou hast shed; but the emerald, gleaming with hope’s own colour, proclaims to thee that thy sorrows shall bring their joy. And look at the inscription. Thy bridegroom, though not perfectly blameless, is yet an honourable man; and the inscription contains not alone a good wish, but also a prophecy for thee and for him!” And on the inner surface of the ring Matilda read, in letters so minute, yet so distinct, that no artist could hope to rival it—

Heaven’s will adore!—  
Thy grief is o’er  
For evermore!

She awoke, wonderfully consoled by her dream; and, though she was still detained in custody, yet she was full of hope. “O merciful God!” she cried, “Thou hast sent this dream to me, and I now hope that these sorrows of mine will be brought to a happy end, and be turned into joy at last!”

## CHAPTER V

## MATILDA'S RELEASE.

MEANWHILE Adolphus, accompanied by his anxious parents, betook himself with a heavy heart to his uncle the field-marshal, who had again returned to reside at his castle of Hainburg. The old man was delighted to see his dear nephew perfectly restored, and now not only a captain of horse, but also decorated with an order, though not so splendid a one as his own. He embraced him with the deepest emotion. But his father and mother said—"All this is very gratifying, but there is a sad story still to come." They told him the history of the ring and of the ruby. Adolphus was afraid that the old veteran would fly into a furious passion, and storm and rage. But it was quite the reverse.

"Well, well," said he; "supposing that the ruby is gone from the badge of my order—what matters it? If I have ever had any merit to entitle me to this distinction, at all events this merit cannot be taken from me! Thank God that no dishonesty lies at the door of my honest old Hubert, on whom I relied more than on any being in this world—his honesty is more precious in my eyes than any gem could be! Thank God that Matilda, my dear wife's god-child and name-sake, is proved to be innocent in this affair! When we used to come here formerly in the spring and summer for a few weeks, she was always my dear daughter's favourite playmate, and appeared to be a good, pious, innocent, noble-minded girl. I loved her as my own daughter, and in comparison with her innocence the most precious jewel in the world is as nothing. As regards you, Adolphus, I cannot but view your conduct as most

condemnable and criminal. You have deserved that I should disinherit you. You have wandered far from the straight and honest course. You have caused the poor girl tears without number, and were on the point of involving her in the extreme of misery, nay of imperilling her life itself. You see here, then, the unhappy fruits which ever spring from falsehood. The most trivial lie is an evil seed, which may grow up into a poisonous weed, spread itself far and wide, and cause the ruin of many. But I see you are sensible of your fault, and therefore let it pass. As regards the ruby, I do not place so much value on such things, now that I have grown old, and am drawing near the grave. I cannot bring my order with me to heaven, where I hope to go; nor would the ruby have been of any use to you, for none of you could have worn the order; it would have lain idly in a drawer, except, perhaps, to be exhibited to a friend from time to time. It is true, I myself would not have changed it for all the treasures of earth; but now that it has been done without my cooperation, I am satisfied. The price may be of use at this moment, as the war has almost impoverished you. I can only ratify what Adolphus has done, and I humbly do so. But, as regards the ring which he gave to Matilda, he must, if he hope to retain my inheritance, keep the faith which he plighted. The ring must be Matilda's bridal ring!"

Adolphus was delighted at this sentence; and his parents, though they were not quite satisfied with this marriage, yet did not offer the slightest objection.

The marshal immediately ordered a despatch to be prepared for the criminal court, solemnly declaring Matilda's innocence of the theft, and revoking his charge, as having rested on false suspicion. "I need not say, dear Adolphus," said he, "what you are to do with this paper. Set off at once express. You may communicate verbally to my friend, the president of the criminal court, whatever

it is necessary to add to my written explanation. It has nothing to do with the record, nor with the public proceedings of the court; for the whole case of the ring, as well as of the ruby, now reverts to my jurisdiction."

Meanwhile Matilda still remained in prison. One day she was sitting at her spinning-wheel, full of joyous expectation, yet not entirely free from anxiety and fear, when the door of her cell suddenly opened, and an officer in a splendid uniform walked in. Matilda was no little astonished; but in a moment, full of wonder and amazement, she cried out—"Adolphus!" It was he.

"Matilda, dearest Matilda!" he cried, "forgive me! Not without my fault, but certainly directly contrary to my intention, I have brought you into a complication of afflictions. But, behold, this mysterious ring is still, nevertheless, your bridal ring!" He placed it upon her finger. They embraced each other full of joy. His parents, who had followed him, stood by, though Matilda was not conscious of their presence. "This is my father, Baron von Wildberg," said Adolphus; "this is my dear mother, and you are henceforth her daughter."

Almost overpowered with joy and astonishment, Matilda for a long time could not utter a word. At last she cried out: "O my God! how good art Thou! Thou hast brought my innocence to light! Thou deliverest all who trust in Thee!" The baron and baroness embraced her affectionately.

At this moment the venerable old president of the criminal court walked in. "We owe you, my dear young lady," said he, in a voice full of joy and emotion, "the justice of a public reparation. As appearances were quite against you, you have had a great deal to suffer. But I must do you the justice to say, that you have borne your unmerited sufferings with heavenly patience. Our merciful God, who, I am convinced, permitted these trials to befall you, solely for your greater honour, will requite you



richly: he sends joy after sorrow. Come with me. I feel it my duty to conduct you out of this prison; your bridegroom must permit me to offer you my arm."

The president led her into the great hall of the court-house, in which all the privy-councillors and a number of ladies and gentlemen were assembled. One of the councillors read, in a loud voice, the report of the marshal, and the decision of the court thereupon. Every one present congratulated Matilda. As she walked out of court, leaning on the arm of the president, she saw an immense crowd assembled. The whole street was full of people; for, as she was almost universally reputed as a daughter of Madam von Lilienthal, her imprisonment had created the greatest interest. Many had thought she would be executed, and the news of her innocence spread in a moment through the city. Every one wished to see her. The porch of the court-house was a few steps higher than the street; she could thence see, at a glance, the immense multitude, and she herself could be seen by every one in the crowd. Every eye was fixed upon her, and many a one was wet with tears for the poor girl, who a living picture of suffering innocence and shrinking modesty, bore on her wasted features the traces of her long and sorrowful confinement. The president addressed a few words to the assembly, publicly attesting her innocence, and briefly but forcibly eulogising her virtues; while the poor girl cast down her eyes, and the tears flowed plentifully down her pale cheeks.

Two magnificent open carriages drove up. In the first Matilda and Adolphus took their places, the president seating himself opposite to them, to do honour to the noble pair. In the second were Adolphus's father and mother, and two of the senior members of the council. They drove to the house of Madam von Lilienthal, where Matilda had resided before her imprisonment; the president having taken the precaution to apprise her of Matilda's innocence

and of the intended proceedings in the court. The lady, therefore, stood ready at the door, to receive Matilda, raised her in her arms out of the carriage, and clasped her to her heart with tears of joy. She then cordially saluted Adolphus and his father and mother, with whom she had long been acquainted, and invited them to remain a few days with her; and the friendly invitation was accepted on the condition that she should accompany them back to Wildberg, to honour the wedding-feast with her presence, which she joyfully consented to do.

When she had accompanied her guests to the apartments which had been prepared for them, she brought Matilda to the room in which she had formerly lived. The moment Matilda was alone with her beloved foster-mother, she threw herself on her knees before her.

“Dearest mother,” she cried with tears in her eyes, “forgive me for yielding to the representations of the old man, whom I so much venerated, and of entering your family under a false name. Bitterly have I grieved you thereby, and heavy afflictions have I drawn upon myself.”

The lady raised her up and embraced her. “All is forgiven and forgotten,” she said. “I have even forgiven the old hermit the deceit he practised on me, though I found it somewhat difficult. He had many excellent and eminent qualities; and he was a universal lover of his kind. But from benevolence he seems to have adopted the principle, that, when the object is to do a service to another, it is lawful to tell a trivial lie. But I do not think so; we should never do evil in order that good may follow from it. However, what the old man did is now past and gone. God permitted it so. He wished, by this humiliation (as we often read even in sacred history) to prepare you for the higher sphere to which He destined you. Remember, therefore, as, in your humiliation and misfortune, you have been a model of patience, so now

you should be, in your exaltation and success, a model of modesty and of benevolence to the suffering and oppressed."

When Adolphus, his bride, his parents, and Madam von Lilienthal arrived at Wildberg, they found a letter from the marshal, (who had returned from Pymont to Hainburg, and now resided there constantly,) urging them earnestly to celebrate the wedding in Hainburg, as his age would prevent his joining their party at Wildberg. He had sent this letter by his valet, in order that they might arrange everything with a confidential servant, who would be able to give every information which might be required; and three days before the wedding, they all repaired to Hainburg.

On the evening of the wedding, the marshal told his valet he would wear his full-dress uniform, perhaps for the last time. "But I am greatly embarrassed," said he, "about my order. I do not well know what to do. If I don't put it on, all the guests will miss it; and if I do, they will detect the false stone immediately. It was a bad thing for Adolphus to sell the splendid ruby. I have never been able to look at my cross since. Instead of reminding me of my own gallant deeds of arms, it only calls to my mind Adolphus's bad conduct, which I would gladly forget; instead of proclaiming my honour, it only publishes Adolphus's shame!"

The valet produced the cross notwithstanding. "Put it on even so," said he smiling; "look closely at it! The ruby does not appear so ill after all!"

"What!" cried the marshal, in amazement, "is it possible? This is the old real stone—my splendid ruby—back again! Give it to me—I can hardly trust my eyes!" He took the cross out of the valet's hand—brought it to the window, and cried in the utmost astonishment: "Yes! it is actually the same. It has the same brilliant fiery red sparkle as of old! Oh, tell me how this has occurred!"

“When captain Adolphus was last in the city with his parents,” said the valet, “for the purpose of bringing Miss Matilda home, he accidentally met the very same jeweller to whom he had sold the ruby, and who chanced to have arrived there on his tour of business. Adolphus expressed his regret at having sold him the ruby. ‘You may have the stone back again, if you please,’ said the merchant; ‘the Russian to whom I sold it, has returned it to me. His wife, who is very capricious, only cared for the stone till she got it into her possession, and she soon grew tired of it, and even came to dislike it in the end. Last month, when I was in Petersburg, I showed her my wares; she begged her husband to buy her a pair of diamond bracelets, to which she took a great fancy, and to give the ruby (which she had had set in a brooch) in exchange for them. And now, if you wish for the stone,’ said he to Adolphus, ‘you may have it, gold setting and all, for the same money which I gave you for it.’ Adolphus immediately drew the money from the bank; the merchant came to his apartments, delivered up the stone to him, and took the money in exchange. The moment Adolphus saw me at Wildberg, he took me to his room, and proposed to me to get the new jeweller, who has established himself at Hainburg, privately to substitute the genuine ruby for the false one, in the star of your order; and the artist, who is a skilful workman, did it in my presence.”

The old marshal listened to the story with unaffected delight; his countenance lighted up with joy. “That was very good of Adolphus,” said he, over and over. “I am delighted with it—it was very well done. It was very noble in him to give up, freely and voluntarily, this large sum of money, of which I had made him a present, for the mere purpose of affording his old uncle an agreeable surprise, and of repairing the wrong which he had done me. Would that every one would thus repair the wrongs they do! But Adolphus is an admirable young man; from his very child-

hood he has been affectionately attached to me, and I have always loved him. How delighted I was that he distinguished himself so much in the field, and came to us a captain! I must confess that the trick he practised on me in exchanging the stone damped my joy a little; and, satisfied as I felt with him in every thing else, still there was always something in my breast towards him for this. But this resentful feeling is now gone, and he has my whole heart once more. With the false stone has disappeared all memory of Adolphus's falsehood—the genuine one only reminds me of this noble act of his!"

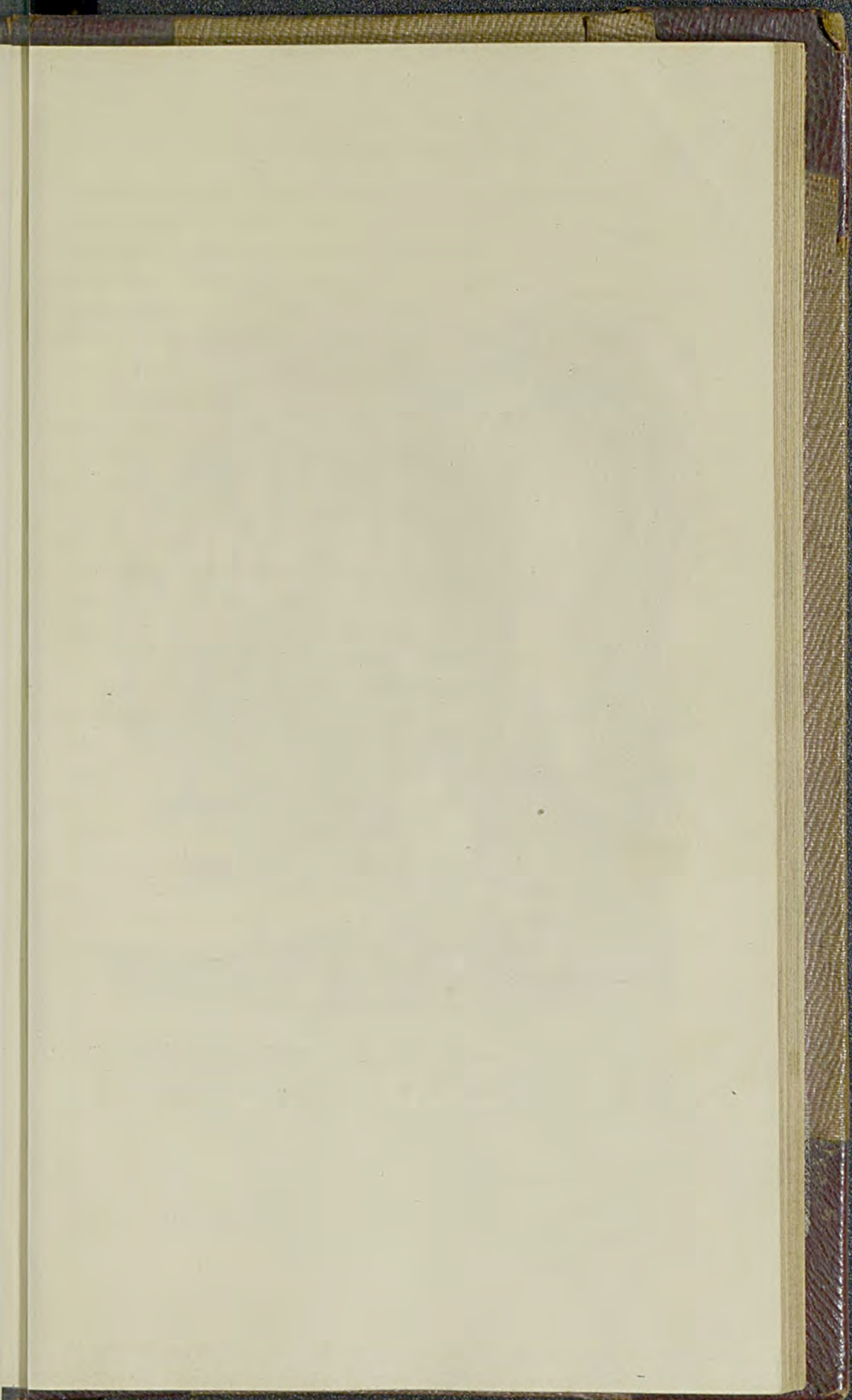
Scarce had the marshal finished speaking, when Adolphus, with his bride and his parents, came in to wish him good morning. He started up from his arm-chair, ran to Adolphus, and pressed him to his heart. "You have got a noble-minded man in your husband!" said he to Matilda, and then, pointing to his order, he asked the baron and his lady what they thought of the ruby.

"Why," said the baron, "did you think this stone a false one? I will lay my life it is genuine."

"Never in my life," said the baroness, "did I see a finer ruby. Oh, how deep, how dazzling a red! Dear brother, you have been deceived in thinking this to be a false stone!"

"I have not been deceived," he replied; "Adolphus wished to deceive me. I never took this stone to be false. Adolphus substituted a false stone for it; but he has now repaired his fault; he has removed the false stone once more, and restored the real one to its old position. And thus we ought always to do, when we feel that we have acted dishonestly. Far from us be all falsehood—far from us all dishonesty, all deceit, all hypocrisy, all affectation of piety! Let our hearts be filled with true old German honesty—unaffected and universal benevolence, true virtue, genuine piety, and sincere fear of God! These are THE MOST PRECIOUS OF ALL JEWELS, whose value is beyond all

question in this world and in the next. They are more fire-proof than diamond, for the diamond shall melt away when this earth shall perish in the last great fire—infinitely more precious than this recovered and cherished ruby of mine, and than all THE JEWELS IN THE WORLD !”





MARCKL

RUDZILOWICZ

In the centre of the green plot, there stood a venerable oak, and beneath its branching arms, a fine boy, about six or seven years old, was kneeling; his clasped hands and dark eyes raised devoutly to heaven, and the tears streaming down his ruddy cheeks.—p. 267.

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# LEWIS, THE LITTLE EMIGRANT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### LEWIS FOUND IN THE FOREST.

LORENZO LINDER, the proprietor of a little farm near Ellerse, had gone out at break of day into the forest, and remained there until evening cutting wood. As he was returning home, with his bundle on his back, and his axe in his hand, he heard a low plaintive moan issuing from a neighbouring thicket. "That is certainly the voice of some child who has lost his way in the forest," said the good farmer. "I must find him out and bring him to the right road."

