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PIXY'S HOLIDAY JOURNEY

Translated from the German of GEORGE LANG

by MARY E. IRELAND

1906

**TO THE TWO DEAR BOYS, HUGH D. SHEPARD
AND GEORGE H. IRELAND, BOTH OF WHOM
TOOK KEEN PLEASURE IN LISTENING TO
THE READING OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE
HOLIDAY JOURNEY OF THREE BOYS AND
PIXY, THE STORY, NOW IN BOOK FORM, IS
LOVINGLY DEDICATED BY**

THE TRANSLATOR.

Washington, D.C.

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PIXY'S HOLIDAY JOURNEY

CHAPTER I

THE GRECIANS AND THE TROJANS

There were three boys in the same class in the polytechnic school in the mountainous Odenwald country, in Hesse Darmstadt, who were such great friends and inseparable companions that the other pupils named them "the three-leaved clover." They were near of an age—about eleven—and near of a size; and their names were Fritz, Paul and Franz.

Fritz was an active, energetic boy, had coal black hair and bright, black eyes which looked out upon the world with the alert glance of a squirrel in a cage.

Paul had brown hair, brown eyes and brown complexion, was of reflective manner, and willing to follow where Fritz led.

Franz was a robust boy with blonde hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, and cheeks like cherries which had ripened in the sun.

They had been firm friends ever since the day that Fritz had had a combat with a larger boy, and Franz and Paul ran to his assistance. But the big boy was victor, leaving Fritz on the field of battle with a bleeding nose, Franz with a bruise upon his forehead, and Paul with a fiery-red cheek, caused by slaps from the hand of the foe. From that hour the three united for life or death in an alliance for defense against an enemy and resolved to provide themselves with weapons, also a place to keep them when not in active service; said place to be called the armory.

It was a subject of much thought and discussion to secure a suitable place, but at length Franz brought the welcome news that his father had sold the calf that day, and the nice shed it had occupied was vacant. This was delightful news and when school was out they hurried there, drove nails in the

board walls, and hung up their spears which were made of pine wood, and, like the shields hanging beside them, were glistening with gold and silver paper. On the opposite wall were the sombre bows and arrows, brightened, however, by the nearness of three brilliant helmets with waving plumes made of black yarn.

The array of weapons seemed so warlike that it called to memory the battle between the Grecians and the Trojans as recorded in Homer's *Iliad*, which their class was reading in school; and they then and there decided to take the names of their favorite Greek heroes.

"I will be Odysseus," said Fritz.

"I will be Achilles," responded Franz.

"And I," said Paul after due reflection, "will be Patroclus."

"And let us call that fellow that fought us a Trojan," suggested Franz.

"Agreed," cried Fritz. "Let us call all of our enemies Trojans."

This proposition was received with warmth and they solemnly shook hands to clinch the compact.

It was a shadow to their enjoyment that while there was an outside bolt to their armory, there was no lock and key, and there were plenty of Trojans in school who would wish no better amusement than to break in and carry off the weapons. To prevent such a catastrophe, it was decided that the moment school was out, one of them must run to the armory and remain on guard until all the boys had gone to their homes. They were to take turns in this duty, and Franz was appointed as sentinel for that evening.

When he reached the shed he heard the sound of movement inside the armory, yet the bolt was not withdrawn. He stood a moment in mute wonder for he could not understand how a Trojan could get in when there was no window, and but one door, and it bolted on the outside. He called several times, but there was no answer, and he was more than glad when he saw Fritz running through the gateway of the barnyard. Emboldened by the sight of the Grecian warrior, he pushed back the bolt, the door flew open, and out rushed a hog, squealing with delight at regaining his liberty. Without delay it made for the open gateway, ran between the feet of the advancing Fritz, upset him, causing him to measure his length with that of the hog's back, then after a few turns about the yard, upset the pursuing Achilles-Franz and ran to the top of a heap of sodden straw, where it shook off Odysseus-Fritz, then ran nimbly down and out the gateway to the road. To fill to overflowing the measure of their ill-luck, some of the Trojans who had safely passed the gate sometime before, heard the squealing, and ran back in time to see Odysseus shaken off upon the straw-heap, and Achilles in the act of grasping the pig by its tail. They broke into jeering laughter, shrill whistles, and witty speeches which stung the Grecian heroes into helpless fury.

But they could not take time to retaliate; the escaped fugitive was going down the road at a commendable pace had he been going to school, and Achilles was again Franz, his father's son, and the pig must be brought back and with no help but that of Fritz, for he scorned to ask the grinning Trojans to join in the chase, nor would it have been of any use to ask, for they preferred to remain at the gate and watch the race, which they enjoyed to the limit. The pig had a good start and was a brisk runner, but after many twistings and turnings, sprints and boltings, it allowed itself to be driven into a fence corner just at the moment that Paul appeared upon the scene.

A short discussion followed this happy meeting, which resulted in Franz grasping one ear of the recreant pig and Fritz the other, while Paul took charge of the tail, to pull or push as the necessities of the case demanded. The pig was finally made to back out and face about, and their homeward journey was commenced.

It was well for them that the waiting Trojans had caught a glimpse of a teacher coming through the gate of the school yard, or they would have had trouble getting their captive through the gateway into the barnyard. As it was, the coast was clear, and the pig, in spite of his squealings and gruntings, was back in his cell, the door shut and the bolt pushed into its socket.

Then the three heroes with beads of perspiration rolling from their foreheads sat down under the shade of an apple tree to discuss the situation. Since their armory was demeaned into a pig-pen, it was necessary to remove their weapons and put them in a secure place; but where? That was the question.

There was a summer-house in the garden of Franz's home which was never used, was rain-proof, and had a good door with a strong catch, but no lock and key or even a bolt. Being near the dwelling it was secure, as no opposing schoolboy would dare go through the garden to break into their armory and carry off the weapons.

This suggestion was hailed with hearty appreciation, and in good spirits they drove nails into the walls and carried their helmets and beloved weapons one by one and put them in that place of refuge; then went to their suppers, and to prepare their lessons for the following day.

Their arrival in the school yard the next morning was announced by the laughter and jeers of their opponents.

"Say, did you imagine that your hog was Hector on the walls of Troy when it ran up the straw-heap?" shouted one.

"No, he thought he was Hercules, but found that instead of being strong enough to carry the hog, the hog had to carry him," laughed another.

The three friends passed on into the schoolroom, red with anger but helpless to defend themselves; their tormentors following, for there was more sport in store which not one of them wished to miss.

Upon the great blackboard was a very fair picture in chalk of the exploit with the hog, and the laughing, jeering and shrill whistling were resumed when they saw the anger of the three friends. The muscular and energetic Fritz rushed to the blackboard to rub out the offending cartoon, but his hands were held by the enemy, his struggles to release them were useless, and he went to his seat in anger and mortification.

At that moment the teacher came, and hearing the sound of weeping he asked the cause. As Odysseus-Fritz was unable to speak for sobbing, the enemy had the welcome chance to give an account of the tilt between the "three-leaved clover" and the four-footed Hector, and as the wit of the school was spokesman, the story lost nothing of its mirth-provoking quality.

The teacher tried his best to look grave over the affair, but the narrative, together with its illustration on the blackboard, was too much for him and he took such a sudden and violent spell of coughing that he was compelled to put his handkerchief to his mouth and go outside the door. Every boy in the room, including the three Grecian warriors, knew that he went out to indulge in the laughter that he could not restrain, and the enemy's triumph was complete.

"You must rub that miserable sketch from the board," he said upon his return, "and write in place of it, 'Do unto others as you would have them do to you,' which will remain there until we need the board for an exercise."

It was a great relief to the three friends that the summer holiday was so near at hand that there would be but little more time for the Trojans to trouble them. Every boy in school had a plan in view as to the way the holiday was to be spent.

"We are going out to the woods every day," said one group of boys. "We will take our luncheon and will fish in the brook, and find good places to set snares in the fall."

"We are going to the woods, too," said another group, "and will gather flowers to press for our herbariums."

But our three friends could overmatch all the pleasures mentioned by their schoolmates, for they had the promise from their parents that they should go to the city of Frankfort on the Main river to visit an aunt of Fritz. Every day their schoolmates heard from some one of the three, or perhaps from all, of the pleasures expected from their first journey, and their visit to a city to remain a whole week. This again aroused the jeers of the enemy which they bore bravely, knowing that it was only envy; so went on serenely with their preparations for the visit.

Their homes were but a short distance apart, therefore out of school as well as in they were much together and all their talk was upon the visit to Frankfort, and of the things they would take, their plans subject to change from day to day.

The father of Fritz took a Frankfort paper which the boy read carefully, and reported the dangers of a great city to his comrades. From these readings the three considered the city highly dangerous and they resolved to go well prepared for any attack that might be made upon them, either upon the journey or during their sojourn in the great city, which its own paper denounced as wicked.

One morning he announced to his companions that he was well fixed to go, for he had now a weapon which could be depended upon, and showed them an old hunting-knife thick with rust, which he had concealed under his jacket, and which was to be placed in the armory until time to start upon the journey; and the ever watchful enemy saw that something very important was going on among the Grecian heroes.

In truth there was something very important, for they were arranging to go upon their journey wearing their helmets with waving plumes, and with their shields and spears, and Franz and Paul were to have weapons to place with that of Fritz in the armory. But who can describe their surprise and dismay when that evening they went to put the hunting-knife in its proper place, they found the armory plundered, and everything gone! The enemy had come in an unguarded moment and carried everything away. But where? That was the question, for they had not the least doubt as to who did it, for the tracks of boys' boots were in the moist ground, and Fritz was quite sure that he knew whose they were, whereupon Franz laughed, although as much grieved as were the others over the loss of their belongings.

"Yes, laugh as much as you please!" cried Fritz excitedly, "but when Mr. Colbert's house was robbed he tracked the thief by a piece of buttered bread which he had dropped in his flight. A piece bitten out of it showed that the thief had lost a front tooth, and he had the man whom he suspected arrested. When he came to trial they made him bite into a piece of buttered bread, and it was exactly like the piece that Mr. Gilbert had found."

"Your story is very good, but what help will it be in this case?" enquired the logical Franz. "Do you think the Trojans will be so obliging as to walk here and put their feet in the tracks?"

"Then name a better way."

"I don't know any."

"Then the only way left," remarked the reflective Paul, "is to watch the faces of the suspects when we go to school in the morning, and maybe we can spot the ones who did it."

As there seemed nothing more to do about it, they left the rifled armory and went to their homes.

The next morning as they neared the schoolyard they heard loud laughing which they could not lay altogether to the near approach of the holiday. They hurried in, and were quickly surrounded by their schoolmates who with laughter and jeers pointed to the top of the climbing pole; and oh, misery! there hung the helmet of Achilles, its plume waving in the morning air. Speechless and helpless the three friends stood, and would have given the last penny in their savings banks if a hawk or some other large bird would swoop down upon it and send it to the ground.

"Now here is an exercise in physical culture," cried one of the Trojans, in the tone and manner of the professor in that line of instruction. "One of our Grecian heroes will kindly ascend and bring the helmet down."

This called for peals of laughter and shrill whistles from the Trojans, for they knew that no one of the Grecians could climb to the top and it was a delight to see them redden with shame. But the restless Fritz was not willing to give up without trying to scale the giddy height.

"Here, Franz," he cried, "hold my books. Paul, here is my jacket and hat. Stand back, boys, and see if I am the coward they think me," and soon his legs and arms were in motion. The laughter and jeering of the Trojans stimulated him to his greatest effort, and he had almost reached the top when his efforts ceased.

"He is only resting," cried Franz and Paul anxiously.

"No, his strength has given out and you will see him coming down in a moment," said one of the Trojans.

Hearing this, Fritz made one last effort, and holding on to the pole with one arm, he reached up for the helmet, but it was farther off than he thought. His strength had given out, and he slid rapidly down and dropped in a heap, pale and weak from over-exertion, and for a moment unable to rise.

The shouts and laughter of the Trojans impelled the three to flee to the schoolroom for refuge, but their arms were held by the enemy and they were led to a linden tree in the school yard and bidden to look up. There amid the branches lay the three lances and the bows and arrows. The tumult of laughter and shouting was now beyond all bounds, and at that moment the principal of the school made his appearance and was soon in the midst of the wild, surging crowd.

"Who put that gilt paper cap on the point of the climbing pole?" he asked.

No one answered and the Trojans looked at each other in dismay.

"Whose cap is it?" he asked.

"It is mine," replied Achilles-Franz, "and some of these boys got it from the place I keep it and before I got here this morning put it on the pole."

"Do you know which of the boys did it?"

"No, sir."

"Go to the schoolroom and ask Professor Moot to please step here."

"Professor," said the principal, when the teacher of physical culture stood among them, "how many of your pupils can climb to the top of the pole?"

"Five of them can do it easily; two of them have not yet come, but there are three here."

"Step here, you three, and show me the palms of your hands," said the principal, and with very red faces the three obeyed.

"This is the boy," he continued, as the red palms proved that the boy had recently climbed the pole, "and because you were a coward and would not answer when I asked, you get no recess to-day. Now pass your books to your neighbor and bring down that cap."

Like a poor criminal going to the gallows, the Trojan went to the pole and began the ascent with his already tender hands. He would have asked for a postponement had not the serene face of the principal warned him that it would not be granted. With much effort he reached the top, took off the helmet, and slipped rapidly down with it in his hand.

"Lay it on the window sill there, and go up the linden tree and bring down the lances."

"Where did you get these things?" was the next question.

"I, we—we took them from the summer house which Franz and Fritz and Paul call their armory."

"Who was with you?"

"William Cross, Otto Eidman and Henry Frolick."

"Professor, there were two more helmets," explained Fritz, stepping forward.

"Where have you put the others?" asked the principal, sharply.

"Under the table in the lecture-room."

"Very well. You four boys will have an hour's arrest in the lecture-room after school and when released you will take the things back and put them exactly where you found them. Now you can go into the class-room."

With very sheepish faces the Trojans filed in, followed by the triumphant Grecian heroes.

When school was out for the day they hurried to the armory to await the coming of the Trojans with the weapons, while the boys in the class who had not allied themselves to either Trojans or Grecians gathered in the yard under the window of the lecture-room to see the vanquished ones come out with the weapons when the hour of arrest was over. Before the hour was spent they were joined by others who in passing the open gate saw them and were glad to wait to see the four delinquents pass out.

At length the clock in the old church-tower struck the four solemn strokes. The hour of arrest was over, but the Trojans did not come. They waited five, ten minutes, still no sign or sound of their coming.

"I believe I hear a stir. Yes, they are coming," whispered one, rubbing his hands in glee.

"And I can tell exactly how they will act," commented another. "Otto will be crying from shame and anger at having to carry the things back. Cross will hide his eyes with his arm, and Henry will hold a high head as much as to say, 'who cares.'"

"But why don't they come? The hour was out when we came," said a newcomer.

At that moment the lecture-room door opened quickly and the stern face of the principal appeared, and the boys joined in a stampede.

"Halt!" cried the professor. "Come here! Why are you boys loitering here so long after school hours?"

The boys reddened, but no one spoke.

"Henry Strong, speak; what are you doing here?"

"We wanted—we thought—we—"

"Out with it."

"The boys are to take back the weapons."

"Well, what of that?"

"We are staying to see them."

"Indeed! Well, that is just what I expected, so I gave them permission to go out the back way some time ago and take the weapons to their places. By this time they are quietly eating their suppers in their homes."

There were many red faces at hearing the joke turned upon them, and they went quietly out of the yard, glad to be away from the piercing gaze of the principal, feeling that he could see into their hearts and minds as well as he could see through the lecture-room window.

In the meantime Odysseus-Fritz, Achilles-Franz and Patroclus-Paul were in triumphant possession of their weapons, and to add to their happiness they had a safe place to keep them, for the father of Franz, who was keeper of the forest, gave them a room in the forest cabin. It had a lock and keys and the Grecian warriors realized that many a dark cloud has a silver lining.

CHAPTER II

THEY MEET A KIND FRIEND

The interest in their weapons gave place in a few days to preparations for the journey to Frankfort; and they decided to walk, just as such healthy, energetic boys would prefer, taking two days for the journey, and stopping for the one night at some wayside inn.

The mothers prepared the outfit, the main part of the clothing for the three boys to be packed in one satchel and sent by express to the home of Mrs. Fanny Steiner, the widowed sister of Fritz's father, and the boys were to carry their school knapsacks strapped across their shoulders, containing the few articles they would need upon their journey. The fathers agreed to furnish funds for the journey, and the three travelers, not having to bother about clothing or money, could give all their attention to the subject of weapons with which to overcome the dangers which might beset them on the way.

Fritz brought forward his rusty knife; Paul had found an old pistol of the time of the first Napoleon, in which lay no danger because it would not shoot; and Franz had an old cutlass which hung by a cord at his side. They praised each other's weapons, but Fritz and Paul could not help envying the owner of the cutlass.

"Listen," said Fritz. "We need not always carry our own weapons upon the journey, we can exchange when we feel like it."

Paul agreed heartily to this, but Franz was silent; he did not wish any one to have a share in his new possession.

"I know what I can do," exclaimed Fritz. "Just wait a minute," and he ran home, returning with a leather belt and a cord, and soon his knife was hanging by his side.

"Why can't I wear my pistol in my belt like the men do in pictures?" questioned Paul. "I will run home and get mine."

This was brought, and the three warriors were equipped to their hearty satisfaction, for they had already provided their straw hats with plumes from the cast-off tail feathers of roosters in their respective poultry yards.

They decided to have beside other needed things in each knapsack a drinking cup that they might

slake their thirst along the way from cool springs, or clear running water, or a convenient well or pump.

Franz had a silver watch which all agreed would be very useful. Paul had a box of tapers which he considered equal to a wonder-lamp in a fairy tale, and Fritz had a small compass, so correct in its bearings that if they trusted to it there was not the least danger of losing their way.

"Oh," he continued jubilantly, "let us run and get our knapsacks and hang them across our shoulders and go to the photographer and ask what he will charge to take our pictures."

"Agreed!" cried the others gleefully, and they were about to go when they heard the sound of hearty laughter, and turning, they saw the father of Franz.

"Wait, boys," he said, "there is danger of being arrested on the way. Don't you know that it is against the law to carry weapons?"

"But, father, people do carry them."

"Yes, but they take good care to keep them hidden."

"We could keep ours hidden."

"But where? Could Paul hide his pistol in his hat, and could Franz put the cutlass in his vest pocket as if it were a tooth-pick? Oh no, boys, lay aside the old weapons and travel along the public road as peaceable citizens with no thought of being harmed or of harming anyone. The roads of our beloved Fatherland are not infested with bandits and footpads, and you can go with contented minds and with no fear of danger upon your travels. Now it is time to part; good-night, boys. Go home to a good supper and a good sleep. Come, Franz."

The next day came the selecting of things that were to go in the knapsacks and each boy had collected enough of what they considered really needed to fill them to overflowing.

"What is this?" asked the mother of Franz, who was about to help him with his knapsack, as they were to take an early start the next morning.

"It is my checker-board. We can play in the evenings before we go to bed."

"Oh, you cannot take it! see, it would take up half the room in the knapsack. You will be so tired in the evenings that you will be ready to drop asleep before you take off your shoes. Where are your stockings?"

"Why, they will go in the satchel, mother; I don't have to carry them."

"Yes, you must take one pair. Your feet will be dusty from your long walk, and you must have a fresh pair for the second day. Where is your rain-coat?"

"Rain-coat? Why, I never thought of it."

"A checker-board would not keep the rain from wetting you should there come up a sudden shower. You must have it in, no matter what you leave at home."

"Paul and Fritz did not say they would take their rain-coats in their knapsacks."

"Perhaps not, but their mothers did, and mothers know best. What is in this box?"

"My writing paper; you gave it to me at Christmas."

"A hundred sheets! Do you expect to write a hundred letters while you are in Frankfort? If so, you will not see much of the city. You must take in your knapsack only what you will really need upon your journey, and with only that you will find it heavy enough."

The mother put the knapsack in care of Franz when ready for the journey, and he took it to his room; then hurried to the home of Fritz to see how the packing was progressing there, and found that the good mother of the boy had given the same wise advice in regard to the packing of the knapsack. Then the two went to the home of Paul and found that the same plan had ruled out the useless things that Paul had intended should journey to Frankfort in his knapsack.

At six o'clock the next morning Franz and Paul had bidden their home people an affectionate farewell and were on their way to meet Fritz, when they saw him coming, knapsack upon his shoulder and leading his dog by a new green cord tied to the collar.

"Oh, Fritz!" they exclaimed in a breath, "surely you are not going to take Pixy on the journey to Frankfort?"

"Surely I am! He wants to go, and I am going to take him."

"Does your father and mother know it?"

"No, certainly not, or Pixy would be at home this minute."

"But you had no right to take him without telling them," said the thoughtful Paul.

"Pixy is mine and I have a right to take him, but I wish them to know that I have him, so I have written a postal telling them, and will drop it in the village letter box. That will make it all right."

"But your Aunt Fanny. Will she like to have him?" asked Franz, doubtfully.

"Oh, she loves Pixy, and will be glad to see him. When she comes to visit us in the summers, she always takes Pixy with her when she walks to the village or calls to see the neighbors. Yes, indeed; she will be very, very glad to have him there."

"He will have to eat on his way to Frankfort," remarked Paul.

"Yes, but mother put up a great deal more than I can eat in this one day, and I will share with Pixy."

"And I," and "I, too," said the others, for in their hearts they were glad to have his company; "but are you going to lead him all the way with that rope?"

"No, indeed; he doesn't need it, and I will take it off, and put it in my knapsack as soon as we are past the village. I only brought it to put on him when we are in the streets of Frankfort to keep him from getting frightened and running away."

The rope was taken off and put in the knapsack, and then Fritz made another proposition.

"Let us take off our shoes and stick our stockings in them, swing them from our knapsacks, and go barefoot."

"All right!" agreed the others, and soon they were rejoicing in the luxury of bare feet, but not long, for Paul struck his toe against a stone, then getting a briar in his foot, sank down upon a green bank and took it in his hand.

"I see the briar," exclaimed Fritz, "and can take it out."

"Oh, no, it will hurt," objected Paul, with tears in his eyes, but his tears changed to smiles when he saw the briar in the hand of Fritz.

This was a warning and they put on their stockings and shoes, and then concluded to eat some more breakfast.

"What have you to eat?" asked Fritz, as Franz took his package from his knapsack.

"I have brown bread; mother made it for me because I love it, and she put plenty of good sausage with it."

"Nothing better!" said Fritz, heartily. "What have you, Paul, for your second breakfast?"

"I have bread and butter and two eggs."

"And I have bread and butter and ham, and if either of you boys want a slice of it, just speak. It is fine, I tell you," said Fritz.

"Oh, say, boys," exclaimed Franz, "let us divide our breakfast, share and share alike. If either of you would like some of my brown bread and sausage, say so, and you shall have it."

"I love brown bread and sausage, too," remarked Paul, "and either of you can have part of the eggs, only that I do not know how to divide two into three parts."

"Easy enough," explained Franz, "you can give me one egg, and I will give you the biggest piece of my sausage, then you can cut the other egg in two for you and Fritz."

"All right, here is the egg."

"And here is the sausage, the largest piece for you. Fritz, here is yours."

"That is fine; here, Franz, take part of my ham."

"Here is a slice of my white bread for a slice of your brown," continued Paul.

"All right, reach for it. You will find that it goes as well with sausage as does an egg with white bread; now let's eat."

Fritz had not waited for any invitation. He was hungry and as he ate the sausage which he was holding in one hand, he passed the ham to Franz, in exchange for it. As Paul reached for the slice of brown bread, his piece of sausage fell to the ground and was snapped up by the waiting Pixy.

"Now I have no sausage, and it was your dog, Fritz, that robbed me of it," complained Paul in a disappointed tone.

"Yes, and I would give you my share, but I have eaten it; eat the ham, Paul, and take back this half egg."

This was agreed to as fair, then the subject of drink to go with the food was discussed, and their little tin cups were taken from their knapsacks.

"What have you in your bottle, Fritz?" asked Paul.

"Chocolate; what have you?"

"Milk; and Franz has coffee. Will we share as we did our food?"

"Yes, let's share," so time about the little cups were filled with the different fluids, and they ate and drank and chatted. Nor was Pixy forgotten. He made an abundant meal from the scraps, and lay down in the shade and slept.

"Let us keep our cups in hand until we come to a running stream of water. Milk, coffee and chocolate are all good, but it is water you want when you are real thirsty."

The running stream was found after they had walked a half mile further and Fritz had to hold Pixy by the collar to keep him from running in and taking a bath before they had satisfied their thirst. The water was delightfully cool and fresh, and the moment Fritz let go the cord Pixy plunged in, and enjoyed the bath so much that the boys were tempted to follow his example. But they had heard that it was not good for the health to bathe so soon after a hearty meal, so sat in the shade while Pixy slept in the sun until his long, silky, black hair was nearly dry. Then they arose and walked on until about the middle of the day they reached a village which had an old church with a tall tower, and a number of small dwellings, two of them being public houses, or inns.

"To which of the two will we go to take our dinners?" asked Franz.

"To the one that has the gilt lion on the sign-board. I believe they are richer people and will give us a better dinner," replied Paul.

"But it will cost us more," objected Fritz, "and you know that we have just so much money, which must last until we get back to the Odenwald. Let us go to the one that looks the cheapest."

This was agreed to, and the three went in, and were received by the landlady.

"Do you wish your dinners?" she asked, seeing that none of them seemed inclined to give an order.

No one of them had ever been in a public house, so each waited for the other to speak.

"Yes, we wish dinner," said Fritz at length. "Have you lettuce?"

"Yes; what will you have with it?"

"Potatoes."

"But they take so long to boil, so think of something else."

"We will have meat."

"I have no meat to-day."

"Then we will take sausage."

"I have no sausage to-day."

"Then what have you?"

"Noodle soup, and a cherry pudding."

"Good!" exclaimed the boys in a breath, "we all like pudding."

"Very well, take seats at this table and I will bring in the dinner."

The boys were not slow in obeying; there was no tablecloth but the pine table was scoured to almost perfect whiteness, and the dishes, few and poor though they were, glistened.

A large dish of lettuce was set before them, then a bowl of soup at each plate, and some thick slices of brown bread.

"What drink will you have?" she asked.

"We prefer milk."

"There is no milk. It all went into the pudding, but you can have plenty of cold coffee."

"No, we will take water, please."

This was brought, and when the soup was finished, the pudding was brought, and although it was of fair size not a vestige of it was left; and it was then that Fritz remembered Pixy.

"Oh, boys, I forgot him and we have eaten all the pudding from him," he said, remorsefully.

"We will each give a penny and ask the mistress to give him some dinner," said Paul.

But it was not needed. Pixy had been well fed on the remains of the soup, and was ready to journey as soon as they gave him notice. Fritz thanked the kind woman, and she in turn was pleased with the well-bred boys who had given evidence of being satisfied with the food, and had paid her the price she asked.

Then they set out cheerily and soon broke into a melody they sang at school. They had good voices and sang with spirit. So interested were they that they did not hear the sound of wheels although a carriage was coming slowly behind them, and a gentleman who was in it was listening with pleasure. At length the song was finished and the boys heard the sound of wheels, halted and turned, then lifted their hats to the stranger.

"I hope you will keep on with your singing. I love it, and I love boys," said the gentleman in a pleasant voice. "I like to see them on their travels. Have you any objection to telling me where you are going?"

"To Frankfort," they all replied at once.

"Why not go by railway?"

"We wished to walk all the way."

"Of course you expect to stay over night somewhere?"

"Yes, we expect to stay to-night at an inn if it is not too expensive. If it is, we will sleep on straw somewhere. We would not mind that this warm weather."

"People who are used to a bed would find it very uncomfortable to sleep on straw. What place did you expect to reach by evening?"

"The village of Umstadt; and we think we can find an inn there where we can stay."

"It is quite a long distance from here, and you would be very late in reaching it. You will get there much faster if you will step into my carriage, for I expect to pass through the village on my way to my home."

"Would there be room for my dog Pixy?" asked Fritz, anxiously.

"Certainly there is room. Two of you boys can sit on the back seat, and the other can sit by me and the dog can sit between us."

It seemed to the three that an angel had come down to help them on their journey, for they were woefully tired, and evening was coming on. Therefore it was with smiling countenances that they

climbed in and took seats. The gentleman spoke quietly to his horse and off they went on their way to the village.

"Do you think it lightens the burden for my horse that you keep your knapsacks on your shoulders?" smiled the gentleman. "If you lay them off you will see that he can trot just as well; and if there were a dozen boys he would not consider them a burden but would keep on trotting. You have told me where you are going, now tell me where you are from."

"We are from the country near the village of Michelstadt," replied Fritz. "We left at six o'clock this morning to pass our holiday with my father's sister, Mrs. Fanny Steiner."

"That is good. Now tell me your names and your fathers'."

"My father is Fritz Heil, and I am named for him. He is a clothing merchant in the village of Michelstadt."

"Very good! I know him well. Now tell me who you are," turning to Paul.

"My father is Paul Roth, he is a teacher. My name is the same."

"Very good; now, my boy," turning to Franz.

"My father is named Franz Krupp, and I am named for him. He is the head-forester in the Odenwald. The master-forester is old and when he dies my father will get the place."

"Halt, my boy! Guard your speech. Don't speak to a stranger or to anyone of the master-forester's death. Is he not in good health?"

"No, he is sick. I never heard my father say anything about his death or of taking his place, but I know that he will have it when he dies."

"Nor should you speak of it. I know the master-forester as well as I know your father. Suppose I should tell him what you have just said about his dying and your father getting the position?"

The eyes of Franz filled with tears and he looked alarmed.

"Don't be anxious, my boy. I know you meant no harm, but I wish to warn you to be careful of your speech. The master-forester has a brother living in this neighborhood. I may be that brother. If so, would I like to hear that your father is looking forward to his death in order to have his place? And would it be to your father's advantage to have it known that he is looking forward to it?"

Franz was silent a moment, then he reached forward and put his hand in that of his adviser and thanked him, and his friend shook it heartily.

"Now, as a matter of courtesy, I should tell you my name. It is James Furman. I am a farmer and live near the village of Umstadt. I know your fathers well and am glad to meet their sons."

"And we are glad to meet you! It is kind of you to ask us to ride. We were getting very tired, and we are much obliged to you."

"Then perhaps you will sing some more of your sweet songs. Hear how the larks and finches are singing their evening praises to God."

The boys were very willing. They sang several, their new friend joining them, and had just finished his favorite when they reached the little town of Umstadt, and halted in front of the one public house of which the sign was a swan. The moment the carriage stopped Pixy sprang out and waited with bright eyes and wagging tail for his master to descend.

The landlord met them at the open door, and greeted them as if old acquaintances.

"Why, neighbor, you have brought me a fine flock of birds!" he said, cordially.

"Yes, they are choice singing birds and will roost with you to-night and to-morrow will fly away to Frankfort."

"All right, all right! We have a room that will suit them exactly."

"These boys spoke of being thirsty, neighbor. Will you have some fresh water brought for them? I offered them something stronger in the shape of a bottle of mineral water or sarsaparilla, but they prefer the water."

The order was given, and a large stone pitcher and glasses soon appeared. The moment Pixy saw it he sprang up, put his feet on the pitcher and tried to lick the drops from it.

"Wait a bit, Pixy! I am so thirsty," exclaimed Fritz, and he drained the glass of cold water without stopping.

"My boy," said Mr. Furman, "the true friend of our poor dependent dumb creatures attends to their wants first; the really kind master will not let them wait while he satisfies his own hunger and thirst."

Fritz was ashamed of his treatment of Pixy, and was glad to pour some of the water into a basin which the innkeeper reached to him. He carried it to the porch, where Pixy ran quickly and drank as if he was afraid the basin would be taken away from him.

"Now, boys, I must go on home," said Mr. Furman as he shook hands with them. "Good-bye! Remember me to your fathers, and take good care of Pixy."

CHAPTER III

AT THE SWAN INN

The moment the carriage was out of sight the boys turned to their own needs.

"I don't believe I was ever so hungry in my life," ejaculated Franz, and the others agreed with him, and set about the best way to have their hunger satisfied.

"Mr. Swan, what have you for supper?" asked Fritz.

The landlord laughed heartily at the name, but as the boy had given it in all sincerity, thinking that, as it was the Swan Inn, it must take its name from its owner, he did not correct him. Instead, he asked a question in response.

"What would you like to have?"

"Have you fresh lettuce?"

"Yes, plenty of it; what else?"

"Roasted potatoes?"

"Yes; you can have roasted potatoes. What kind of meat will you have with it? We have a fine roast of veal."

"The very thing we like!" cried the boys jubilantly, but the ever frugal Fritz regretted that they had spoken for the veal, and wondered whether they could not change the order.

"I am afraid it will cost us too much," he said in a whisper, but the landlord had already gone to the kitchen and they had to let it stand.

"It may be that we are in an expensive hotel," he continued, "and our night's lodging may cost us a good sum. But I will tell you what we can do. We will not take breakfast here, but will buy a roll in the village and when we come to a brook we can eat it. A roll and a cup of fresh water will be enough breakfast for us."

"No," said Franz, "I won't eat a roll and drink water; I must have my breakfast and coffee; you can drink water, a bucket full if you choose. My father does not wish us to go hungry on this journey. But we can talk about it after we have had our supper."

"Yes, you are right," added Paul. "I will have my breakfast and coffee in the morning. And, boys, we are now in a hotel that is more stylish than the one in which we took dinner. We must not eat all that we take on our plates, but will leave a little, then the landlord will think 'they must have had enough, for they have not eaten all.'"

This brought up a discussion, the other two fearing that if any food were left upon their plates the innkeeper's feelings would be wounded, believing that they were not satisfied with the food. The

dialogue waxed warm, but it was finally decided that they would take more upon their plates than they could eat, and thus could leave some, to spare the feelings of the innkeeper by letting him know that they had enough. They also decided that they would not eat so hurriedly and greedily as at dinner. Just then supper was announced, and the three hungry travelers went to the supper-room and took their places.

In addition to the dish of roast veal, lettuce and potatoes, there was a plate of white rolls and a dish of stewed pears.

The boys forgot their agreement in regard to eating slowly, and the viands disappeared like frost in the beams of a July sun. The lettuce and stewed pears had disappeared like magic, and but one piece of the veal and two rolls remained.

They arose from the table and were about to leave, when Fritz took the piece of veal upon his fork and ate it.

"What is the use of leaving it when one has an appetite for it?" he said.

"Then as none of the veal is left we may as well eat the rolls," said Franz. Paul agreed and the plate was empty, and nothing was left to prove to the landlord that they had more than enough.

"Oh, boys, we have again forgotten to feed Pixy!" said Fritz. "You see my little sister feeds him at home and that is the reason that I forget him."

This was a misfortune and there was no help for it but to tell the innkeeper.

"Would you give Pixy his supper for three pennies?" asked Fritz.

"Oh, don't bother about the dog. He has had his supper in the yard. Don't you see how well he is sleeping on the porch?"

The three now concluded to take a walk through the village, followed or rather guided by Pixy, who could be trusted without his rope in that quiet place, but they soon returned and asked to be shown to their room. The landlord led the way to a large, pleasant room with three single beds in it, and pointed to a piece of carpet for Pixy, for Fritz had asked permission for him to share their room. Then he wished them a good sleep, bade them good-night and went below.

The room was different from any that they had ever seen, not at all like theirs in their own homes. It was not square, but had many nooks and corners which the light of one candle could not reach. Paul said it was like a room he once read of, which had a secret door which led down to an underground passage where travelers were robbed and left there to find their way out if they could. This blood-curdling narrative filled the hearers' minds with fears of what might happen, and they resolved to barricade the door. They locked it, and then pushed the washstand and chairs against it.

"A robber could not push these things away without waking us," remarked Paul.

"No, and before he could get in, Pixy would be ready to fly at him," said Fritz proudly.

This was a great comfort to the three and they prepared to disrobe for sleep.

"We have not much money to waste for lodging," remarked Fritz, "and if we sleep in three beds we will have to pay for three; let us all sleep in one, and we will have to pay for but one."

This was a great stroke of policy, and the others agreed heartily. Although each bed was only intended for one grown person, the boys thought they could manage it.

"Let Paul sleep in the middle because he is the slimmest," Fritz said. "I will sleep back and Franz can sleep front."

This met with approval and then Franz made a suggestion.

"Wise travelers always put their money under their pillows," he said, "then a burglar cannot get it without waking them. We will tie the three pocketbooks together, and put them under Paul's head, then a robber would have to reach over Fritz or me to get it."

This was considered an excellent scheme, and the three dropped into bed and in five minutes were asleep.

Pixy considered the situation for a minute, then sprang upon the foot of the bed, curled around and

was soon in the land of dreams.

All went well until Fritz had a troubled dream. He had fallen out of bed, had rolled under it, and thought he was in a trunk with the lid partly shut down and he could not get out, so set up a wailing cry.

"What is the matter in there?" called the landlord from outside the door.

"Oh, I don't know where I am!" cried Fritz.

"Well, open the door and I will soon see. Oh, it is locked. Well, never mind. I will come through the portiere way."

He soon appeared with a light, and Fritz crept from under the bed and sat blinking beside it.

The three boys were astonished to see the landlord in their room without having to ask them to remove the barricade. They did not know that the portiere hung before an open door leading into the hall as did the one they had taken so much trouble to make secure.

"Now, boys," he said, laughing heartily, "have you lost your senses, or had you none to lose? Now tell me, Fritz, why were you under the bed?"

"I don't know how I got there, but I dreamed that I was in a trunk and the lid was almost down, and I could not raise it."

"Oh, you silly boy! of course you fell out of that narrow bed. What possessed you to all crowd in there when there are three beds in the room?"

"We did not wish to pay for all three."

"Then why did you not tell me that you wished only one bed, and I would have put you in a room where there is a larger one? Now, why did you barricade the door?"

"We were afraid of robbers," explained Paul after a long pause.

This amused the innkeeper mightily and he laughed till he shook.

"Locked and barred one door and left the other standing wide open!" he said with tears of mirth in his eyes.

"Well, well," he said, "no harm is done. Now each one get into a bed, with no heed to the pay. Mr. Furman has paid the whole bill for your stay here in return for the sweet songs you sang for him."

The boys made great eyes over this piece of news, and lost no time in getting themselves into the other beds.

"Wait, boys! You must first put the pieces of furniture back in their places, then go to bed and sleep well. You yet have several hours. What time do you wish to leave in the morning?"

"At six o'clock we must be on our way."

"All right," said the jolly landlord, and as he glanced at their rosy, bright faces, each in his own bed, he laughed, shook his head and went out, and soon the three boys and Pixy were sound asleep.

It is not known how long they would have slept had not the landlord paid them another visit.

"You have slept past the breakfast hour. Do you intend sleeping until dinner time?" he asked laughingly.

"No indeed! What time is it?" asked Fritz, opening his eyes sleepily.

"Nine o'clock and I thought you wished to start at six."

"Up, you sleepers!" cried the boy, as he sprang out of bed. The others obeyed promptly and commenced dressing, and in a short time appeared with clean hands, faces and teeth, at the good breakfast provided for them, their hair neatly brushed, and their spirits refreshed from a sound sleep in comfortable beds. On the back porch was a dish of good food for Pixy, that he might be ready to go as soon as the boys finished the meal.

When they were about to continue their journey, the landlord gave each of them a large roll and one for Pixy, saying that it would stay hunger until they reached an inn where they could take dinner.

Pixy was delighted to see them again on the move, and while the boys were bidding the host and hostess good-bye ran out in the street; and before his master caught up with him, he was in the midst of a fight with street curs. Fritz ran to protect his pet, who was taking his own part bravely, and Peter, the waiter at the inn, ran with a bucket of cold water which he dashed upon the circling mass of yelpers, and the fight was brought to a sudden finish.

Pixy came out of the combat sound, and ready for another fight, and Fritz was unharmed; the only injury being to the seat of his trousers, from which a piece had been torn by one of the street curs as a souvenir of the first visit to Umstadt.

"Come here, child," called the landlady to Fritz, "you cannot go among the stylish people of Frankfort with the hem of your shirt showing. I will mend it as well as I can, and when you get there, your aunt can mend it better. Now see what trouble your dog has brought upon you!"

"Pixy didn't tear my pants. It was one of the strange dogs. I am glad I brought him."

"No, your dog did not tear them, but if he had not been here there would not have been a fight."

"But he did not commence it. They fought him, and he had to defend himself."

"That too is true, but they do not wish a strange dog among them, nor will other dogs he meets on his travels. So he should have been left at home. Now go up to your room and take one of the boys with you to bring down your trousers, and I will do the best I can to mend them."

This was done, and Fritz sat disconsolately upon a chair waiting for the return of Paul. He began to question within himself whether he had done a wise thing to bring Pixy. The first dogs they had met had fought him, and it might be that he would get worsted in many a battle before he was again safely at home.

At length Paul brought up the trousers, but to Fritz's dismay the patch was of different color. His father being a cloth merchant, the cloth was of good quality and Fritz had always been rather proud of it, but now to have a dark blue patch on dark brown trousers was mortifying indeed. But there was no help for it. The good woman had done the best she could, and he must wear them until he reached Frankfort.

A happy thought came to Paul. "Wear your rain-coat," he said. "It is long enough to hide the patch."

Franz, who had come up to learn the cause of delay, thought it an excellent idea, so ran down and brought up the knapsack containing the coat.

Fritz put it on, much relieved that the objectionable ornament was hidden from public view, and the three went below to resume their journey.

More than an hour had been lost by this mishap, and the landlord advised that they take the train to Frankfort in continuance of their journey.

"But we set out to walk, and told everybody that we were going to walk, and we *will* walk," responded Fritz resolutely.

"That would be all right if you had started early enough. You might then by steady walking have made the journey before dark. As it is, you cannot reach there until night which would be rather hard for you in a strange city, and you would have to wake your aunt out of sleep to let you in."

"But we have an hour yet until dinner time. We can walk a long distance in an hour."

"All right, then. Good-bye, and a pleasant journey."

"Good-bye, and a pleasant journey," echoed Peter, who, having cleaned the dust from the shoes of the three, carried their wash-water up to their room, and thrown water on the fighting dogs, was in evidence on the porch waiting for tips.

"Will we give him anything?" whispered Paul.

"No," replied Fritz. "I would think if Mr. Furman paid for all, he would not forget to give Peter something for waiting upon us. Come on."

Had they opened their hearts to give the waiting Peter a few pennies, it would have saved them much anxiety, but they walked away without casting one backward glance.

They felt somewhat weary from their walk of the day before, yet enjoyed the fresh air, the song of the

birds, the fragrant smell of woods and meadows; and Pixy frolicked along sometimes before and sometimes behind them, but never losing sight of his master.

They had walked more than a mile when Fritz halted suddenly and grasped the arm of Paul.

"Did you take our money from under your pillow?" he asked.

"I? No, I never thought about it. You put it under the pillow, and I have never thought of it since seeing you put it there."

"Now, Paul, it was Franz and I who went to the other beds, you were left in the one where the money was hidden. You must have it, and are only trying to scare us. Of course, you would not leave it under the pillow."

"Of course I did! I tell you that I never thought of it once."

"Then, Franz, you would not forget it. Certainly you have it in your pocket."

"Certainly I have not! I have never thought of it since you put it under the pillow."

"Oh, that is too bad!" cried Fritz, flushing with dismay. "We will have to go back to the inn and get it."

"Not I," asserted Franz. "I would be ashamed to go back. Remember how Mr. Swan laughed because we stacked things against the door."

"Nor will I," echoed Paul stoutly.

"Then we can go no further on our journey to Frankfort; we will have to go back home, for we have no money."

"Now just see!" ejaculated Paul, "you remembered the dog which is of no use to us, and forgot the money that we cannot do without. We must go back for it," and like the sons of Jacob returning to Egypt, they turned their faces toward Umstadt.

A slight coolness reigned among the triplets; a cloud rested upon the brows of Franz and Paul that for the forgetfulness of Fritz they must face the landlord, and more than that the tipless Peter. So with red cheeks and eyes cast down they returned to the Swan inn, and the landlord met them at the door with a smiling welcome.

"I expected you," he said. "You remind me of the story of the traveler who upon his journey came to a cross road, and, not knowing which to take, returned home. But I judge you had a better reason that it will be a great pleasure to you to relate."

On their way back Fritz had said, "If the money is under the pillow we can get it, and there will be no need of telling the hotel people why we came back. Then they will not have a chance to laugh at us."

The others agreed to this, so he was ready with his reply.

"Yes, sir; we left a trifle under our pillow, and came back to get it."

"Only a trifle?"

"A small package, but as we do not wish to leave it, we came back for it."

"That was quite right. You can go up and seek for it."

The three flew up the steps, but soon returned with long faces and tearful eyes.

"We have not found it, Mr. Swan," they said.

"But if it is only a trifle, why need you care?" asked the landlord, laughing heartily. "But," he added, "there are sometimes important things left by travelers, for this morning our chambermaid found in one of the rooms this handkerchief in which is tied three small pocketbooks," and he held it up out of reach of the boys.

"It is ours," cried the boys gleefully. "Give it to us, please," and they reached for it.

"Hands off!" laughed the landlord. "How am I to know that the purses are yours, when you said you had left a trifle? So it cannot be your money; for money is no trifle to a traveler. In truth nothing is more useful to him. It will supply him with a bed, comfortable room, good meals, and with it he can pay something for having his dusty shoes cleaned after a day's walk. Now do you think money is a trifle

when with it you can have bed, meals, and service such as brushing dusty shoes? All these things can be had for a piece of paper, or a coin that you can hide under your tongue. Then is money really a trifle? Even if there is not much money in these little purses, yet what would you do if they were not returned to you?"

"Oh, please forgive us that we have been so foolish," pleaded Fritz. "The purses are ours and we came back to get them, and we can tell you of every penny that is in each of them. I have a—"

"Oh, you do not need to tell me! I knew that they could belong only to you. They are just as Letta, our chambermaid, found them. Our people are honest."

"Where is she? and where is Peter? We wish to give them something."

"Peter, Letta, come! You are wanted," called the landlord, and they came and stood waiting to hear the reason for being summoned.

Each of the boys in the meantime had his purse in his hand, and they were holding a hurried and whispered conversation which ended by them taking twenty cents from each purse, ten for Letta and ten for Peter, who received it with smiling faces. The travelers felt that they had done the right thing, their self-respect was restored, and they were about to start again upon their travels when a new thought came to Fritz.

"At what time do you have dinner here, Mr. Swan?" he asked.

Again the landlord could not control his laughter, as he replied, "It will be ready in half an hour."

"Suppose we stay," said Fritz, turning to his companions. "I am terribly hungry."

"So am I," echoed Paul.

"So am I," agreed Franz.

"I was about to suggest that you take dinner with us," said their host.
"It is quite a distance to the next public house."

"What will you have for dinner, Mr. Swan?"

"Liverwurst, roast potatoes, stewed pears, and warm brown bread with butter."

"I love every one of those things," remarked Franz.

"What will the dinner cost each of us?" asked Fritz.

"What would it cost?" echoed the innkeeper as if reflecting. "Oh, we will not talk of that. All I can say is that we wish every one who eats here to have plenty, and after the meal is over we can tell better what it is worth."

"We will stay," said the boys jubilantly, and removed their knapsacks. When dinner was served their host led the way to the dining-room and gave them places, and took his own. His wife was already at the table, then followed Letta and Peter. The landlord removed his skull-cap, bowed his head reverently as did the others and asked a blessing upon the meal; then he and his wife told the boys to help themselves, which they did forthwith from the large plates well-filled which they had placed before them.

Peter, who sat opposite, was filled with admiration of their powers of endurance, and said to himself, as the viands disappeared with astonishing celerity, "How much will it take to fill them when they are men? They make me think of our William when he was a growing boy, and had eaten all he could hold, father would say, 'William, are you satisfied,' and he would say, 'No, father. I am full, but I am not satisfied.'"

But notwithstanding the comparison with the insatiable William, the boys expressed themselves as fully satisfied when every vessel of food had disappeared from the plates, and when they returned to the reception-room told the landlord that they had heartily enjoyed the excellent dinner and asked again the cost of it for each.

"The cost? Well now, let me state the case as it really stands," said the smiling landlord. "If you had come and ordered a dinner of the kind you wished, and took seats at the public table, with a servant to wait upon you, I should have charged you the same that I would charge any other guest. But you just sat down with us at our family table, and shared the plain dinner that had been prepared for us, so I do not charge you anything."

"But we did have just the kind of dinner we like," said Fritz, "and I am afraid our fathers would not like us to go away without paying for it."

"Oh, boys, don't worry. Your fathers have taken many a dinner here, and, God willing, will take many more. All I ask of you is to take my advice by going to the station and taking the train for Frankfort. If you go now you will be in good time to catch the afternoon train for Frankfort. Now good-bye and a pleasant journey!"

The three boys shouldered their knapsacks, Fritz still wearing his rain-coat, although the sun shone brightly, and went through the market place on their way to the station, Pixy in the lead carrying a bone that Letta had given him after he finished his dinner, while the family gathered on the porch and watched their slow movements with tears of mirth in their eyes.

They had intended walking to Frankfort for two reasons. It would be something of an exploit to relate to their schoolfellows, and it would save money; but slow as they traveled to the station, the train seemed to have waited for them for they were in ample time.

"Do you wish single fares, or return tickets?" asked the clerk.

This was a question which could not be settled too quickly. The boys held a consultation, and Fritz gave the deciding opinion.

"If we buy a return ticket," he explained, "we will save money, but we may want to walk back, and then would have to lose what we pay for a return ticket. Besides, if we did not want to ride home, some one of us, or it may be all of us, might lose our return ticket, and Aunt Fanny would insist giving us money for tickets which we would not wish her to do. No, we will take single fares."

They bought them, and were about to step into a car when they were stopped by the conductor.

"Where is your ticket for the dog?" he asked.

"Must I have a ticket for him?" asked the boy, in surprise.

"I should say so! You must be a kindergarten youngster to ask such a question. Moreover, if anybody in the car objects to having him in there, you will have to take him in a freight car even if you have a ticket for him."

"I object," said a woman, sitting in the car next the window. "Who wants to get dog hairs on them when traveling for pleasure?"

"What shall we do?" asked Fritz, ready to cry.

"Get a ticket and get it quickly for the train will soon start, and put the dog in the freight car."

"But I must go with him. He would be frightened to be there without me."

"Certainly. You can go as freight if you wish. I have nothing to say against it."

Fritz hurried away, secured the ticket and returned, sad with the thought of being separated from his companions, but smiles came again to his face when they told him that they would go to the freight car with him.

They hurried in, and the train moved off while they were looking about them, hoping to see among the freight some boxes that would serve for seats.

They were nearly thrown off their feet, while Pixy, not at all unsettled by the motion of the cars, saw something so interesting in a slatted box filled with chickens that he sniffed and capered about in doggish delight. But the chickens were not at all pleased with his appearance, and fluttered, cackled and shrieked, awakening the old woman who was taking them to market.

"Whose black fiend of a dog is that, running loose about a freight car?" she exclaimed angrily.

"It is mine, good lady," said Fritz soothingly. "I did not wish him to frighten your chickens."

"How do I know that you did not set him on them while I was asleep? If he has hurt them, you will pay well for them."

"See, here is the cord that I hold him with," said the boy, taking it from his knapsack. "I will tie it to his collar, and he will not go near your chickens again."

But all that he could say was but oil to the fire, and Fritz found that the wiser plan for him was to

keep silent; while Pixy, understanding that the storm of words had something to do with him, crept behind the box on which his master sat and looked up at him with a very penitent air.

The seats the boys had taken did not prove permanent, for at every station some of the freight must be taken out, and some brought in, but they enjoyed the trip, for the old woman and her chickens left the car at one of the stations, and they had the place to themselves.

"Is this Frankfort?" they asked at every station.

"No," the guard replied, "and I expect you to ask at every stopping place until we really reach Frankfort, and then you will not ask."

"Why?" asked Fritz.

"Because you will know without asking."

Presently Franz called out, "Hurrah, we are here!"

"Where?" asked Fritz, hurrying to the window.

"At Frankfort. See, we are crossing a river. It is the Main. Yes, there is the dome! I know it from the picture of the cathedral in my picture of Frankfort."

"Didn't I say that you wouldn't ask if this is Frankfort? Now boys, out with you, and take your dog. Good-bye!"

CHAPTER IV

A KIND WELCOME

The train drew slowly into the depot at Frankfort, and for the first time in their lives the country boys saw something of the bustle and excitement of travel. A crowd of people was hurrying out of the cars, and an equally hurrying one was passing in, while on the platform of the depot was a waiting crowd greeting returned ones, and bidding farewell to departing ones, in all of which the boys were so interested that for a time they forgot their own interests. At length the departure of the train brought to their remembrance that they, too, must depart and Fritz stepped up to an old gentleman whose pleasant countenance inspired confidence.