He made his way, with some difficulty, through the thick underwood, and came to an open space surrounded, on every side, by clustering hazel and hawthorn trees. In the centre of the green plot, there stood a venerable oak, and beneath its branching arms, a fine boy, about six or seven years old, was kneeling; his clasped hands and dark eyes raised devoutly to heaven, and the tears streaming down his ruddy cheeks. He was elegantly dressed. His little frock was of the finest blue cloth, the vest and trousers of the purest white—his neck was bare, and his jet black hair fell in ringlets over a collar of rich lace that was drawn over his shoulders. He had neither hat nor cap. "O my God, my God, have mercy on me," cried the poor boy in that loud and plaintive tone, which had already attracted the attention of the good farmer.

The boy spoke French—but though the farmer did not understand that language, the feeling tone in which the prayer was uttered spoke distinctly enough to his heart. When the boy perceived him he started to his feet, and, running rapidly towards him, took him by the hand, begging of him, in broken German, but most earnestly and confidently, to bring him back to his mother. Lorenzo asked him where was his mother, and how it happened that he lost his way in the wood. After many questions and signs, the boy continued to give an account of his misfortune. He was a native of France, and was called Lewis. When the revolution broke out, his parents fled to Germany, and he, though then only three years old, was carried along with them. His father, who had been attached to the court of one of the French princes, had followed them in exile, and was now with them at Coblenz, while the mother and little Lewis remained at Treves. When the French armies were marching on that town, Lewis and his mother once more took flight, and had that very day arrived in a village not far from the forest. Lewis, who had been cooped up in the carriage, from day break, with a crowd of fugitives, asked his mother's permission to play in the garden, while dinner was preparing in the hotel. The mother consented—at the same time, expressly warning him not to go out of the garden: an admonition to which the poor boy readily assented, but which he had not the prudence to follow; for, scarcely had he bounded into the garden, and began to enjoy his sport with all the happy thoughtlessness of his years, when a butterfly crossed his path. The gilded wings and glittering hues of the butterfly, were too tempting for poor Lewis; and he resolved to catch it. The butterfly flew over the hedge—the garden door was open—and away ran the boy over a large field that lay outside the garden, in ardent pursuit of his prey. When he approached the verge of the forest, he heard a cuckoo—and as he had among his playthings, one that was so

constructed as to imitate the voice of that bird, he listened with rapture, for a few moments, to the well known sounds, and completely lost sight of his butterfly. Unable to resist the temptation of seeing the cuckoo, he plunged into the forest, where the bird allured him farther and farther, flitting from tree to tree, but never giving him a full view of it. Abandoning the chase in despair, he thought it was time to return to his mother, and ran as speedily through the forest as his exhausted strength and the thick underwood allowed him. But he knew not whither he was going—instead of returning to the village, he was penetrating farther into the forest, where he wandered about for several hours, till he at length found himself in a thicket, from which it was impossible to extricate himself. Despairing, and exhausted with hunger and fatigue, he threw himself on his knees under the old oak, where Lorenzo found him, and earnestly prayed to God to rescue him from the fatal consequences of his disobedience.

“Dear Lewis,” said Lorenzo, “you have been guilty of a great fault, in preferring the gaudy colours of the butterfly and the sportive notes of the cuckoo, to the commands of your mother.”

Lewis nodded assent and wept bitterly. But Lorenzo consoled him. “Weep not, Lewis ;” said he, “I think God has received your repentance and heard your prayer. I think he has pardoned you and sent you help. Return thanks to Him now, and promise that henceforward you will be more prudent, and will more faithfully obey the fourth commandment. You know now, from fatal experience, how easily a person that seeks his own pleasure, and listens to every pleasing voice, can go sadly astray, and fall into the most dreadful dangers.”

“Alas,” continued Lorenzo, “in this world there are many gaudy trifles, that lead men more fatally astray than that butterfly ; the seductive voice of pleasure, is a more fatal spell for young people than the call of the

cuckoo. May heaven preserve you from it, and lead you spotless and unhurt through this dangerous world—come—I must bring you back to your mother.”

Lorenzo then conducted the boy to a foot path, which soon brought them through the thicket to the high way.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE NIGHT'S LODGING.

As young Lewis was returning from the forest to Ellersee, Lorenzo asked him the name of the town where his mother had stopped. Lewis could not tell the name, but described it as situated on a hill, crowned by a very high castle, which commanded the whole forest.

“That is Waldenberg;” said Lorenzo, “nearly two leagues off. You are too fatigued to travel so far now. You have taken no dinner and must be very hungry. My house is very near; and when you have taken your supper, we can mount a horse together, and one hour will bring us to your mother at Waldenberg.”

The boy was overjoyed, both at the prospect of a ride, which he had long ardently wished for, but still more at the thought of once more seeing his dear mother. He could have jumped for joy with the usual animation of his countrymen—had he not been so completely exhausted.

Scarcely had they emerged from the dark forest, when the pleasant little village of Ellersee arose before them. It was built on a lake lined with verdant alder—and was just at that moment smiling under the ruddy rays of the descending sun. Lorenzo's house was the nearest to them; and they were no more than a hundred paces from it, when Lorenzo's wife, with an infant in her arms and followed by five other children, came forth to meet them, and asked in a trembling voice, “Have you heard the

news? The French red hussars took possession of Ellersee this day; and large bodies of infantry are quartered in all the districts around the forest."

While Lorenzo was in the forest, he heard or knew nothing of what was passing in the rest of the world. He was amazed at the rapid and unexpected progress of the French troops, and not less surprised was his good wife Johanna on seeing the young French boy with him. She was struck with the light and graceful form of the child. The children were at first shy and distant, but by degrees they approached him; and little Alicia remarked: "I always heard the French were horrible people—but if they be all like this modest, friendly boy—surely they will not eat us—poor children."

Lorenzo told his wife what he knew of the boy. "Ah, poor little fellow;" said she, moved to compassion, "you must be very hungry—supper will be ready immediately." She returned at once to the kitchen, leaving Lewis with her children, who prattled with him and laughed heartily at his attempts to speak German.

As soon as supper was on the table, Lewis sat down with as much ease and happiness, as if he had grown up one of the family. With his usual sprightliness, he raised a spoonful of warm soup to his lips, and had nearly burned them. "Oh!" said he, not knowing the German word for heat, "there is a great deal of *summer* in that broth." The children, of course, laughed—but knew very well what he meant.

During supper the father asked the name of the hotel where his mother stopped. Lewis, in attempting to describe it, made another blunder, which set the children in roars of laughter—in which the father himself could scarcely refrain from joining, though he reproved the children for their bad manners. When they had taken the soup, Johanna brought in a dish of ruddy potatoes. Lewis took a couple of them and set them on his plate with the air of a person who was expecting something else

to follow. He would have called for some fowl, but not knowing the German word, he looked out in the window, and pointing to a weathercock on a neighbouring steeple, asked what was that? The children supposing that he pointed to the steeple itself, answered, "that is the church steeple." "Well," said Lewis, "give me a young church steeple." This was too much for the gravity even of the old people; all laughed heartily at the blunder. Lorenzo having explained to Lewis the cause of their merriment, Johanna added, "chickens, dear Lewis, are too expensive food for us, poor people—we sell them in the next town, and with the price, purchase other things necessary for our support." She then brought him some butter and some of her own good bread which he eat heartily—declaring that this was as good a dinner as ever he had taken.

"Dear Lewis," said Lorenzo, "we cannot travel to your mother to-day. Waldenberg and the whole country around are in possession of the French troops, so that it would be dangerous to travel by night. You must have patience and spend this night with us—tomorrow morning early we shall see what is to be done."

Though Lewis was very anxious to see his mother that night, yet he was so tired and sleepy, that he readily assented, and Johanna having prepared for him a comfortable bed, in her nursery, he soon forgot all his cares in a sound and refreshing sleep.

When the good mother had seen all her children in bed, she went, according to her custom, and sat with her husband on the bench outside the door. For it was there, that on sunny evenings, when the day-toil was over, they sat for a while, arranging business for the next day, speaking on the education of their children, and gratefully acknowledging the favours which heaven had poured out on them that day.

When they had been for some time silent, Johanna observed, "I think you ought to go alone to Waldenberg, tomorrow morning; for Lewis's mother, who is flying from

her countrymen, is, no doubt awaiting, in some place of concealment, the return of her son. If you brought him with you, it would certainly attract observation, and perhaps endanger the mother's life."

"You are right," said Lorenzo, "I will go alone in the morning and give the poor mother some news of her child. I start at day-break to spare her one unhappy hour."

"Do so," said Johanna, "I can well conceive how she must feel. I could not survive the blow, if I lost one of my children in a foreign land. To avoid suspicion you must carry with you a half dozen of our young chickens, which are now ready for the market."

"Well devised," said Lorenzo, "they will serve as a pass word for me through the enemy's lines. The landlady of the hotel too, will, I am sure, give me a good price for them, as she has so many foreigners in her house now; and she alone can, probably, give me any information on the real object of my journey—the fate of Lewis's mother. I will venture on the expedition."

"There is certainly some danger," added Johanna, "but then it is a work of mercy, and must have the blessing of God. That I firmly believe—to do good is the duty of every mortal, and he that does it is under the protection of God."

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

THE following morning, at three o'clock, before the first dawn had streaked the sky, the good farmer took his basket of fowl, and hanging it by his walking stick over his shoulder, started at a rapid pace for Waldenberg. He did not make a long delay—for just as the village clock

was striking seven he was at the door of his cottage in Ellerssee, where he found his wife Johanna busily engaged with her churn. He sat down on a chair near her, and as soon as he had taken some bread and milk, she asked him for an account of his journey.

“The landlady,” said he, “told me the whole story at great length; but I will now give it to you in a few words. Early yesterday morning a long train of waggons and carriages, bearing crowds of fugitives flying before the French army, entered Waldenberg. At noon another train arrived with such numbers that no accommodation could be found in the hotels. The poor fugitives had time only to take a little refreshment, and the moment their horses were ready, continued their flight. Lewis’s mother, a beautiful and highly respectable lady, was amongst them. When dinner was ready, she went to call her son in the garden—but no trace of him could be found—no person had seen or heard of him. While she was searching for him every where, in the garden, the adjoining fields and the streets of the village, an Austrian hussar spurred rapidly into the town and announced that the French advanced posts were bearing down on it. Discharges of musquetry were soon distinctly heard, approaching nearer and nearer. The fugitives, panic-stricken, started from table, ordered their horses without delay—and knights and nobles mingled with the grooms and servants in the stable, preparing their equipage for the road. But no tongue can tell the agony of the poor mother. Pale as a corpse, she ran, with dishevelled hair, and piteous cries through the village calling her son—telling her woes to the villagers, as if they could understand her, and imploring them to tell her where she could find him. All this time the peals of artillery were incessant—nearer and nearer they approached, and now were heard from the groves and vineyards skirting the town. The companions of Lewis’s mother pressed her to fly with them, warning her, that, if she had the misfortune to fall into



the hands of the French, she should certainly be sent back to France and executed. "Die, I will," was her only answer, "rather than desert my son." One of the fugitives, an elderly gentleman, at last assured her that her son was with his playfellows in a carriage, which, after stopping for a short time at one of the hotels, had started at the first alarm. The mother running to that hotel, was assured of the fact by the landlady and her servants. Whether it is, that the people did not understand the mother, or that the old gentleman, who appeared deeply interested in her fate, had devised this plan to induce her to fly from captivity, or, perhaps, death, I know not—certain it is, however, that the poor lady allowed herself to be borne, faint and almost breathless, into a carriage; and little time had they to spare, for they had scarcely disappeared at one side of the village, when the French hussars entered at the other, and sat down with all the zest of tired soldiers, to the untouched refreshments prepared for the fugitives."

"A sad story this," said Johanna, "but tell me who is this unhappy mother? what is her name and quality?"

Lorenzo answered. "Her name is Madam Duval. She appears to have been very wealthy—but now is evidently reduced. Her dress was plain, but exceedingly neat. She wore neither gold nor lace. Her coach was plain—her effects few—and even the dinner which she had ordered for herself and son and that old man, was of the humblest fare. But all the servants who understood French and conversed with her, are loud in their praises of her prudence and virtue."

"Alas, poor mother," sighed Johanna, the tears streaming down her cheeks, "what woe is yours, when you meet that coach and miss your son. She cannot come back to look for him—all the passes are in the enemy's hands—she cannot guess what will be his fate in a strange country—she must abandon all hope of seeing

him, perhaps for ever—great, great, indeed, must be your affliction.”

“From my heart I pity her,” answered Lorenzo, “but where is Lewis? has he not risen yet?”

“I saw him a moment ago,” said Johanna, “he is sleeping quietly—the poor child will be greatly afflicted at being separated from his mother—perhaps for many long years.”

“But,” said Lorenzo, in an anxious tone, “what are we to do with him?”

“An easy question,” said Johanna, “God has placed him in our hands—and keep him we must, until the mother returns and claims her son. Surely, it was God himself brought you near that old oak tree to hear the fervent prayer of the poor deserted child.”

“I thought so already,” answered Lorenzo, “but if the war should last many years, and the mother return no more; if she should sink under the fatigue of flight or the agony of her mind—what can we do with the boy then?”

“We can educate him as one of our own children,” said Johanna—“as we have six, a seventh cannot be a great additional burthen: God will bless the little we have, if we share it with a poor orphan. He that fed five thousand men in the desert, with five loaves, is over us still.”

“Very true,” added Lorenzo, “but to tell you the truth I wish that persons who are more wealthy than we, would take pity on the boy and educate him.”

“I would prefer that also,” said Johanna, “if such rich persons come forward of their own accord and offer to educate him. But we will not apply to any of them. Rich people are not always the most generous, and those that are generous, though they could do more for him than we can, cannot do it with a better heart than we: I feel all a mother’s love for the boy—and you, too—dear Lorenzo, I know it well—have the same feelings towards him.”

“Yes truly,” said Lorenzo, beginning at the same time to calculate whether out of the profits of his little farm he could provide for the additional expense of the boy’s education. But not being able to wind up the account to his satisfaction, Johanna interrupted him observing, “when we are doing a good act, we must not be so exact in our calculations—we must allow something for the providence of God. It just strikes me, that if ever our Conrad were a homeless orphan in a foreign land—in France for example—we would most ardently wish that some generous and pious family would take him into their house and make him one of their own. What we wish others to do unto us, ought not we to do unto them?” The kind Johanna wept when making this appeal.

Lorenzo in a tone of deep emotion added, “I am most anxious to keep and rear the poor child—but as we have nothing to spare, we shall find it very hard to do it.”

“Ah,” said Johanna, “men can do more than they think—you intended to buy a new gown for me the next fair day—why not spend that money on poor Lewis?”

“You are as prudent as generous,” cried Lorenzo, resuming suddenly his usual gait and banishing the cloud of care which had been gathering on his brow, “you have suggested the proper plan,—I, too, must contrive that my Sunday suit last another year,—and that will enable us to meet all the boy’s expenses. God will provide for the rest.”

Little Lewis entered at this moment—dressed and prepared for a journey, and having wished the virtuous couple a good morning in the most cordial way,—requested Lorenzo to saddle the horse without delay and bring him to his mother.

“Dear Lewis,” said Lorenzo, “your mother left Waldenberg yesterday at noon and is now many long miles away. She was in great affliction for you—but she could not remain. The hussars frightened her away. Contending armies now lie between her and us, and completely shut out all hope of meeting her for the present.”

Poor Lewis wept bitterly at this sad news; he was almost convulsed with agony. Johanna sat down on a chair and taking the weeping child on her knees, wiped away the tears from his face and addressed him in her own soft and gentle tones, "Dear Lewis—don't cry, have patience a little while—you shall certainly see your dear mother again, and be happier than ever in her society. In the mean time, I will be a mother to you—and my husband there will treat you as his son, my children will love and cherish you as a brother—all that we have, we will most cordially divide with you."

But Lewis could not be comforted and still continued to weep. Johanna however soon appeased him. She carried him into the yard, and told her husband to bring out the foal from the stable. Lewis had never seen a foal and not suspecting that the animal was young, cried out in amazement, when he saw it, "Oh, the little horse—the little horse." He surveyed it again and again with the most intense pleasure—observing that all the horses he had ever seen before in town or country were much larger, but none so handsome as this. Lorenzo set him on the foal and led him up and down the yard: Lewis could scarcely set bounds to his joy on finding himself for the first time on a horse, and one so small and beautiful that it appeared expressly destined for himself. All his griefs were forgotten, and though the tears were still on his cheeks, he said with a joyous smile. "Tomorrow or after I will ride this home to my mother."

"We have succeeded at last," said Johanna to Lorenzo—"the boy's sorrow is turned into joy. Punishment is not the best means of diverting a young person from sorrowful or wayward thoughts; it is more useful to turn the mind to something else. This is the case even with grown up people, as I myself can testify from my own experience; for when anxiety comes over me, I begin to sing a merry song, or join in pleasant prattle with my children or tell them a story; at other times I look out in my garden and

please myself with the bloom and verdure of trees and herbs—or consider the field of waving flax with its sky blue blossoms. It is only a few days ago that my spirits were very low, when little Alicia happened to bring to me a garland of May flowers, which at once dispelled my gloom and restored serenity and joy to my mind. No doubt—care is sometimes so pressing and anxiety so harrassing that they cannot be driven away by such means. But then I raise my thoughts to heaven and reflect on that good God who has care of us all, and who rewards the passing troubles of this life with the endless bliss of the next. Few there are—to whom this reflection will not bring consolation, if they make it in the proper spirit.”

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE VILLAGE PEASANTS.

THE arrival of the French boy was soon known through the whole village and attracted much observation. Crowds of children and good housewives came next day to see him, and in the evening the peasants of the village assembled under the large lime tree which stood in the little square, not far from the church. It was here, that when the day's toil was over, they used to assemble and spend the evening in familiar chat, discussing the news of the day, or sending round the friendly pipe. Lewis was now the engrossing topic. The chief man in the village was going to join the group, when Lorenzo perceived him, and going forth with the little orphan—introduced him to the villagers, telling him he had found him in the forest, and offering at the close, to take him into his own house and educate him as one of his own family.