"We wish to go to the house of my aunt, Mrs. Fanny Steiner," he said. "Are you acquainted with her? She is a little, thin lady, has gray hair, and wears a widow's cap."

"No, my boy," smiled the old gentleman, "I have not the honor of her acquaintance. Perhaps you can tell me the number of her house and the street?"

"Yes, it is number 37 Bornheimer street."

"Good! I can direct you exactly how to go. You take the electric car which will pass here in a few minutes, and it will take you to the corner of the street not more than a few steps from number 37."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" said Fritz much relieved. Paul and Franz touched their hats and thanked him, taking Fritz as an example in all things.

The car came, and the three, followed closely by Pixy, rushed to get aboard.

"You can't bring that dog on the car. It is against orders," called the motorman.

"What must I do?" asked Fritz despairingly.

"You must settle that matter between yourself and the dog. Perhaps he will follow the car if he sees you in it."

"Can I stand on the platform where he can see me?"

"No, it is against orders; but you can sit at the window at the end of the car, where he can see you."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" and the three quickly boarded the car. Fritz took the place designated, and they were off, while Pixy, who believed that his master was deserting him, ran barking and howling in their track.

At every stoppage of the car, Pixy sprang up to the window, but Fritz knew better than to speak one comforting word, although his heart ached for his forlorn traveling companion who must walk—or rather run, and run fast to keep up with the rapidly moving car. At length Pixy learned the lesson of experience. As there was no chance for him at the back end of the car, he would try the front, so at the next stopping-place, he flew along the length of the car, sprang on the front platform and curled about the feet of the motorman.

"See here, boy, you must get out, and take your dog. It is against orders for a dog to be on the platform."

"We will go out, too," said Franz and Paul, jumping up to follow their leader.

"Give us back our money," said Fritz, holding out his hand, when they reached the street.

"No; it is against orders;" and the car sped away.

Pixy was delighted that the three boys were now on the same footing as himself, and proved it by springing up, putting his feet on his master's shoulders and licking his face; and the boy petted him to his heart's content. But Paul and Franz were not flattered in an equal measure with Fritz at Pixy's pleasure in their company as fellow-travelers, and expressed their opinion with clouded faces.

"Now this is the second time that we have paid out money and got but little good out of it because of the dog," grumbled Franz. "He got into a fight and your pants got torn, and we would, I think, have remembered the money if we had not been bothered about having to wait to get them mended. Then we had to come back and pay thirty cents to Peter and thirty to Letta; and afterward had to ride in a freight-car because of your dog."

"If you don't want Pixy with us, I will go back home to-morrow and take him," said Fritz with tears in his eyes. "It has been enough trouble to me that I brought him without first asking papa and mamma. It was a mean thing to do, but I thought it would be so nice to have him take the journey with us."

Franz and Paul were ashamed of their treatment of the one to whom they were indebted for the visit to Mrs. Steiner and Frankfort, and hastened to assure him that no matter what trouble happened through Pixy's fault they would make no word of complaint.

Pixy knew by the change of tone that peace had again spread its blessed wings over the "three-leaved clover," and to show his approbation he fawned upon all three with impartial effusiveness.

"I am sorry that I said that he had no sense like city dogs that were running quietly along-side of wagons, but must try to jump on the car whenever it stopped," said Paul penitently.

"Yes," replied Fritz, throwing his arm around Pixy's neck, "you were both glad when you saw that I was bringing him upon the journey, and now when he brings us into trouble we must not blame him for what he cannot help."

"No, it would not be right to blame him for loving us, and wanting to be with us," agreed Franz.

"Aunt Fanny will rejoice to see him, I know," continued Fritz. "No, I am not at all sorry I brought him, only I wish I had asked leave of papa and mamma."

The mention of his aunt reminded the three that they had yet to find her house, and they were in consultation as to what way to go when a workman in a blue blouse came in sight and they asked the way to 37 Bornheimer street.

"Whom are you going to see there?" he asked.

"My Aunt Fanny Steiner. She lives in the apartments on the third floor."

"If you will give me fifty cents, I will take you there."

The boys glanced at each other but were silent, and the man saw that he had struck too high.

"Well, then, suppose we say thirty pennies. That will be ten each," and to this they agreed and the caravan set out, Fritz leading Pixy by his cord.

The way led through several streets but at length they reached a retired street, and the leader halted

before a neat dwelling with a flight of long winding steps leading up to a narrow porch and it was agreed among them that he should go up while the boys waited below. In response to his knock, the door was opened by a small, elderly lady, who was informed that three boys and a dog waited below.

"I am not expecting anyone," she said, stepping out upon the porch and looking down.

"Here we are, Aunt Fanny!" called Fritz. "It is our holiday and we have come to visit you."

"Come right up, dear," exclaimed his aunt joyously; "but leave the dog below. Dogs are not allowed in these apartments."

"But, aunt, it is Pixy, that you take out walking every morning in summer, and always give him a lump of sugar when you visit us in the country."

"Oh," cried the perplexed aunt, "I did not recognize him, but come up, boys. I am heartily glad to see you."

"First give me my money," said their guide, holding out his hand; the money was given, and the three and Pixy ran up the long steps, Fritz saying as he ran, "Come on, boys, we have found Aunt Steiner and she is glad to see us."

"Did you write that you were coming to-day, dear?" asked his aunt when all hands were seated and the boys had laid aside their knapsacks.

"No, aunt. You know I wrote two weeks ago and told you that Franz and I were coming as soon as school was done; and we thought you would not mind if we brought Paul."

"No, I am really glad he is with you; I met Paul and his parents when I was at your home in the country and am glad to welcome him as well as Franz, whose parents are dear friends of mine. The only reason that I would be glad if you had written is that I might have provided another bed. There is only one in my spare room."

The boys looked at each other with anxious glances. It seemed to them a hopeless case for they had tried the experiment of three in a bed at the Swan inn, and it had not been a success.

"Don't feel concerned, dear boys," said Mrs. Steiner kindly; "there is a wide lounge in the room with a head-piece which serves as a pillow. One of you can sleep upon it."

"Let Franz and Paul have the bed, aunt. I am perfectly willing to sleep on the lounge."

"Then that matter is settled. Now about the dog."

"He does not need a bed, dear Aunt Fanny," replied the boy, reddening with anxiety. "He can sleep on the floor anywhere, and he does not eat much; just the scraps from the table will suit him."

"I am not thinking of his bed or of his food, my dear; but you have come to Frankfort on a sight-seeing tour, and dogs will not be allowed at any place that you will want to go."

"Then we can leave him here."

"But to that there is also an objection. When I rented this suite of rooms, I assured the owner who lives on the first floor that I had no dog. In the apartments below me lives an old lady who is afraid of dogs and is frightened at noise. Now if Pixy should howl or bark while you are out, what would I do?"

Fritz loved his dog and it distressed him that there seemed to be no place in the world where he was tolerated except his father's house; therefore there seemed no other course than to return home and take Pixy with him.

"Oh, dear aunt!" he said tearfully, "let us stay this one night, and to-morrow I will go back home."

"My dear boy," said his aunt with tears of sympathy in her eyes, "do you think for a moment that I would allow you to go home, when this is the very first time you have paid me a visit? No; come with me and bring Pixy with you. We will go down to the first floor to see Mr. Steerer, the owner of this house, and ask him if he will let you keep your dog during your visit."

This was one ray of sunlight on a cloudy day, and Fritz and Pixy followed down the long steps. Mrs. Steiner rang the bell of the first floor apartments, and Mr. Steerer opened the door and invited them in.

"Now tell the gentleman why we have come," said Mrs. Steiner.

But Fritz was weeping too bitterly to make explanations, and his aunt had to speak for him.

"I have no objection to the dog staying," replied Mr. Steerer kindly, "providing he does not bark and annoy my tenant on the second floor."

"Now, Pixy, thank the gentleman for his kindness," said Aunt Fanny, and immediately the intelligent animal sat upon his hind feet and waved his right fore foot back and forth.

"But you must speak," commanded Fritz, who was smiling through his tears, whereupon Pixy gave a sharp little bark while again waving his paw.

"Now we will call and ask Mrs. Hagner if your dog can stay," said Aunt Fanny when they reached the door of the old lady's apartments and gently tapped.

"Come in! Come in!" laughed a voice within, "and I am pretty sure that I know why you have come."

Fritz felt so relieved at their pleasant reception that he made the explanation.

"Certainly, certainly, I will not object," replied Mrs. Hagner. "I do not like dogs, but I do like my neighbor and I like boys; so taking these two likings together, you see they are too strong to be mastered by the one dislike."

"Thank the lady for her kindness, Pixy," said Fritz gleefully and it was done, not omitting the bark, and aunt and nephew went with light hearts up the steps to the third floor to tell the anxious Franz and Paul the result of their visit.

"Now, children," said Mrs. Steiner, "let us lay that care and all others aside and be happy. I am rejoiced to see you all, and hope to make you have a pleasant visit. But you must also do your share to make it so by being satisfied with what I can do to entertain you. You must be contented with the few pleasures I can offer. And now tell me, Fritz, why you are wearing a rain-coat on a clear day," and Fritz explained the situation in a few words.

"Well, dear Fritz, we must sometimes have shadow instead of sunshine, thorns instead of roses; and you must not let this mar your pleasure. I am glad to see young, cheerful people about me; it makes me feel young again."

The boys looked at each other with a satisfied smile. They felt that it was the right kind of a welcome, and Fritz was proud of his father's sister.

"Now you can take your knapsacks into my spare-bedroom," she continued, opening the door of a pleasant apartment. At that moment to the joy of Fritz, a porter from the depot brought his satchel, and at the request of Mrs. Steiner placed it in their room. He lost no time in taking out a pair of trousers, putting the patched ones in the trunk, and then the three returned to the sitting-room which was also dining-room.

"Now, boys," said Mrs. Steiner, "I was just preparing supper for myself when you came, and all I will have to do is to add something more substantial for three travelers. But first I must ask how it happened that you did not write at least a postal to let me know you were coming? I might have been away from home. Then what would you have done?"

"Father said I ought to write to you and tell you the time we would be here," replied Fritz, "but I put it off until it was too late, and I thought you would not care."

"No, it does not make the least difference to me but it might have made a great difference to you. I might have been sick, or, as I said before, away from home. So do not trust to chance in such matters, but more than all, do as your parents advise. They know best. Now I see that it is my usual time for getting supper, and Paul will go out with me to buy something for it. Fritz and Franz can go into the kitchen and wash their hands in the basin hanging by the sink. Then Franz can tie on an apron he will see out there and take the peelings from a dish of boiled potatoes on the table and cut them up in small pieces, while Fritz sets the table in this room. The tablecloth is in this drawer, and the dishes in the cupboard; and he can set the table for four people as he sees it set at home. Now, Paul, we will go."

Nothing could have made the boys feel more at home that first evening than the sharing of the work of the household, and all joined in cheerfully.

"I am as hungry as a wolf; I could almost eat the cold potatoes," remarked Franz.

"So could I, but we can wait. Aunt will get supper quickly when she comes." And he was right, for the boys had scarcely finished their work when they heard her and Paul coming up the steps, and a half hour later supper was ready.

She had turned the well-chopped potatoes in a hot pan in which was melted butter and set Franz to stir them that they might brown without burning. In another pan she put the slices of liverwurst for Fritz to watch, and Paul, who had first been sent to the kitchen to wash his hands, put the slices of rich ham upon a pretty pink plate, and fresh lettuce upon another, and placed them upon the table, while Mrs. Steiner cut the bread and got a pitcher of new milk.

"Now, Fritz, before we take our suppers, here is a plate upon which you can break some pieces of bread and soften it with this good milk."

"What for?" asked the boy in surprise.

"For Pixy, who is waiting so patiently. Could we enjoy our supper knowing that the poor dumb creature is hungry?"

This was done and the plate placed on the floor by the window, and the heart of Fritz was filled with pleasure to see Pixy's appreciation of the good supper.

The potatoes and liverwurst, both beautifully browned, were placed upon the table, and all sat down.

"Did I set the table nicely, Aunt Fanny?" asked Fritz.

"Yes, very well indeed, except that you forgot the napkins. Please get four out of that drawer, and then choose the places you wish," and she took her own at the head of the table. Bowing her head she said in reverent voice, "Dear Jesus, be our guest at this meal and at all our meals. Bless the good food Thou hast given us, and receive our grateful thanks. Amen."

"Now, my boys," she continued cordially, "you cannot fail being hungry, and I hope you will eat heartily and if the meat and potatoes fail us, we can make out with this good brown and white bread, and butter and new milk and these stewed pears."

The boys were glad to obey and the viands disappeared like magic. Mrs. Steiner had many questions to ask about her brother and his family but would not disturb Fritz until he had finished supper. An old adage came into her mind as she saw them eat, "When a sheep bleats you may be sure he has no food in his mouth."

She was glad to see that they heartily enjoyed their supper, and when finished she made a proposition. "You can rest while I put the place in order for the night and then we will take a walk."

"Can I take Pixy?" asked Fritz eagerly.

"Certainly, if you lead him by his cord, and if a policeman speaks to you about your dog having no tag or muzzle, tell him that you are from the country and are only visiting Frankfort, which is your reason for not having one or the other."

"But I am afraid the policeman will take him. I would rather stay here with him."

"There is no danger of him taking the dog from you. The most he could do would be to make you pay a fine; and I am sure he will not do that when we explain matters to him. Now we will go."

"Where are all the people going?" asked Fritz when they reached the street. "At home we only see a crowd when the church service is over and that is but for a little while. Here the street seems alive all the time."

"Yes, Frankfort has more than three hundred thousand inhabitants and of course many are on the street, some caring for business, others for pleasure, and some, like us, are sight-seeing."

"Just see that beautiful place like a rich man's garden!" said Franz, "with trees and plants and flowers, and so many people walking there."

"Yes, they are the public gardens or promenades, and are in place of what was once the fortifications of the city. In the early part of the nineteenth century part of them were taken away and this splendid girdle of plants and beautiful walks took their place."

"Oh, it is lovely, lovely!" exclaimed Paul. "I never before saw a garden lighted, and with so many gas lamps that it is as bright as if the sun were shining. Can we go in?"

"Yes, but we will wait here a little while. Do you see this beautiful lake surrounded by trees? In a few minutes you will see a beautiful scene which will surprise you."

"Oh, this is the surprise," cried the boys in a breath, for like magic myriads of gas lights sprang up

along the line of the trees and the Main river. It was a bewildering sight to the country boys, who had no words to express their pleasure.

"And two rows of lights are across the river," exclaimed Paul.

"Yes, they are on the fine new bridge over the Main; and above is the old bridge and several others which you can visit while in Frankfort."

They crossed the bridge and looked at the great dome of the cathedral, and while they were gazing, eight solemn strokes sounded from its clock, and other clocks over the city struck the hour.

"We have but one clock and one church-tower in our village," remarked Franz. "The boys in Frankfort don't get the chance to say the clock is wrong when they are late to school."

Thus chatting, they reached the bridge, and, leaning upon the parapet, gazed at the brilliant scene.

"See, Aunt Fanny, what is that coming down the river? A whole company of boats filled with people, and with music, and with flags flying?"

"That is a regatta, or sailing match. It will go under this bridge and down to the old one, then will turn and go up to that island where they will all leave the boats and will have games and refreshments."

As the boats passed under the bridge Fritz would have liked to jump down among the group of boys in the first boat; and he watched intently as the merry company passed up the river and turn, and then stepped off on the island.

"Aunt, do let us go to the old bridge, and look at the people," he said eagerly.

Mrs. Steiner was glad to oblige, and they hurried to the bridge to see the boats land, each one greeted by cheers. The whole company joined in a march to the sound of martial music by the band, then a short speech was listened to and when finished our triplets joined in the cheers, and the throwing up of hats without in the least knowing what the speech was about, or by whom made.

Fritz was so full of delight over the whole affair that he rubbed his hands in glee as he made known his resolution to be a cloth merchant when he was old enough and would come to live in Frankfort, and meant to join the rudder club. "I will tell them now that I will join," he ended enthusiastically.

"I think it will be a little too early, my boy," smiled his aunt.

"I don't wish to be too late."

"But it will be some years before you are a merchant."

"I am going to join the marines," exclaimed Franz eagerly. "Father wishes me to be a forester, and I had not made up my mind what I would be. Now I know. Yes, I will join the marines. Oh, that is a jolly life."

"Are you sure of that, my boy?" asked a man who stood near them on the crowded bridge, and Mrs. Steiner turned to greet August Stayman whom she had known from his boyhood, and introduced the boys to him.

"And so you think the life of a marine a jolly one?" he asked, turning again to Franz. "Well, our kaiser will need good strong men, and I will not discourage you. I was three years on the sea in storm and adventure, on a war-vessel, and am yet living and in good health."

"And what are you now?" asked Fritz.

"I am the owner of a cloth and clothing store, and also a tailor, and can wield the needle as well as ever, although my hands had been hardened by the heavy ropes."

"Did you have to come to Frankfort to join the marines?" asked Franz.

"No, I was born in Frankfort on the shore of the Main. People used to call me a water-rat; and they were right, for I became a more expert seaman on the Main than do many on the ocean. My longing was to be a seaman, and my mother, who was at first opposed to it, gave consent, and I have never regretted it. I looked death in the face many times, but escaped without a scratch."

The boys were deeply interested in this conversation, but it was interrupted by a succession of splendid fireworks on the island which surprised and delighted them beyond measure. They almost held their breath while watching an especially brilliant piece reflected in the water.

"Now, boys, we will go," said Aunt Steiner when the last exhibition of the evening fireworks went up, making the words "good-night" high in the air; "and we will call at a confectioner's for a glass of ice-cream soda."

"Let me have the pleasure of showing some attention to your young guests," said Mr. Stayman. "I shall be pleased to accompany you to the store."

Mrs. Steiner gave willing assent, and soon the five thirsty ones found themselves upon comfortable seats under the awning in front of the store and Mr. Stayman gave the order for five glasses of ice-cream soda with cake. This was a pleasant ending to the first evening of sight-seeing in Frankfort, and the triplets realized that "their lines had fallen in pleasant places."

As they were separating Mrs. Steiner thanked Mr. Stayman for his kindness, and he in turn invited her guests to visit his store, which was eagerly agreed to by Fritz, who considered the clothing business exactly in his line.

"Then you expect to be a clothing merchant, do you?" asked his new acquaintance.

"Yes, a merchant in the manufacturing branch of the business," was the reply in a slightly pompous tone and manner.

"Well, then it may be that you will come to Frankfort and learn the business of me."

"Study to be a tailor? No, I do no care to learn to sew."

"What have you against the trade of tailoring? Do you know any that is more honorable? Is it not our business here upon earth to serve our fellow-men? And are not our fellow-men well served by having clothes made for them? If a tailor understands his business and works at it in a faithful, honest manner, he is as much to be respected as a kaiser who rules his people in a just and faithful manner. Listen to this little rhyme:

"Not everyone can wear a kaiser's hat,
Not everyone must daily gutters sweep;
Yet everyone can do his honest work,
In palace or in hut his charge can keep."

"Do not think I am censuring you, my dear boy, but never, never speak disparagingly of any honest work."

"That little verse pleases me," remarked the quiet but observing Paul. "My father often says the same thing but not in verse. He says that work is no disgrace to anyone. And he tells his pupils that the smut that is upon the hands of a toiling man can be washed off by soap, but no soap can wash away the smutty word that comes from the lips."

"That is true indeed," commented Mrs. Steiner, "and now we must journey toward home and the blessed land of sleep, as my dear mother always called the bedroom. And she was right, for a comfortable bedroom is indeed a blessed place to the weary one at the close of a hard day's labor or the child wearied with play."

They bade Mr. Stayman a cordial farewell, and, taking another glance at the gay scene about them, returned to the quiet flat.

The boys began to realize how tired they were when they reached number 37, and went directly to their room and to bed.

When all was quiet, the careful aunt went in and just as she had expected, found no one had thought to put out the light. Moreover, Fritz was lying with his feet upon the raised part of the lounge and his head on the low part.

"Fritz, dear boy, Fritz!" she said, shaking him by the shoulder, "wake up! You must not sleep with your head so low."

"Oh, aunt," he said plaintively, "let me sleep. I am all right."

"No, you are not all right, and you shall sleep the whole blessed night when you get in a more comfortable position. Don't you see that your feet are on the pillow where your head ought to be?"

"Yes, but I was sleeping so well. Aunt, see you turned the lounge the other way, the head was down this way when we first came."

"Yes, Fritz, you are right. I did turn it that you might not be waked by the sun shining upon your eyelids. Now step off, quick, and put your heels in their proper place."

"Oh, aunt, indeed I am satisfied. Please do not make me get up."

"But I am not satisfied," and Mrs. Steiner helped him rise and still half asleep he dropped back upon the lounge with his head upon the pillow. She kissed his fair forehead, took up the lamp, and glanced at the three sleepers, perfect pictures of healthy, happy boyhood.

"Now, Fritz, is not that a more comfortable way to sleep?" she asked, but there was no response for he was fast asleep.

"It would be a happy day for me, if he could come to Frankfort and live with me," she said to herself, "but not as I will, but as God wills. May He protect them all through life, and keep them pure of heart as now; and ten years hence may they look as openly and honestly into the faces of their fellow-creatures as they do now. Let them not seek worldly honors in preference to the favor of God."

Then she went softly from the room to her own apartment.

Pixy was the first to awake the next morning, and had a good run in the grassy backyard to get an appetite for breakfast.

"Now it is time to wake our sleepers," said Mrs. Steiner, and went to the door of the room to call them.

They were too sound asleep to hear the call, and she opened the door and looked in. Upon the floor on the side of the bed occupied by Paul lay the pillow, and on the floor by the side of Franz's place lay the sheet. Fritz had lost his blanket during the night, and, not more than half awake, had reached out for it and gotten his handkerchief, which he had spread over his shoulders, and his head was resting upon the chair which his careful aunt had placed in front of the head-piece of the lounge.

"Wake up, sleepers!" she said cheerfully. "The sun has been up this long while. There is only one washstand, but you can take turns at it; and there is a pitcher of cool fresh water. Now make yourselves neat as quickly as possible that you may be ready for breakfast."

She returned to the kitchen and presently the odor of frying sausage and steaming coffee floated into the room, and a little later the triplets stood beside Mrs. Steiner, neat, refreshed and in splendid spirits.

"Pixy has been trying to take a bath in the pan of fresh water that I set out for the birds," said Mrs. Steiner, "and as he could not get into it, he dipped a foot in as does a cat. All animals try to be clean if we give them the chance. Take that largest tin basin, Fritz, fill it with water, dip this dust brush in it, and wash him. It will answer almost as well as if he were put in a tub. See, he seems to understand what I am saying and wags his tail as if to say, 'yes, little mother, all animals love a bath, and would be clean if given the chance.'"

The boys hurried away and gave Pixy his bath which he certainly enjoyed, and had just finished when Mrs. Steiner called them to breakfast. They were about to take their places when Mrs. Steiner asked Fritz if he had not forgotten something.

"No, Aunt Steiner, I cannot think of anything that I have forgotten," he said.

"Go back to the kitchen, dear, and you will see Pixy's dish with bits of bread in it, softened and made richer by having some of the sausage gravy upon it. He smelled it, as did you while it was cooking, and we must not disappoint him. Go set his breakfast on the porch for him, and then we will have ours."

This was done, and all took seats, the blessing was asked, and then Mrs. Steiner in her pleasant way called attention to the pure white linen tablecloth.

"You see, boys," she said, "that it is white and spotless; and you perhaps do not know how much labor there is in placing even one piece of washing in this fine condition. Now, I wish one of you to pour the coffee, and pass the cups around without spilling any."

"Let me pour it, Aunt Fanny," said Fritz, and he poured a cupful for each person and passed it without spilling a drop, while Aunt Steiner served the sausage.

Then Fritz poured his own coffee, and in passing it to his place he noticed a tiny stain at Paul's plate. Immediately a discussion arose between them as to who was to blame in the matter.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Steiner soothingly, "I am satisfied that the whole cup of coffee has not

flowed over the cloth. We will cover the stain with the mantle of love and charity in the shape of a clean napkin."

It was such a satisfaction to Fritz to see it hidden that he was ready to ask a question.

"Aunt Fanny," he said, "where are we to go to-day?"

"Every place is new to you, and you can go where you prefer, but on horses that do not eat oats."

The boys understood that she meant that they must go on foot; and were well satisfied.

"Our horse at home eats oats," remarked Franz, "and loves sugar. Every morning, when papa is ready to ride to the forest mamma goes to the gate with him, with a lump of sugar for Betty, and always says, 'Now, Betty, be a good little horse to-day and bring your master safely home to his wife and children this evening. Do you understand?' and she does really seem to understand and neighs gently as much as to say 'I will.'"

"Can you go out alone, do you think, or do you wish me to go with you?" asked Mrs. Steiner when breakfast was finished.

"I am sure we could go alone," replied Fritz. "If we get lost we will ask the way to 37 Bornheimer street."

They put on their straw hats for the march, and Pixy, who evidently thought that they were going home, sprang up in delight, and was so full of frolic that Fritz could scarcely fasten the cord to his collar.

"Now, are you going out without one of you thinking of something you have left undone?" asked Mrs. Steiner gently. "Will you not write one line to your parents to tell them of your safe arrival?"

"Yes, truly we forgot it," and the three looked at each other, then laid aside their hats. Fritz ran to his satchel for paper and envelopes, but his aunt told him that post-cards would be sufficient and supplied them with three, saying that they could write letters later.

"Would it not be better to wait and get scenery cards?" asked the thoughtful Paul; "scenes of something we will see while we are out to-day?"

"No, write now, and just a few words that your parents may get them this evening. It may perhaps save them sleepless nights."

The triplets sat down immediately to the business of writing home. Franz wrote so large that he could only get upon it the few words: "My dear father and mother and sister: We got safely to Frankfort last evening."

Fritz, with his usual frugality, used but a third part of his postal, and Paul took the middle course, and neatly filled his card.

CHAPTER V

FRITZ IN TROUBLE

When the boys had finished writing their postals, they bade Mrs. Steiner good morning and set out to see what they could of Frankfort without a helper, and their first aim was to find a letter box. They had nearly reached one when Franz noticed that he had not written the address upon his postal. He saw no remedy but to go back and mount the long flight of steps to correct his mistake. But a gentleman who was also about to post a letter comforted him by the assurance that his parents would receive it if the address were written with a pencil, and loaned him one, to the great satisfaction of the whole party.