The peasants generally applauded Lorenzo's charity; some however, by their looks seemed to say, that his family

was numerous enough already, and could not well provide for a strange boy; but Crall, one of the peasants—who had not a good name, and who was the sworn enemy of Lorenzo, proposed that the young Frenchman should without a moment's delay be banished from the village. "Remember, neighbours," said he, "that all the refugees are enemies of France; the French soldiers from whose power we are not safe one moment, will be highly incensed against us, if we keep the child of one of their enemies in our village. They will make us pay dearly for our hospitality, by plundering, perhaps burning, our village. Alas, good heavens," he exclaimed with a broken voice, and with an air of the deepest woe—"I think I see all our roofs in flames over our heads. Major," said he, with a fiendish scowl at Lorenzo, "I propose that this French boy be this very night given up to the parish beadle, and sent outside our village bounds; and that Lorenzo, who by keeping him here, proves that he is in communication with the refugee French—be punished with a heavy fine, for the danger into which he has brought us."

Some of the peasants were panic-stricken at the danger to which they thought themselves exposed and loudly seconded Crall's proposition—but others, who had more good sense and better hearts made energetic exclamations against him. A warm dispute arose, which every moment was becoming more serious. Every soul in the village, young and old; men, women, and children, were soon crowded together, some to listen to, or join in, the dispute, others to get a sight of the poor trembling boy who was the innocent cause of it.

Just as the quarrel was coming to an alarming pitch, the parish priest arrived, and having listened for a few moments, addressed his parishioners in a kind and paternal tone, "Dear friends—you have no reason to be so much alarmed; there is not the slightest danger of that terrible calamity which some of you appear to apprehend. The brave French soldier is too noble and generous to take it

ill of you, to protect this poor helpless child, who is too young to know anything of the causes of their civil wars; they will rather take it as a favour, that you have kindly, generously protected a poor orphan boy, expelled from his and their own native land. If any blame or any misfortune threaten any of you—say that I am the cause of all. Say that I have advised you to receive the child into your village. I have no fear of the consequences. I have my answer and defence in the words, ‘Do good, and fear no man.’”

The good priest then took the little trembling and weeping Lewis, kindly by the hand, and having placed him in the middle of the crowd, “See,” said he, “such a child as this it was that our Divine Redeemer shewed to his disciples, when he told them, ‘Whosoever shall receive one such child as this, in my name, receiveth me;’ and still more, warning his disciples, he says, ‘See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you, that these angels in heaven, always see the face of my Father who is in heaven—it is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.’ These are the words of our Divine Redeemer—now my dear friends—poor little Lewis was really lost, and Lorenzo—this good man has found him, and brought him to his house. Do you wish that he should cast him out? Do you wish that a poor deserted child, should be cast out alone on the wide world, without any place to shelter himself? Then, indeed, would the holy angels who have charge of him, be displeased—and God himself, who looks upon everything done to this child, as done to himself, will judge you severely. Are you rash enough to fly in the face of that heavenly Father, who orders you to protect the deserted child? No, my friends, you will not act thus—it would do you no good. But if all of you had the same feelings as Lorenzo, for this unhappy boy, what blessings may not be brought down upon you.—Remember—you that stand here with me now, under our village tree—

remember—that your sons are now in the field, exposed to all the dangers of war—of fire and famine. If one of these brave young soldiers, far from his mother, or wife, or sisters, should lie bleeding and helpless, under the canopy of heaven, in a foreign land, God will send some kind friend to him, if you befriend this boy. Believe me, that whatever you do for a poor, deserted, orphan, will be amply paid back to your own children.”

The allusion to the young soldiers, brought the tears to the eyes of the mothers, sisters, and young brides of the village—even stern manhood and old age could not resist the affecting appeal. All promised to follow the advice of the good priest, praised the kind-heartedness of Lorenzo, and severely condemned the cruel proposal of Crall, for having thrown them into groundless alarm, and led them to assent to his evil suggestions. Little Lewis gratefully kissed his benefactor’s hand, for having pleaded his cause so successfully. The priest addressed him affectionately, and requested a visit from him early next morning.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE GOOD PARISH PRIEST.

NEXT morning Lewis was all anxiety to pay the promised visit. He brushed his fine blue frock, and asked his foster-mother to arrange his long curling locks. With the permission of the owner, he took Conrad’s straw hat, though it was not in keeping with his own dress. Johanna remarked this—but Lewis said that it would do very well—as it was the fashion of the day. Thus equipped, he started for the parochial house, and having got himself announced—entered, with genteel gait and a profound bow, the pastor’s parlour, saying, in the French language, that he came to pay his respects to the good man, and to return him once



more his most cordial thanks, for his kind interference on his behalf, the evening before.

The worthy pastor, who was a venerable old man, and took especial delight in the education of children, understood French perfectly and had his library well stocked with many good books in that language, which he often read, but placed as he was in an obscure little village, where he had no opportunity of conversing with educated persons, he could not speak French. He welcomed the boy in the German language, and having placed him by his side, on a sofa, said, "Though I cannot speak your language, I understand it well, dear Lewis, especially as your enunciation is so distinct and clear. Speak French to me, and I will speak German to you, which you can understand well enough by the help of an occasional explanation in French." Lewis was delighted with this plan, and now conversed, in his own tongue, with all the fluency, peculiar to his countrymen.

The pastor could not think without sorrow on the sad calamity which had separated the poor boy from his mother, and thrown him on the charity of a foreign land. He therefore conversed with him in the most affectionate and familiar manner—asked him many questions, and was soon agreeably convinced that he had received an excellent education for his years, and that his mother must have been, as Lorenzo said, a pious and intelligent woman."

"Have you learned to read, Lewis?" asked the priest.

"O yes," he answered, "I can read French, but not German."

The priest then taking down from his bookcase, a French book of tales for children, put it into Lewis's hand, and pointing out a story, desired him to read it, which Lewis did, with perfect ease and energy.

"Who taught you to read so well?" asked the priest, not a little amazed.

"My mother," he answered, "she was my only instructor."

The priest then wishing to know whether he was well instructed in his religion, asked him many questions, all of which the good child answered with piety and reverence. His intelligent face beamed with corresponding expression when he spoke of the goodness of God to men—of that all-seeing Providence, which turns all, even the calamities of men, to their greater good; of confidence in God and holy prayer—and above all of that happier life, in heaven, where we are all to meet, if we obey the precepts which God has given to us through His only Son.

The priest was highly pleased with Lewis. “Your mother,” said he, “must have impressed deeply upon your mind, those lessons that console her, in her afflictions, and which are indeed the best consolation for all persons in affliction. She must be a truly prudent and pious woman.”

“O! she is good, better and more attached to me than any tongue can tell,” said Lewis, the tears streaming down his cheeks. “She is most pious—every morning and evening she prayed with me, especially for my dear father, that we might all three be united once more, and return together to our beloved country. She was, indeed, often very sorrowful, and wept at being banished from her home and separated from her husband; other people knew little of her sorrows. If a visitor came she was calm and even sprightly. But when she sat alone in her chamber, at her work-table, many a time I saw her sigh, and raise her eyes to heaven.”

“Fear not,” answered the priest, “her prayers and yours have not ascended in vain before the throne of God.”

“I have that confidence too,” added Lewis; “still I don’t know how it is; when I prayed in the forest, God heard me and sent Lorenzo to my relief, and now though I have been praying constantly these three last days, that God would restore me to my mother, He appears to pay no attention to my prayers. I cannot conceive why He should leave me to pray so long in vain: were I in his

place, I would hearken to men at once, and grant their petitions."

"If so, you would do much mischief, my dear Lewis," said the priest. "No one but the Almighty God knows what is good for men. He wishes our good, and for that very reason cannot grant our petitions as soon as, and in the manner, we wish. The wishes of men are often evil or foolish: the very thing that seems best to us—is often the worst. But a good fervent prayer is never without fruit. God comes to our relief, later perhaps than we hoped, and in a different, but in a much more useful, way to ourselves. So far God has provided for you—He has entrusted you to pious and affectionate foster-parents—He will send down consolation on your lonely mother, and that happy morn will assuredly come which shall restore you once more to her arms."

"Alas! my dear mother," said Lewis, clasping his little hands, "I cannot tell how much I love you, and how I grieve that by my levity I have added to your other griefs. Many a time will you be troubled and weep on my account." The bitter thought drew the tears from the poor child himself.

"Oh! dear Lewis," said the priest, "be patient and calm. *Trouble is good for nothing.* All that you can do for your mother now, is to pray for her—to be a good boy yourself—and apply yourself diligently to your studies, to make her more happy when you meet. I promise to give you some instructions daily for an hour or two, and as you can read French so well, you must now learn to write it, and in a short time you will be able to read German also, with the help of the conversations, you can have every day. With those French books there in my library I can give you as good an education as you require. Your good foster-parents will second my exertions—present them my kindest compliments, and return to me tomorrow morning at the same hour—weep no more, dear Lewis, God will

restore you once more to your mother's arms, and change your sorrow into joy."

Lewis was delighted at the kind offer of the good priest, and was never more happy than when receiving instruction from him. He was very anxious to advance in his studies, and had always many questions to propose, which generally brought on some useful and entertaining conversation. He had a soft and generous heart, was often affected to tears with the sublime instructions of the good old priest, and conceived for him the strongest attachment of ardent love and reverence.

He had been long looking for some opportunity to testify his gratitude, and on the eve of the good priest's feast day, he asked his foster-mother to give him a fourpenny piece.

"For what?" she asked.

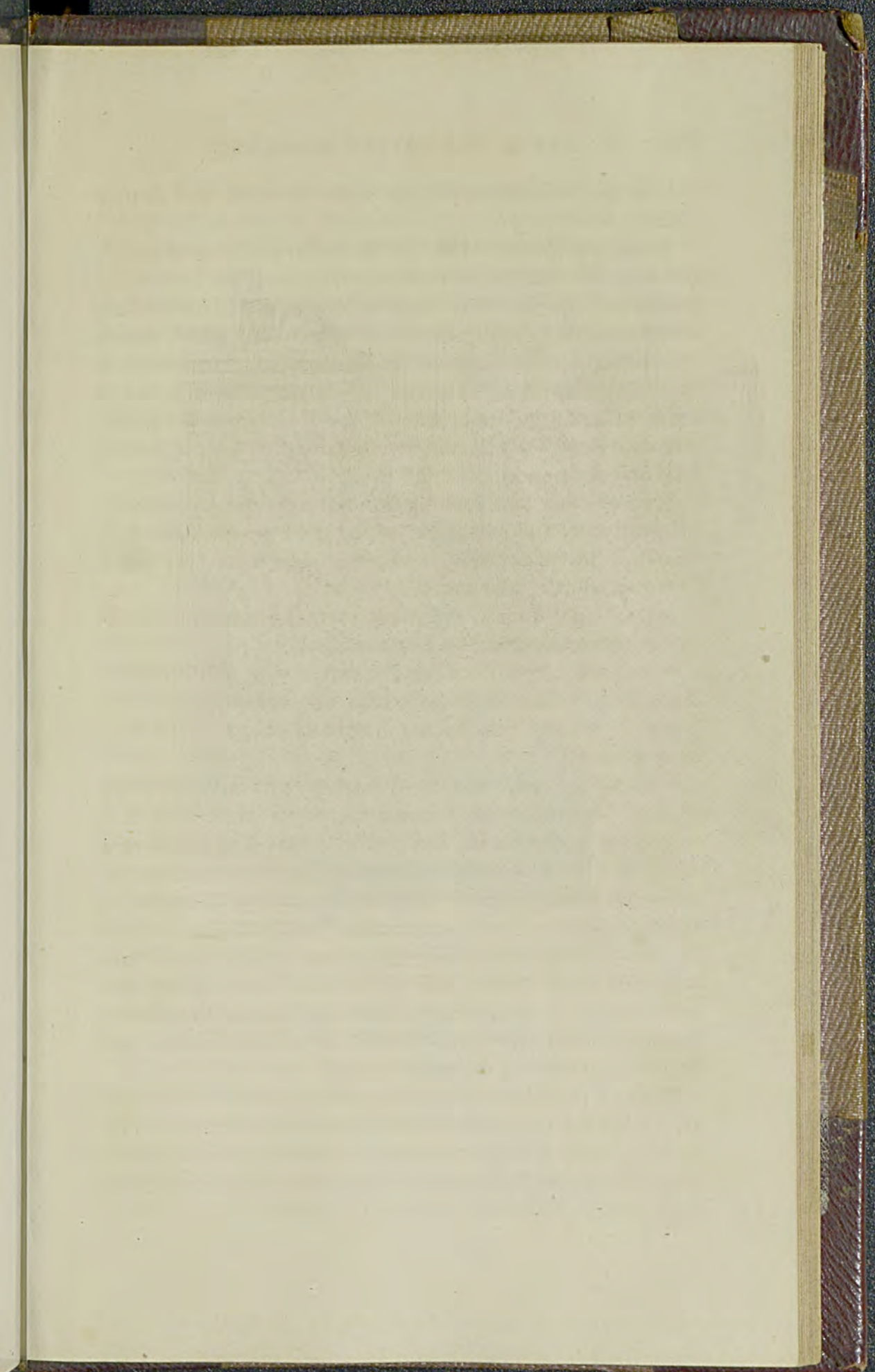
"Oh," said Lewis, "I wish to make some present to our good parish priest on his feast day."

"But what could you buy, Lewis, for so small a sum," she asked, "that would be worth the acceptance of our pastor? Surely you do not intend to offer him the fourpenny piece?"

"Certainly not," answered Lewis, "I could not think of such a thing; but I could purchase something that would certainly please him. He is very fond of flowers. He has a great variety of roses in his garden and takes great pleasure in them. But as yet none of them are in bloom. None of our own are in bloom yet, nor can any be found in any garden in the whole village, for I have inspected all of them. But there is one tree, on the miller's window, that is now in full blow: I asked the miller's boy to give me one rose; which he refused unless I promised to give him a fourpenny piece."

"All right," said Johanna, with a smile, "I admire your love for our good pastor, and your attention to his tastes. Here is the fourpenny piece, with all my heart."

Lewis ran to the mill with the fourpenny piece, and





Lewis presented the rose-tree to the priest, with the words "May God give you a happy life, and strew flowers in your path."—p. 287.

called on the miller's boy to give him the rose. The miller, who overheard him, said, "That is very foolish on your part, Lewis, to give so much money for a rose. In fourteen days' time you can have roses enough for nothing. But you are acting like those who have not youth to plead as an extenuation of their folly, who throw away enormous sums, to purchase fruits or vegetables some two or three weeks earlier than the ordinary time, though by waiting awhile, they could have them infinitely cheaper and more wholesome, and agreeable. People ought to know how to have patience—time will bring roses."

Lewis was somewhat disconcerted, but recovered and said, that it was not for himself, but as a present to the parish priest, on his feast day, that he intended the rose.

"Oh," said the miller, in a friendly tone, "that is quite another thing. That is, indeed, a praiseworthy intention. Keep your money, my good boy; you shall have not only the rose, but the rose-tree itself, with all its roses. That is not too much from me to our good priest."

Who can describe how happy Lewis was now. He carried off the rose-tree in triumph from the miller's to his foster-father's house, and having dressed himself in his best clothes, ran to the parochial house with his rose-tree, and presented it to the priest, with the words "May God give you a happy life and strew flowers in your path."

"Where are you bringing the beautiful rose-tree, dear Lewis?" asked the priest.

When Lewis told how it came into his possession, and convinced the priest, by his artless narrative, of his affectionate solicitude to please him, the joy of the good old man was too great for utterance, and he burst into tears. "May heaven bless you, dear Lewis," said he, "you are like one of those tender rose-buds; remain always pious and diligent, and your life will one day bloom with more grace and beauty than the most lovely rose."

When Lewis's feast day came, the priest made him a present of a French prayer book, which he had purchased

expressly for that purpose, and got beautifully bound in red morocco. He wrote in the book the following words: "Youth and beauty fade like flowers—but he that doth the will of God liveth for ever."

Lewis was highly pleased with his new book, and declared that it was the most acceptable present he could desire. It was, truly, the most useful present; containing, as it did, many devout and affecting prayers which Lewis never failed to read—night and morning and at his public devotions.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### RURAL LIFE.

IN a short time Lewis felt quite at home, among the scenes and duties of his rural life. He was fondly attached to his foster-parents, and was as happy with their children as if he were one of themselves. The affection that all had for him, made him forget that he was under a strange roof. Now and then his heart yearned for his dear mother, but he was never sad. He consoled himself with the hope that he would see her again, and that happy buoyancy of spirit so peculiar to his years, and with which he was eminently gifted—enabled him to chase away all melancholy thoughts. He was at all times, so gay, so cordial, and obedient, that he was a favourite not only with the family of his kind protector, but with all the inhabitants of the village. The rural diet was at first somewhat strange to him. Thus, when, the first morning after his arrival, he ran about amusing himself with the other children, and walked around the village and the little lake, he asked on his return whether the coffee was ready.

The mother answered with a smile, "Dear Lewis, we have a fare of our own here, which you must endeavour



to take with us. Some grand people here in our village drink coffee without milk ; we drink milk without coffee. We find it cheaper, and moreover, more wholesome and agreeable to our tastes. Try it yourself now," said she, bringing a bowl of milk and a cut of good bread. Lewis, who had been walking for more than two hours through the fields and village, found the milk excellent ; better than any coffee he had ever tasted, and declared that henceforward he would never take anything but milk for breakfast. He thought the same of the other articles of rural fare, presented to him. He rarely had meat at table, but was plentifully supplied with bread and butter, eggs and vegetables of various kinds, which Johanna knew how to prepare in the best fashion. He was soon accustomed to this new fare, and as he took more exercise under the open air in the country than he had ever taken in the town, his appetite was always good, his general health always better, and his appearance, with his ruddy cheeks and nimble gait, infinitely improved.