"And now, my boy," added the gentleman when they heard the postal rattle into the box, "remember to always direct a letter, postal or package clearly, and correctly and then look again at the address before dropping it into the box."

The triplets promised to remember, and the gentleman bade them good-bye, and hurried down the street.

"Now, where will we go first?" inquired Fritz.

"I think the zoological garden would be the best place," suggested Paul, but Fritz had set his heart upon seeing soldiers, for in their home neighborhood they saw a soldier only now and then when home upon a furlough; but a regiment, or a company even, they had never seen. So they walked along the street some distance hoping to see a drill, having read of drills and maneuvers in their story books.

"Look! There comes an officer," exclaimed Franz, as a corporal came walking along in a stately, dignified manner, and the delighted boys took off their hats and bowed low to him.

The young man was not at all flattered by this attention, believing that the country boys were making fun of him; but his angry stare was positive proof to the triplets that he was some great man, Fritz deciding that he was a general.

"But if he were a general, he would ride upon a splendid horse. He would not walk," remarked Paul.

"But he would walk sometimes," insisted Fritz, and at that moment they met a drummer, and again the boys doffed their hats and bowed low.

"If I were a soldier, I would be a drummer," decided Fritz. "No instrument makes such beautiful music as a drum; and a person must understand music to be a drummer."

"But a captain is greater than a drummer," said Paul, "and a general is greater than a captain."

"Yes, people say so, but if you notice, it is the drummer who leads the way. All the others have to follow him. I always think of a verse that tells exactly what I think. Shall I say it to you?"

"Yes, if it is not too long," replied both of his companions, and Fritz repeated it.

"My comrades envy me, I know,
They can deny it not;
For drummer of the regiment
Has been my happy lot.

"And at a tap, or drum's loud beat
The soldiers follow me;
The general, even, has no choice,
He follows, too, you see.

"But if it had not been my lot
To be a drummer boy
Then I would be a General;
But not with half the joy."

"He was right!" agreed the boys, "and when we are soldiers we will be drummers."

Chatting amicably, they reached the beautiful flower-bordered walks where they had been the evening before, and sat down under the shade of a great linden to watch the swan swimming about in the lake. They had scarcely been seated when a soldier passed and again the triplets raised their hats, and some street boys who were playing near raised a shout of derision.

"Look at the country boobies taking off their hats to a common soldier!" they cried, and gathered about the three with mocking laughter and jeers.

"Where did you come from to be so green?" asked one of them.

"There is no need for you to know, therefore no need for us to tell you," answered Franz.

"See the hayseeds who come here and think they know it all! I will take this hat and keep it until its owner tells me what I asked," and he grasped Paul's hat, intending to run, but Paul was too quick for him, for he lay hold of the boy's arm, and got his hat.

This was just what the rough street urchins wanted, and they gathered about the three; pushed against Odysseus-Fritz, Achilles-Franz and Patroclus-Paul, and as no policeman was near, they would have mastered the three peaceable, well-bred boys, but at that moment Pixy, who had been watching the game, sprang in the midst of the melee, grasped the sleeve of one of the boys, snarling savagely, as if he were a terribly dangerous dog, indeed. The frightened boy tore himself loose with such force that he fell to the ground and Pixy, as though scorning to attack a fallen enemy, grasped the seat of the pants of another boy, tore a piece out, which released the boy, and he and the others ran as fast as their feet would carry them from such a dangerous locality. Pixy followed their hasty flight, barking

vigorously, and would have made another attack had not Fritz called him back. The three Grecian heroes petted and praised him, and he wagged his tail for joy, and capered about them as much as to say, "Didn't I make them fly!"

Yet prouder was his young master, and he could not help reminding his comrades that he was not so foolish after all in bringing his dog to Frankfort, to which they agreed, for they felt much relieved at the scatterment of the rough and violent street urchins.

"But," continued Fritz, "it will be better for us to leave here, for these rough boys may collect a larger company and come back and fight us; and as brave as Pixy is, he might not be able to manage them all."

"Say, boys," exclaimed Franz after they had walked some distance, "we will not raise our hats to every soldier that happens along. That is why the street boys made fun of us. It would be all right if we only knew a General should he come along for then it would certainly be good form to raise our hats to him. But we don't know, so we won't raise our hats to any man in uniform," advised Franz. All agreeing to this decision, they passed on to the business part of the city, Pixy trotting near them, his young master holding fast to his rope.

"Just see that splendid clothing-house made of glass and iron, and filled from basement to roof with beautiful suits of clothing of all kinds," said Fritz delightedly. "A man could go in there in a morning-gown, and come out in a quarter of an hour dressed like a gentleman from head to foot. Father told me of a splendid clothing-house here in Frankfort, and this must be the one. Let us go in and see it."

"But we cannot take Pixy in," said thoughtful Paul. "Surely they would not allow dogs in that beautiful place."

"No," replied Fritz, "you boys may go in first, and I will stay here with Pixy. After you have been through the building you can stay with him while I go."

Franz and Paul hurried in, and Fritz stood by the great glass front, and examined with the eyes of an experienced clothing merchant the elegant cloth garments hanging within.

"They are wonderfully cheap," he said to himself as he considered the cards upon them. "We could not afford to sell them at that price. But then who knows whether they are well made? If I were going to buy them, I would examine them well before paying any money for them."

So the future clothing merchant chatted to himself, and did not take notice that a tall, handsomely dressed and gentlemanly-looking stranger was gazing upon him with a smile of benevolent good-comradeship, and at length spoke to him.

"You appear to be a stranger here, my young friend," he said in a winning tone, and he lifted his glossy silk hat as he spoke.

"Yes, sir; I was never in Frankfort before; and came only yesterday."

"Then I am sure that there is much to see and to hear that will be new to you."

"Yes, for I came from the country, and this is the first city I have ever seen."

"But can you enjoy it so well alone?"

"I am not alone; two of my classmates are with me. They have gone into this clothing house, and when they come back they will hold my dog and I will go."

"Then I will remain with you until they come, for I love the company of young people. I will also be a protection to you, for there are many bad characters in a great city."

"Yes, I have read and heard of them and it is very kind in you to stay. I have read in our newspapers of the cunning rogues, and I am on the lookout for them. My comrades could be more easily deceived than I, for I am quite sure that I would know one the moment I saw him; and would like to see one."

"Your reply proves to me that you are intelligent and thoughtful beyond your years, and certainly have no need of anyone to protect you, for you can take care of yourself. I wish other boys would read more about these light-fingered people and they would be on their guard. Now you might be seeing something while you are waiting for your friends. We might walk about the square and they will see us when they come out of the store, for we will keep in sight of it."

Fritz was pleased with this proposal and walked slowly along with his new acquaintance, who pointed out with his cane objects of interest and at times laid his hand on the boy's shoulder like an affectionate

father, and Fritz felt perfectly at home with him.

At length they reached a tall column upon which was pasted many bills and placards.

"Have you read this?" asked the new acquaintance, pointing to one of them with his cane.

"No, sir."

"Well now, read it aloud."

"Way to the Zoological Aquarium," repeated Fritz.

"Now this one."

"Beware of pick-pockets."

"It is good advice. I must see if I have my money," and he touched his pocket; his example followed by Fritz.

"Yes, mine is all right yet. How is it with yours, my dear young friend? I hope your money is in a safe place, that is, if you have any with you?"

"Yes, I have two dollars and some small money; but better than all, I have a gold piece that I keep in the safest place in my pocketbook. I am not intending to spend it for I have enough without it, but my father said that one ought to have more money with him than he thinks he will need."

"Your father is evidently a kind and sensible man."

"Yes, he certainly is. He told me to keep my nickels in my vest pocket that I need not take out my pocketbook when with strangers."

"That is true in most cases, my boy, but from long experience in living in a city I would advise that you put it all in one place. If all your money is in your pocketbook you can guard it much better than if your attention was divided by having to guard two places."

Fritz took the advice and his nickels to the value of two marks were taken from his vest pocket and put in his purse, and the purse returned to the pocket of his pants.

"Now that is right, and you may thank this notice which has warned you. Just see how easily one expert pick-pocket could have gotten your money had you not been warned," and he showed Fritz how it could be done.

Pixy had kept his eyes upon the stranger and when he saw his hand glide down to the pocket, he gave a low growl.

"Be quiet, Pixy!" said his master. "Don't you know a friend from an enemy? Excuse my dog's bad manners, please; he is not in a good humor. Some street boys attacked us, and he had to fight them off."

"Don't say a word, my dear boy. He is a faithful servant. If he is jealous of a friend, he would have a still sharper eye upon an enemy if one should happen along. Now, Pixy, good, brave dog, eat this piece of candy, and let us be friends."

He took the candy from his vest pocket and offered it, but Pixy scorned the gift, and gave an angry growl.

"Oh well, doggie, I will not trouble you any longer," and he put the candy back in his pocket. "Now I must away. Bye-bye, my boy, and beware—of—pick-pockets," and he disappeared around the corner.

Pixy sprang up to follow, but the boy called him back.

"Franz was right, Pixy, when he said you have no sense," complained Fritz, as the dog continued to give dissatisfied growls. "You don't know a kind, good man from a thief and dislike him only because he is a stranger. Yes," he said to himself, as he walked along back to the store, "it was real kind in him to warn me, for he did not know but I was a stupid country boy who had never heard of pocket-took thieves. I would like to see a thief that could put his hand in my pocket without my knowing it. Stupid people are yet to be found, for with all the reports of thieves in the papers, there are people who allow themselves to be robbed, but they are generally women. People like me would know a thief the moment they saw him."

By this time he had reached the store, and wondered what kept the boys so long within.

"They forgot that I am waiting outside," he said to himself, "and I am terribly hungry. There is a bakery across the street. I will run over and buy a roll."

No sooner said than done; he ran across, and the odor of fresh bread, cakes and pretzels filled the place. He bought a roll, and took a bite while feeling in his pocket for his purse.

"Oh, it is gone!" he cried, turning pale with distress.

"Put your hand in your other pocket," said the saleswoman. "It may be there."

This was quickly done, but it was not to be found.

"I don't believe you had any money," said the woman, angrily, "but took that planning to get the roll without paying for it. I will call a policeman."

"Oh, please don't!" cried the boy, with tears streaming down his cheeks, "I will pay you when I see my aunt. She is Mrs. Fanny Steiner, number 37 Bornheimer street."

"Yes, now I believe that you are telling me the exact truth that you had money and have lost it."

"No, I did not lose it; it was stolen from me by a man who warned me against thieves."

"Then I should certainly call a policeman that you may have a chance of getting your money by giving a description of the pick-pocket."

"Oh no, please don't call him. I am afraid of a policeman, and don't want to see one."

"But why? That is foolish of you. They are our protectors. Only bad boys need fear them; honest people are glad to call upon them in trouble."

"There comes Franz and Paul out of the clothing store," and he ran to the door and called them, and they came across the street and into the bakery.

"What are you crying about?" asked Franz. "Have the street boys been fighting you while we were in the store?"

"No, I wish it had been the rude, ill-mannered rabble instead of the polite, kind-appearing gentleman who was a thief and stole my money. I am so ashamed that I was deceived by his pleasant words. Besides, I have bought a roll and cannot pay for it."

"Oh, that is all right!" said his companions, taking out their pocketbooks. "Here is your money for it, lady, and we will each buy a roll."

"Come, Fritz," said Paul as he took a bite out of his roll, "eat your roll and come with us. It is no use to stay here."

"Oh, my hunger is gone, and how can I forget my loss when I need my money every day?"

"But what is the use of fretting over it?" said Franz, impatiently. "The money is gone, and crying will not bring it back, so you may as well make the best of it."

"Yes, Franz, it is easy for you to talk that way when you have your money in your pocket. But mine is gone. Even the few nickels that were in my vest pocket were taken by the miserable thief," and tears streamed from the boy's eyes.

"I do feel sorry for you," said the saleswoman. "Had you much money in your pocketbook?"

"Yes, I had two silver dollars and a ten-mark gold piece with the face of Kaiser Frederick upon it. My father got it in trade, and he put it on the Christmas tree for me. It was new and bright and beautiful, and now it is gone. Besides I had two marks, and the nickels in my vest pocket—and—"

"What is the use of calling them all over?" complained Franz. "This is the third time you have called them. They will not come back like tame birds that know their names."

"Just think of the lines we repeat in school: 'Happy are we if we forget what we cannot change,'" Paul said by way of comfort.

"Yes, Paul, that is all right when people are not in trouble, but it will not bring back my beautiful, bright gold-piece and my—"

"It was not very smart of you to allow yourself to be robbed," rejoined Paul quickly. "No thief would have gotten the chance to fool *me* that way. I would not have been so friendly with a strange man as to allow him the chance to get his fingers in my pocket."

"Oh, Paul! you think you are very wise, but you would have been taken in just as I was by his smooth, sleek speech. The rascal was so pleasant and kind! It is a lesson to me, but that does not bring my money back; oh, my gold-piece, and my two dollars—boo—hoo—hoo—"

"Oh, do be quiet!" warned Franz. "Don't you see that people are gathering about the door?"

"Yes, you are right; I will be quiet, but we must go back now to Aunt Fanny's. I have had enough of Frankfort for one day."

To this the others agreed, but when they left the bakery they went in the wrong direction, and had gone many squares before they realized their mistake.

"Yes, you are going exactly in the opposite direction from 37 Bornheimer street," said a policeman whom they accosted. "Face about and enquire of policemen and postmen whom you meet, and in time you will get there."

This they did and when they reached 37, Mrs. Steiner was on the porch looking for them. They ran up the steps and Franz and Paul left explanations to Fritz, who fell upon her neck weeping, and sobbing, "Oh, Aunt Fanny, it is gone, all gone!"

"What is gone? Tell me, my little Fritz. You frighten me."

"My pocketbook, with my beautiful, bright gold-piece with the picture of Kaiser Frederick on it, and my two hard dollars, and my two mark-pieces—and my nickels; all are gone!"

"But, my pet, suppose you have lost your pocketbook, that is not saying that it cannot be found. There are plenty of honest people in the world who would be glad to return it if they could find the owner. We will search the papers and we may see in the 'found' column that some one has it, and will give it up to you."

"But, aunt, it is not an honest person but a thief who has it. I had no idea that anybody could steal from me," and he poured forth the whole story, concluding with, "Oh, my beautiful, bright gold-piece, with the face of Kaiser Frederick upon it!"

"Stolen! Dear Fritz, that is an entirely different thing from being lost. I, too, would never have thought of you allowing yourself to be robbed, for you spoke of reading so much about pick-pockets. It is evident that your dog was a better judge than his master. He had no confidence in the man, while you almost gave him your pocketbook."

"Oh, Aunt, don't remind me of that! I know it too well myself."

"No, dear, and I am sorry for your loss, and hope it will not make you lose confidence in your fellow-men. For one thief in the world there are thousands of honest people, but in a strange city and in a crowd one can be on guard without hurting the feelings of any stranger. Now I will hurry to the police station and give the information. No doubt you are not the only one the rascal has robbed, but if I can help it you will be the last, for a time at least. Franz, my boy, go to the kitchen and stir the beans. Stir quietly all the time I am gone. The soup and the veal roast are ready, and we can eat as soon as I come back, which will be in a few minutes."

She threw a little, fleecy shawl over her head and ran down the steps as lightly as a girl of fifteen. The boys in the meantime were in the kitchen, Fritz being so comforted by his aunt's sympathy and help that he could turn his attention to the dinner.

"This is pea-soup," he said, "and I certainly like it. Do you, Paul?"

"Yes, and the veal and the beans are good."

"But I could enjoy them all more if I had not lost my money. Oh, my beautiful gold-piece with the—"

"Likeness of Kaiser Frederick upon it," finished Franz. "Oh, Fritz, do give us a rest! It is gone, and if you tell it a thousand times, it will not make the thief bring it back and put it in your pocket. No, the rogue will have many good meals with its help, and the money will find its way into many pockets."

"Yes, that is what makes me feel so badly about it. I tried to save every penny of it and now it is gone! No wonder that you can feel cheerful! you have your money, but I—"

At that moment his Aunt Fanny returned, and brought some cheer with her.

"While the police have no clue to the thief," she slid, "as no one saw the theft committed, yet they will take every means to trap him. And now, Fritz, don't grieve any more. You shall not feel the need of money if I can help it, for when you want it you shall have it. Now we will take the meat and other things to the table, but first I must fix Pixy's plate."

This was done and Fritz carried it to the porch, then they took seats at the table, their plates were filled and a dish of the pea-soup was at each plate. The kind little hostess was glad to see that they ate heartily and enjoyed their dinner. As she glanced at Fritz she said to herself: "Thank goodness that it was his money that was lost instead of his appetite. That would be a far worse loss than even his gold-piece."

Roast veal, potatoes, beans and lettuce disappeared like mist, and before they arose from the table she said: "Boys, is your hunger entirely satisfied?"

"Perfectly satisfied!" was the unanimous response.

"Oh, what a pity!" she said, as if reflecting.

"Why a pity, Aunt Fanny?" asked Fritz.

"Because I have a basket of fine ripe cherries in the cupboard which I intended for dessert. But as you are satisfied, I suppose we must wait for another time."

The young guests looked crestfallen, and for a time were silent; then Franz came to the rescue with the right word.

"Cherries," he remarked, "have so much juice that I do not know that they could be called food. Instead, I would say that they are more like drink."

"Franz, you are a born lawyer," laughed Aunt Fanny. "You certainly deserve a fee for that brilliant opinion. As you say that you are satisfied that you have sufficient food, you may bring in a fresh drink in the shape of ripe, red cherries."

Franz was not slow to obey, and soon four heaps of cherry stones proved that the new drink was appreciated.

"Now could you enjoy another dessert?" asked Aunt Fanny, smilingly. "One that you will appreciate quite as much as the red cherries? Look!" and she held up a letter and two postals.

"Oh, please, please! They bring us news from home," cried the boys in a breath; and Fritz asked who was to get the letter.

"It is for Paul, and you and Franz get the postals. Now you can read them while I take the dishes from the table."

"Oh," exclaimed Franz, "they have gathered the summer pears, and I was not there to help. But all are well, and they send love to Aunt Steiner and thank her for her goodness to me. Boys, what have you in yours?"

"All are well," responded Fritz, "but father says I should not have brought Pixy. He says that he will not only be a trouble to us and to Aunt Fanny, but it will do the dog no good."

"I have never thought to ask where you got Pixy," remarked his aunt, "perhaps you can tell me, Fritz."

"Yes, aunt. He belonged to a neighbor who did not want him so gave him away. One cold day in winter the poor dog came all the way back, half starved, and scratched at our neighbor's door; but the hard-hearted man threw a bucket of cold water upon him and he ran to our door. Father took him in, fed and dried him, and the first week kept saying, 'If I only knew of some one who wants a good, gentle, young dog.' After another week he said, 'I will keep the dog. I could not bear to give him to some one that might not be kind to him.' So we kept him and named him Pixy, which father said was another name for fairy. I hope nothing will happen to him on this journey, for father would be so sorry."

"We will all care for him, that nothing may happen," said his aunt, cheerfully.

"Aunt Fanny, when I write home, will you write a line in my letter and say that you will see that nothing happens to Pixy?"

"Certainly, I will say that we will take the best care of him that we can."

"Oh, yes, Pixy will be all right, but my beautiful, bright gold-piece which—"

"Have you begun to sing that old song again?" exclaimed Franz. "You have been robbed of your money, and you are robbing us of pleasure!"

"Oh yes, you can talk of pleasure, but I—"

"Listen, my boy," said his aunt, "worrying will not bring your pocketbook back, and you must not lose this beautiful afternoon in grieving; but go out and see something of the city. My old friend and cousin, Gotfried Braun, is coming to go with you and will point out places of interest. He knows them all for he has lived in Frankfort all his life, and will give you the history of them."

"I am real glad. I love to see and hear of historic places," said Paul, and he had scarcely finished speaking when the old gentleman stepped in and was greeted as a loved friend.

"All the young people of his acquaintance call him Uncle Braun, and I think he will be pleased to have my boys call him that, will you not, cousin?" she enquired, turning to the old man.

"I certainly will, and now let us set out, for we have much to see."

"Can I take Pixy, Uncle Braun?" asked Fritz.

"Yes, you can take him, for we are not going into any buildings to-day, but when we visit them he cannot go unless he wears jacket and trousers and walks upright."

Fritz was jubilant over this and the three rushed for their hats, and they were off. Mrs. Steiner, standing upon the porch, looked after them until they were out of sight.

"Thank good Braun that I can stay at home this afternoon for I have many things to do that cannot be put off any longer," she said to herself, as she set to work to put the place in order and then go out to buy things to cook for supper.

CHAPTER VI

A WHOLE DAY OF SIGHT-SEEING

The four descended the steps, Fritz leading Pixy, and were soon in the main streets of the city, where the constant hurrying of feet and the rush of traffic was a continual subject of wonder to the country boys. In the windows of the large stores they saw so many things that were new to them, some of them from foreign countries, that they could scarcely move on and Uncle Braun waited patiently, answering innumerable questions.

"Is this the first time that you have ever seen diamonds, pearls and other precious gems?" he asked when they remained long at the windows of a large jewelry store.

"Yes," Fritz replied, "our parents have none, nor have our neighbors. Oh, how beautiful they are! and just see the price that is upon the earrings."

"Yes, ten thousand marks."

"Ten thousand marks," echoed Franz. "Why, that would buy a house and garden in the Odenwald."

"Does any person except queens and other royal people wear such things?" asked Paul.

"Certainly! There are many people in Frankfort who buy and wear them. If you are surprised at the price of the earrings, I am sure that you would be more astonished did we know the price of the diamond necklace."

"Uncle Braun, do you suppose that it was this jewelry store that was robbed a few weeks ago?" asked Fritz. "I saw an account of it in a Frankfort paper."

"I cannot say. There are many jewelry stores here, also many thieves."

"Oh," cried the boy, at the remembrance of his own loss, "my new, bright gold-piece—"

"With the likeness of Kaiser Frederick upon it!" completed Franz. "You see we can repeat that wail all right."

"Don't tease him, Franz, my boy," remarked Uncle Braun in a kind, yet rebuking tone. "You have not as yet had the opportunity to show us how you would act if all your money was stolen. Fritz has nothing to be ashamed of that he was deceived by the smooth-tongued stranger. I will tell you what happened to a baker, a middle-aged man, who has lived in Frankfort all his life. He was sitting in his bakery one day when he heard the footsteps of a man going up the steps of his house, which had two front doors, one leading into the bakery and the other up the stairway to the bedrooms.

"He went to the door and looked up and there was a man who appeared to be going up, but was in reality coming down backwards. He halted when he heard the sound at the door.

"He had a large bundle tied up in a compact roll, consisting of bed, pillows and bed clothing and did not appear to be in the least haste.

"What are you doing there?" called the baker.

"Isn't this the pawn-broker's shop?" asked the stranger.

"No, that is on the next square. You go to the corner and turn to the right, and there you are."

"Thank you!"

"The baker returned to his bakery and the man went out and down the street. When night came and the family went to retire there was no bed or bed-clothing in the baker's room. The clever thief had made off with them."

Fritz seemed somewhat comforted to hear that he was not the only one who had been outwitted.

Farther on the boys took keen interest in a bicycle race.

"Oh, look at them!" Fritz exclaimed. "A whole regiment of them! How can the dealer sell so many?"

"He must sell a great many more than you see there in order to pay the rent of his store."

"Yes," agreed Fritz, knowingly, "the rents are high with us, too; there is one man in our village who pays one hundred and eighty marks for the rent of his store."

"That is quite a sum of money, my boy," smiled Uncle Braun, "but look at this small store we are passing. I happen to know that the rent of it is ten times your one hundred and eighty marks."

"Is that possible? Then if he got but a mark for each pair of shoes, he would have to sell eighteen hundred pairs in a year to make the rent."

"I don't know how many he sells, but I do know that he has been there for a long time and does a flourishing business."

"Oh, listen to the music in this store!" exclaimed Paul, "singing, and no singer to be seen."

"I thought it would surprise you. That is a phonograph. Now listen, do you know the air?"

"Yes, it is from '*Der Freischutz*,' and oh, how beautifully it is done! How can it be possible for it to sing so correctly?" and the triplets listened with delight. They would have lingered much longer but Uncle Braun reminded them that time was passing, and there was much more to see.

"Do you know anything of the poet Goethe?" he asked as they passed along.

"Oh, yes!" they all exclaimed eagerly.

"Would you like to see the house in which he was born? I am sure you would, so we will go directly to it. The old house has been restored and is just as it was when he lived there. He was born in 1749. How old would he be if living?"

It did not take the triplets an instant to state exactly the number of years, then their old friend asked which of Goethe's poems they liked most.

"I like the 'Singer,'" said Paul, "and I like the 'Erlking,' but when my father read it aloud to us last winter my little sister crept under the sofa. She was afraid."

By this time they had reached the old house, and it was a delight to the triplets to see the rooms in

which he had played when a boy like them. They looked from the windows from which he had gazed at the fields beyond, and did not wonder that every intelligent stranger who came to Frankfort paid a visit to the old house, where the greatest poet that Germany has ever known—John Wolfgang von Goethe—lived and wrote.

"Where would you like to go next?" asked Uncle Braun.

"To the bridge over the Main," they answered promptly, for they believed that they would never grow weary of watching the cool, rippling water making its way to the Rhine and from thence to the sea. So to the bridge they went and leaned upon the parapet and gazed upon the scene as they had done the evening before.

"Did you ever hear how Frankfort got its name?" asked their guide.

"No, we never heard."

"It is said that at that point," he continued, designating it with his cane, "the river was at one time so shallow, owing to a ridge of rocks under its bed, that it could be forded by persons on foot. One time when Charlemagne—or Charles the Great—was battling against the Saxons, he was compelled to retreat before them, and they were in hot pursuit. The French forces were weak, while the Saxons were strong, but if he and his army could cross the Main, all would be safe. A heavy fog rested upon the river and they could not find the safe fording. The French ran up and down the shore, hoping to see someone who could tell them the location of the ford, but found no one. The enemy was advancing rapidly upon them and they had about given up in despair, when they saw a deer with her young step into the water and cross safely. In full confidence that the instinct of the animal had guided her correctly, they followed and reached the south side of the Main safely. The Saxons followed, but could not find the shallow place to cross, for there was no deer to guide them, and the city, dating from that time, was called *Frankenfurt* or Frankfort."

This narrative was of deep interest to the boys, who gazed at the spot where Charlemagne had crossed more than eleven hundred years before.

"Did he live in Frankfort?" asked Paul.

"Yes, for even at that time the city was of some importance. He built a fine palace which he named 'Frankfort,' and did much to improve the city and neighborhood. He formed great hunting troops to destroy the wild animals which infested the forests and did much damage, bears, wolves, wild hogs and buffaloes making the forests dangerous to travelers."

Now that they had heard this story of the river, they took keen interest in all that concerned it, especially the vessels upon its placid waters.

"They can carry great burdens," remarked Fritz, "more than many horses could pull."

"Suppose we have a question in arithmetic," said Uncle Braun. "I am sure that any one of you can solve it. If one such vessel could carry thirty thousand hundredweight, how many horses would it take to draw that burden if two horses could draw fifty hundredweight, and how many wagons and drivers if each driver had two horses?"

Fritz was the ready reckoner of the three, and quickly answered, "Twelve hundred horses, six hundred wagons, and six hundred drivers."

"Then you can see how much cheaper it is to have freight carried by sea."

"What are those boards for reaching from the shore out over the water?" asked Paul.

"They are for those who wish to take a bath in the Main; and on these warm evenings it is very agreeable to have this refreshment to weary bodies. Would you boys like to take a bath?"

"What would it cost?" asked Fritz.

"Eight cents."

"Then I can't take it. I have no money. Oh, my beautiful, bright gold—"

"But would you take the bath if I pay for it?"

"Do you mean for Franz and Paul, too?"

"Yes, for all three."

"Franz, do you and Paul take the bath, and Uncle Braun can give me the eight cents, which is just the same to him as if I took the bath."

"Oh, Fritz, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" exclaimed Paul. "It was not money, but a bath that Uncle Braun offered us."

Fritz had thought of this before Paul spoke, and his face had turned very red, and he could not raise his eyes to the face of his old friend.

But Uncle Braun laughed heartily at the different expressions upon the countenances of the three boys.

"I am much older than our little man, Fritz, and I must say that I would be tempted to strike a bargain with somebody if every penny was stolen from me. Now in such a predicament, I think we should help each other, so I will give Fritz five nickels to put in his empty pocket which will at least make a jingle."

"No, no, I will not take them!" cried Fritz, flushing warmly, "I am ashamed of myself."

"Fritz," said Paul, "it is a very different thing for you to take the money that Uncle Braun offers you as a gift, than to ask for money in place of a bath when he offers you the bath."

Franz saw the affair in the same light and advised the acceptance of the nickels, but added that it would take too much time to take a bath when there was so much they wished to see.

They passed on to the residence streets of the city where were some elegant dwellings, one of which especially attracted the attention of Fritz.

"Does a Rothschild live there?" he asked.

"No; there is no male descendant of Mayer Anselm Rothschild living now in Frankfort; nor is there now a Rothschild banking house."

"Was Mayer Anselm always rich?" asked Fritz.

"No. He came of poor Jewish parentage, and lived in his childhood in a poor little dwelling in a narrow street, but by his honesty and strict integrity he became the founder of a banking house known over the world, and his five sons, Anselm, Solomon, Nathan, Charles and James, became heads of great banking houses in different cities."

"Then the father was born in Frankfort?" remarked Paul.

"Yes. Mayer Anselm Rothschild was born in Frankfort in the year 1743, and died here in 1812."

"Then he was six years older than Goethe," commented Paul.

"Yes, they were great men in their different lines, and were contemporaries; that is, they lived at the same time."

"But it must have been tiresome to stay in a bank and count money," remarked Franz. "I would rather be a forester and live in the woods. My father says that healthy blood and sound limbs are better than money."

"Yes, but a rich man can live where he chooses," quoth Fritz. "If Mayer Rothschild wished to live in the woods, he could have done so. Couldn't he, Uncle Braun?"

"Yes, but his living there would only be for pleasure, while the father of Franz lives there to protect and care for our forests. Each man should do his duty to the best of his ability in the sphere that Providence has placed him."

"Boys, do you see that old gray tower rising high above the treetops?" he continued. "It is the old Eschenheimer tower, and gave its protective strength to the city wall, which long ago has disappeared; but the old tower remains a monument of the past. Do you notice that ivy has climbed to its very top? There was an old saying that when ivy reaches the top of any high building, the beginning of the end has come, and you will soon see that building in ruins. But the ivy reached the top long ago, and the tower still stands."

"And looks strong enough to stand forever," said Paul.

"Did you ever hear of Hans Winkelsee, who was once imprisoned there?" asked Uncle Braun.

"No. Please tell us about him," said the three eagerly.

"Hans Winkelsee was, in his time, one of the boldest, most daring robbers that ever infested the Frankfort forests and the foresters did their best to entrap him and make him their prisoner, but for a long time he eluded them. At length his time came, and he who had lived the wild, free life of a bird of prey was in a narrow cell at the top of Eschenheimer tower, judged guilty of so many crimes that he was sentenced to death.

"He who had roamed the forest, after deer and other wild animals, and had lain in wait to plunder travelers, now saw nothing, heard nothing but the creaking of the weather-vane on the top of the tower, which tormented him by day and robbed him of sleep by night until he preferred going to the gallows to longer imprisonment.

"'Oh, that I were free to see the bright sunshine, the moon and the stars; hear the thrush sing and the owl hoot!' he would say to himself in the darkness of his cell. 'But I see nothing, hear nothing but the horrible grating sound overhead.'

"'Well, Winkelsee,' said the jailor one evening as he stood at the cell door, 'you must feel it a great relief to be safely in here, as would a bear that had escaped the hunters and the dogs, and was safe in the depths of his cave.'

"'I could endure it if it were not for that fiendish weather-vane. If I only had my good rifle in my hand and was upon the ground, I would shoot a bullet hole through it for every night it has robbed me of sleep.'

"'Now, Winkelsee, do you really imagine that you could shoot to the top of the tower from the ground?'

"'I don't imagine it. I know it, and it would be a joy to me to have revenge upon it for robbing me of sleep.'

"'Hans Winkelsee, the burgomaster and the judge who condemned you would believe you a boaster, or out of your mind did they hear you say this, for it is simply impossible.'

"'You can go and tell them, and say that if I lose my life upon the gallows, they lose the best marksman in the kingdom.'

"The jailor shook his head, then turned the key in the lock and went slowly down the steps. He believed that the judge and the burgomaster would laugh at him should he give them Winkelsee's message. Yet he feared that if the imprisoned man died upon the scaffold, he would feel self-reproach and remorse for not giving him the one chance for his life.

"He went to the judge and told him, and a council was called to discuss the question. As in most cases, part were in favor of giving him the chance for his life, and the other part believed that he was planning a flight, and his associates would gather about to help him escape.

"But there were huntsmen among them who were eager to see what Winkelsee could do and argued that if he failed, it would then be time enough to have him executed, so they decided that as soon as the clock struck twelve the next morning they would allow him the trial of his skill.

"A deputation was sent to tell him of the decision.

"'I am not afraid of the gallows,' he said, 'but am willing to have a chance for my life on condition that I have my own rifle and one of my comrades accompany me to the spot where I take my stand. Can you agree to this?'

"They assured him that both requests should be granted, and hoped that the trial would be a success.

"'I have no fear in regard to it. I know what I can do. Now you can leave me to myself, and to-morrow I will leave this martyr cage and be as free as the birds of the air.'

"'Winkelsee, I advise you not to take the affair so lightly. If you fail, your last chance for life fails with it.'

"The news of the trial of his skill spread through the city and the next day at twelve a great crowd assembled to witness the test of skill.

"When Hans was escorted to the spot by one of his associates, his rifle was put in his hand. He pressed it to his breast as if it were a long lost friend, examined it carefully to see that it had not been tampered with, then said, 'I am ready. Shall I shoot?'

"The burgomaster nodded and Hans took aim at the weather-vane and fired.

"Stillness reigned in the great multitude, then hunters and marksmen shouted and cheered, for there was a bullet hole in the weather-vane, plainly visible to the spectators. Hans loaded the rifle, took aim, a second bullet whizzed through the air, and a second hole appeared in the weather-vane close to the first.

"'He is in league with satan,' cried a voice in the crowd. 'No mortal being could do that without the evil one's help.'

"'He is satan himself,' cried another, 'and could shoot a hole through the moon if his rifle would reach that far.'

"Shot after shot followed, each one leaving a bullet hole in the vase, until the whole nine were there, and anyone having good eyes can see them to-day."

"Fritz, Franz, I see them!" cried Paul. "Oh, he was a wonderful marksman. I wonder if anyone is living now who could do it?"

"But," suggested Franz, "how easily the maker of the weather-vane could make the nine holes before it was placed on the top of the tower."

"You boys can settle that question among yourselves," replied Uncle Braun, "but listen to the rest of the story. The burgomaster and councilmen were glad to have the chance to spare the life of the stalwart and expert marksman, and told him that he was free to go, providing he would no longer molest travelers in the forest.

"He made no reply, and the councilmen held a consultation and one of them went to him with another offer.

"'The head-master of hunting died lately, and his place must be filled,' he said. 'You have given such an exhibition of your skill as a marksman that we offer the place to you. You can then live in the city of Frankfort and have all the rights and privileges of a citizen, together with the compensation that goes with the office, and our good wishes.'

"All expected Winkelsee to accept this offer with gratitude, but he waved his hand in refusal.

"'I do not wish the place,' he said. 'All my life I have been free and free I will be. My imprisonment let me see what it is to be buried alive. I would feel if enclosed by the walls of a city as a chaffinch would feel in the claw of a hawk. No matter if your city walls enclose a larger place, it is yet a cage. No, I will not stay. Hans Winkelsee seeks the woods. There he was born, there he will die and be buried under a shady oak tree.'"

The boys were so interested in the story that they did not realize that it was past their supper hour, but Uncle Braun knew that they must be hungry.

"We will go into a restaurant," he said, "and each of you can order whatever you wish just so that the price does not exceed ten pennies for each. That will buy enough to stay your hunger until you can reach home to enjoy the good supper your aunt will have ready."

"Ten cents will get enough for us and leave a little over for Pixy," remarked Fritz.

"No, I will provide for Pixy. He, too, is my guest."

It was a new and pleasant experience to the boys to give an order in a fine restaurant, and each chose ten cents' worth of cake, which they pronounced delicious, and which with glasses of cool water refreshed them greatly.

"Would it not be well to take your kind aunt some of the cake which you like so well?" asked Uncle Braun.

"We should have thought of it ourselves," said Franz. "Paul and I will buy twenty cents' worth and Fritz need not help because he has lost his money."

"There was no need to remind him of his loss," rebuked Paul.

"There is no need to remind me, true enough," sighed Fritz, "for it is never out of my mind. When I saw the fine houses I thought to myself that it took gold-pieces like mine to build them. When I saw the tower and heard the story of Winkelsee, I thought that I would not give my gold-piece for his rifle and when I walk along the streets I think that perhaps I may find a gold-piece like the one I lost."

"But, my dear boy," said Uncle Braun, "what would be your gain would be someone's loss; perhaps it would be the only piece that a poor widow had to pay rent or to buy bread for her children."

"I am ashamed that I wished to find one, but my gold-piece was so new and bright."

"There is no need to be all the time grieving about what cannot be helped," grumbled Franz.

"My boy," said Uncle Braun kindly, "do not censure him. It is a comfort to speak to friends of what troubles us, and a pleasure to speak of what interests us. I knew three young men in college who were very fond of the pleasures of the table. What they had to eat, what they wished to eat, and where they hoped to eat, seemed to be their only object in life, and they spoke of it continually. It certainly was not entertaining or instructive conversation."

"But I wish to do my share toward buying the cake for Aunt Steiner," said Fritz, and he took out ten cents of the money given him by Uncle Braun, the other boys each added ten, and quite a large piece of the rich cake was ordered, wrapped in white paper, paid for and then they were ready to go to 37 Bornheimer street, for Uncle Braun had decided that they had enough sight-seeing for one day.

They parted from their kind guide with many thanks for the pleasures he had given them, and went slowly up the long steps. When they opened the door of the cheerful supper room, all was so homelike and comfortable, and Mrs. Steiner welcomed them so gladly that they felt that it was a great blessing to have a second home.

"Dear boys," she said, "rest a little while, then one of you get a pitcher of fresh water and all go to your room and wash faces and hands and brush your hair, and you will be refreshed and rested for supper."

Fritz had carried the cake, and when his aunt returned to the kitchen he slipped it back of the stove until the proper time to present it, then all went to their room.

"Are you hungry?" asked Franz.

"Yes, hungry as a wolf," replied Paul, "but don't let us speak of it again, or Aunt Steiner will think that we are Odenwald wolves and all we came to see her for is what we get to eat. You know what Uncle Braun said of those three young men and I don't wish to be like them."

Upon returning to the supper room Fritz said, "Let us set the table for Aunt Fanny."

"All right," responded Franz, springing up. "Do you put on the tablecloth and I will put on the dishes."

"No, let us both spread the cloth, and both put on the dishes," returned Fritz, but Franz got a plate from the cupboard, and when Fritz attempted to take it out of his hands it fell to the floor and broke into many pieces.

"Now see what you have done!" ejaculated Franz.

"No, what you have done," retorted Fritz.

Question and answer flew back and forth like snowballs in winter, and then Mrs. Steiner appeared at the door.

"Dear, dear, that is a great display of crockery!" she said.

"Franz did it," said Fritz.

"No, it was Fritz."

"Oh, you innocent lambs," she said laughingly, "of course neither of you did it, so it must be that little man on the clock face who stepped down to break a plate. Or perhaps it was the dog; he is hiding his face between his feet as if ashamed to look up."

"No, no, Aunt Fanny, it was not my Pixy," exclaimed Fritz, "I will take all the blame upon myself."

"It was partly my fault," echoed Franz, "and I am sorry that the plate is broken."

"So am I," rejoined Fritz, "and I will pay for it."

"Hear him, offering to pay for it," laughed Mrs. Steiner, "when he has no money. Never mind, my boy, you need not pay for the plate. I have plenty more, and here is a mark to put in your empty purse."

"But, Aunt Fanny, my purse is not empty," and he told of the nickels given him by Uncle Braun.

"It was kind in him to take you out; and he is very generous in every way. Now pick up the pieces of plate, and put them upon this waiter and then we will set the table and have supper."

This was done, and while his aunt was out of the room Fritz took out one of the pink plates, put the cake upon it and set it in the middle of the table. It was a great surprise to her and she was gratified that they remembered her while they were out, and said so, whereupon the conscientious boys would not let her remain in ignorance of the fact that it was Uncle Braun who suggested it.

"Well, it is no matter who first thought of it," she said cheerfully, "you boys used your money to prepare a surprise for me. We will cut it in four parts and it will make a fine dessert."

The boys insisted that she should keep it all for herself, but she said she would enjoy her part more when all had a share, so they did not refuse it.

"Now, boys, tell me something of your afternoon," said Mrs. Steiner, and each vied with the others to describe what they had seen. Fritz contributed his share of it by telling of his wish that he could find a gold-piece on the street, and what Uncle Braun said in regard to it, ending with "Oh, my new, bright, gold-piece with the—"

"Oh, dear, are we again to hear that cry?" grumbled Franz. "You are like Hannibal weeping upon the ruins of Carthage."

"You have not lost any gold-piece, and you are wrong about Hannibal; it was Scipio who wept on the ruins of Carthage."

"You are both wrong," corrected Paul, "it was Marius who wept upon the ruins of Carthage. Wasn't it, Aunt Steiner?"

"My dear boy, I have forgotten much that I once knew of ancient history, but I think that Hannibal was a great Carthaginian general who fought the Romans. Whether he wept or not over the ruins of Carthage I cannot say; but I do know that you boys are tired and sleepy and the sooner you get to bed the better. Go now, don't forget to say your prayers; and Fritz, see that your head keeps on the pillow of the lounge and not on the chair beside it."

CHAPTER VII

THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

The next morning just as Mrs. Steiner and her guests had finished breakfast the doorbell rang, and she went to the door, opened it but drew back startled, when she saw a tall policeman.

"Why are you here?" she asked anxiously.

"It is a strange thing that people seem frightened as if fearing arrest when we come to their doors," he said in a kindly tone. "They should look upon us as protectors against thieves and other evil-doers, yet they seem to look upon us as enemies."

"Yes," said Mrs. Steiner pleasantly, "one cannot deny that when a policeman comes it seems to signify trouble."

"Well, I am not bringing trouble. I only came to enquire if there is a boy here named Fritz."

"Yes, Fritz is here. He is my brother's son, and is visiting me."

The boys had heard all and made a rush for the door, where they stood behind Mrs. Steiner, gazing with intense interest at the tall, dark man who had such piercing black eyes and a moustache so large that Fritz told his aunt afterward that it looked as if a blackbird had lighted upon his upper lip and spread its wings under his nose.

"Now, which one of these boys is Fritz?" he asked.

"This one," said the aunt, turning to the boy, who was doing his best to hide Pixy from the eyes of the

law. But Pixy was not willing to be obscured. He did not like the looks of the man, and gave one of his low growls.

"Call your dog away, boy, I have no business with him, although he has no tag. However that is no harm, so long as he stays in the house. Now, Fritz, what is your other name?"

"Fritz Heil. My father is a clothing merchant, and his store—"

"I do not have need to know of him. Did you lose a pocketbook yesterday?"

"No, it was stolen from me."

"Well, I came to take you to the police commissioner."

"Aunt, has the policeman arrested me?" asked the boy, clinging to his aunt's arm.

"You are not under arrest, boy," laughed the man. "You are only wanted as witness. We hope to catch the thief. Now forward, march."

"Yes, Fritz, go and do what you can to help. Do you think you can find your way back?"

"I will see that he gets back all right, madam," and down the steps they went, Franz and Paul looking after them until they disappeared from view.

Fritz was received so kindly by the police commissioner that he felt entirely at ease.

"So you were robbed, my little man. How did the churl look who picked your pocket?"

"Oh, he was no churl, but a pleasant gentleman with a soft voice."

"Yes, we know this pleasant gentleman. How was he dressed the day you saw him?"

"He wore a tall silk hat, a black broadcloth coat and vest, and although it was a warm day, he had on a fine thin overcoat."

"Entirely right. You describe him well as to clothing. Now about his face and form?"

"He was tall and slender, had a smooth face, black hair and black eyes that looked quickly about him like a squirrel, and he had a scar over his left eye."

"Exactly! Now tell me about your pocketbook."

"My mother gave it to me at Christmas, and—"

"There is no need to tell me that, my son."

"Yes, there is need, because in it is a tiny card on which is written 'To my loved Fritz, from his mother; Christmas.'"

"Oh, it is well to know this. Describe the pocketbook."

"It is of red leather, and has a bright clasp, and upon it I scratched 'Fritz' with my pocket knife."

"That is enough, my boy. Is this it?" and he held upon a red leather pocketbook.

"No, mine is the same shape, but smaller."

"Is this it?" holding up another.

"Yes!" cried the boy joyously and reached for it.

"First tell me what is in it."

It was no trouble for Fritz to enumerate the coin; he had done it too often to forget.

"The pocketbook is yours, my little man. Tell me, do you recognize this photograph?"

"Yes, it is he; the very one, only his overcoat was not buttoned when he robbed me."

"Exactly. We know our man and he is now behind iron bars. When your aunt came here and gave the information, I sent one of my detectives to a public house where these rascals congregate; and, sure enough, there was your fine gentleman partaking of a good dinner washed down by a bottle of good

wine at your expense. Your gold-piece is safe and one of the dollars. He used the other and the small change for his refreshments. Here, take your pocketbook, and I wish to say that there are not many grown people who could observe and describe so well the thief who robbed them."

"I will not trust anybody again as I did that smooth-talking stranger. I will be on the lookout all the time for thieves."

"Oh, my boy, do not let this affair make you suspicious of your fellow-creatures, or you will never have a peaceful hour upon earth. Of course, we should not trust entire strangers too much, and should carry our money in a secure place. The safest is a pocket on the inside of your vest, a thief could not well get his hand in there. And now let us shake hands in farewell, and may you have a pleasant visit to Frankfort!"

The boy left the office in splendid spirits, for he felt richer than when he first owned the pocketbook and the gold-piece, for he had it again, when he thought it was gone forever. The policeman took him in sight of number 37, and he ran the rest of the way alone. He saw his aunt on the porch waiting for him.

"Aunt Fanny, dear Aunt Fanny, I have my gold-piece and my pocketbook," and he held it up in glee.

"Oh, my boy, had we Pixy back, that would be a greater joy," said Mrs. Steiner.

"My Pixy!" cried the boy. "Isn't he in the house?"

"No, my poor boy, and I have no idea where he is. After you left, the affectionate creature was so lost without you that I could not quiet his restlessness. Franz and Paul had gone out to walk around the square, and left the door open a little way and while I was in the kitchen to see if the bread was ready to put in the oven Pixy slipped out. I saw him disappear, and ran after him as fast as my feet would carry me, but he escaped."

Fritz broke into bitter weeping and his aunt wept with him for she had no comfort to offer, and when Franz and Paul came they, too, were deeply worried over the loss, for they blamed themselves that they did not see that the door was latched.

"What can we do?" they asked Mrs. Steiner.

"The first thing is to run to the station-house and tell the police. They have found the thief and may find the dog."

"Oh, Fritz, have you really got your gold-piece?" they asked in a breath.

"Yes, and my pocketbook, but they are no pleasure to me now that I have lost Pixy, and I am the only one to blame. If I had left him at home, instead of bringing him to Frankfort without papa's knowing it, this would not have happened," and again he wept and the others could offer no comfort.

"If I don't find Pixy, I will not go home," he sobbed; "Papa and mamma and little sister love him so, and even our servant girl will grieve if Pixy never comes back."

"Let us not lose time in grieving," said his aunt, putting her hand upon his shoulder, "but let us do what we can to find him."

"Yes, we will go," said Fritz, "for the longer we wait, the further away he will be," and he ran out, followed by his comrades.

The first person they met was a carpenter with his tools upon his shoulder.

"Have you seen my dog, my Pixy?" asked Fritz as the three halted and looked up in his face. "A beautiful, black dog with curly hair on his neck and shoulders?"

"No, I have seen no black dog," and the boys ran along again, asking every one they met.

"You are only asking me to plague me," said a cross old woman, not heeding the tearful eyes of Fritz. "The street boys are getting more tormenting all the time."

At length a kind-hearted woman told them that she had seen a black dog on the next street, and they ran in breathless haste to see it, but alas! it was not Pixy, for while resembling him, it did not recognize the name of Pixy, nor the voice of Fritz calling it.

"This is my dog, boys! What do you mean by trying to toll him away?" exclaimed a gentleman, coming to the door of a store; but when Fritz explained that he had lost his dog, the gentleman believed him

and became a sympathizing friend.

"I will give you the advice to go to the animal asylum," he said. "Stray dogs and other animals are taken there and good care given them until the owners claim them."

"Oh, if my Pixy falls in good hands until I can find him," said Fritz.

"I must tell you, boys," continued the gentleman, "that in Frankfort, as in other cities, there are people who will steal dogs in order to get a reward. But your dog may only be lost, and the best way will be to put a notice in the morning paper. Then if he is at the asylum, they will let you know."

At that moment a well-known voice said, "Good day, doctor, what important business have you with my young friends?"

It was Uncle Braun who spoke, and the boys were so delighted to see him that half their trouble seemed to be gone.

"Don't be so distressed, Fritz," he said. "I will put a notice in the paper saying that a black dog answering to the name of Pixy has strayed away, and will promise a reward to anyone who will bring him to 37 Bornheimer street. Now run home, boys, and do not keep Mrs. Steiner anxious about you."

He added to his kindness by going with them as far as number 37, and when the triplets hurried up the steps, they found Mrs. Steiner on the porch watching for them. She was sad to see that Pixy was not with them, but cheered Fritz by saying that Uncle Braun generally succeeded in what he undertook, and all ate dinner with hope in their hearts. But when they arose from the table and Fritz saw Pixy's plate on the back porch, he threw his arms about his aunt, and wept.

"Oh, Aunt Fanny," he said, "if I only knew that Pixy was in the asylum or some other safe place, and not wandering the streets, hungry and looking for me, I would not feel so badly! but I am afraid the street boys will throw stones at him and he will run away and never come back."

"If your gold-piece that you gave up as lost was found, so Pixy may be. Do not cry any more, my darling, or you will be sick. Perhaps your dog may be on his way back to the Odenwald."

"If we had walked all the way he might track us, but we came in the cars from Umstadt."

"In spite of that disadvantage he may find his way home, as he did the time your neighbor gave him away."

"Where will we go to-morrow?" asked Paul with the kind intent of taking Fritz's thoughts from his trouble.

"In search of Pixy."

"No," responded Mrs. Steiner, "that will be of no use. You might walk the streets from morning until late at night every day, and it would be of no advantage to you or the dog. Let us go this afternoon to the zoological gardens and see the many animals from foreign countries. We will have some dinner and then go, that we may have a long afternoon at the gardens."

This was a happy thought. Nothing could have taken the boy's mind from his loss of the dog so well as did the many varied interests which the gardens offered.

Near the entrance was a large, fine building used by visitors as a resting-place, and for refreshments. Mrs. Steiner did not pass it by, but the four went in and she bought a supply of cake as a supplement to their light dinner. Then they went to see the splendid crested pea-fowls that were spreading their brilliantly tinted fans on the green lawn. As they passed a company of gay-plumaged parrots they were crying, "Dora! Dora!" and Mrs. Steiner told the boys of a lady who owned the large green parrot and was so weary of hearing it scream, "Dora! Dora!" from morning until night, that she gave it to the garden; and now all the parrots screamed "Dora."

"Ask it what its name is," she said to Fritz.

"What is your name?" he asked, going close to it.

"Same as yours," was the reply, followed by croaking laughter.

This amused the boys greatly and they would have remained there longer, but they heard low growls from a great cage not far away and going nearer they saw upon a low rock in the centre of it a lioness lashing her sides with her tail and uttering low growls. The floor of the cage was of sand and stretched upon it was the king of beasts, his great head upon his paws, and his savage eyes resting upon the

bystanders. At length he arose, and coming to the great iron rungs that surrounded it, he yawned, and the boys started back in affright from the terrible mouth and teeth, but he soon returned to the sand.

"Pixy's mane is prettier than the lion's," said Fritz. "Oh, my Pixy!"

"Yesterday it was your gold-piece, now it is Pixy," grumbled Franz impatiently. "You should be glad that your dog is running in the open air, instead of being fastened up in a cage."

"Yes, I am glad of that, but, oh, I cannot keep from crying when I think of the street boys, and how they may chase him."