No person indeed could relish more cordially the pleasures of rural life. From his infancy, he had spent his days cooped up in narrow streets, but now roaming free over the open plains and charming scenes of nature, he had every day something new to delight and instruct him. Johanna had an exquisite sensibility for the beauties of nature, and studied to excite and nourish it in the hearts of her children. She had an apt pupil in Lewis, who had already made such wonderful progress in the German language, that he could converse with freedom and ease.

One day Johanna whitewashed the walls of her little parlour, cleaned the windows and other articles, and according to the custom of her country strewed the floor with fine, white sand. When Lewis came down in the morning, he looked around him, and after viewing the change for a few moments in silence, said, "All very neat and proper—but the chambers we had in the city were much more beautiful. We had a large looking glass in a

gilt frame, hanging between the windows, and fine landscapes painted on the walls, and a soft carpet beautifully coloured, under our feet. Why should not you furnish your room in that style?"

"We have not money enough, for such costly furniture as that, dear Lewis," Johanna answered; "but what need have we of it; why should we get a landscape painted on our walls, when we have, every day, a most charming landscape here before our eyes. Look out in that window, see the blue heavens above and the green fields and forests below, and the tops of the trees and the spire of the church, burnished with the splendour of the rising sun. Can any painter equal that scene; or has any prince or princess a more beautiful carpet than those blooming pastures, smiling there before you, with a thousand different colours? Is not that lake, in which the sky, the trees, and rocks, and the mill are reflected, as fine a mirror as any to be found in a royal palace? do you not think so?"

"No doubt," said Lewis. "The city, with all its art and pomp, has nothing to equal this. When I looked out of my window, nothing but a mass of tiles, walls, and plaster met my view. This is, assuredly, much more delightful."

"Has not our good God," Johanna continued, "made this earth a beautiful dwelling for man; has he not made all things well, and decked them in the most charming colours?"

"Yes," answered Lewis. "He is indeed, a great and good God—and I feel that, in the country, more than ever I did in the town."

Lewis himself made many observations on the contrast between the country and the city life. During summer, Lorenzo and his family arose and went to rest with the sun. He never lighted a candle in his house, during summer, a custom which was particularly agreeable to Lewis. Formerly, he never saw the sun rise, but now he never ceased praising the bright golden beams that gleamed in

the morning through his little window. "Great fools," he would say, "are those town's people, who sleep so long in the morning, and spend half the night with candle light. Would it not be much better for them to rise early and go to bed early; surely it would save much money for candles."

Lewis and the children going one day into the forest to gather strawberries, came to a most beautiful little valley. The hills were clothed with woods of majestic oak, with its light green leaves, and the reddish rocks appearing here and there, were shaded with the sombre hues of the towering pine; a silver stream murmured through a beautiful meadow, tinted with the innumerable colours of a thousand wild flowers, all gleaming in the bright and warm rays of the summer sun. The banks of the stream were blue with "*forget-me-nots*," and the brilliant strawberry was found in abundance, among the rocks on the hills. "This is a beautiful spot, indeed," exclaimed Lewis, in rapture, "it is far more beautiful than the large garden into which my mother used to bring me to walk. We had more gravel there, than grass or flowers, and the trees had scarcely any boughs, except on their cropped heads; but here in this woody valley, where the strawberry grows wild, and the stream is bordered with a thousand blue flowers, and the great oak stretches out its mighty arms—Oh! this is the fine place, this is the real garden—the whole country around our village is a garden of delight, and I praise and bless that great and good God, who hath planted the oak and the strawberry, the forget-me-not and the pine. When I meet my mother again, I must tell her to quit the town, and come live in the country, where we can enjoy the bright sun and the free air, the trees, fruits and flowers, which God has given to us, to make us love Him."

But the most agreeable thing to Lewis in his new abode, was the happy mirth, with which all the children of the village assembled in the evening under the old lime tree,

or ran to sport and play in the adjoining fields. As it was now a time of war, war was the favourite sport—Lewis, who had often seen the soldiers go through their exercise, at the reviews in the city, assisted at the boyish war, and having observed many irregularities in their movements, volunteered his services to instruct them.

The boys were charmed with the offer, and under his direction, soon knew how to stand erect, and turn out their toes and handle their hazel rods, with due military precision; he taught them to march quick and to march slow, to advance and to retreat, to wheel to the right and to the left, and to go through many evolutions of which they had no idea. So high an opinion had they of his skill, that to his great delight, he was unanimously elected their general. He now applied himself with all the gravity of a veteran, to prepare ever thing necessary, as he said, for service. At his request, the miller bought a little trumpet for his son, and Johanna gave to himself an old muslin handkerchief which was to serve as colours. The handkerchief was clean but sadly faded. "Oh, no matter," said Lewis, "colours are never so fine, as when faded and tattered."

Having found some spangles in Johanna's work-box, he asked them, and worked them into a star, which he fixed in his fine blue frock, on extraordinary days. He also instituted a military order, giving badges of coloured paper, to the boys whom he deemed the most intelligent and expert in their military exercises.

Many a time did the villagers, as they assembled under the tree to smoke their pipes and enjoy their village gossip, look on with delight, at the warlike pastimes of their sons or young brothers. Even the old priest himself, often spent a half hour at the window, amusing himself with the same scene. The mothers, too, came and looked on, and felt proud of the promise and manliness of their sons. All admitted that Lewis was the finest boy among them. The village boys were dark complexioned and heavy limbed, but Lewis was fair and florid, and as light and

graceful as a young prince. He was perfectly at ease in all his movements, and gave the word of command with as much solemnity, as if the safety of the whole village depended on it.

Johanna asked him one day in an anxious tone, whether he ever intended to be a soldier? "Oh certainly," said the boy, with a smile of joy; "why not?" "But, perhaps you may be killed?" she added. "Oh, I know that well," he answered; "but I read the other day, that it is noble and glorious to die for fatherland."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### GREAT WOE, RELIEF, AND GRATITUDE.

LORENZO and his good wife spent their time very happily, and prospered during the summer on their little farm. They were surrounded by their good children, who, together with Lewis, aided them in their rustic labours. But the harvest was not as good as they expected; and to add to his misfortunes, Lorenzo lost a horse, and was obliged, in order to till his farm, to purchase another for a very considerable price. Rent-day, in the mean time, was at hand, and he knew not how he could make up the requisite sum. He applied, though not without shame and reluctance, to several of his neighbours, to advance the money—but in vain. Those who wished to help, could not, and those who could, would not. He and his wife were in the greatest alarm, because there was an express covenant in the lease, that if the stipulated sum were not paid in full, on the very day, to the agent at Waldenberg, the farmer, by the very fact, forfeited all right to his farm, and was bound to quit without an hour's delay. When the terrible day came, Lorenzo once more counted all the money in his possession, but he still wanted

twenty-two crowns of the rent. "Alas," he sighed, "I know the landlord will be very much displeased. But I hope he will take into account, that in consequence of the bad harvest, and the loss of my horse, it was impossible for me to make up the rent; he will have pity on us, and not send me and my family adrift on the world."

"God grant it," sighed poor Johanna, weeping; "a mother's prayer shall be offered up continually to God, that He may not permit our innocent children to be driven out houseless wanderers upon the world."

"Oh, do pray," said Lorenzo, in a tone of anguish, "pray without ceasing while I am on this journey. I, too, shall not cease to pray until I arrive at the castle." Then casting one sorrowful and imploring look to heaven, he started on his journey.

The agent was a severe man, who seldom deigned to speak to the tenants. To all Lorenzo's prayers and statements, he made no answer—but silently counted the money, gave a receipt for the amount, and then coolly remarked that a considerable sum was wanting. "You know," said he, sternly, "the conditions of your tenure. If the twenty-two crowns are not paid out to the penny, here on this table, before sunset, you cease to be our tenant: you must quit your house to-morrow morning, and pitch your quarters somewhere else. I must take your furniture and stock for the rent—understand me—another person has already offered me more rent than you pay for your farm." He then took down the written agreement from one of his shelves, and quietly unfolding it, "read," said he; "have not you signed the agreement? is not that your name? What doubt can be on the matter? You know my fixed determination—and may retire."

With a heavy heart, poor Lorenzo turned towards home. In an agony of grief, he thought on the terrible effect this news must have on his beloved wife and children: the big tears rolled down his cheeks, and he

sobbed as if he were going to expire. His path lay not far from that old oak, under which he had found poor Lewis. He turned towards it, and making his way through the underwood to the foot of the tree, he threw himself on his knees, and fervently clasping his hands on his heaving breast, cried out: "O good God!—here on this spot, poor Lewis, a deserted orphan, raised up his imploring hands to Thee, and Thou hast heard his prayer—Here do I kneel to Thee now, and fervently beg Thine aid. O! hear my prayer; have mercy on me—my wife—my children—my dear Lewis—Thou hast promised mercy to those who are merciful. I have had pity on him—do Thou have pity now on me and my children! O God, do not reject my petition!" Lorenzo rose from prayer with a tranquil mind; but he had not proceeded far, when he met his wife running towards him in breathless haste. He was alarmed, and cried out: "What misfortune has happened that you are rushing in such haste to meet me?"

"Nothing—nothing but good," said she, smiling as sweetly on her husband, as if she were an angel from heaven.

"The agent was obdurate," said she; "is not that a fact?"

"No hope from him," answered Lorenzo.

"I suspected so," said Johanna, smiling.

"But how can you say so?" said he, "with such a contented face."

"Because God himself has come to our relief," said she; "my heart is so full of gratitude and joy, that I could go abroad and proclaim aloud His goodness and mercy—I could not have patience to stay at home until you arrived; I was obliged to come and meet you, and tell you the good luck that has come to us. Wonderful, indeed, has been God's goodness towards us. Look here," said she, opening her hand, and showing him twenty crowns fresh from the mint.

Lorenzo could scarcely believe his eyes. "For God's sake," said he, "where did you find so much money?"

"You might be guessing for ages," said Johanna, "and not discover—but I will tell you at once. After your departure, my heart was very heavy, so heavy that I can scarcely describe it. The elder children were with Lewis at the chapel; the younger were playing in the orchard; the youngest was sleeping soft and calmly in the cradle. I brought down all their clothes, to see if they required any repairs, and set them before me on the table in the lower room. I stitched away—my heart, all the time, praying to God to relieve us. I looked now to my children who were playing abroad, and then to my poor baby in the cradle. O God! I exclaimed often, have mercy on these poor children, who know nothing of the evils that are pressing on me, and that are hanging over their own innocent heads. Many a tear fell on the clothes of my dear children as I stitched them. Lewis's blue frock came at last—which was beginning to wear in two or three places. I drew a few threads where they were wanting, and then examined the buttons, to know if any were wanting or required to be fastened. They were covered with blue cloth; and seeing that one of them was torn, I looked closely and found that something like gold appeared glistening through the rent; I opened it still wider—and out dropped one of these gold coins. You may guess my amazement; 'good heavens,' I exclaimed, 'that's gold; what brought it there?' I reflected awhile, and could imagine nothing else, but that it had been sewn there to conceal it. Lewis's mother, thought I, saw herself obliged to fly; fugitives are exposed to many dangers; she put the gold here to screen it from the robber's eye. The other buttons are gold too, thought I. I opened them one after another, and found in each, one of these gold pieces. Here they are—twenty gold pieces—here is the help God has sent to us. You can now meet



the agent's demands, and keep me and my children under our beloved roof."

Lorenzo paused for a moment. "Can we take that money?" said he, at last, "it is not ours; it belongs to Lewis's mother. God preserve me from taking the property of another."

"That scruple occurred to me also," said she, "and I considered the matter. Listen now to my opinion. As Lewis's mother is probably much richer than we imagined, she will pay us amply for the support of her son. We will provide him with all that he requires; and I think a crown a week would not be too much for his support. We have already expended a considerable sum on him. He came to us without any other effects, but those he had on his back; he had not even a hat; you bought a fine new hat for him, and I made, with my own hands, a new suit for him, to spare, for Sundays and holidays, the fine clothes he brought with him; we have also given him new shoes and boots. We have clothed him anew from head to foot, and that with his support already amounts to twenty-two crowns. Here, take these four ducats, which make exactly twenty-two crowns, and bring them, without scruple, to the agent."

"What you say is perfectly true," said Lorenzo. "We can take the four ducats with a fair conscience. God has rescued us from our great distress. To Him be all the glory and thanks." Full of grateful and pious emotions, he was silent for a moment, but then added: "The agent will wonder where I have found this money—what can I say to him if he ask me?"

"Oh!" said Johanna, "tell him that your wife gave it to you, and that it was a little store of which you knew nothing to this very moment. Go now quickly—and I will return as fast as I can to my children."

"Come here with me a moment," said Lorenzo. "I must show you the tree where I found Lewis praying." She followed him through the thicket. "There," said he,

when they came to the green plot, "there is the tree under which Lewis prayed so fervently to God, and was heard by Him; and under that very tree I, too, prayed to God to help me in my deep distress, and He has heard me. Little did I think when I prayed to Him there, that I could so soon kneel on the same spot, to return my ardent thanks for this great mercy."

Lorenzo fell on his knees, and raising up his hands to heaven: "Dear heavenly Father," he prayed, "may my gratitude be now as warm and sincere, as my prayer, a few moments ago, was earnest and confiding. Thou hast not rejected my prayer; deign now to accept my grateful thanks." Johanna then knelt by her husband's side, and joined in his prayer. Both, with overflowing hearts, praised that Almighty and benevolent Providence, that watches over men and saves them from ruin: their love and confidence in God, and their filial gratitude towards Him, filled their hearts with a serene and sublime joy, which all the gold in this world could not confer on them.

Johanna hastened home, and Lorenzo once more turned his steps towards Waldenberg. It was far advanced in the night, before he returned to his native valley. The full moon shone brightly, lighting up the houses and street of the quiet village, and burnishing the bosom of the unruffled lake with brilliant silver. Johanna was sitting on the bench outside her door, awaiting her husband's return. The children were in bed; and the warm supper lay ready by the fire side. They entered their house together, partook of their frugal fare, and conversed on the singular events of the past day.

"Does Lewis know anything of this money?" said Lorenzo.

"No," answered his wife, "I am sure he does not. Lewis, said I to him, the buttons of your coat are torn, I must throw them away and sew brass buttons in their place, which will be as bright as gold, and much more durable than those covered with cloth. The child was

delighted; so far from making any objection, which he certainly would have made, or, at least, told me to take out the gold first, had he known that the gold was really there."

"Well," said Lorenzo, "since his mother did not tell him, we will not."

"I am of the same opinion," answered Johanna; "but though he knows nothing of the gold, it shall be spent on himself to the full amount. I shall regard it as a sum left in my hands for his use, of which I am to return a strict account. An exact account I will keep of all my expenditure; and consider myself as the boy's guardian. He has already almost worn the last pair of shoes we gave him. His poor mother, when she sewed the gold in his clothes, gave, though not intending it, more money than is required for his support."

"The money," said Lorenzo, "was, indeed, a treasure from heaven, which Lewis brought into our house, and which has now been to us an incalculable blessing. Without that money we never could make up our rent."

"Never could," repeated the wife; "for the money we have expended on the child is very inconsiderable, and the cost of his food and support is scarcely anything.—If he had not come to our house, we would not be twenty, ten, scarcely ten crowns richer."

"Just so, dear Johanna," said Lorenzo; "in one word, if we had not taken that child into our house, we should be quitting it to-morrow with our poor children. If we have done an act of mercy to him, God has, through him, done an act of mercy to us. May His name be ever blessed and praised, who conducts all things wisely and mercifully, and does not allow the slightest good act, to go without its reward in this world or in the next."

Lorenzo raised his eyes to heaven with an emotion of gratitude. Johanna clasped her hands, and both remained silent for a few moments—it was a pause of deep and solemn devotion. The moon shone bright and clear,

through the boughs of the trees outside the open window, and the gentle night breeze, laden with the perfume of the lime-blossoms, whispered through the leaves. The grateful prayers of the happy couple that night, were a more agreeable incense before the throne of God, than many a pompous procession.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FOREIGN SOLDIERS.

AUTUMN, in the mean time, advancing with mild and solemn pace, had tinted the forests of Ellensee; yet no foreign soldier had made his appearance. The inhabitants felt none of the horrors of war, except the high taxes. But one evening the little village was suddenly startled with the clangour of strange and martial music. A French regiment marched through, leaving one of its companies quartered on the inhabitants. Johanna was greatly alarmed, lest the French soldiers might visit on poor Lewis, the supposed crimes of his refugee parents, and, perhaps, kill or injure Lorenzo and herself or children, for having taken him into their house. It was announced, that one of the soldiers was to be billeted on Lorenzo, who was ordered to go immediately for him to the village tree, and conduct him to his house.

Lewis at once earnestly requested to be allowed to put on his best dress, in compliment to his expected guest. But Johanna refused. "Keep the clothes you have on you," said she; "it would excite suspicion if you were better dressed than Conrad. Take care, do not speak one word of French; our guests must not know that you are their countryman. We must first know how they intend to conduct themselves towards us."

When the stern and rugged soldier entered the house, and saw so many bright and happy faces around him, he appeared evidently delighted. He sat down near the table, and took out his pipe. Lewis ran at once for a light to kindle it; Conrad brought a bottle of good beer and a tumbler; and little Alicia was busy preparing the table. When the soldier had smoked his pipe, Lewis served up a pair of roasted pigeons, followed by the salad served up by Conrad. The stern soldier smiled and bowed, and though he could not express his thanks, was much gratified with the kind services of the children. He took a hearty dinner; while Lewis, who had, in the mean time, retired to a corner of the room, fixed his eyes intently on him, and watched all his movements.