"Come to this cage, boys," called Mrs. Steiner, "I wish you to see a lion that I once held in my arms and petted as if it were a kitten. He is now a great, grown lion, but he was born in this garden, and crowds came to see him and some people would give the keeper a fee to be allowed to take it in their arms. No one would dare to touch him now."

"Except myself," said the keeper who came up that moment, put his hand in the cage and combed the long mane with his fingers.

"Is he always so tame?" asked Paul.

"Yes, except at meal time; then they are hungry and show their native ferocity; I would not dare to put my hand in his cage then. If you will come here at five o'clock, you will see him fed."

They promised to come, then went to see the panther, the hyena, and the wolves; and then Mrs. Steiner called them to go to the great pavilion where the monkeys lived and played as merrily as if in their native haunts; running over the branches of the tree in the centre and swinging from the ropes, chattering, grinning, teasing each other, and making themselves generally amusing to the many spectators who crowded about their pavilion.

"I never imagined so many in one place," said Fritz, "and they are flying past and around each other so fast that it makes one's head giddy to watch them. I like that little fellow that is so playful and good-natured. Now a lady has given him a lump of sugar; and oh, see that bigger monkey has taken it from him and eaten it. That is a shame!"

Fritz was so interested in the cunning little creature that he was glad when the lady gave him another lump of sugar which he put quickly in his mouth, swelling out his jaw in a comical manner while his little, sharp eyes were watching the other monkey. But alas! the old tyrant rushed down upon him, took the sugar out of his mouth, and put it in his own, and slapped the little one he had robbed right and left.

"Oh, it is certainly a shame," said Fritz, and he took off his hat, and put it under his arm while he wiped his heated forehead; when in a flash the little monkey he had so pitied rushed down, grasped his hat, drew it through the rungs and was up on the branches almost before Fritz knew it was gone.

"Oh, Aunt Fanny, he took my hat while I was looking at the big one eating the sugar. Oh, see! he is tearing off the blue ribbon band, and biting pieces out of the rim and dropping them down for the little monkeys," and tears rolled down Fritz's cheeks.

The keeper, hearing the laughter, came at once, and with a pole knocked the hat out of the monkey's hands, and although many little black fingers clutched it as it lay a second on the floor, it was brought to the rungs by the pole and Fritz secured it. But little remained of the rim, and what there was of it was ragged; and when he put it on, peals of laughter from the spectators sent him crying to his aunt. But alas! she too was laughing, and the boy felt that his last friend had gone over to the enemy.

"Oh, little Fritz!" she said, trying in vain to look sympathizing and serious, "there is one kind of bird they can add to their collection to-day and that is the *pechrogel*, for surely you, poor child, are that unlucky bird. But never mind; your luck will change; your Pixy will come back, and I will buy you a new straw hat."

"Yes, but we must go away from here. It makes me sick to see the people laughing at me."

"Yes, we will go and see the birds. That is my favorite place in all the garden."

On their way, they passed the cage where serpents of every kind were twisting and squirming about, among them the terrible boa-constrictor, and the python; but Mrs. Steiner could not look at them, and asked the boys to stay but a little while, but they could halt at the tanks of the South American alligator, the rhinoceros, the great turtle, and the hippopotamus; all animals which the boys had never seen except in pictures and were of wonderful interest to them.

The bird enclosure was truly an attractive place. Among the branches overhead were many kinds of small birds singing, chirping and chattering, and Mrs. Steiner pointed out several which should have been acquaintances of the Odenwald boys, but to her surprise they did not appear to know their names.

"I am ashamed that I, a forester's son, and living in the country all my life, do not know the names of our native song birds, but know the foreign ones from seeing them in pictures," said Franz. They gazed long at the wise looking owls who were blinking on a wall of masonry, which represented an old tower; then turned their attention to the swan and spoonbills, and other aquatic fowl sporting in the clear water of the lake, while on the shore marched the stately flamingoes, resembling red-coated soldiers.

On a rocky point rested an eagle, and upon another a Golden Condor spread its great wings.

"Oh, see!" cried Fritz, "here comes a great elephant carrying an organ in his trunk. See, he is setting it down; now he is turning the crank and playing a beautiful waltz."

Of all the new and interesting things they had seen, this was the greatest delight to the boys; and their delight was not dampened by having the animal musician hold out his trunk for pay. Fritz gave him one of his beloved nickels, which was immediately passed to the keeper, and when Mrs. Steiner gave him a sweet bun which she had brought in her pocket especially for him, he put it in his capacious mouth and swallowed it with evident relish.

After the elephant organ-grinder had received all the pay he could gather from the people congregated about the bird enclosure, he passed on with his organ, and Mrs. Steiner took her guests to the bear pits, and to their delight, they saw the great polar bear, the black bear and many others of which they had seen illustrations, and after watching them as much time as they could spare they passed on to see the giraffe, and from thence to the pen of the zebra. They were earnestly engaged in counting its beautiful stripes when from a great tent near they heard the sound of some wild and warlike instrument which seemed to serve as a summons, for people were hurrying to the tent. Mrs. Steiner told the boys to come, and all went through the opening and found that a company of Nubians were about to give a performance. They were in native costume, their coal black hair stiffened with grease to make it stand straight up, their brilliant white teeth in contrast with their black faces.

They commenced the performance by a representation of a sham battle with their spears; and our Grecian heroes were reminded of their weapons which to their regret they were advised to leave in the Odenwald. It was with intense interest they watched the many different exploits exhibited in the one-hour's performance. When it was finished, Mrs. Steiner suggested that they go to the pavilion on the terrace and have rolls and chocolate while they rested.

This proposition was readily accepted, and just as they finished, Mrs. Steiner upon glancing at her watch found that it wanted but five minutes of five o'clock.

"And we were to see the lions fed," exclaimed Fritz.

"You can go," said his aunt, "I will stay here and rest," and she pointed out the nearest way for them to go. They were just in time to see the keeper walking to and fro before the cage of the great African lion, holding upon the point of a long pole a piece of raw beef. The lion sprang against the stout iron bars which made the cage tremble, and reached out his terrible claws as if to grasp not only the meat but the keeper who was watching a suitable moment to toss in the meat. At length this was done, and the ferocious beast with low growls pounced upon it, took it between his paws, while his eyes rolled about as if dreading an enemy who would take it from him, then tore it to pieces and swallowed it.

The panther was next fed. He took his meat slyly to a distant corner of his cage to eat it. When the boys returned to Mrs. Steiner she said, "Now we have not seen all that is to be seen in the garden. Would you like to stay longer?"

"No, Aunt Fanny," replied Fritz, "I have seen and heard so much that I don't think I could remember any more," and to this Franz and Paul willingly agreed, and they set out cheerily for home.

They had enjoyed a charming afternoon and the refreshments that Aunt Steiner had selected had been so abundant and good that new life seemed to thrill them as they moved along.

"Look, Fritz," cried Paul excitedly, "there is Pixy."

"Where?" cried the boy, reddening with surprise and joy.

Paul's finger was pointing to a black dog, with head and tail depressed from hunger and weariness, but Fritz knew his dog.

"Pixy! Pixy!" he cried joyously, and the three boys ran toward him and the stout well-grown boy who

was leading him. As if electrified Pixy raised his head, and barked from joy as he struggled to break away from the rough hand that held him. The three boys grasped the rope, but were powerless to wrench it from the hand that held it.

"Let go!" cried Fritz, "Pixy is mine and you shall not have him."

"No, he is mine. I bought him to-day from a strange gentleman. Let go the rope, or I will give you a blow upon the head that will keep you from seeing and hearing for awhile."

A regular struggle now ensued. The big boy planted a blow on Fritz's face which caused the blood to stream from his nose, but he held on to the rope until knocked down; whereupon Franz and Paul ran behind the boy, pulled him backward on the ground, the three jumped forward, and two of them grasped his arms while the other sat upon his ankles; and Pixy did his share by catching one leg of his pantaloons in his teeth and holding fast.

Mrs. Steiner, in the meantime, was almost sick from fright; but summoned strength to call "Help! Help!" and several men ran to separate the combatants.

"Whose dog is it?" asked a gray-haired gentleman when he could understand the fight enough to know that it was to obtain possession of Pixy.

"It is mine!" sputtered the big boy, "and these three rascals are trying to get it from me."

"It is mine!" cried Fritz; "we brought Pixy from the Odenwald. We came to visit my Aunt Steiner. There she is."

"There comes a policeman," called a boy in the crowd that had gathered around; and the big boy rushed away, disappearing around a corner, which convinced all that he was not the owner of Pixy.

"I am glad that your boy got his dog. He fought a hard battle to recover it," said one.

"Yes, and just see his face is all bruised and bleeding, and his nose swollen, perhaps disfigured for life. And see his nice suit of clothes all dusty, and a hole torn in his pants; and his stockings, even, have blood upon them!"

And truly poor Fritz was a sorry looking object. His hat, thanks to the monkey, did not add to his appearance. His aunt had intended stopping at a store on their way home to get a new straw hat, but on account of his battered appearance decided to wait until next day.

"But, Aunt Fanny!" said the logical Fritz, "I may look worse to-morrow than I do to-day; and why should we care more for the people in the store than on the street? Besides, the rim of the new straw hat will hide the bruise on my forehead."

"That is true, Fritz, and I know of a fountain on our way home where you can wash the blood from your face and hands and as much as we can off your clothes, and with a new hat, you will look much better."

All this was done, and Fritz was really proud of his new hat, and glad to leave the torn one at the store to be thrown away.

When they reached home, Mrs. Steiner's first care was to give the hungry and tired Pixy a plate of good bread and milk, which he ate gratefully and then lay down upon his piece of carpet by the window.

Oh, how good it was to them all to see him there! and how good the supper which Aunt Steiner prepared, and how good the restful home to the weary ones, and how welcome the comfortable beds to which they retired as soon as supper was finished!

CHAPTER VIII

PIXY IN TROUBLE

The next morning Mrs. Steiner arose earlier than usual to put in order the boys' clothes which had been damaged in the fight for Pixy. There was some mending and much cleansing to be done, but all

was finished in good time, when she called them to get ready for breakfast.

"Yes, Aunt Fanny, we are coming," said Fritz, and then followed "oh's" and "ah's" and other signs of discomfort as they arose to dress, and found themselves stiff and sore from the exertion and the blows of the afternoon before.

It was a great satisfaction to Mrs. Steiner to see that the swelling which had disfigured Fritz had disappeared, and his nose was in its normal condition. The boys were so enthusiastic over their visit to the zoological garden, and so refreshed by sleep that all had a cheerful time while enjoying the substantial breakfast which their hostess had prepared.

"I loved that cute little monkey, Aunt Fanny, and was so sorry to see it treated badly by the big monkey, and then to think it was so mean as to tear up my straw hat."

"But he would not be a monkey if he were not playful," laughed Aunt Fanny; "and he did it in play. There is Uncle Braun," she continued as the doorbell rang. "He has come to take you out sight-seeing."

The three boys hurried to admit him, and came back holding him by the hand.

"I am glad you gave these boys breakfast in good time this morning," he said after greeting Mrs. Steiner, "for I wish them to see two more of the noted places of Frankfort on the Main, and when they get older they can visit Frankfort on the Oden and compare the two cities."

"You have selected good places, if you still think of taking them to those you spoke of the day you were here."

"Yes, they have seen Goethe Square, and Schiller Square. Now I wish them to see Romerberg Square and the Cathedral of St. Bartholomew. Could you not make it convenient to go with us?"

"No; for it would not do to take Pixy in any of the buildings, and he could not be left alone here. But after I attend to some matters, I will take him out for a walk."

The boys were ready to go, and they set out, their first visit being to the Cathedral.

Their way led across a part of the beautiful promenade, and the equally beautiful Ziel street, and later through the narrow streets of the middle ages, and in a short time they stood before the mighty buildings called the Kaiser Cathedral, so called because from the year 1711 the German emperors were crowned there.

The magnificence of the carved work upon the portal charmed the boys, and when they entered they were filled with admiration of the splendid stained glass windows and the grand paintings. They stood for some time gazing at the monument of the Emperor Gunther of Schwartzburg, and Uncle Braun informed them that he was the only emperor who had been buried there.

They heartily appreciated the privilege of seeing the great cathedral in the company of one who could give them reliable information, and when they left it, they walked through the narrow, ancient streets on their way to the Romerberg Square, and their guide said as they passed along, "In it stands the Romer, or Council House where the German emperors were elected and entertained.

"When crowned in the cathedral they walked to the Council House, followed by a great retinue of princes and the other great people of the earth, while the streets, doors, windows and roofs of the houses were filled with spectators.

"When the crowned emperor disappeared within the walls of the Council House, all eyes were turned in expectation to the windows of Kaiser Hall. Very soon the centre one was opened, and the Kaiser appeared in his imperial robes, the crown upon his head, in his left hand the imperial globe of the kingdom, and in his right the sceptre.

"A storm of applause greeted him, and at the same moment all the bells of the city rang in rejoicing over the crowning of a new emperor."

It was a delight to the boys after hearing this on their way there to step into this Kaiser Hall and see the portraits of the emperors looking down upon them. Uncle Braun told them of each emperor, and was glad to see that they were very well acquainted with history, and in turn could tell him something of each of them.

"It would have been easier to study history if we could have come to this Kaiser Hall first," remarked Franz. "I know a good deal of Charles the Great, but I like better to hear of Frederick Barbarossa."

"You are making a great chasm in your likings," laughed Uncle Braun; "see how many emperors come

between them. Besides, I think you are mistaken in thinking it would have made history easier had you come here first. Instead, your knowledge of history has made you take interest in these portraits which you could not have taken had you not known something of them. So it is with all travelers. The more they have read of a place, the more intelligent appreciation they have of it when they see it."

The boys gazed with great interest at each portrait, and also at the white marble statue of Emperor William I, which had been placed there and unveiled in March, 1892.

"Now that we have enjoyed living in the past, let us step out upon the balcony and look at the present in the form of the beautiful Romerberg Square, its green lawn, and its fountain," suggested their guide.

It was a stirring scene upon which they gazed. People were going to and fro; and among them Franz saw two familiar figures.

"Fritz," he said, "there is Aunt Steiner and Pixy."

"So it is Aunt Fanny," cried Fritz, joyously; "Aunt Fanny, do you see us? Pixy! Pixy!"

Scarcely had the sound of the loved voice reached the dog, when he sprang forward, dragging the weak little woman, who was compelled to leap and bound over the grass at a pace which was, to say the least, unaccustomed. She called, coaxed and upbraided by turns, but Pixy never halted in his race, nor looked back to see how she was faring, but was making with all speed for the balcony. At length Mrs. Steiner could hold out no longer. She dropped the line and sank into a seat on the lawn, and Pixy, released from his burden, sprang up the steps of the Council House where he was met by a watchman.

"What are you doing in here, you black Satan?" cried the surprised man as Pixy ran in. "Out with you! Out with you!"

But Pixy had seen the open door into the balcony, had spied his master, and ran to greet him with every evidence of delight.

"Whom does that black beast belong to?" asked the watchman, hurrying out.

"To me," replied Fritz, "but—"

"How dare you bring him in here? Come out, both of you."

Uncle Braun advised Fritz to pacify the angry man by telling how it happened that Pixy got in, but the watchman would not listen, so Fritz hurried out to his much-tried relative, followed by the others.

"Oh, Aunt Fanny, dear Aunt Fanny, I am so sorry that Pixy acted so badly," he exclaimed.

"No, no; don't blame Pixy for your own fault. You should not have called him. The affectionate creature was rejoiced to hear your voice. You called him and he was glad to obey."

"Yes, it was my fault. I should have known what Pixy would do."

"Oh, no one is to blame. It was merely a mistake," said Uncle Braun, joining in the conversation; "but you are all tired, especially the aunt, and you must ride home."

He called a carriage, and before they could make objection they were helped in, with Pixy at their feet.

"Bornheimer street, number 37," said Uncle Braun to the coachman as he put a coin in his hand, and they were off.

"Oh, how nice it is to live in a great city!" remarked Franz. "In the country when any of the people wish to ride out, the horse must be brought up from the field and curried, the harness be put on, the carriage taken from the carriage-house, the whip and carriage robe gotten from their places, the horse put to the carriage, and then when the drive is over everything has to be put back in its place."

"Yes, child, all one needs in a city in order to obtain these things is money; and Uncle Braun has certainly done us a favor to-day to add to his many kindnesses. I really don't know how I could have walked home, for my knees trembled and my back ached. Never in my life did I take such long steps, and run and bound as I had to do while trying to keep back that black rascal."

"But it was not Pixy's fault. You said so yourself, Auntie!"

"Yes, I did say it. It was your fault in calling 'Pixy! Pixy!'"

The moment the dog heard his name he sprang up, put his paws on her lap, and looked into her face

with such an affectionate expression in his brown eyes, that she could not help patting his head and saying, "With it all, one cannot help loving you."

The carriage stopped at number 37, and Pixy sprang to the pavement, followed closely by the boys, who helped Mrs. Steiner out carefully, and with one on each side she went slowly up the long steps.

"Certainly such help is not to be despised," she said. "You are my gallant cavaliers."

She took out her key as she spoke and unlocked the door, and was surprised to see several letters which had been pushed under it during her absence.

"They are only business circulars, I suppose," she said as the boys gathered them up and put them on the table.

She put on her glasses, took one up, broke the seal and read:

"In reference to your notice in the 'Intelligencer' that you offer a reward for the recovery of your dog, I write to say that it can be found at 395 New street. If you send ten marks between twelve and one o'clock, and a rope, you can have your dog.

"Respectfully,

"M.R."

"Now just hear that, boys! Whoever heard the like of this? If he asks two marks for catching the dog, then he asks eight marks for one day's feed. He must have fed it on pound cake and champagne."

"It would take my gold-piece to pay it, if the dog were really Pixy," remarked Fritz.

"Yes, but it is not Pixy. Let me see what this one says."

"We have your dog, and you can have it, if you will put a notice in the paper that you will put twenty-five marks in our hand for it. If you agree to this, then you can come to the Hessen statue with the money, and take your dog.

"P.P."

"Wonderful that P.P. promises to bring a dog that we already have and who is lying comfortably on his piece of carpet by the window. Now here is a stylish looking letter. Let us see who is the writer.

"Highborn gentleman (or lady).

"I see that you speak of having lost your dog. Do not imagine that it was lost; it was stolen. It is evident that you like dogs, so I write to say that I have a fine Spitz which I will sell you. His brother sold for twelve marks and I think you will be willing to give that sum. If so, bring the money to Roderberg square at four o'clock. With due respect,

"Euphrosine Sauerbier."

"Fritz! Fritz! Your dog has shown me that there is more rascality in Frankfort than I ever imagined," exclaimed Aunt Steiner; "or, upon second thought, I believe they are foreigners. I am sure that no Frankforter would do such tricky things."

"Here is a postal, Aunt, that you have not seen," said Fritz.

"Read it, my boy. Of course it is from another swindler," and Fritz read:

"To No. 37 Bornheimer street:

"I have found your dog, and will bring it to you if you will tell me through the paper how much the reward is.

"H.Y.R."

"Will bring us Pixy, and Pixy sitting by looking at us! Well, well, I would never have believed it! But just see, it wants ten minutes of our dinner hour. Franz, do you and Paul wash your hands and set the table, and Fritz can help clear off when we have finished."

"But Aunt Fanny!" exclaimed the astonished Fritz, "when did you cook dinner?"

"I did not cook any, yet we will have it, and a good one, and all we have to do is to set the table, and as quickly as possible."

This was a mystery which the boys could not unravel, yet they hurried to wash and dry their hands, the cloth was spread neatly, napkins put to the places, and the dishes on, when a trim-looking girl came in carrying a long basket in which was a bucket of lentil soup, a roast of veal with vegetables and a plate of fine summer pears.

She nodded pleasantly to all, put the dinner quickly and deftly upon the table, set the basket on a chair, and with a smile and a nod went out and down the steps.

"Well, I never!" ejaculated Fritz. "How did you get this dinner cooked, Aunt Fanny?"

"Very easily. All I had to do was to leave an order at a cook shop, and you see the result. Yes, little Fritz, as I said in regard to the carriage, in a large city one can get the comforts and luxuries of life if he has the money. Without that, many doors and also hearts have to remain closed. I ordered a dinner to-day because it is a change for me as well as for you, for it is very seldom I have a meal except as I prepare it myself. Now let us eat our dinner."

They took their seats, the blessing was asked as usual, and Mrs. Steiner carved the roast, giving generous pieces to the hungry boys.

The soup was all that could be desired, as was each dish of the prepared meal, and they sat at the table after they finished until the girl came for her basket and bucket and departed, and Fritz was helping take the dishes to the kitchen, when the door bell rang.

"Now I wonder if that is another policeman?" ejaculated Aunt Steiner, as she went to the door and opened it.

There stood a stout young man with a cigarette between his teeth, who set one of his feet within the room, so that she could not have closed the door had she tried. He was leading a black dog by a rope—which squeezed past him into the room—and he did not appear to think it necessary to remove his cap, as he said with a foreign accent: "Dog lost—I got him, yes, I brought him."

The dog was black, but much larger than Pixy, was shaggy and unkempt, and had a cross and savage look, very different from the well-kept and gentle Pixy.

"We have found our dog," replied Mrs. Steiner. "I am sorry that you went to the trouble of bringing one."

"Found your dog? Where is he?"

"Fritz, bring Pixy here," called his aunt, and Fritz came with his dog, followed by Franz and Paul.

"I have been more than half an hour coming here with this dog in answer to your advertisement, and should be paid for my trouble," said the young man, gruffly.

"It is not our fault that you came. It is not our dog. See, he is not at all like ours and he does not answer to the name of Pixy."

"See if he don't," and he jerked the dog's head up by the cord as he called "Pixy!"

"No matter if his name is Pixy, he is not our dog. Our dog is here, as you see."

The man grew angry and raised his voice, and the dogs, who had been eyeing each other with no friendly looks, snarled and sprang upon each other, and the small entry was the scene of such a fierce battle, and resounded with such shrill yelps and much thumping and bumping about that the very coats and hats on the pegs trembled. Pixy was full of fight, but the strange dog was much the larger, and scored a victory, while Pixy ran howling under the sofa in the dining-room.

Mrs. Steiner was so weak from fright that she had to hold to the open door for support; and tears were running down Fritz's cheeks. They all hoped that the man would leave, but no, he wanted money. He changed his reason for demanding it, claiming that he should have payment for the injury to his dog.

"Asking for money when your wild beast dragged our poor Pixy over the floor as if he were a bundle of old rags?" cried Mrs. Steiner in astonishment.

"Your dog commenced it! He snarled at my dog."

"He did it from fright, I think, and your dog bit him and tore out some of his silky, black hair, and Pixy is now lying under the sofa, his teeth chattering from fear."

"What do I care where he is! If my Turk mastered him, that is not saying that my dog is not hurt."

"So your dog is not named Pixy but Turk," commented Mrs. Steiner.

The man took no notice of this; his object was money and he resolved to get it.

"I should have a dollar at least for my trouble," he said.

"I wish a policeman would happen along. There are not enough of them in Frankfort," remarked Mrs. Steiner. "Look out of the windows, boys, and if you see one beckon to him to come. I would give a dollar this minute to see one."

"Why should you give a dollar to a policeman? Give the dollar to me, and I will go and take my dog."

"Not a penny, Aunt Fanny!" called Paul. "He would better leave now, and quickly, or he will see what he will get."

It would have been hard for Paul to have told what the man would get, but his determined manner had its effect and the man ran down the steps, instantly followed by Turk.

Mrs. Steiner sank upon the sofa, pale and nervous; Fritz sat by her shedding tears of regret that he had brought his dog to Frankfort; and Pixy crept out from his covert and tried to comfort them.

"I feel nervous and exhausted over the dog fight, and the rudeness of that man," said Mrs. Steiner, "and will lie down upon the sofa and rest awhile. Franz, you and Paul can take the dishes and other things to the kitchen and Fritz can put water on the gas stove to heat."

"Oh, Aunt Fanny, let us wash the dishes," said Paul.

"Certainly you may," and in great glee the two boys did the work nicely, while Fritz fed Pixy and gave him fresh water.

"Now I feel rested," said Mrs. Steiner, rising, "and you boys have been such a help that I have time to go out on business in the city. Who will go with me?"

"I will go!" said Franz, "and I!" exclaimed Paul.

"Aunt Fanny, if you will excuse me, I will stay at home and write a letter. Besides, I can rest," said Fritz.

"Certainly I will excuse you, dear child; and if you get tired of staying alone and wish to take a walk, leave the key on the first floor with the Steerers," and the three went cheerily down the steps and Fritz was alone with his black friend.

"Pixy," he said as he commenced to write, "whom do you suppose my letter is to? It is to Aunt Fanny for we are going home, Pixy; yes, going home. We will surprise them. I will tell you how we will do, Pixy. When we are near our house I will take off your cord, and you can run in the open door of the store and see papa. Then you can run in the open door of the house and see mamma and sister. Mamma will say, 'Why, here's Pixy! Fritz cannot be far away.'"

This plan seemed to suit Pixy admirably, and Fritz continued with his letter. When it was finished he folded and addressed it to "Dear Aunt Fanny," and laid it upon the table. He hurried into the bedroom, put such things in his knapsack as he would need before Paul and Franz came home, strapped it over his shoulder, put his rain-coat over his left arm, took the end of Pixy's cord in his right, and descended the steps after carefully locking the door, and putting the key into the hands of the Steerer servant, he set out for home.

CHAPTER IX

THEY VISIT THE CLOTHING HOUSE

When Mrs. Steiner and the boys returned they found the door locked.

"Run down, Franz, and get the key. I told Fritz to leave it there if he went out for a walk and the boy took my advice."

Franz soon returned, the door was opened and they entered, Mrs. Steiner sinking down upon the sofa with the sigh, "Oh, those steps, those steps!"

"Aunt Fanny, here is a letter upon the table. It is for you, and written by Fritz," said Paul.

"By Fritz!" laughed Aunt Fanny, "gone out for a walk and left a letter for me! Read it, Paul."

The boy opened the missive and read, each sentence meeting with comments from his interested listeners.

"Dear Aunt Fanny: Pixy was not to blame for the dog fight; and the time he ran into the Council House he was not to blame, because I called 'Pixy! Pixy!' I should have kept my mouth shut."

"The dear Fritz! He is right, but I am sorry he takes it so much to heart."

"You know, Aunt Fanny, that Pixy is but a dog, and has not a man's understanding."

"Yes, Fritz, I remember that much of my studies in natural history," laughed his aunt.