After dinner, another soldier came in to see his comrade, and commenced a lively and hearty conversation. The sounds of his own beloved language, fell like music from heaven, on the ears of poor Lewis, now so long unaccustomed to it. He started to his feet, and rushing to the soldiers saluted them in the most cordial and loving way in French. They were amazed that this poor peasant boy could speak French with such accuracy and elegant accent. They knew by the first words he pronounced that he must have been born in France, and eagerly asked him, how he came hither. Poor Lewis told his whole story, how he was travelling with his mother, and was led astray in the forest by that unlucky cuckoo, how he had been kindly taken up and supported by Lorenzo and Johanna, but as yet had no account of his mother. The soldiers shewed the most lively sympathy for their poor little countryman, and expressed their warmest thanks to Johanna and her husband. They took both cordially by the hands and told Lewis to tell them in German, how deeply grateful they were for the kindness shewn to him.

Next morning, every soldier in the company, knew the history of the little French boy. Many of them came to see him, and were delighted with him. The officer

himself, hearing their favourable reports, was much interested for him, and sent to invite him to dinner. Lewis ran to his room, and in a few moments was dressed in his best. Johanna arranged his fine curling hair, and thus prepared for his visit he entered the officer's apartments, hat in hand, made a polite bow and expressed how grateful he was for the high honour that had been conferred on him. During dinner, the officer was charmed with him, and kept up a lively and entertaining conversation, in which Lewis was able to join, with all the grace and elegance of his countrymen.

The officer and his company made but a short stay in the village—others, however occasionally followed, which added not a little to Lewis's importance; for as disputes often arose between the villagers and the soldiers, principally from not understanding each other's language, he was always called in, and often restored peace with a few words of explanation. Many a time did he stand under the village tree, between the villagers on the one side, and the grisly warriors on the other, acting as interpreter, and in such a way as to receive invariably the thanks of both. Many troops dashed into the village with scowling brow and threatening looks, but no sooner were they addressed in their own language, in the soft and gentle accents of Lewis, than their stern faces relaxed into smiles, and their projects of rapine and plunder were abandoned.

The peasants had now clear proofs of the great service Lewis had been to them. "Many a time would we have been sorely plundered, if he had not been here," was the general cry. The mayor proposed, that as Lorenzo, by his support of Lewis, had been the instrument of a great public good, he should be exempted, henceforth, from the taxes imposed on the other villagers. After some opposition from a few narrow hearted or jealous clowns, the motion was carried by a large majority, which was a great relief to poor Lorenzo, in the support of his numerous family.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE WOUNDED OFFICER.

THE storms of war were now gathering around the quiet village. The French had taken up their position in the neighbouring forest, and the Germans strained all their forces to dislodge them. A sharp engagement was fought in a swampy spot, covered over with bushwood, not far from the opposite side of the little lake. The villagers ran in crowds to the top of a neighbouring hill, which commanded a full view of the field of battle. They could hear the report and see the flash of every musket—but owing to the smoke and the distance, they could not distinguish clearly their own countrymen from the French. Lewis was among the first to take his position on the hill. With anxious looks and throbbing heart he witnessed the engagement, and felt as if every shot pierced his own heart, when he reflected that each was probably the knell of some brave soldier. The good child stood there motionless as a statue and pale as a corpse, and scarcely uttered a single word, except to ask, why the flash in the pan was so distinctly seen before the report of the discharge was heard.

The battle was continued till nightfall. When it was already nearly dark, and the shots were heard becoming more faint in the distance, a peasant came up from the direction where the battle was fought, and with pale face and trembling lips, told all he knew about it. "Oh! I was in dreadful danger;" said he. "I was travelling peaceably on my way, when suddenly I heard the cracking at both sides of the road. I was in the very middle of the two contending armies. The bullets whizzed right and left by my ears. Scarcely knowing what I did, I thrust myself under a brake, expecting that this terrible storm

would blow over me. As I was returning, I saw a French officer lying wounded: I would have willingly remained to assist him, but was afraid that it would cost me my life; so I ran home as quick as I could."

As soon as Lewis had heard this narrative, he earnestly pressed the villagers to go with him, and give some relief to the wounded officer. But one of the bystanders, the same Crall, who had already proved himself so unmerciful to Lorenzo and Lewis, cried out: "Do not attempt it: I think the shots are approaching us; listen how it peals and thunders as if the whole forest was on fire! how easily one of you might be taken down by a ball. When the battle is over, those who keep possession of the field, can take care of the wounded, and do not require our help. After this appeal to their selfish fears, not one of the peasants ventured to go in search of the wounded officer. When the firing ceased, they returned, in groups, to the village, leaving Lewis alone on the top of the hill. He listened attentively to catch every sound; and when the firing had totally ceased, and the stillness of night came over the forest, he thought he heard something like the cry of the human voice in distress. The noble hearted boy had a generous love of all men, but especially of his countrymen. He could not resist the generous impulse, but sprung down the hill side, and ran rapidly along the banks of the lake, towards the spot whence the cry proceeded. He found, stretched under a willow tree, a young French officer, pale as death, but of a noble and engaging appearance. His right leg had been severely wounded, and as neither friend nor foe could give him relief during the battle, he had bound his handkerchief around the wound to staunch the blood, and endeavoured, with the help of a musket stock, to support his tottering steps to the village. But he could not proceed far, when he sunk exhausted under the willow tree. The pain of the wound was excruciating: the slight bandage could not staunch the blood; and his lips were parched with a



burning thirst. The evening was cold, and, believing that he could not survive the night, stretched there on the damp earth: he had already given up all hopes of life, and resigned his soul into the hands of God. But just at that moment he saw the peasant boy come up, and, to his amazement, address him affectionately in the French language, and promise him assistance. It was as if an angel from heaven visited him. He told Lewis his misfortune and his most pressing wants, and Lewis promised to bring him a drink, and call the peasants to his aid. He ran to the mill, which was some hundred paces nearer than the village, and implored the miller to shelter the poor officer, or he certainly could not survive that night.

“That would be a dangerous step,” said the miller, anxiously. “The storm has blown over for the present, but I hear a few occasional shots, which appear not to be very far off. I cannot expose myself and my family to the danger of being shot.”

But Lewis threw himself on his knees before the miller, and with uplifted hands, begged of him, for God’s sake, to have pity on the unfortunate man. “Think,” said he, among other things, “of the good Samaritan, and go thou and do likewise.”

The miller yielded, and gave orders to his servants to follow the boy, and bring a litter for the soldier. Lewis ran before them with a pitcher of water, and coming up to the poor man, who was faint from thirst, presented it to him. He drank copiously and often: “O! how refreshing,” he exclaimed; “God, who rewards even a cup of water given to the thirsty, will amply reward you for your goodness, good boy.”

The miller and his servant boy, and two other men, then placed the officer gently on the litter. Lewis disappeared immediately, but scarcely had they placed the officer on the bed, and given him up to the charitable care of the miller’s wife, when Lewis made his appearance

again, accompanied by the village surgeon. The surgeon bandaged the wound, which, he said, was dangerous enough—but not so bad as to leave no hopes of cure. Lewis communicated this information to the officer, who was greatly rejoiced to hear it.

The miller's wife then brought him something to eat, and soon after, he fell into a soft and refreshing sleep. When Lewis had seen every thing prepared for the night, he returned home with a happy heart. The conviction of having done a generous action, and saved, perhaps, the life of a man, filled him with the most delightful sentiments.

Next morning, before sunrise, Lewis was at the bedside of the wounded man, and asked him, how he had rested during the night. The surgeon came soon after, and made a very favourable report. He said that he wanted lint for the bandage, and Lewis ran immediately to his foster mother, and told her to prepare it. But she did not know what it was. "O! I know," said Lewis, "for I and my mother often made it. It is linen unravelled; I will show you how to make it." The mother and all her children, then began, by his direction and example, to prepare the lint, which he brought, without delay, to the surgeon. He also gave a clean handkerchief to the officer, to replace the one which was saturated with blood.

The officer was sensibly affected at the generous and zealous attentions of Lewis, and shed tears of gratitude while expressing his thanks.

As there was no other person who could speak French, Lewis visited the officer frequently every day, and remained whole hours by his bedside, to beguile away the time. He spoke of his own father, whom he scarcely remembered, except from the accounts of his mother; and also of her—her ardent love for him, and her fatiguing flight: he bewailed his own fatal levity, which led him astray in the wood. "Oh!" would he often repeat, with a heavy heart, "what a bitter affliction have I brought

down on that beloved mother. I never can think of those tears she sheds for my loss, without weeping myself."

The officer, who was a very young man, remembered the tears that had been shed by his own beloved parents, at his departure. Though they were very wealthy, he was obliged to enter the army as a common soldier, but was rapidly promoted for his bravery and commanding figure. "Lewis," said he, "is it not singular, that we should meet here in a foreign land, so far from those dear parents, from whom we have been torn. Generous boy, you have saved my life, and every day gives me fresh proofs of your kindness. I am poor now, and have not one penny at my command. All my pocket money and my watch, were taken from me as booty. But I trust the day shall come, when I can repay your kindness, by some service to you or your friends. God, who, by placing you in this village, has made you the instrument in saving my life, has, perhaps, sent me here to be of some service to you."

The wound daily improved; and Lebrun, for so the officer was called, found himself happy enough, though somewhat tired, in his situation. His greatest affliction was, to be kept so long inactive and idle. The hours that Lewis spent with him flew pleasantly on, but then he had many others of oppressive languor. Lewis gave him some French books, which he got from the parish priest, and though they were on serious subjects, and composed rather for instruction than amusement, Lebrun read them with the greatest avidity. He was amazed that those books, of which he had hitherto a very low opinion, and which he often had heard condemned in the most contemptuous terms, should contain so many great truths, expressed in such eloquent language. "These books," he used to say, "have had a wonderful influence in forming my opinions, and directing my sentiments. I look upon it, as a special act of God's kind providence towards me, that I was suddenly snatched from the cares of the world and the

tumult of war, and left in this solitary chamber, with these admirable books. From them, I learned to know God and myself, and to become a better man. God does truly dispose all things well." After some time, the French armies once more pushed forward. Many soldiers and officers passed through Ellersee, and were rejoiced exceedingly to find Lebrun, who was an universal favourite. They had given him up as lost; and now lavished the warmest praises on his young preserver. Lebrun had now so far recovered, as to be able to bear removal, and was advised to go to a distant city, where he could have better attendance. Before his departure, he took an affecting farewell of Lewis, and thanked him for all his kindness. "Do not weep, dear Lewis," said he; "we part now—but not for ever; we shall certainly meet again."

One officer still remained in the village with a company of soldiers; and when at last, they, too, were drawn up under the village tree, to march after their comrades, the officer called a meeting of all the village elders, with whom a large crowd of men, women, and children, obeyed the summons. The officer, who was a native of Alsace, and spoke excellent German, addressed them in terms of the highest praise, for having been so kind and generous to little Lewis. "The good boy," he said, "has done great services, not only to the officer, but to all the French soldiers: you must have already had good proofs, that we wished to treat you kindly, to content ourselves with as little as possible, and to spare you all unnecessary expences. You know that there is a claim on you at present, for a large contribution to the expences of the war: but by orders from head-quarters that claim is remitted; and it is further stated, that, because you have treated this French boy so generously, you shall be exempt from all claims in future. It is Lewis you ought to thank for this indulgence." The officer then, having shaken hands with the mayor, the miller, and a few others, especially Lorenzo—gave the signal to the drummer.

The trumpets blew—the soldiers waved their schakos—gave a hearty cheer for their commander and the villagers—and dashed forward on their march.

The peasants were deeply affected by the officer's words, and in the best spirits for the remission of the tax. "Did not I tell you," said several voices, in the same breath, "that we ought to receive Lewis into our village." But the men who had opposed it, and especially Crall, were silent, and hung down their heads. The mayor said, "It was happy for them, that they had taken the advice of their parish priest. He is a prudent and truly pious man. He foretold that, though Lewis was a poor, abandoned orphan, he would bring down blessings on the village; and surely his prediction has been literally fulfilled."

"Yes, yes it is," exclaimed one of the happy villagers. "True are the words we read in our Catechism: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,'"—a sentiment, whose truth was then heartily acknowledged by all the peasants.

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## CHAPTER. X.

### A GOOD MAN ACCUSED OF CRIME.

ONCE more, the strife of arms and tumult of war, were gone from the quiet village; and for several weeks, no soldier, friend or enemy, was seen in Ellersee. It was believed that peace was about to be concluded, which gladdened the good people so much, that they thought the sun shone more bright and warm over their village than before. Lorenzo and his family, alone, were in woe. He was accused of having stolen a large sum of money from one of the church tenants, the richest peasant in the village.

This was the state of the case: Lorenzo, who was a

good gardener, had grafted some trees in that peasant's garden. The garden was enclosed by a low brick wall, on which, for want of a better place, Lorenzo had placed his grafts and garden implements. But in that very spot, the owner had some time before, when the soldiers were coming, concealed several pieces of gold coin behind a loose brick. When the enemy had passed on, he came in search of his treasure, but to his amazement, found that it was gone. His suspicion at once fell on Lorenzo. He knew that he had not money enough to pay his rent; for Lorenzo had asked himself to advance a part of the money, the day he came to graft in the garden. The peasant went home with a heavy heart; and learned from the bailiffs, that Lorenzo had paid his rent in gold coin. This circumstance confirmed the suspicion, that Lorenzo was the robber; and the peasant started, without delay, for Waldenberg, to bring his charge before the agent, who was also a magistrate. The agent was amazed. He had still in his possession the very coins that Lorenzo had given to him; he kept them in his hand, and asked the peasant to describe the image, coinage, and date on the pieces which he had lost. He did so—and they corresponded in every particular, with those which Lorenzo had paid. The agent then opened his hand and showed the gold coin. "O!" said the peasant, "the identical pieces Lorenzo stole from me:" he even attempted to seize them without further delay. But the agent checked him: "Softly now—not so fast—we must first hear what Lorenzo can say for himself."

Lorenzo was then sent for, and interrogated as to how the money came into his hands. He declared that they were found sewn up in the buttons of Lewis's coat; and appealed, in truth of his assertion, to the paper on which his wife Johanna had set down on one side, Lewis's expenses; and on the other the money found in his dress.

The agent ordered the police to go to Johanna instantly, and bring her to Ellersee, with this paper. Johanna

appeared trembling and agitated; for the thought of being conducted by policemen, on a charge, no matter how groundless, was to her one of the greatest of all earthly afflictions. Lorenzo was led out of the hall; she was introduced alone, and examined—Her account coincided in every particular with his. The agent looked with evident complacency, on the paper which she produced—but added, after some deliberation: “All were right, if you could prove to me, that this account was not drawn up with the intention of eluding the arm of justice, should you happen to be detected.”

Lewis was summoned; but his total ignorance of the money in his dress, was a suspicious fact against his foster parents. The agent was severe, but just. He was, therefore, perplexed, and knew not whether to believe Lorenzo's declaration, or regard it an imposture preconcerted to deceive him. He was afraid to condemn Lorenzo, and yet could not declare him innocent. He resolved to allow the case to lie over for some time—thus leaving Lorenzo and his wife, under the grievous suspicion that they were guilty, which many believed.

The affair was soon known in Ellersee, and caused great commotion. In every house and in every field, wherever the villagers met, it was the engrossing topic. Conrad and Alicia, the children of Lorenzo, often came home to him with tears in their eyes, bitterly complaining that their playmates had reproached them as being of a dishonest family.

Many good people still believed in Lorenzo's integrity. They regarded him and his wife, as a virtuous, peaceable, and industrious couple. But Lorenzo had enemies who thought otherwise. When he and his wife settled in the village, all eyes were fixed on them, and many civilities, usually extended to neighbours, were denied to them. The villagers could not relish the idea of having a stranger, in possession of a comfortable farm, amongst them. The malicious Crall, moreover, had been looking for that very

farm a short time previously; and had even induced the villagers, who were all afraid of him, not to bid against him, or push his bargain too high. He was sure of his purchase, and looked upon himself as actual possessor of the ground; but when, instead of the expected lease in his own favour, he saw Lorenzo taking possession, he burst into a fit of passion, declared himself, from that moment, Lorenzo's sworn foe, and never omitted any opportunity of maligning and insulting him. He now proclaimed through all the alehouses, that he was a liar and a thief; and was urged on by the miserly church tenant, who went still farther, accusing the agent of injustice, for not having handed over to him the gold coin which Lorenzo had paid, and then condemned Lorenzo to make up, from some other source, the sum that was due.

Many of the women of the village, were not at all displeased at Johanna's misfortune, for she had been educated at a market town not far off, where there was an excellent school, of which she had profited well, under the eye of her virtuous parents. She spoke more correctly, and had a better address and more sense than her new neighbours; and never countenanced some absurd stories and opinions, that were admitted as gospel amongst them. She had, moreover, contracted in her native town, the habit of dressing herself not so gaudily, indeed, as was the fashion of Ellersee, but much more cleanly and tastefully. No wonder then, that she had been the object of many an envious or malicious glance, and that she and her husband were now heartily condemned and abused without pity.

Lorenzo consoled himself with the conviction of his innocence: but Johanna was deeply afflicted, and often wept bitterly. Lorenzo endeavoured to cheer her, and inspire her with confidence. "Dearest Johanna," said he to her, one night, as she sat at the window, weeping bitterly, "look at that moon, which now shines so bright and clear in the heavens: a large black cloud comes over her—but have patience a moment—see, the cloud is



passed, and the moon shines bright and clear as before. Thus it is with innocence. It may be clouded and blackened by false accusations and calumnious tongues—but it triumphs at last. So will God scatter those clouds, that now hang over our fair name, and make our innocence as clear and evident to all men, as this light is to your eyes.”

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MEETING.

LORENZO with his wife and family, were going to Mass one Sunday morning, according to their custom. It was a beautiful day in Autumn. The children were in the highest spirits; but poor Johanna's heart was heavy—for she had no salute from any of her old acquaintances, and if they did deign to look at her, it was a glance of contempt. Heartily did she pray that day in the chapel, that the merciful God would rescue herself and her dear husband, from the foul charge of theft and falsehood.

On her return home after Mass, with her husband and children, what was her surprise on seeing, drawn up, before her humble cottage, a splendid coach and four. The people who were walking before Johanna, cried out, “That's our lady's coach: O, God be praised that our good lady has returned home to us!”

Such was indeed the fact; for on coming up to her door, Johanna found there Lady Waldenburg, and another strange lady of noble and engaging appearance. “O my dearest mother!” exclaimed Lewis, uttering a loud cry of joy, and throwing himself into the stranger's arms. She embraced him with passionate tenderness, and wept copiously. Lewis also wept for joy. Even the bystanders were much moved, many of them even to tears. “It is

Lewis's mother," they whispered, "who could have imagined that the poor boy was the son of such a lady."

As the crowd was now encreasing, Lady Waldenberg brought Lewis and his mother into the house. The poor mother was so much agitated by her unexpected happiness, that she was scarcely able to stand, and sunk exhausted on a chair. She could not take her eyes from her beloved son. "O, how tall you have grown—how ruddy and healthful. She remarked, with pleasure, how clean and neat his dress was; for he had a new frock made after the fashion of the old one, which he had outgrown; the neckcloth, was not indeed costly, but it was white as snow, and his long black locks were tastefully combed down his shoulders. His mother asked him a thousand questions, and he could never cease praising his foster-parents, for their constant care and affectionate solicitude for his happiness, during the whole time of his residence under their roof.

His mother then told how much she grieved on missing him, and how she had suffered ever since: how her husband, whom she had not yet seen, shared in her sorrow, when he heard by letter that Lewis was lost; she also endeavoured to express her happiness on hearing that her son was in Ellersee; and as peace was now almost certain, she told her hopes of being allowed to return to her beloved France. The mother and son were so happy in each other's society, that they forgot the whole world besides.

Neither Lorenzo nor Johanna understood one word of all their conversation; for they spoke nothing but French. But it was easy to see from their animated tones, their gestures, the glow in their faces, and the tears which they shed, that mother and son were the happiest of mortals.

While they were speaking on the topics most interesting to themselves, Lady Waldenberg turned to Lorenzo and his wife, and expressed the happiness she felt in having such generous tenants on her estate. She told them who this strange lady was, and judge what was the surprise of

the good pair on learning that Lewis, whom they had supposed to be the son of some poor, helpless exile, was in reality a young count, and that his mother was a woman of such high rank, and of well known prudence and virtue.

Lady Waldenberg then gave a history of the accident, by which they were led to return rapidly from Bohemia, where they had taken refuge. The history was briefly this—Lewis's mother continued her flight, till she arrived at Prague, where Count and Lady Waldenburg were residing. But the countess led a retired life, was seldom seen in company, and for a long time held no communication with Lady Waldenberg's family. The agent at Waldenberg wrote to his master regular accounts of what was passing on his property; and among other things, mentioned the story of the gold coin, which were said to have been found in the dress of the young French emigrant. Lady Waldenberg told the story at one of her parties, and one of the ladies present, told it to Lewis's mother. Without a moment's delay she ran to Lady Waldenberg to learn further particulars, which were given in full detail by the agent. The place, the name of the boy, the day on which he lost his mother, her assumed name, the number, nay the very impression on the coins, were all given, and all perfectly agreed. The countess was convinced that the boy in whose clothes the money was found, must be her beloved Lewis, for she had with her own hands sewed the money in his dress. She burned with anxiety to see her beloved son. But she could not dare to travel so far as Waldenberg, because, as yet there was only a truce, and the French armies were still on the German side of the Rhine. But Count Waldenberg told her that he and his lady would start with her instantly for Waldenberg, if she were willing to accompany them as a waiting maid of the countess, for in that case, there could not be the slightest possibility of danger. She could travel securely and have a secure home as long as she pleased, in the castle of

Waldenberg. The countess was overjoyed at this generous proposal, and all three started immediately for home.

"Thus," said Lady Waldenberg, "these gold coins have been, under God, the occasion of this rapid journey of Lewis's mother, and the restoration to her arms of her beloved son. Many a long year might pass, before their meeting, were it not for the false charge that was made against you and your husband, my dear Johanna."

"Ah," said Johanna, "the happiness of that mother and son has banished from my mind every thought of the unmerited disgrace that fell on us. My joy is not less than their's. Turly, here is a striking proof that God knows how to turn, when He pleases, all our evils to our advantage."

Lady Waldenberg now told Lewis and his mother, that it was time to return to Waldenberg. The countess arose, and going over to Lorenzo and his wife, expressed, in the warmest terms she could command, the deep debt of gratitude which she owed to them for the preservation of her son. Lady Waldenberg acted as interpreter. Johanna then produced the remaining gold pieces, with the account which she had carefully kept, and offered them to the countess. But the countess would not listen to her. "I must see," she added, "how I can give you some more substantial proof of my gratitude."

Johanna now hastened to pack up Lewis's clothes, and in a few minutes, Conrad and Alicia entered with a parcel. When Lewis saw them, and felt that the hour of separation was come, his countenance reflected the deep emotions of his soul, and he burst into tears. He took an affectionate farewell of his foster-parents, and embraced the children of the family, as if they were his own brothers and sisters. Lorenzo, Johanna, and their children were in tears. "This," said Lewis's mother, who was also weeping, "this is another proof that all of you loved my Lewis, and treated him as kindly as if he were one of yourselves."

Lady Waldenberg consoled Lorenzo and his family. "Weep not, my good people," said she, "Lewis is not bidding you an eternal farewell; he remains, with his mother, for a long time at Waldenberg. You can often see him there." Lewis now entered the carriage with his mother and Lady Waldenberg, and after having paid a visit to the parish priest, whom the countess cordially thanked for his kindness to her son, the happy party started for the castle of Waldenberg.

## CHAPTER XII.

### VIRTUE REWARDED—DISHONESTY PUNISHED.

LEWIS'S mother resided at the castle of Waldenberg until peace was proclaimed, when she was joined by her husband. No pen can describe their happiness on meeting, after such a long separation, especially after having found their beloved son. Great, indeed, was their joy—but not greater than their gratitude to God.

After having conversed for several hours on all that had befallen them during their separation, the countess said to her husband, "Now we must take some plan for rewarding Lewis's foster-parents."

The count and countess had lost their property in France; but they still had at their command a considerable fund, which they had lodged in the bank of England. The countess had also in her possession her case of diamonds and jewels, which she had contrived to carry with her in her flight. "All these precious stones," said she "I would have willingly given to find my lost son! Ought I not then to give one of them, at least—one of these rich diamonds, to reward the love which that good couple, Johanna and Lorenzo, have shewed to our child? We must ask Count Waldenberg to sell to us the little farm

now held by them; and we shall then give it to them in fee: our diamond can thus make many people happy—and well assuredly do they deserve it at our hands.”

The proposal pleased the count. “No better use,” said he, “could be made of the diamond, than to give it for the benefit of that family, which has preserved for us, our dearest treasure on earth, our beloved son.”

The count and countess communicated their intention to Count Waldenberg. The Countess Waldenberg admired the diamond, which was beautifully set in a ring. Its value was, however, scarcely half that of the farm, but when Lewis’s mother, offered two smaller diamonds, set in a pair of earrings, Count Waldenberg would not listen to her. “No,” said he, “that is not necessary, it is too much: we shall arrange the matter thus—my lady will accept the ring, which she so much prizes, both for its intrinsic value, and as a keepsake from a beloved friend, and I will give to Lorenzo a lease for ever of his farm, which he has held for nine years, and require only half his present annual rent. He can thus consider the farm as his own property, except the very moderate rent, and not only support himself comfortably, but also provide respectably for his children.”

The count and countess gratefully approved this arrangement, and the agent was ordered to have the deeds drawn up without delay.

Count Waldenberg proposed that Lorenzo should be sent for, immediately; but Lewis’s mother objected. “I and my husband will go to Ellersee, and our son Lewis will present the deed to his foster-parents.”

“I believe that is the better way,” said Count Waldenberg. “You know how to enhance a favour by the mode of presenting it. You must allow my lady and myself to accompany you.”

It was agreed, and they started without delay. The carriage rolled up to the door of the humble peasants. Lewis sprung out first and presented the papers to Lorenzo.

The good man read them, and raised his eyes gratefully to heaven; Johanna could not controul her joy—but clasping her hands, “My God,” she exclaimed, “this house where we and our children have lived as tenants—these fields and gardens around us—can they be really ours?”

“They are,” answered Count Waldenberg. “Your charity to a poor child who wandered without a home, has secured a perpetual home for you and your children.”

“Thus,” said Lady Waldenberg, “every good act has its reward—but however great this temporal reward may appear, what is it, compared to what you may expect in the world to come.”

All the inhabitants of Ellensee, were surprised at this visit to poor Lorenzo, and at the valuable favour conferred on him. “Oh!” said the church tenant’s wife, “if we had suspected that things would take such a turn, we would have done the work of mercy, and insisted on Lorenzo’s resigning the poor French boy to our care.”

The church tenant was convinced now, that the charge which he had made against Lorenzo for the missing coin, was false. He went to Lorenzo and begged his pardon, for having traduced and accused him of robbery. His suspicions now fell on another man—whom he had always regarded as his friend. This was Crall himself. The church tenant went straight to Waldenberg; appeared before the magistrate, and stated that he had another charge to prefer, regarding his stolen property.

“A charge as foolish, perhaps, as that made against Lorenzo,” said the magistrate: “but let us hear it.”

The man gave, according to his custom, a long-winded history of the matter. “When the French army,” said he, “burst down so suddenly on us, I almost lost my head. My bills, and my fifty gold pieces, the hard savings of twenty-five years’ labour, were a load on my heart. I should hide them from the enemy: but where, I knew not; I consulted Crall, my neighbour. ‘He is a prudent man,’ said I; ‘and has often given me very good advice.’ ‘Put

your money,' said he, 'this very night, behind a loose brick in your garden wall; no man can find it there. Your papers you may leave where they are; the enemy will not take them.' The advice pleased me, and I followed it. At twelve o'clock that very night, when all were asleep, I stole gently into the garden. The night was so dark, my wife followed me with a lantern; for I could not rest secure, unless I had examined, with my own eyes, the place where the money was deposited. Day and night my thoughts were with that money; and the soldiers had scarcely left our village, when I ran to take it out of the wall. But judge my horror—it almost killed me; none of the coins, not even one was to be found. That whole night long, I could not close an eye; and rising before day break, I ran and rapped and thundered at Crall's door until he awoke. I complained to him of my misfortune."

"Well," said the magistrate, "and what did neighbour Crall say?"

"He flew into a rage with me," said the man, "and threw the blame of my misfortune on myself. 'I see now,' said he, 'that when a wise man gives counsel, he must have a wise man to put it in execution. But you,' he added, 'are a stupid clown—Why did you bring the lantern with you? was it that people might see you? I am not at all surprised, that the gold birds are flown, and that the nest is empty. However, I will give you some hints now, which may lead to their recovery. When you employed Lorenzo to graft your trees, contrary to my advice, did you not see that he was often loitering at the wall, though he had no business there? Believe me,' said he, 'Lorenzo—no other man—stole the money. Were I in your place, I would swear informations against him at once!' I did so, as you are aware, but I did not tell that it was at Crall's instigation, because he cautioned me in the strictest manner, not to let any mortal know that he was my adviser."



“Yes,” said the magistrate to himself, “Crall, that malicious rogue, would avenge himself on Lorenzo, bring him into contempt, and, perhaps, expel him from the village—to become, in the end, a tenant in that farm.”

The magistrate then enquired: “Have you told any person as yet, of this new suspicion of yours?”

“Not one soul have I said a syllable to,” answered the farmer. “For many years, I have placed unlimited confidence in Crall, but I distrust him now, and dread him. He must not know that I have accused him. Do not let him hear my name.”

“Well,” said the magistrate, who, with all his gravity, could not help smiling at the farmer’s simplicity, “don’t say one word more at present: you shall be summoned another day.”

The magistrate knew that Crall was a cunning rogue. “It is probable enough,” thought he, “that Crall had an eye to the money, and persuaded the simple farmer to put it in the wall, where the thief could easily seize it. Crall is a bad manager; goes in debt; drinks and gambles; and, no doubt, has already squandered most of the money—if he stole it. It is easy to make enquiries on this matter.”

Having summoned his bailiffs, and told them his suspicions, he ordered them to ascertain whether Crall had paid, in gold, any of his numerous debts; or, at least, had been seen, for some time past, with any gold in his hands. In a few days’ time one of the bailiffs returned, and informed the magistrate that Crall had not paid one penny of his debts, but that, being in a public house some time ago, where he drank and gambled the whole night, he had changed some gold coins. I have secured two of them, which I got in change for silver. Here they are: the very same coinage and description, you see, as the farmer swore were stolen from him.

The magistrate ordered Crall to be taken into custody at once, and charged him with the theft. He wept, and swore, and raged, that so honest a man as he, should be

charged with such a crime. That he had changed the money, he could not deny; but that he had stolen it, he did deny with the most tremendous and repeated oaths and imprecations.

“That may be the fact,” said the magistrate; “but there is one point, which you can easily clear up. You can tell us from whom you received the gold coin.”

Crall turned pale: he could not name the person. He was compelled to confess his crime; was condemned to restore the stolen goods; and to be imprisoned for many years, as a thief and false accuser.

“So it is,” said the magistrate, “with all who are not frugal and industrious; who drink and gamble; and, in the end, calumniate and steal. Bad actions bear bad fruit, woe, and shame: virtue and honesty, alone, lead to happiness. Your guilt is now as evident as Lorenzo’s innocence: and as he was rewarded for his honesty and charity, so shall you be punished for your dishonesty and malice.”

As Crall was already deeply in debt, all his property was brought to the hammer, to meet the sum which he was condemned to pay. He was reduced to beggary: and often did his poor children beg a piece of bread at Lorenzo’s window. “Crall deserved his fate,” said all the villagers; “not only for his evil deeds, his treachery, and calunnies, but still more for his cruelty to the good Lewis. He wished to expel the poor abandoned orphan from Lorenzo’s roof—his own wife and children, are now without a roof to cover them.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE COLONEL.

COUNT Waldenberg and the French count were not less attached to each other than their countesses, for all had the same noble and generous dispositions. Though the war was over for the present, the emigrants had no hope of returning to their native country. But war soon burst forth with redoubled fury, and was raging in countries far away from Waldenburg, which induced the count and countess to make a pressing invitation to their noble guests to remain with them until better times. The offer was gratefully accepted, and the two families lived for a considerable time, very happily, together.

One day, when no one was expecting the appearance of a French soldier, a colonel rode up to the castle, accompanied by some hussars. He announced himself as a Frenchman, and requested to be introduced without delay to Count Waldenberg. Every person in the castle was astonished at the visit, Lewis's parents were alarmed, his mother especially, who feared that they might be taken prisoners and sent into France. Decline the visit they could not.

A young man of noble and engaging appearance, entered the chamber. He was dressed in his beautiful hussar uniform. Lewis no sooner saw him than, uttering a cry of joy, he sprung into his arms. The colonel was that very officer, who had been wounded at Ellersee, but who had, since that time, risen rapidly by his bravery and good conduct. The evening before, his regiment had halted some miles from Ellersee, and taking advantage of that circumstance, he rode all night, to pay a visit to his young

preserver, and to see how he was going on. But hearing at Ellersee, that Lewis and his parents were at Waldenberg, he started for the castle, without even alighting from his horse.

He embraced Lewis affectionately, and gave his delighted parents an eloquent account of how their son had saved his life. Count Waldenberg pressed him to remain some days with him at the castle, but he said, "A few hours are all I have at my command—I must be with my troops to the minute." He conversed with the French count and countess on their misfortunes, and promised, when taking leave of them, "I will return at another time, and I hope to meet you and your noble son Lewis, under happier circumstances."

The colonel kept his word; he returned as soon as the war was over, and presented to Lewis's parents a written document, authorizing them to return to France, and take possession of their property. He had so many friends, and such influence, that he was able to obtain for them, what was denied to most of the other emigrants for many years. The conduct of the young boy in saving the life of a distinguished officer, was universally praised; and every one said, it were a pity, that the parents of so noble a youth, should be banished from their native land.

The colonel paid a visit to Ellersee, in company with Lewis and his parents. The parish priest, who had lent the good books, and often brought them in person, was the first whom they visited. The colonel gave him a large collection of the best French authors, beautifully bound, and of the best editions. He also gave valuable presents to his good hostess, the miller's wife, and to her husband. He gave a large sum of money to Lewis's foster-parents, leaving to their own discretion how it was to be expended. To Johanna and her children he presented more than sixty yards of the finest linen, in return, as he said, for the lint which they had supplied him with. The colonel had never been so happy during, his brilliant career, as on the day

when he conducted Lewis and his parents, as it were in triumph, into France. Until the day of his death, Lewis always thought it a most fortunate circumstance, that he had been obliged to spend part of his youth in the country. It had improved not only his constitution, which was naturally weak, but still more his heart and his principles. The simple and pious habits of his foster-parents, who commenced and closed each day with a family prayer, that God would preserve them from all evil, and teach them to bear all their sufferings and crosses with patience; the honesty and innocence of the pious country people, and their earnest and solemn devotions on Sundays, in the little church of the village, excited and nurtured within him a deep love and reverence for religion and virtue. Domestic example, and the public worship in the chapel, word and example had, with united influence, formed his character to true virtue. From the lives of his humble but contented associates in the country, he knew how little was required for man's health and happiness; and to his last breath, he hated all useless expenditure, especially on those fleeting and costly fashions of the day. The country was his favourite. His castle was his cherished home, not so much for its beautiful architecture and elegant furniture, as for that rich landscape of waving corn fields, blooming pasture and shady woods, with which it was surrounded. He loved to contemplate God's works, because they purified and tranquilized his soul. For those who were beneath him in rank, especially the poorer classes of the people, he had an ardent and hearty sympathy; for he had seen with his own eyes what toil they bear to support their masters and their landlords, and what noble souls are often found under a thatched roof. These feelings and principles grew with his years, and were further developed by the instructions and example of his excellent father.