"I have not as much understanding as a man, either, or I would not have brought Pixy to Frankfort."

"The boy is certainly right there."

"I am sorry that you stood and held him while we were in the buildings and you had to run and jump when I called 'Pixy!' If he had not come he would have been disobedient or stupid; and my father will tell you that he is neither disobedient nor stupid. You will not have to hold his cord again."

"Now what does he mean by saying I will not have to stand and hold his cord again?"

"We are now on our way home," continued Paul, "and papa will be glad to see me and Pixy."

"For heaven's sake! Has the boy run off?"

"Yes, he must mean that," replied Paul.

"Oh, he is only joking. Run to your room, Franz, and see if he has taken his knapsack."

"Yes, and his rain-coat is gone. Shall we finish reading the letter?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Steiner with tears in her eyes.

"Dear Aunt Fanny, I thank you for your goodness, and for the mark you gave me; and want to say that I will never again bring a dog to visit Frankfort."

"Oh, that boy has made my heart heavy! I feel as if I will never see him again and it is all Pixy's fault. Is that all?"

"Yes, and oh, Aunt Fanny, I wish we had not been so harsh with Fritz in regard to Pixy," said Paul.

"Now you are trying to make me more unhappy than I am when I am enough distressed that the boy has run away without bidding us good-bye."

"No, but we are to blame. We were as glad as was Fritz that Pixy was with us on the way to Frankfort; then when he became a trouble we blamed Fritz. I wish we could do something now. Perhaps the train has not left for the Odenwald, and if we go to the depot he may be there, and we can bring him and Pixy back."

"Oh, you dear boy, to think of this! Yes, go quickly. But hark! I hear a step on the porch. He is at the hall door. Yes, thank heaven, the boy has come back of his own free will!" And she ran and opened the door.

"Fritz! Fritz!" she called as she saw the tall form of her brother, and, clasping his hand, she led him to the sitting-room. "Did you see Fritz at the station?"

"No, is he not here?"

"He left for home without bidding us good-bye, and it is all on account of the dog. The boys were just

going to the depot to see if he is there."

"It is no use to go. If he had been there, I would have seen him, and Pixy would have found me."

"What are we to do about it?"

"Do nothing. It will be an experience for him to be allowed to follow his own inclination in the matter. He will be surprised when he reaches home to know that I am here. I am on my way to Cassel on business and stopped off to see you and my boy."

"But I feel so anxious about him," said his sister. "I would ask the police to see to it but am ashamed, for I had to apply to them when his purse was lost, then when his dog was lost and now it would be to tell them that both dog and boy are gone. Uncle Braun put a notice in the paper about the dog, and oh dear! there seems to be no end to what that notice brought;" and she told of the letters and the dog fight.

"I am sorry you bothered about it for there is no need. He can take care of himself. He is eleven years old, has money in his purse, and is afraid of nothing, so what is the need of worrying? Yet it may be that he has not left Frankfort, and if it will be a comfort to you we will try to find the young rascal. There are two railways which he could take to go home, so you and the two boys can go to the Eastern station, and I will go to the other, which will leave us plenty of time to see both departures for the Odenwald and one of us will catch him if he is there to be caught. Have you a schedule?"

"No, I have no need of one from one year's end to another. But suppose he refuses to come back with us?"

"No danger of that when he hears that I am here. He will not think that he can get back quickly enough."

Mrs. Steiner locked the hall door and they hurried away, taking the shortest way to the two depots. It was not likely that one spy at the one and the three at the other would miss seeing the runaway, especially as he would be accompanied by his four-footed traveling companion, and would perhaps be the only boy in the crowd with a dog.

"Fritz will have to travel in a freight car," remarked Paul as the three neared the depot; "the guard will not allow Pixy in a passenger car, and Fritz will not let his dog go in there alone."

"Oh, Paul, you should have mentioned this before! Brother Fritz will never think of it, and the boy will be stowed in a freight car without his father finding him, and we here, not knowing whether or not he is in Frankfort."

"Mr. Heil will think of it, I am sure," said Franz, "for Fritz wrote a letter home on Thursday, and in it he told them about Pixy and the chickens."

"We can only hope so," sighed Mrs. Steiner, "and when we reach the depot, you, Paul, can watch the freight cars, Franz can watch the passenger cars, and I will go first into the waiting-rooms to see if he is there. Then we can all watch the crowd upon the platform and see if Fritz is among them."

This program was followed, but Fritz and his dog were not to be seen, and they could only hope that Mr. Heil would be more successful.

"But I will not see him until we get home," said Mrs. Steiner, "so will send a telegram to Fritz's mother, telling her that the boy set out for home about noon, and when he arrives there, she would please send me a telegram to that effect, as I am extremely anxious about him."

No sooner thought of than done. She hurried into the office, gave her message to the operator who made quite a reduction in the number of words, thus lessening the expense, and then the three would have set out for home had not Paul made a study of the schedule and found that the train which Mr. Heil had gone to watch would not leave for fifteen minutes.

"Oh, I am glad of that!" exclaimed Mrs. Steiner. "We can board an electric car and get there in time to tell Brother Fritz about the freight car, and you boys can help watch for the boy."

The car came, and they lost no time in boarding it, and Paul and Franz enjoyed the swift run through the streets.

But Mrs. Steiner was far from enjoying it. The car had to halt at so many corners that she dreaded that the train would leave for the Odenwald before they reached the depot, and she would have to

return home without knowing the whereabouts of her nephew.

"Oh, there is Mr. Heil on that car that has whirled past us," exclaimed Franz. "He saw us and signaled us not to go to the depot, but to go home."

"Now isn't that too provoking! Let us get out," and she sprang up, and would have hurried to the platform had not the guard caught her arm.

"Do you wish to fall off and be killed, or have your limbs broken?" he asked. "Wait until we stop at the next corner—so; now you can step off, and in safety."

The three quickly took his advice, and waited on the curb until a car came that was going in an opposite direction, and hurried aboard.

"I wish to get home as quickly as possible," said Mrs. Steiner, "for Brother Fritz will have to stand outside until we come with the key. I am afraid this has hindered him from leaving for Cassel. And oh, boys, we are on the wrong car! See, it is turning in another direction. We will have to get off and wait for a car to take us back."

She gave the signal, they stepped off, and again waited on the curb, Mrs. Steiner feverish with impatience.

"I am completely bewildered or I should not have made that mistake," she explained. "That boy's rash act of running away has upset me so that I cannot think. There was not the least excuse for it. Surely he could have waited until Monday, when all three would go, your time of holiday being over. It is all the fault of that miserable Pixy."

After some delay they returned home and found Mr. Heil waiting for them.

"I am sorry you took the trouble to go to the other depot, sister," he said kindly. "You knew that I would wait there until the train left for the Odenwald."

"But did you see Fritz?" she asked anxiously.

"No, and no boy of about his age had bought a ticket for the Odenwald, so he is yet here in Frankfort."

"Oh, where is the poor boy?" exclaimed Mrs. Steiner, tearfully. "I cannot forgive myself for finding fault with his dog. You must not go to Cassel, Fritz, until we know where he is."

"No, there is nothing to prevent my waiting for the evening train. I have written to my wife's brother that I would pass Sunday with them, but there was no time set to reach there."

In the meantime where were Fritz and Pixy?

Fritz had set out for home in splendid spirits. It seemed to him that he had been away for months, and wondered if there had been many changes during his absence. He hurried along, for he wished to stop on his way to the depot and get a present for his little sister.

He knew that she wished a canary-bird, and went into a store to see how much one would cost. To his surprise and delight, he found that he could buy a singer and a cage for two marks, and he purchased both.

"Is there no one else that you would take a present to?" asked the shop-keeper.

"Yes, I would like to take a present to my baby brother, and something to my mother."

"What would you like?"

"A tin trumpet to my brother, but I don't know what my mother would like."

"There is a nice trumpet, and here is a tin grater. I think she would like it."

"Yes, and I will take it, if it and the trumpet do not cost too much. I must have enough money left for my journey home."

It was found by counting that he would have enough without disturbing his beloved gold-piece, and the shop-keeper strapped the three articles on his back, drawing the grater around to his side, and the happy Fritz set out for the depot, when a street urchin slipped up behind him and blew a shrill blast upon the trumpet. Fritz turned quickly and at that moment he heard a call, "Pixy! Pixy!" and the dog turned joyously and looked back at a tall policeman who laid his hand upon the shoulder of Fritz.

"How did you come by this dog?" he enquired, sternly.

"It belonged to my father and he gave it to me. He has no tag or muzzle because I am only visiting in Frankfort."

"I am not asking about muzzle or tag, but wish to know if the dog's name is Pixy."

"Yes, his name is Pixy."

"Now listen. A black dog of that name was stolen yesterday; and the lady from whom it was stolen not only put the case in the hands of the police, but put an advertisement in the paper, giving an exact description of the dog."

"Yes, this is the dog," assured Fritz. "He first ran away, then was stolen by a man."

"And the man gave him to you to take away. Is that it?"

"No. Franz and Paul and I had a hard fight to get him; and I am taking him to the depot to go to Odenwald."

"What is your name?"

"Fritz Heil."

"And that of your father?"

"His name is also Fritz."

"So you say that the dog belongs to Fritz Heil, yet it was the Widow Steiner who put the case in the hands of the police. How does that story agree with yours?"

Fritz was so bewildered and frightened that he stammered over his explanation. "Yes—no. It did run away—Yes, it was stolen; I was there, but I am going away."

"You were where?"

"At my Aunt Steiner's."

"Does she know that you are going away?"

"No, I did not tell her. Yes, I did in my letter."

"That is a beautiful story! Now I know that you are taking her dog away without her knowledge."

"No; she knows it," howled Fritz.

"Yes, but all the world knows how cunning dog thieves are in Frankfort. You come with me that we may learn the straight story of how you got this dog."

"Oh, Mr. Policeman, do not take me to prison! I would die there."

"No, not to prison, but to the Widow Steiner's. There we will hear a full account of Pixy."

"But I do not want to go there, because I have just run off from her house and it shames me to go back."

"I believe that, but you need not be ashamed if you are telling the truth."

"But, Mr. Policeman, I am only taking my own dog to my own home."

"Perhaps so. We will see what Mrs. Steiner says about it," and the tall policeman set out for 37 Bornheimer street, followed by the weeping Fritz, and a motley crowd of onlookers.

"He has been stealing tinware," commented one of them. "While he was about it he might as well have taken silver or something worth while."

"Poor boy, he has not been trained right by his parents," remarked a woman standing in the door of her bakery. "People who take no care of their children but let them run the streets must expect arrests."

This remark was so trying to Fritz that he halted to set the woman right in regard to his parents, but the policeman bade him hurry along, and they soon reached 37, where the returned ones were still

upon the porch. Mrs. Steiner was weeping, and Mr. Heil and the boys were anxious, believing that Fritz had lost his way in going to the depot and was wandering about the streets.

"Look, brother!" exclaimed Mrs. Steiner, eagerly; "look at that crowd coming up the street following a policeman. Among them is a black dog. Yes, it is Fritz and Pixy, and with them a policeman! What can be the matter now?"

Fritz had one arm over his eyes, trying to hide his tears but looked out when his captor told him that they had reached his aunt's home and there were people on the porch.

"Oh, it is father! dear, dear father!" exclaimed Fritz in delight, and running up the steps he was clasped in the arms of his relieved parent.

But the boy's joy was no greater than that of the dog, for Pixy danced and pranced about his master, jumped upon him and tried to lick his face and hands.

"It is of no use for me to ask to whom the dog belongs," remarked the policeman as he reached the group upon the porch. "The dog tells me that the boy has told the exact truth."

"See, Mr. Policeman, the dog does belong to papa and me, and not to Aunt Steiner," exclaimed Fritz, jubilantly.

"Yes; and is this lady the Widow Steiner?"

"Yes," she replied, stepping forward.

"You gave a false statement in the paper, and to the police," he said in an injured tone. "You said you had lost your dog."

"It was a misleading statement, that is true," she replied, "but many people know me who do not know Fritz. The dog ran away from my house while under my care, and my wish was to state correctly in a few words where the dog could be returned if found. It was a friend who advertised."

"It would have taken but a few words more to have said that your nephew, Fritz Heil, had lost his dog, then when the boy told me his name and where he had been staying, I would not have arrested him, knowing that he was telling the exact truth."

"Yes, you are quite right, and I am sorry that my mistake has given you trouble, and I thank you heartily. It has all turned out right. Had you not arrested him, he would have been on his way home, and his father here to see him."

"All right. I have nothing to say, except to tell you that when you call upon the police to help you, you will state the case correctly."

"I, too, thank you heartily," added Mr. Heil. "You have done us a good service."

The policeman gave the military salute and passed down the steps and Aunt Steiner and the others went inside.

"Now tell me, Fritz, what was your reason for starting for Odenwald with such a motley array of things upon your back? You looked like a traveling tinker," enquired his father.

"They were presents for mother, and sister and baby brother, and the shop-keeper said I could carry them better if strapped upon my back, and he strapped them which I thought was very kind. I got the canary bird so very cheap that I could not bear to go home without it."

"No wonder it was cheap! It is not a singer, the man cheated you."

Fritz looked so sad over this information that his aunt tried to think of something to cheer him.

"Do you know, brother, that Fritz can make excellent coffee and all three boys are learning to cook?" she said.

"No, indeed! I never imagined such a thing," he replied, looking as surprised and pleased as the boys could possibly desire.

"Yes; they can cook, and as it is nearly time for our afternoon meal, we will give you a sample of how they can help me."

"Set them at it as early as convenient, sister, and when finished I can pass an hour or more with you at the forest park before starting to Cassel, if you care to go."

"That will be charming. Fritz, you may go now and grind the coffee, and put in a tablespoonful more, now that we are having a guest to share it with us. Franz, you will please peel and chop the cold boiled potatoes, and brown them nicely and cut thin slices from the cold boiled ham, and put them upon the pink plate. Paul will please set the table, and then go to the bakery and get a seed cake in honor of the returned prodigal."

The boys set to work and the odor of the mocha coffee as it was being ground floated into the sitting-room.

"You always have fine coffee, sister," remarked Mr. Heil.

"Yes, it is good, and the reason is that it is genuine coffee, no chicory or other mixture. Yet I have seen passable coffee made of poor material by an adept. Our dear old grandmother was compelled in war-times to make it from chicory, but would use no deception, so when she invited friends to take supper she would not say, 'Come to afternoon coffee,' but 'Come to chicory.'"

Paul in the meantime had set the table neatly, and had returned from the bakery with a fine large seed cake, Mrs. Steiner having given him two marks to pay for it.

The potatoes, ham, good brown and white bread, butter and lettuce was now upon the table, Fritz brought the coffee, and all took seats at the hospitable board.

Mr. Heil at his sister's request asked the blessing, then with pleasant chat the meal progressed, the guest assuring the boys that he did not know that he had ever enjoyed one more.

"If it would not tire you too much, sister, I would prefer that we walk to the Forest-house, as I would like to call on the way at the Stayman cloth house and leave an order for cloth and ready-made clothing."

"I prefer walking this lovely evening."

"And oh, papa, we are glad to go there, for we know Mr. Stayman! We spent part of the time with him watching the fireworks," exclaimed Fritz. "Do you know, papa, that he is a tailor?"

"Yes, and I hope that you will have as good knowledge of how the work should be done as has Mr. Stayman when old enough to go in business."

"But I would rather be a merchant."

"He is a merchant and a successful one; and his success lies in the fact that he understands thoroughly how the work of making the clothing should be done."

"He invited us to come to his store and I am glad you will take us. Will we see him on his work-table with a needle in his hand?"

"I am not sure; but if so, we should have double respect for him, for it would prove that he is not above his business. You appear to have the foolish opinion that it is the kind of work that demeans or elevates a man. I know of but two classes of men, the worker and the drone. The king who rules wisely and the tailor who does honest work are pleasing to God in the position in which he has placed them. But the man who thinks the world owes him a living and will not work but begs from door to door is like a parasite that lives upon the fruit tree."

As soon as the meal was finished the boys helped Mrs. Steiner put the place in order, and they set out for the Forest-house, Mr. Heil leading the way with his sister, the boys following, and Pixy enjoying the freedom of running along without the restriction of his cord, but always keeping near his master. They halted at the house of Uncle Braun and invited him to meet them at the Forest-house which he gladly accepted; then they passed on and soon stood before the palatial clothing house of the Staymans and to the surprise of the boys it was the very one which Franz and Paul had visited and near which Fritz was robbed. They were met by a young man, dressed in the latest-style business-suit, who welcomed them courteously and asked how he could serve them.

"Please tell Mr. Stayman that Frederick Heil of the Odenwald wishes to leave an order with his firm," said Mr. Heil.

Mr. Stayman appeared immediately, and welcomed them all cordially.

"Come to my office," he said, "and I will give you comfortable seats; we can converse there without interruption." They followed him, passing through a small room lined with mirrors from floor to ceiling, and while Mr. Heil gave his order, one of the young clerks took Mrs. Steiner and the boys over the

building.

"Where are the workrooms?" asked Fritz.

"They are in a large building back of this one. Here we have only suits, and cloth in the piece."

CHAPTER X

PIXY'S EARNINGS

Soon the city lay behind them and they entered the avenue lined with great trees which led to the Forest-house, a favorite resort of the people of Frankfort.

As soon as they reached the beautiful grounds, Mrs. Steiner rested upon a rustic chair and her brother took a seat beside her, and rolling his handkerchief in a ball, as he had often done before in playful mood, he showed it to Pixy and then while Fritz held his hands over his pet's eyes, he threw it far away. Pixy bounded away the moment the hands were removed, sniffed about through the grass, and in a very short time returned with the handkerchief. As it was white, it was easily seen in the grass, so Mr. Heil showed Pixy the black leather letter-case that he always carried with him, and threw it near a clump of tall bushes. Pixy ran off, brought it back, but instead of waiting to be applauded and petted he hurried away, and soon returned with a new pocketbook which he would deliver to no one but Mr. Heil.

"Some visitor has lost it," said Mrs. Steiner, "and no doubt is worrying over the loss."

"Yes, and it feels bulky. There may be things of value in it," replied her brother. "We must try to find the owner."

"Open it, father," said Fritz, "it may be that the owner's name is in it."

"Yes, it may be, but I prefer to wait until we have a witness other than ourselves for we are strangers here."

"Why should we not be witnesses enough, father?"

"Because some one may have found it, taken money from it and thrown it away, and we might be blamed."

"What can you do about it, father?"

"I will take it to the music pavilion. Perhaps some one in the crowd is the owner."

At that moment the band stationed in the pavilion began playing *The Watch on the Rhine*, and Mr. Heil and his party left their place under the trees and joined the listeners within. As soon as the music was finished, he called a waiter to him. "Will you please ask the proprietor to favor me by coming here? I have something I wish to say to him."

"Yes," replied the waiter, "but I am sure he cannot come just yet, for he is intending to speak to the assembly, but I will tell him as soon as he is at liberty."

A little later the proprietor requested the attention of the guests, and announced that an English visitor had lost his pocketbook and would be very grateful if the finder would return it to him as it contained some valuable papers and some English money. It had also German money which he would give freely to the finder for restoring the pocketbook.

As soon as the announcement was made, the waiter told the proprietor of Mr. Heil's request and he came immediately to hear what he wished to say.

"I will announce the finding of it as soon as the band has finished this number; and I am sure the owner will be rejoiced to hear it for he is much concerned at the loss of the papers," said the proprietor, "and I am glad for his sake."

"And please say that the pocketbook was found by Pixy," requested Fritz.

The proprietor promised and hurried away and soon the little party heard the announcement that a pocketbook answering the description given had been found by young Mr. Pixy from the Odenwald. The boys could scarcely restrain their laughter to hear that Pixy had been honored with the title of "Mr." and they clustered about him, toyed with his ears and his curly mane, until the dog wondered what he had done that they should laugh at him.

The Englishman quickly made his way to the group and said with warmth, as he clasped the hand of Mr. Heil, "I have heard of the Odenwald, and will from this time hold it in grateful remembrance, knowing that in that retired place are just and honorable people, and that Mr. Pixy is one of them."

Mr. Heil and his sister could scarcely restrain their smiles at hearing this, and were about to enlighten him as to who found the pocketbook and how it happened when he looked around at the three boys.

"Now tell me," he said, "which of the three is Mr. Pixy?"

"No one of them; it was our dog that found your pocketbook and his name is Pixy."

"Your dog! Now how shall I reward *him*? Will you please tell me your name?"

"Yes, my name is Frederick Heil, and in reply to your first question, I will say that my dog does not need anything, although I thank you for your kind wish to reward him."

"Pray, Mr. Heil, accept this five hundred marks to use to the advantage of your dog in any way you think best."

"Please excuse me," replied Mr. Heil. "There is no way that I can think of that it could be used for Pixy. He really needs nothing."

"But, my friend, please respect my wish to express my gratitude in the only way I can. You cannot know what the finding of these papers has been to me. You will do me the greatest of favors if you will tell me if there is any way that you can use this money."

"I believe you fully and will tell you where your five hundred marks would do more good than can be told. In my neighborhood has been founded a home and school for poor children. It is but a short distance from my home, and every day at noon our Pixy goes to the schoolyard to play with the children. The matron calls him her black servant, for he is so helpful in caring for the children. If you will give the five hundred marks to the school, Pixy shall take it to it, and there will be great joy over the gift, for we have a hard struggle to keep up supplies for the home."

"It will be a great pleasure to me to give it to such a worthy cause, and you can do me no greater service than to accept it."

"I do accept it gratefully, for just at this time there are changes to be made in the building, and there was no money to buy the materials and pay for the work. Only assure me that it will not inconvenience you, and I will accept the generous gift gladly."

"I can give you this assurance truthfully. I do not need it and am glad to help in a worthy cause."

"It is indeed a worthy cause. At first it appeared to be a hopeless undertaking to try to establish a home on such slender means as we could command, but we have struggled along, and now this sum of money is indeed a Godsend."

Fritz saw an opportunity for him to speak and going to Mr. Heil took his hand. "Father," he said, "I have often thought since leaving home that I should not have brought Pixy to Frankfort, and I knew that you all thought it very foolish in me. You see now that it was after all a good thing, for through him you have gotten money needed for the home and school. Had it not been for him, some one might have found it who would not have given it to the owner."

"Yes, in this instance your foolishness has brought a good result, but, as a rule, trouble follows when a boy does what he knows that his parents would disapprove. Give the gentleman your hand and thank him for the good gift to our Children's Home."

This was done and the stranger thanked him in turn for the good turn Pixy had done him, and Fritz returned to his place beside Aunt Steiner prouder than ever of his dog.

"I have great interest in the Odenwald for the reason that my ancestors belonged to that green mountain region," remarked the Englishman, "but it has not been in my time that any of them have lived there. My great grandfather was a German and a native of the Odenwald country. He married an

English lady, and would have lived in England had she not been willing to come to Odenwald which was, in those early days, a wilderness. She knew that he longed to return to his native land, and said, 'Whither thou goest I will go.' When my great-grandfather died, she returned to England with her two sons and her daughter. One of these sons was my grandfather. I have held in remembrance my German ancestry, and have wondered if any of the descendants of my great-grandfather's relatives are in the Odenwald."

"I think that I can give you some information, Mr. Urich," replied Mr. Heil.

"How did you know my name?" asked the Englishman in surprise. "I did not mention it, and you did not ask."

"There was no need, for I know the history of your family. Forest-master Urich was the first of the name in the Odenwald, and his son—your great-grandfather—was also my great-grandfather on his sister's side of the house.

"Your great-grandfather was named Otto, and was an educated and cultured gentleman. Your great-grandmother was named Mary Beyer and was one of four sisters. Your grandfather, also named Otto, was the second son of the forest-master. So you see that your family history is also mine, and the same blood runs in our veins, although we do not bear the same name. The old people of Odenwald have told me what their ancestors have told them of the forest-master, Otto Urich."

"Mr. Heil, was he the forest-master who lived in the same forest-house where we live?" asked Franz.

"Yes, the same log-building. Has your father ever told you of these forest-masters who once inhabited it?"

"Yes, he told us that once a member of the consistory came from Hanover to learn of the customs of the people of the Odenwald that he might write an article for publication. Some one had told him that one curious custom was that the fathers whipped their children every morning, and this punishment was to last all day. No matter how badly the children acted the rest of the day, they had received their punishment and there would be no more that day. The sons of Forest-master Urich were so amused at hearing this that every morning while the stranger staid in the neighborhood they yelled as if being cruelly beaten, and the visitor published the article in which was mentioned the barbarous custom of the people of the Odenwald. Forest-master Urich would often say in jest to his boys, 'Come now, and get your cudgeling, which is to serve you for the day.'"

"Yes, Franz, that has ever since been one of the sayings in our neighborhood," laughed Mr. Heil, and Mr. Urich heartily enjoyed hearing the tradition.

"Friends, relatives!" he commented, "I thought I had not one on my father's side of the house, and now I have found not only a helping friend, but one bound to me by the ties of blood. You are rejoicing over a few paltry marks for your children's home, while I rejoice that through the unlooked-for incident we have met. I had passed by that tall shrubby hours before the pocketbook was found, and I had entirely forgotten that I had been there when my pocketbook was missing. Had it not been for the sharp scent of little Pixy, I am quite sure I would have been compelled to return to England without it."

"Yes, Pixy did help us all," said Mrs. Steiner, "and I have done the poor little dog much injustice. He is a prince in disguise, and has done two beautiful deeds at one and the same time by earning five hundred marks for the poor children's home, and introducing us to a relative of whom we are proud."

"Who is this relative?" was asked in the well-known voice of Uncle Braun, and the welcome visitor stepped into the circle of friends.

"Dear Uncle Braun," cried Fritz, "we are so glad to tell you that Pixy found a new uncle from England, and five hundred marks for the poor children's home. Now, wasn't it good that I brought him to Frankfort?"

"It certainly was. And is this the new relation? Perhaps he is mine also," and he held out his hand to Mr. Urich, which was grasped cordially.

As Mr. Heil and Mr. Braun were cousins on their mother's side and descended from the Forest-master Urich, their relation to the Englishman was equal and they sat and conversed with hearty appreciation of each other's society, at the same time listening to the sweet music which floated out from the pavilion.

"Excuse me a moment from your congenial company," said Mr. Urich, finally, and went to the part of

the ground where vehicles of all kinds were kept.

"I have ordered an excursion carriage," he said to Mrs. Steiner, upon returning, "which will take us all to your door, if you will allow us the pleasure."

"I accept the kindness gladly," replied Mrs. Steiner, "and hope that Brother Fritz can accompany us. He is on his way to Cassel."