“A rage for empty pomp and shew,” said the count, “led us astray from nature, and those who were below us in rank, followed our wanderings. Hence sprung all the

vices, disorders and convulsions of this age. Return to simple nature we must, if we would place things in a better state. By this means alone, can the discontent of the suffering masses be removed, and all ranks in the social scale, enjoy, peaceful, tranquil, and happy lives.

The countess adopted those views also, but her greatest delight was to study the ways of Divine Providence, as manifested in the history of her beloved Lewis. "God," would she often say, "snatched him from my arms to restore him a more virtuous and prudent son. A frail butterfly, a flitting, insignificant creature, gave the first occasion to a series of events, most beneficial not only to Lewis, but to many other men. The colonel's life was saved; Lorenzo and his virtuous family were placed in better circumstances; and we were recalled to our beloved country, and reinstated in our ancient inheritance. Under the calamities that befell me, I was too often fretful and desponding, but I have now learned, by experience, that a supreme and infinitely good and wise Providence, presides invisibly over the destiny of men, and disposes all things for our benefit: and this belief is the sure and sole principle by which we can support ourselves through the troubles of this life, and not sink, faint hearted and hopeless, on our way to a better land, beyond the grave."

# THE DUMB GIRL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### AN AFFLICTED MOTHER.

MRS. VON GRUNAU led a lonely and sorrowful life on her paternal estate. Misfortunes had fallen fast and heavy on her. Two years ago she had lost a beloved husband, and, accompanied by her three little children, she had followed his remains to the grave. Within another year two of those children—two beautiful and promising boys—were carried off by the measles, and once more the widow's tears flowed over the fresh clay, as she fixed the white garlands on their graves. In the beginning of this year news came, that her only brother, a brave officer, had fallen in defence of his country, and this new sorrow opened all her wounds, and made them bleed afresh. One consolation alone remained for her on this earth—her only daughter Melina—a lovely child—about eight or nine years old.

One day as they were sitting, at the work table, in the parlour, the mother sewing according to her custom, and her little daughter, whom she herself instructed, reading aloud from a book that lay open on the table, a stranger entered. He held a paper in his hand, and after having saluted them, he said, that this was a claim for a small debt of some thousand thalers, due to him by the late Mr. von Grunau. The claim appeared highly improbable to the widow, especially as the stranger was very badly

dressed and had rather the appearance of a vagabond, than one who could lend so much money. But she was afraid, because none of her servants were in the house. The butler had gone to town to see his mother, who was dangerously ill; the cook had accompanied him; and the other servants were saving hay in the meadow. Mrs. von Grunau ordered Melina to call the steward, who came, and declared positively that the claim was a forgery. "I know, beyond all doubt," said he, "that Mr. von Grunau did not owe one penny at his death. That signature is a forgery." The stranger appeared transported with fury, and with shocking imprecations, poured out a torrent of calumnious invectives on the deceased. The mother not wishing that her daughter should hear such horrible things, ordered her to go into the garden. The stranger then began to give a tedious and confused account of the time and place, where the debt was contracted, stating that Mr. von Grunau, when at college, had borrowed the money from him. At last the steward lost all patience. "Begone," said he, "you are a liar; if my good master had owed you ten thalers instead of your large claim, you would have come long ago to demand the money, which you seem to want very sadly, and not waited until now—two years after his death." But the stranger persisted in urging his claim, and could not be induced to stir. Hot words passed between him and the steward, and brought on a long altercation. The widow was sorry that her servants were not at home, to drive away the man by force, or take him into custody. After some time he went off, threatening still to bring his claim before the courts.

Mrs. von Grunau was much annoyed by this intrusion, and walked into the garden to see her daughter. But no trace of the child could be found. A very rapid river flowed outside the hedge; on the banks, at a point where they were very steep, she found Melina's little watering-pot. The poor mother almost fainted in despair. A shepherd boy came up with Melina's straw hat.



“The hat,” he said, “had floated down the river, until it was caught by a willow branch. He knew it by the fine blue ribbons.”

“O God!” exclaimed the poor mother, raising her pale face and clasped hands to heaven, “my darling child has fallen into the river.”

“Oh,” said the boy, with a shudder, “the poor little girl is certainly drowned. You see there—the grass is beaten from the place where the water pot lay, down to the river’s brink. Alas, kind Melina, it was only yesterday evening you gave me bread and butter.”

The agitated mother cried out: “Run, run quickly—call the people: perhaps they may save her?” Herself ran to the steward—and told him what had happened. The whole village was out in search of the child. But they sought in vain.

The disconsolate mother, now spent sorrowful days and sleepless nights. “Oh!” she would often exclaim, “my dear husband and my three children are gone from me, and are with Thee now in heaven, my God. My noble brother, too, died far away from his native land. I am left alone and comfortless. My property has no charms for me: the world is dead to me. My sole pleasure is, to think of the day which shall unite us in heaven. My only hope is beyond the grave. Heaven was, at all times, my most ardent desire—but now, with greater ardour than ever—I pray to my God, that I may soon find rest there.”

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## CHAPTER II.

### MAJOR VON BERG.

MR. VON BERG, the widow’s brother, though supposed to be dead, was still alive: he was captain of a regiment of hussars; and had been thrown from his horse in a terrible

battle, and was abandoned by his soldiers in the confusion of their flight. They believed that he was killed, but he was only severely wounded. Being carried away prisoner to a distant fortress in the enemy's country, he had no means of sending news to his friend, nor did any news come to them from any other quarter.

Peace was proclaimed: the major was liberated, and was returning home at the head of his regiment. They halted for a time at a village, on the borders of a great forest, in which a friend of the major's dwelt. He rode to his friend's castle; and learned the sad tidings of his brother-in-law's death, but could not get any information of his sister and her children.

When the major and his servant were returning to the camp in the evening, through the wild and wooded country, they lost their way. Autumn had already far advanced. The country, with its gloomy pines, became, at every step, wilder and more savage. For a time, the moon, then in her first quarter, threw a flickering light through the dark pines, waving their arms over the travellers' path. But large masses of dark clouds soon gathered over their heads: the storm howled through the forest; and mingled rain and snow dashed in the travellers' faces. The darkness was so great, that not a glimpse of the moon or sky, could be caught through the trees. "Our horses," said the major, at last, "are so tired, that, cold and frosty though it be, we must spend this night in the forest."

"Well," answered Haska, "it is not our first time. As we have nothing to eat or drink, we must have a fire, at all events." He accordingly dismounted; and having tied his horse to a tree, sought some sheltered spot, but all his endeavours to light a fire were fruitless. The fallen twigs and branches were too wet; and he gave up in despair. Suddenly, during a pause in the howling of the storm, they heard the barking of a dog. "Thank God," said the major, "we cannot be far from a village or house."

“No,” answered his servant: “let us mount again, and ride in the direction where the dog barked.”

After a short ride, they saw a light glimmering through the trees. They rode towards it, and came to a solitary house, surrounded with a high wall, enclosing a garden, the yard, and stabling. The reflection of a large fire from the kitchen, flung a reddish glare on the old trunks and moss-grown arms of the trees. The house appeared to be very strongly built: the windows were secured with massive iron grating: and several parts of the wall, from which the plaster had fallen off, were encrusted with green and yellow moss or weeds. Both riders dismounted, and leading their horses by the bridles, walked round the wall to find the door. Haska rapped loudly—after a pause—a small lattice in the door was opened—a light appeared, and a voice within asked, “who are you?” “Travellers,” answered Haska, “who have lost our way in the forest.” “Ha, ha,” muttered the voice, “you come at an untimely hour. How many are you?” “Two, and our two horses,” answered Haska. “Good,” was the reply: “four in all.” An old, wrinkled face, was then thrust through the opening, to take a view of the travellers.

“Heavens,” thought the major, “if I had not seen the dress, I would swear it was a grizzly old hussar.” He drew nearer to the door, and asked to be admitted.

“Since you are such a handsome young fellow,” said the old hag, “we could not shut the door against you.” She unlocked the door, and the major entered, followed by Haska and the two jaded horses. “There’s the stable,” said she, pointing to a door: “you will find a lantern inside. Bring it here until I light it: you have room and hay enough, but our supply of oats is out.”

Haska led the horses into the stable. The major, also, wished to see how they were tended, and found every thing to his taste. The old woman locked the door very carefully, and brought in the keys.

“ Now, my fine, young gentleman,” said she, “ come into our hall.”

“ With all my heart,” answered the major: “ and, good landlady, get a warm supper in haste: I am cold as a wet dog, and hungry as a wolf.”

“ With pleasure,” said she: “ but I am very sorry that I cannot treat you as I wish: my son is not at home: I must do as well as I can. I limp—as you see—to lay the table, and cook, and bring up the dishes, is too much for me—I must call down Ursula, my little grandchild. The poor child is dumb, and cannot utter one syllable; but her hearing is very good; and, for so young a child, she is of great use to us. My son will be home in about half an hour’s time, and then we can amuse and entertain you more hospitably.”

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DUMB GIRL.

THE major threw off his wet mantle, and sat opposite the large blazing fire. The old hostess introduced Ursula, telling her to salute the strangers. The poor girl did so. “ Prepare the table now,” said the old woman, giving her a table cloth. The girl wore a black gown, a red shawl drawn over her shoulders, and a cap and apron white as snow. She appeared pale and sorrowful; and excited the warmest sympathy of the kind-hearted soldier, who could not behold, without pity, so young and beautiful a face clouded with grief. “ God bless you, dear girl,” said he: “ what a pity that you are dumb—I wish I could have a few words from you.” The girl cast one kind, but sorrowful glance at the major; pressed her finger to her lips; prepared the table, and retired.

In a few minutes she brought in the supper. The major rose and seated himself at table. Contrary to his expectations, the table linen and napkins were of the finest quality, and white as snow. The spoons and other articles were silver; and the supper itself was excellent. He was loud in his praise of the attendance. "Thank heaven," said he, "I have found out excellent quarters: I can make some amends for the fatigues of the road." Once more the girl cast a look at him, of the most indescribable sorrow; burst into tears, and withdrew.

"Astonishing," thought he, "that the child is so sad. But to hear and not to be able to speak—must be very afflicting—to one so young—especially a girl. Still, there must be some other cause for her grief. I pity the poor thing from my heart; and would wish, above all things, that she could tell me her sorrow."

After some time, Ursula brought some roast venison and salad; and secretly slipped a piece of paper into the major's hand. She glanced first at the paper, then at the kitchen window, and retired. The major understood that he was to read the paper secretly, for, on looking to the window that opened into the kitchen, he found that the old woman was watching him. He unfolded the paper without stirring from table, and read the following words. They had been scrawled with a pencil, and, evidently, with a trembling hand.

"You have fallen into a den of murderers: you shall be murdered this night: be on your guard: God be with you—rescue me."

The major was thunderstruck. He doubted whether he should fly at once, or hold himself on his guard where he was. He had still some doubts whether the information was true.

Haska came into the chamber with the portmanteau, from which he was about to take, what his master wanted for the night. The major spoke to him in a low tone, such as could not be heard by the old woman, telling him

of the contents of the note, and asking his advice on the best plan to escape, or meet the danger with which they were threatened. The trusty servant shook from head to foot. "Come, come," said the major, "we must not lose courage. Though it be no laughing matter, we must laugh, as if we were in the best possible humour. If we look so gloomy, the old hag will certainly suspect us."

Haska, instantly, burst into a loud and hearty laugh, as if the major, had said something very pleasant. "O," said the major, "that's too loud; bring my pair of double-barrelled pistols. They must stand the first charge—and then my hope is in the edge of this good sabre. Examine, also, whether there may not be something suspicious in the house, either arms or stolen goods; or perhaps some servants lurking concealed, so that it would be better for us to escape if possible. I will keep the hag engaged in the mean time, and prevent her from watching you. As soon as she is ready in the kitchen, I will call her and keep her in chat here."

Haska went as he was ordered, and after a short delay returned with the pistols, and laid them on the table. He was pale and agitated. "Oh! I have seen enough," said he. "There is a small room near the stable, for servants, I examined it closely, and saw something like a trap door under the bed; I removed the bed, raised the door and looked down—and what did I see, but heaps of rich clothes, silks, satins, all daubed with blood. A splendid waistcoat, which certainly must have belonged to some distinguished person, was bored through with a dagger, just over the heart; and the marks of a stream of blood, were clotted on the white vest, around and below the rent. Horrible, horrible—we are in a den of murderers. There is no chance of escape by flight. The door is secured with strong bolts and locks, and the keys are concealed. The walls are very high—we have no ladder, and even though we had, how could we leave our horses here—I think the robbers would have us taken again in a very short time."

“I would not be afraid of a dozen of them,” said the major, “still I think it better to ask the keys quietly of the old hag, and ride out once more in the forest. I do not wish to shed blood when I can avoid it.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HOST AND HOSTESS.

“COME here, good landlady,” cried the major, in a loud voice.

“What do you want in such a hurry,” she asked, limping into the room. But just at this moment, three loud and heavy knocks were heard at the door. “Ah,” said she, “the master is come, I must let him in before I hear what you have to order.” The major, with a candle in his hand, accompanied her, as if to light her to the door, but in reality to ascertain whether the master was coming alone. He was alone. The major returned with him to the room, and sat down at the table on which the pistols were lying. He entered into an animated conversation, with his host, on the late war, and appeared perfectly free from all suspicion or fear.

In the mean time Haska, having fed the horses, came in and sat down at another table. The major said to him secretly:—“Eat your supper quickly and prepare my chamber. Take my portmanteau with you. Retire then to your own room as if you were going to bed, but be on the watch. When you hear me leaving this room, come to my sleeping room and don't forget your pistols and sabre.”

Haska went with the portmanteau to his master's room, and after returning, pretended to be very sleepy, and yawned heavily. “You strain your jaws,” said the host,

"as if you would swallow me hair and hide." Haska laughed.

"I would do so with pleasure," said he, "but in truth, I am very drowsy; I rose before day-light this morning and have been on the road all day. I will sleep the whole night as sound as a badger. Awaken me in the morning, to feed the horses, but if you don't rap loudly, I certainly will not hear you." The host appeared quite pleased, and lighted Haska to the servant's room, near the stable.

When the host returned, the major renewed the conversation, but observing that the man threw, now and then, a glance at the pistols, "Do you like them, good host?" he asked.

"Very much, indeed," was the answer, "but why have you not left them in your holsters? You have no need of them here. As I am an honourable man, you are under the safest roof in the world."

"Your declaration is, I am sure, perfectly true. Your house is as safe as yourself are honourable. But it has always been my habit to take care of my pistols. Both are charged to the muzzle; they might easily do some harm."

"I will put them in that press there in the wall, and you can keep the key," said the man.

"O, not at all, said the major, "don't give yourself that trouble. I always have had the custom, or the folly, of bringing my pistols to my bedchamber, and leaving them on a table by my bedside."

The host appeared pensive for a few moments, and paced up and down the room. "What can this be," said he at last, "it is only now I observed it, you have nothing but water to drink. My old mother is very forgetful. She gave you no wine; I must bring you some of the best in my cellar, and we shall have a glass together."

"He went out to the kitchen and said, in a loud voice, to his mother, "Mother you forgot to give wine to your noble guest. Bring a lamp and come with me. We must



have some of that butt which I reserve for honourable guests."

"What does the villain mean," thought the major, "to poison me, or give me a sleeping draught?"

But, before he had time to think more, the host rushed to the door, exclaiming, "O, good sir, come quickly to my help, for God's sake: my poor mother, while carrying the candle, fell down in the cellar. I don't know whether she is dead or alive: come help me to carry the poor creature up."

"Most willingly," said the major, "take that candle on the table, and shew me the way."

They came to the cellar, which the major perceived had a trap door. "O, look down," said the man, "my poor mother is below and gives no stir or sign of life."

The major knew not whether the woman had really fallen, or whether this was a trick to lock himself in the cellar. He stood at the head of the stone steps, and said, "Go before me with the light, lest I might break my neck going down."

The man descended. The major now, for the first time, perceived the edge of a dagger, glittering under his coat. "I know the villain," thought the major, "he will stab me with that dagger, while I am engaged carrying the old hag." Suddenly he gave the robber a thrust, which whirled him down to the bottom of the steps, "exclaiming at the same time, "Who digs a piteous fall for another falls into it himself." The robber rolled over his mother, who suddenly started up, and seizing him by the hair, screamed aloud, "You devil, I fear you have broken a couple of my ribs." The major let fall the trap door—and secured it above with the strong iron bolts.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE DUMB GIRL SPEAKS.

THE major ran to the door, and shouted "Haska, Haska," Haska came, as an old hussar comes to the assault, with a pistol in each hand, and his naked sabre across between his teeth. "You don't need your arms," said the major, laughing, "the birds are caught. The hag and her son are safely locked in the cellar."

"Victory!" shouted Haska; "the fortress is our's. We must reconnoitre now, to be on the defensive if necessary. The keys must be found first and kept securely."

After a long search Haska found them in the kitchen, under an old pot. The jolly hussar, put them on a plate, and with a low bow, presented them to his master, as if he were surrendering the keys of a captured fortress.

They first examined all the apartments in the lower story of the house, and then ascended the narrow flight of stone steps, and went through all the dark passages, lest some persons might be concealed in them. As they were passing by a door, they heard some person praying most earnestly. "O, good God," said a soft sweet voice, "have mercy on the noble soldier, and his faithful servant. Save them and save me from this horrible house."

The major, on opening the door, exclaimed in amazement, "Ursula, is it you that are praying so fervently? I thought you were dumb."

"O no, good sir, others pretended that," said she. "The wicked wretches in this house murdered a strange man, and threatened to do the like to me, if I ever uttered one syllable in presence of a stranger."

"Cheer up," said the major, "the master and mistress can do you no more harm; they are settled."

“ Oh, heavens !” said the poor child, “ surely you have not killed them ?”

“ No ;” answered the major, “ I have only locked them up in the cellar. Come down with us now, and let us be merry, and tell me how you happened to fall into this horrible house.”

“ O, sir,” said the poor child, “ you are not safe yet. There are twenty other robbers in this forest yet, and twelve of them are expected here this night. We were getting dinner for them.—O ! take care—do not let the horrible fellows into the house.”

“ Come, Haska,” said the major, “ we must take the proper measures to defend ourselves. I think they cannot enter except through the door.”

“ No ;” answered the girl, “ all the windows are well secured with iron bars. There is a balcony to the house, which the robbers call their lighthouse. The master sets up a light there, whenever he expects his associates—to shew them the way. When they come, they always give three heavy knocks at the door, and then the old woman or her son opens the door.”

“ Well,” said the major, “ if the dozen do not come in a body, we will let them in. If only half a dozen come, it would be only child’s sport for us. We must give them a warm reception. Run and see whether the lamp be lighted in the balcony.”

Haska ran, and returned, saying with a smile, “ Our host and hostess are very punctual people, they lighted a fresh torch before they went down into the cellar. The light is so strong and bright, that we can easily see how many of the villains will come at the same time to the door.”

“ Right, Haska,” said the major. “ Come down, now, into the yard, and we will make all our preparations.” The brave soldier threw off his military cloak, remarking that the sight of the hussar uniforms would not be encouraging to the robbers. “ Get cords now,” he added, “ with which we can bind the fellows.”

Suddenly the three raps were heard at the door—Haska ran up to the balcony, and descending in a minute, told the major softly, that there were only two outside. “Open the door,” said the major, “and stand behind it. Leave the first that comes in to me; you take the second. Lay down the lantern on the ground.”

Haska opened the door. The major seized the first robber by the collar, clapped a pistol to his breast, and cried out in a voice of thunder, “Surrender or you are killed on the spot.” The wretch flung himself on his knees and begged his life. Haska brought his man to the ground in a twinkling. The two robbers were bound hand and foot, and lay stretched on the ground. “If you attempt to stir, or utter one word,” said the major, “I will shoot you without mercy.”

Three other heavy raps were again heard at the door. It was from two robbers, who came loaded with heavy packs on their shoulders. They were admitted, overpowered and bound, like their comrades. The brave officer, and his sturdy servant stood at their post until near morning. But no other robber came, nor gave any sign of approach.

“I don’t know why they are not coming,” said Haska, “perhaps they have smelt the roast meat. But the villains will not escape their punishment.”

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE UNCLE.

WHEN morning arose over the black forest of pines, Haska said, “Now we may retire.” But the major told him that all danger was not over yet.

“You heard,” said he “that there are twenty robbers in the forest still. Before we could look about us, a ball

from a bush or a thicket, might bring us down. We must consult on what is best to be done."

Suddenly Haska cried out, "I hear the tramp of a troop of horse, I fear their whole force of horse and foot is coming on us." He ran up to the window, and in a few minutes came down, bounding with joy. "They are our own men—a whole troop of hussars!"

Haska threw open the doors, and the hussars came in. They saluted the major, and their comrade, with all the cordiality of soldiers. "We were in great trouble for you, major," said the officer, "you are always so punctual at your post, that when we found you absent last night, at the appointed hour, we feared you had either lost your way in the forest, or fallen into the hands of the robbers that infest this district. We mounted our horses, and rode through the forest, and perceiving by the light of our torches, the tracks of two horses, 'That's the track of the major's horse,' said I, pointing to one. 'No other horse, far or near, has a hoof like that;' so we followed the tracks and they brought us here."

"Thank God," said the major, "that we have met again; I thank you heartily for your zeal."

"Ah," said Haska, "I know now why the robbers did not come. Ye frightened them."

The major gave a brief account of what had happened, and then gave his orders. "Guard these four prisoners, and bring up the old woman and her son from the cellar. Search the whole house, break in all the doors, chests and presses: you must find heaps of stolen goods here; make free use of the wine and provisions with which the house is well supplied." The hussars gladly obeyed all his orders, especially the last, and soon dispatched the roast meat that had been prepared for the robbers' dinner.

The major himself went to the room where he had left his young preserver, and brought her to the chamber lighted from the balcony. "Now, my dear girl," said he, "sit here on this sofa, and tell me your history; how you

happened to fall into the hands of these ruffians, for I am confident you cannot be a daughter of the robber—a grandchild of that malignant old hag. Tell me your history, dear Ursula.”

“ My name is not Ursula,” said the girl, “ my name is Melina. I was stolen from my mother and carried to this place. My father died two years before my capture—he was Count von Grunau.”

“ Good heavens!” exclaimed the major, clasping his hands, “ are you, then, my sister’s child? I am your uncle—a thousand blessings on you, dear Melina. When I was going to the war, you were a baby and I took you in my arms and blessed you. You are an angel, whom God has employed to save me from a horrible death.” The warm-hearted soldier clasped his hands, and stood for some time with his eyes devoutly raised to heaven. Melina, too, prayed and wept. “ Praise be to God,” said the major, “ that He has conducted me to you. O, what a happiness for my beloved sister.” The uncle and niece embraced affectionately, and shed torrents of happy tears.

“ But,” asked the major, “ how were you stolen from your mother?”

“ Oh,” she answered, “ a terrible man came into my mother’s house, shewed a paper to her, and cursed and swore most horribly. My mother ordered me to go into the garden. Another terrible man caught me in the garden, stopped my mouth with a handkerchief, and carried me into a near wood, where a carriage was waiting. His companion soon came, and they brought me here.”

The major conducted his niece down to the yard, where the prisoners were lying. “ That man, with the grizzly black head, shewed the paper to my mother,” said Melina, “ and this man, with the red hair and whiskers, carried me away out of the garden.”

The major breakfasted with Melina; and gave orders to his men to get ready for the march. He took Melina

on horseback with himself. The prisoners were conducted, with their arms pinioned, between a file of hussars. Four soldiers were left to guard the house, and keep the stolen goods, until the owners claimed them.

The major delivered up his prisoners, to the magistrates in the nearest town. The whole forest was surrounded and examined, by more than two hundred hussars. The whole band of robbers was captured. During the inquiries, which lasted for a year, the following, among other facts, was elicited: "Mr. von Klauenberg, the sole surviving relative of Mrs. von Grunau, a rich man, but a great miser, having heard that von Grunau and his two children were dead, and that the major had fallen in battle, thus leaving Melina sole heiress of her mother's large property, had instigated the robbers to carry off the poor child. 'The guilt of her blood,' said he, 'I don't wish to have on my head; but carry off the child, and keep her close in some secure place, where she will never be heard of more: guard her securely: don't let her escape.'"

The captain of the gang undertook the business. It was he that brought the paper to the mother, while his companion was prowling outside to seize the child. It was he that placed the watering pot on the bank of the river, and hung the bonnet upon the willow branch, before he carried off Melina.

The captain and all his gang were condemned to death, and the wicked kinsman to a very large fine, and ten years' imprisonment.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE HAPPY MOTHER.

THE major resigned his commission; had his niece dressed suitably to her rank; and conducted her home to Grunau. As his sister believed him to be dead, he took care to have her warned, beforehand, of his return. He resolved to present himself first, and break the news to her that her daughter was alive. He came to the old steward's house, who was almost beside himself with joy, on seeing both alive. It was new life to him—he could not find words to express his feelings—but hastened away to the castle.

Madam von Grunau was seated on her sofa, pale and disconsolate. When she heard that her brother was alive and coming to see her, she would have hurried away to meet him—but he entered at the moment. She ran towards him and fell into his arms. “O! dearest brother,” said she, “you are really alive: God be praised: I am not alone in the world!”

The major sat down beside her on the sofa, and asked her to tell him all that had occurred, since he went to the wars. With many tears she told him how her husband died, after a long and painful illness, which he bore with true Christian patience; how her two sons, whom the major knew and tenderly loved, were carried off by the measles; and how her sole surviving child, her daughter, Melina, was drowned in the river.

The major having listened to her with great sympathy, added, at the close, “It is not probable that Melina was drowned, since you have not found her body.”

“O God!” exclaimed the mother, her sorrowful face lighted up with joy, “O! if she were still alive, and if I



could see her but once before I died, how happy would I be."

"Believe me," said he, "she is alive. Klauenberg has surely had some hand in this matter. Melina is not drowned. She was carried away by robbers, and is detained by them in some of their haunts."

"O God!" exclaimed the mother, "her tears flowing still more copiously. "Better to have her dead, than living amongst wicked men. Better to have her dead, than to have her lost both in body and soul."

"Dearest sister," said the major, "your truly noble sentiments affect me deeply. Believe me, she is still the same innocent, pure, angelic Melina, which you knew her to be. You can have the proof yourself. She has been actually rescued from the robbers' hands."

The mother started to her feet, and exclaimed, "O God, what do I hear? what new light is breaking on me? O, dear brother, tell me all. You have seen her—have you not? perhaps you have her here? come, come, dear brother, bring me to her at once."

The major opened the door. Melina rushed in; threw herself into her mother's arms, and could say no more, than "Mother, dearest mother!"

"Melina, dearest daughter—restored to my arms—thanks, thanks for ever, to Thee, my God!" Thus the delighted mother expressed her joy, while she embraced her beloved child.

"Come, my daughter," said she, at length, "sit here between me and your uncle, on the sofa, and tell me how you lived among the wicked robbers."

"When I was seized by the robber, and carried away to the carriage, I thought," said Melina, "I should have died of fright. They drove me to that terrible house, where I was very kindly received by the old woman. She said she had been expecting me anxiously, for a long time before. She told me not to be crying. She gave me a great many sweet things—brought punch and coffee, and

pressed me, with the rudest compliments, to drink a glass to her health. She conducted me to a neat little chamber, 'Here,' said she, 'this is your bedroom—that is as clean and fine a bed as you could get anywhere.' She told me that she could bake, and boil, and roast for me, and spoke on this topic so often and so heartily, as if it were the greatest, the only happiness of man—in this world—to eat and drink. She dressed me in the dress of a peasant girl—'now,' said she, 'you belong to us—the man of the house is your father—and I, your grandmother.' Both did all in their power to cheer me. But I could not like them—my heart was always with you, dearest mother. Oh! what a difference between those people and you! No pious word ever fell from their lips. No prayer either morning or night, or before or after meals. No book in the whole house. I could scarcely speak to them; I shunned and dreaded them. I was never happier, than in my own little room, looking out into the garden. There I used to recall all the good instructions, the entertaining stories I had heard from you. Oh! how many nights did I pray there, when the moon rose brightly over the dark and lonely forest, and shone on the grey walls and iron bars at my window. 'Yes,' I said, 'though I am kept in the company of wicked people, my heart can be with God.' What a happiness, that day or night, wherever we are, we can speak to God, and be certain that our prayers will be heard!

"The two men, that carried me away, often came to the house with other companions, like themselves. Their guests were worse, even, than the people of the house. They caroused and played cards, with horrible oaths, sang all sorts of bad songs, and said many things which set them in roars of laughter—but which I did not understand—I am sure, they must have been very bad, as they gave pleasure to such abandoned people. They often quarrelled—flung jugs and glasses at each other's heads, and threatened to murder each other. I used to fly, terri-

fied and trembling, to my own room. I resolved to escape, if possible—but all the windows were secured with iron bars, and the door was always carefully locked and bolted.

“ One night, a merchant, a kind, friendly man, came to spend a night in the house. He had very valuable wares and a large sum of money. The robbers murdered him. I heard his screams, and ran down to the scene. The sight almost deprived me of my senses. I told the murderers, that it was a horrible crime, and that God would certainly punish them for it. They paid no attention to me—but charged me not to say one word on the matter to any mortal. My keeper cried out, ‘ From this moment, never open your lips to a stranger—we will say you are dumb.’ He seized me by the arm, dragged me over to the bloody corpse, and said, with a horrible growl, ‘ Look there—if you ever open your mouth to any person, but me and my mother, we will murder you more cruelly than that man there.’ I ran to my room, and throwing myself on my knees, stretched out my hands to heaven, and prayed, ‘ O, good and merciful God, Thou hadst mercy on the young Daniel in the lions’ den. He sat, as tranquil, among the lions, as a shepherd boy among his sheep. Thou didst send an angel to rescue him, and brought him forth from the den. O! have mercy on me, a poor girl—save me from those savage tigers—send an angel to my aid.’ God heard my prayer—yes, dearest mother, He sent an angel to my relief—your beloved brother.”

“ Yes,” answered the mother, “ God has had mercy on you, and on us all. He allowed you to be taken away from me, as a means of saving my brother’s life; and God sent you, dearest brother, to the robbers’ den, to save the life of my daughter. It has not been without advantage to me, to believe that my daughter was dead; for I prayed more earnestly and frequently, than I otherwise would have prayed, and looked forward, with pious hope and resignation, to heaven. And you, Melina, can learn this,

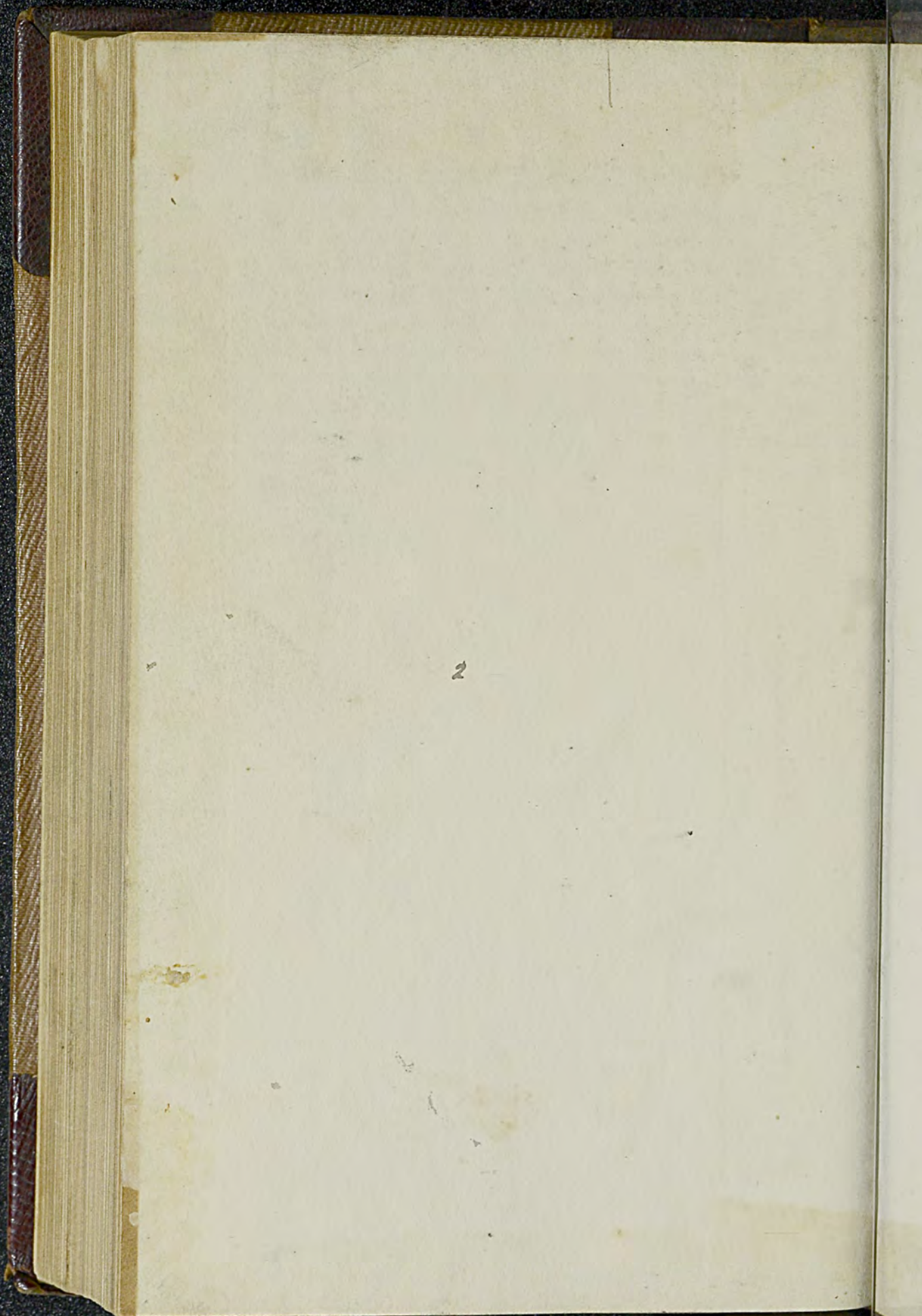
at least, from your long residence in a bad place, how deeply men plunge in wickedness, when they do not rely on God—nor pray, nor hear good instruction or conversation. You have learned a greater horror of vice, and a greater love for virtue. God has comforted us all in our afflictions; and turned our sorrow into joy. O! may we thence learn to believe that He does all for the best! May we ever believe, even in our greatest woes, that he can turn them to good; and thank him from our hearts—under his most heavy visitations! Yes, all his ways are wisdom and goodness: to Him be unceasing, eternal thanks.”

“Amen, amen,” said the Major, and the prayer was re-echoed by the good Melina.

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