"Yes, I will have time to go with you, and will then have time to take the evening train for Cassel."

"You shall not lose any time by it," said Mr. Ulrich, "for I will take you directly to the depot from your sister's house."

"And you can leave Uncle Braun at his own door," suggested Fritz.

"Certainly I will, unless he will return with me and pass the evening."

It was a speedy and pleasant trip with a pair of spirited horses and a good driver and the boys could scarcely believe that they had reached 37 Bornheimer street. They bade Mr. Ulrich good-bye and thanked him for the pleasure he had given, and Mr. Heil accompanied his sister up the steps to her door. There they found a boy from the telegraph office who was just about to depart with his message, having had no response to his ringing of the bell.

"Whom is it for?" asked Fritz.

"For Mrs. Steiner."

"Oh, Brother Fritz," she said, "it is from your wife. I telegraphed to her this afternoon that Fritz had gone home, and asked her to send a message to me upon his arrival."

"Open it and see what she says," requested Mr. Heil, and she complied quickly and read: "Last train in. No Fritz. I am terribly anxious."

"Of course she is, but don't worry, sister," said Mr. Heil, noticing the tears in her eyes. "I will stop off at the telegraph office and send word to her that Fritz is here and will be home on Tuesday."

This was a great satisfaction to Mrs. Steiner. They all bade him good-night and entered her little home, going almost immediately to their rooms, weary with the excitements and pleasures of their day.

They slept soundly all night and until late the next morning, but ate breakfast in time to dress carefully for church, for Mrs. Steiner would not permit any one under her roof to remain at home if able to go. They came home to a good luncheon which Mrs. Steiner had prepared before the boys were up, and then attended a service in the great Cathedral that afternoon. They had passed a profitable day, and in the evening sat on the porch and chatted a little while before going to bed.

"Papa told me at the Forest-House last evening what we are to do to-morrow," remarked Fritz. "We are to leave here on the train at eleven o'clock and go to Umstadt. There we are to take dinner at the Swan hotel, and walk in the afternoon as far as that little village where we took dinner the day we came and stay there all night, and the next day we will walk on home. The Trojans will see that we are walking and will not know but we walked all the way unless we tell them."

"But why need you care if they do know that you rode part of the way both in coming to Frankfort, and going home?" asked his aunt.

"Because we told them that we were going to walk all the way, and we expected to do so, and they will plague us, and say we couldn't do it."

"Your satchel is to be sent by express, is it, Fritz?" asked Mrs. Steiner.

"No, Aunt Fanny. While you were talking to Uncle Braun and the new cousin, papa said that he would stop here on his way from Cassel and bring it home with him, and he will bring the bird cage and bird for sister. So we will have only our knapsacks as we had when we came. He said for me to put the tin horn and the grater in the satchel and not come through our village looking like a traveling tinker. I told him not to tell anybody about my being arrested, for the Trojans might hear it and would plague me."

The next morning at eleven the boys set out for home, Mrs. Steiner accompanying them to the depot. The fates seemed to favor Fritz, for when they reached the platform an old lady called from the car window, "You can bring your dog in here if no one else objects; I am a friend to dogs," and another lady

and an old gentleman in the compartment agreed that they had no objection to having Pixy for a fellow traveler.

The triplets bade Mrs. Steiner good-bye and thanked her for her kindness to them, and she in turn invited them to come to visit her whenever their parents were willing.

"Your dog is young, I think," remarked the old gentleman.

"Yes," replied Fritz, "he is young, but he is very smart."

"Indeed!" commented the old gentleman. "In what way has he given evidence of his intelligence?"

"He earned five hundred marks on Saturday."

The old gentleman frowned, but Fritz, not noticing it, continued, "and he found a cousin of my father, who lives in England."

"Indeed! Then if your dog has such keen scent as to reach to England, perhaps he will go a step farther and tell us whether the old man in the moon smokes cigars or a pipe."

"But I am telling you the truth!" insisted Fritz.

The old gentleman paid no attention to him, but, taking up his paper, commenced reading attentively.

"Fritz, you ought to tell him how Pixy earned the money and found the cousin," whispered Paul.

"No, he won't listen," replied Fritz. And he was right; the old gentleman believed that the boy was treating him with disrespect by telling him such a wild story.

When the train reached Umstadt, and the boys came in sight of the Swan inn, they saw the landlord on the stone steps, his thumbs in his vest pockets and his fingers moving as if playing the piano.

"So, here you are again!" he exclaimed heartily. "Did you get homesick?"

"No, but school begins on Wednesday, and we wished to be on time."

"That was sensible. How did your dog act in that ant-hill, Frankfort?"

"He did well. He earned five hundred marks."

"Five hundred marks! Did he perform tricks in a circus? Of course, we know that he is a cute dog. Of course you have plenty of nickels now, and if you had sent on your order for dinner, you could have had spring chicken, peas, early apples, and other good things."

"Pixy did not perform in a circus, but he found a pocketbook belonging to an English gentleman. It had valuable papers in it, and English money, beside five hundred marks of German money."

"And that you kept."

"No, no! Please don't think so meanly of us."

"That is what I understood by what you said."

"No; let me tell you how it was. The gentleman who owned the pocketbook gave it to my father for the poor children's home in our neighborhood."

"Well, now I call that generous; and I am glad to know that we have such people in the world. If you are ready for dinner, come right to the table and take seats."

The boys were glad that they did not have to wait, and followed the broad-shouldered man to the dining-room. The landlady was already at the table, as were Letta and Peter, and all welcomed the young travelers cordially.

The soup was finished and the boys looked toward the kitchen door, wondering what substantial would be forthcoming. They had not long to wait, for the cook appeared with a veritable Chimborazo of an apple-dumpling mountain, piled tier upon tier; and there had to be a scattering of dishes to make place for the platter. The three Grecian heroes gave glances of approval and satisfaction. They had a special fondness for apple-dumplings, and approved of the size of each, calculating that there would be enough for all, no matter how insatiable the appetites. They took their forks in hand as a warrior would his spear, and the landlady had the gratification of seeing that city delicacies had not depreciated her humble country food in the opinion of the three.

After they had paid the cook the compliment of eating to the limit of possibility, and had laid down their forks preparatory to leaving the table the landlord gave them a bit of excellent advice.

"Boys," he said, "did you ever hear this rule for keeping in good health?"

'After breakfast work and toil;
After dinner rest awhile;
After supper walk a mile.'

"I would advise that you do not set out upon your journey so soon after eating, but rest at least half an hour, and for that purpose we will go to the reception-room, where there are comfortable chairs."

As soon as they were seated, and the landlady had taken her knitting, she asked if they had learned anything new in Frankfort.

"Yes," said Fritz, eagerly; "we learned to make coffee, and to cook potatoes and other things. My aunt let us help her."

"That was good; people ought to learn everything that comes in their way. Now tell us what you saw in Frankfort."

Nothing could have been pleasanter to the triplets than to live over again those hours of sight-seeing, and all three helped tell of their visit.

"Now listen to this," said the landlord, who had picked up a Frankfort paper:

"An Englishman lost his pocketbook on Saturday evening in the grounds of the Forest-house, in the suburbs of Frankfort. It contained valuable papers and money, and was found by a young man named Pixy from the Odenwald country, and delivered to the owner."

The landlord and his wife laughed at the mistake of the reporter until tears stood in their eyes; and then the three boys repeated the story again, and told of the English cousin, and of Uncle Braun, and ended by saying that they felt that they knew everybody and every place in Frankfort.

When they put on their knapsacks to depart, each took out his purse to pay their bill.

"Oh, no, boys," said the landlord, "I cannot take pay for your very plain dinner. You were our guests and were not the least trouble."

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" they said in concert, and Paul voiced the opinion of all, when he said that had they ordered it, they could not have gotten anything they would have enjoyed more.

The three then took generous tips from their purses, and put the money in the hand of their host.

"Will you please give this to Letta and Peter?" they asked.

"Certainly, certainly! and I thank you in their names for it. And now, boys, you will have to walk several miles to reach the little village where Fritz's father said you would stay over night on your way home."

"Did you see father?" asked the boy in surprise.

"Certainly! He would not think of going to Frankfort without stopping to see me."

They shook hands with the innkeeper and his wife, who invited them to come to see them the next time they went to Frankfort, and then took their departure for the Odenwald.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE DESERTED CABIN

They walked along chatting until they were several miles from Umstadt, when Pixy stopped and looked intently toward a thicket of tall grass, giving one of his low growls, a sign of warning. The boys halted, for at that moment three rough heads were raised from the grass and three pairs of eyes were

gazing intently at the travelers from three faces, which were not only dark but not entirely clean. The three were about seventeen years of age, and were apprentices of mechanics out upon a week's vacation. One was learning to be a butcher, another a blacksmith, and the third a basket maker. They had been walking all the morning and had lain down in the cool, tall grass to rest and sleep. They were rough-looking boys, and the triplets were rather sorry that Pixy's growl had caused them to rise and look about them.

"So you are three school boys out on your slide!" exclaimed the blacksmith, eyeing them curiously.

"Slide!" echoed Paul. "How can we slide when it is summer and no ice?"

"Oh, you greenhorns," laughed the boy. "You do not know that 'slide' means a holiday."

"We have been on our holiday, and are on our way home to go to school."

"School! I should run away from that instead of running to it," remarked the blacksmith, "no one there learns how to use the hammer and anvil to make a horse-shoe."

"But he learns other useful things," said Paul.

"What are you going to be when you grow up?"

"A teacher, like my father."

"Bah, a teacher! I suppose it is a great pleasure to cudgel some boy every day. Oh, what I have endured from teachers is more than I can tell."

"A good teacher knows how to manage a bad boy without using the cudgel. It is a weak teacher who knows no other way."

"Oh, just hear our wise one! Let me tell you that your father, great as you appear to think him, could not manage me."

"No, not now, but if you were a boy under his care you would see that he would manage you."

"What are you going to be?" he asked of Fritz.

"A clothing merchant, like my father."

"And cheat buyers by selling poor cloth."

"My father is no swindler," cried Fritz.

Franz had stood back; he did not like the looks of the group, but the roughest looking of the three now put the same question to him.

"A forest-keeper, like my father."

"Then it would be well for you to learn to be a butcher, as I am doing, so you could kill wild animals and dress them."

"Dress them!" exclaimed the boys in surprise.

"Yes, cut them up for packing, as we do cattle. Do you see this butcher knife?" and he held it up to view.

The triplets did not like the look of the butcher and his knife. They were anxious to move on and let the three strangers finish their sleep in the grass, but this was not the wish of their new acquaintances.

"I will tell you what we will do," said the butcher after the three had talked a moment in a low tone. "We are not far from a village where we intend begging food. We will each take one of you boys to help, and when we reach the end of the village we will divide what we have begged."

"No, we have never done that," cried Fritz. "We will not go from door to door holding out our hands."

"No, we cannot do that, but we will each give you a nickel," said Paul quickly, for he noticed frowns upon the faces of the strangers.

"Agreed!" said the three in a breath, and, rising to their feet, they held out their hands.

Paul and Franz gave out their share immediately, but Fritz fingered so long that the gold-piece fell out, and was seen by the three pairs of eyes. Fritz picked it up quickly and replaced it in his purse, and

the three nickels were in the grimy hands of the strangers, who set out for the village.

"You should not have let that butcher boy see your gold-piece," said Paul. "We are traveling the same way, and we don't know what they are planning. The thief in Frankfort got your money out of your pocket with smooth words, but this butcher boy might take a shorter way."

"Let us lose no time in getting out of their path," advised Franz. "I believe the better plan would be to take a train home."

"Oh, no!" objected Fritz; "the Trojans would never get done laughing at us. It is bad enough that we have ridden part of the way, when we boasted so much of taking the whole trip on foot."

"But Paul is right about that butcher boy. I believe that he would stick a boy as willingly as he would a calf."

"I will tell you my plan," said Paul. "Those three tramps have taken the main road; we will take the forest, and walk along where we can see them, and they cannot see us. Then if they strike off in another direction we will come out in the road again."

"That is a first-rate plan," said Fritz; "and it will be so cool and pleasant in the woods."

The boys now took a long look at the apprentices, fearing they would turn and see them enter the woods; but no, they were passing along quietly, and the three darted in, and felt that they had escaped a great misfortune. For a long time they kept the road in sight, then, without them knowing how, it disappeared from view, although they believed that they had been keeping a straight course. It seemed to have grown suddenly dark, and there was the low rumbling of thunder.

"That is the reason that it is growing dark; a storm is coming up," remarked Paul. "We must have a place of shelter. Let us hurry to the road, and it may be that we will see a house or barn."

It was raining fast by this time. It had not occurred to them to take their rain-coats from their knapsacks, but trudged along in the downpour, the woods now so dark that they could scarcely see each other.

"I wish I had something to eat," said Fritz. "I am as hungry as a wolf."

"And I," seconded Franz.

"And I," agreed Paul.

"Follow me, and we will soon be out of this dark woods," commanded Fritz.

The others obeyed, stumbling over stones, tripping over roots, and running against stumps and briars; but they kept along cheerfully, believing that they would soon reach the road where it would not be so dark.

"I wish I had a piece of that cake that Uncle Braun bought for us the day we went to the tower," remarked Fritz.

"Oh, don't speak of it! It makes me hungrier than ever," said Paul.

"Oh, boys, I see a light, a dim one, but it may be in a house, and the people will give us something to eat. I told you I would lead you right if you would follow me."

"If it is a house, and they will give us some straw to sleep on, we will not try to reach the village where we were to stay all night, for I believe it is growing late," suggested Paul.

"Oh, we have come to a swamp," cried Fritz. "Halt! my shoes are full of water. Now one of them has come off, and is sticking in the mud."

"Here it is," said Paul as he pulled it out, "take it and put it on."

"But I can't stand and put it on. What shall I do?"

"You cannot sit down in the swamp, that is certain. Here, Franz, do you get on one side of him and I on the other and we will hold him up while he puts it on. Now, Fritz, hurry."

Fritz took his shoe, shook out the water, and tried his best to make it go on, but without success. His comrades on either side put out a helping hand, but lost their balance, and all three sat down suddenly in the swamp.

"Now we are wet in the only place we were dry," exclaimed Paul.

"Yes," comforted Fritz, "but my shoe is on, so it is well that we did sit down."

"But there was no need for us all to sit down. If you had taken a seat at first, we could have kept dry."

"But see! the light is still there. Let us hurry. Oh, how glad I am to know that we will see people."

They soon reached a small, dark cabin, old and dilapidated, yet it was shelter; and they rejoiced that they had found it. As they neared it, they smelled the welcome odor of frying sausage.

The only light that came through the one little window was from the small fire on the hearth and in this dim light the boys saw two figures bending over the fire, and one by the door, which stood slightly ajar.

Only a few more steps and they were up to the door, and there stood the butcher-boy with knife in hand. Fritz felt that the knife was already at his throat. He fell back upon Franz, and Franz upon Paul, and they were about to flee.

"Here are the three stubborn little tramps that would not beg, but are willing to eat what we begged. But come in, boys, and keep quiet, or some prying forester will come along and drive us out in the rain."

The boys drew back, for they were startled and distressed at having run directly into the lion's claws.

"Come in, you simpletons! Are you afraid that I will kill you?"

"No wonder they are afraid when you are flourishing that big knife," said the basket-maker. "Come in, boys. He has it only to cut our meat and bread. He would not use it on a person because he knows he would have to suffer for it."

The boys were afraid of them all, but night was coming on, it was raining, and there seemed nothing else to do, so they stepped in, followed by Pixy, who had sniffed the odor of sausage.

"Now you can set the table. The sausage is done," said the blacksmith, and while the butcher shut the door, the basket-maker hung his coat across the little window to hide the light from outside, and more fuel was piled on the fire, which soon blazed up and brightened the dingy place.

A newspaper was placed in the centre of the floor and a large paper bag was emptied of its contents upon it, a motley mess of bread, brown and white, scraps of meat, cheese and other things they had begged.

"Now fall to, yellow bills," said the butcher to the triplets. "Your money bought this sausage, and you have a right to share it," and he gave them a liberal supply on slices of brown bread.

The boys were hungry and ate heartily, though realizing that they were beggars and were being entertained by beggars.

"Your dog must have his supper," said the butcher-boy when they had finished and, putting scraps of bread, meat and other things into the pan in which the sausage had been fried, he stirred it about and poured it upon a piece of paper, and Pixy devoured it greedily.

As soon as the supper was finished, the travelers prepared for sleep.

"Let us put on our rain-coats," suggested Paul. "They will help dry our clothes and keep us warm."

"Why didn't you put them on before it rained?" asked the basket-maker.

"That is like locking the stable after the horse is stolen."

"We never thought of it," responded Fritz. They took the rain-coats from their knap sacks, put them on and felt immediate comfort; then all lay down with their feet toward the fire, Pixy close to Fritz.

"I am tired, and could sleep if I were not so thirsty," murmured Paul.

"Well, donkey, there is nothing to hinder you from getting a drink," said the rough voice of the butcher-boy. "Go quietly out the door, turn to the left and there is a spring of good water, which you can scoop up in your hands. Hurry in and shut the door, or some one of the forest-keepers will ferret us out."

The boys arose quickly and went out, followed by Pixy. It had stopped raining, but the woods looked very dark and gloomy.

"Let us run away and leave our knapsacks," said Fritz. "I don't like to be in the company of such people."

"Nor do I," agreed the other two, and there was a pause for reflection.

"Where could we go?" asked Paul. "We would only get lost again in the woods."

"But I am afraid of that butcher with his knife," said Fritz.

"That basket-maker would not let him hurt us."

"Are you coming in or not?" asked the rough voice of the butcher-boy at the door, so they hurried in, and closed the door.

The boys lay near each other for company, and Pixy crept close to Fritz, who rejoiced that he was with them.

After a time the butcher-boy raised his head and whispered, "Boys, are you asleep?"

"No," replied Fritz, with a thrill of alarm which almost deprived him of speech.

"Now keep your mouths shut," was the next whisper. "I hear something outside."

The boys obeyed, though they longed to cry out, "Come, whoever you are, and take us out of this miserable place."

There was one of the party who resolved not to obey the command, and that was Pixy. He, too, heard the noise outside, and sprang against the door, barking shrilly.

"I will kill that dog if he don't keep quiet," said the butcher-boy in an angry but subdued tone.

Fritz groped his way to his pet and put his hand over his mouth, but it was too late. The forest-keeper outside had heard the barking, and striking his musket upon the door, he asked, "Who's there?"

It was now no use to keep silent and Fritz took it upon himself to answer.

"Good friend, we are three boys on our holiday journey. We have been to Frankfort, and are on our way home to Michelstadt."

"Who is in there with you?"

"Three working people who allowed us to take shelter here from the rain."

The forest-keeper opened the door, struck a light in his lantern and stepped in.

"What brought you in here?" he asked of the three grown travelers.

"There is no need to ask. You know that it has been raining," replied the butcher-boy doggedly.

"Yes, but it is not raining now. Go out of here! You might set the cabin on fire, and then the woods would be ablaze."

The triplets were ready in a moment's time, and eager to go, but not so the others.

"The fire is out. What is the use of moving on until daylight?"

"Because it is against orders to allow anyone to stay in this cabin. Wake up your comrade, and all of you leave."

This was a hard task, for the blacksmith was a sound sleeper, but by dint of calling and pushing they got him partly awake.

"What is it you want?" he said, looking sleepily at the forest-keeper.
"Go out of here. There is no room for you."

"Nor for you! Up, up, and out!"

"Out in the rain? No. I will not go," and he lay down again.

The other two drew him to his feet, and told him that it was the forest-keeper who was commanding them to leave the cabin.

"But where are we to go?" he asked. "We cannot sleep out in the rain."

"No, you are all to follow me to my house. I can have an eye over you there, and it will be less of an anxiety than to leave you to yourselves in this cabin."

They all passed out, the triplets with Pixy keeping close to the forester and his lantern.

CHAPTER XII

A WELL-SPRING OF PLEASURE

They walked what seemed to the boys a long distance through the forest. The rain had ceased, and the moon was trying to shed its rays through thin clouds, but in the dense shade the only light was the little circle upon the moist earth, given by the small lantern.

After a time a voice cried, "Who goes there?"

"Hans Hartman, my good friend," replied the forest-keeper.

"All right!" and another forest-keeper stood before them, much surprised to see seven instead of one.

"Have you captured poachers?"

"No, the older ones are gypsies," for in the dim light of the cabin he was quite sure that they belonged to that army of rovers.

"Are we then so dark?" asked the basket-maker, amused at the mistake.

"All animals look dark at night."

"Except a white cow," suggested the butcher.

"But, Hartman, you have three boys with you," continued the forest-keeper. "So young and yet night-strollers!"

"No, these boys are all right. They have been passing their holiday in Frankfort, and are on their way home. They got lost in the forest, the rain came up and they took shelter in the abandoned cabin. One of them tells me that he is the son of Forest-keeper Krupp."

The forester said good-night, and they walked on for some distance and at length came to a clearing in the forest. Looking up, they could see the unchangeable stars, the same that looked down upon Mother Earth when she was fresh from the hands of her Creator. A tinkling brook lay across their path, which the forester cleared at a bound, and the three apprentices followed. The triplets halted to view the situation, but Pixy sprang across, then looked back as if to say, "It is nothing. Just give a spring and you are on this side," and they ran back, gave a long jump and were over.

A short distance beyond was the forest-keeper's cottage, a comfortable place for weary travelers on a wet night.

"I cannot give you all a sleeping place in my house," he said, "but can make room for the three smaller boys. You larger ones can go to the straw shed. You will find plenty of clean, dry straw, and there you can sleep until morning and shall have a good breakfast before you leave. But before we part for the night, you must turn your pockets inside out that I may see that you have no matches or anything else that will strike a spark."

They agreed willingly, and he then led the way to the shed, took from a feed box a number of coarse sacks for covering and said good-night.

"We are thankful to you for giving us this comfortable place to sleep," said the blacksmith. "We thought it harsh treatment to make us leave the cabin, but you have given us better quarters and we are truly obliged to you. You are certainly good to us."

"Yes, I try to be good to everybody, especially to hard-working boys out on their holiday, when I find that they are not common tramps who do not wish to work."

He left the shed and the boys followed him to his dwelling, and to a room adjoining the living-room.

"There are two straw-beds on this bedstead," he said. "One can be taken off and put on the floor, and one of you can sleep upon it, while the other two can have the one on the bedstead."

"I will take the one on the floor. Then Pixy can sleep with me," said Fritz.

"Suit yourselves about that, only take off your wet clothes, shoes and stockings, and my wife will put them about the kitchen fire, and they will be dry by morning."

The boys hurriedly disrobed, and the forest-keeper bade them good-night, and left the room.

Paul and Franz crept jubilantly under the coverings of the bed, and Fritz was equally glad for the piece of carpet which the forest-keeper had given him in lieu of a quilt, and with Pixy close to him, he was happier than many a king.

"Oh, it was good luck for us that Mr. Hartman came and took us away from that miserable place," exclaimed Paul the moment the door closed.

"I never was gladder in my life," affirmed Franz. "Now we feel safe, and are dry and warm and in good beds where we can sleep well."

"And whom have we to thank for it but the young gentleman from Odenwald—my Pixy," reminded Fritz. "If he had not barked, the forest-keeper would not have known we were there. Oh, we are so comfortable here, aren't we, Pixy? And we have you to thank for it."

Early the next morning the forester's wife went to the kitchen to make the wood fire on the hearth brighter, that the boys' garments might be thoroughly dry; for she had planned that they should sleep as long as they wished, and she would give the three apprentices their breakfast first that they might continue their journey. She made coffee and warm bread, and was putting them upon the table when she saw them come up from the brook, where they had washed hands and faces and combed their hair. Refreshed by rest and sleep, they looked much better than when the triplets first saw them.

The forest-keeper, who had risen early to attend to matters about the place, came in just as they finished their breakfast.

"I hope you slept well and have enjoyed your coffee," he said kindly.

"We enjoyed both heartily, Forest-master, and thank you for your goodness to us."

"Forest-master, you say? I am not that but only one of the keepers."

"We would do you honor, which is our reason for calling you by that name."

"But you do not honor one by giving him a higher title than he is entitled to. Instead it humiliates him, or he thinks you are making sport of him."

"We did not mean it in either way, Mr. Hartman."

"I believe you, so we will not say anything more about it."

"Then, good-bye, Mr. Forester, and we thank you and your wife for your goodness to us. We will long remember that coffee. Tell the boys good-bye for us. They were afraid of us, but we meant them no harm. Good-bye! Good-bye!"

The forester's wife now prepared breakfast for her husband and herself. The blazing fire upon the hearth was doing its duty in bringing the boys' clothing to the state desired while they were sleeping the sleep of tired boyhood. They did not waken until near noon, but this would allow them to reach home before night; and they enjoyed their first meal of the day, arrayed in their dry and neatly-brushed garments, and refreshed by bathing their hands, faces and feet in the brook.

The day was bright and delightfully cool after the rain, and in fine spirits they bade the forest-keeper's wife good-bye as they set out for home.

"Their parents will be rejoiced to see them," she said to herself as she watched them out of sight, "for no doubt they have felt somewhat anxious about them, for they are young to be allowed to take a journey. How helpless are our children! A young chicken will search for food while part of its shell is clinging to it, and the young of animals are upon their feet and helping themselves in a few weeks; but not so our children. They must be under the tender care of father and mother until past childhood, and

it is best so, for it binds parents and children in the ties of family life and love. May the dear boys reach home safely and find all well."

The triplets had in the meantime nearly reached the main road to which they had been carefully directed by Mrs. Hartman, her husband having gone to his duties in the forest hours before. They were singing one of their school songs, when it occurred to Paul that something had been omitted.

"Oh, boys," he said, "we have forgotten to thank the lady for her goodness to us. She dried and brushed our clothes and gave us a good breakfast, and tried to restore our hats to good shape after they had been soaked with rain, and we came away and never thanked her!"

This was indeed an oversight which boys so well-bred felt must be rectified, and they turned their faces again toward the cottage. But they had not gone far when the forest-keeper, who had heard them singing, joined them; and they told him their trouble.

"Oh, I will make that all right!" he said. "You need not go back. I will tell her all that you wished to say."

"Tell her that we are very much obliged to her for her kindness to us," said Fritz, "and tell her our breakfast was first-class and we enjoyed it."

"And tell her," said Paul, "that she made our clothes dry and clean and it is not her fault that our hats could not be straightened to look like they did before it rained."

"Nor," added Franz, "was it her fault that they are stained by the color coming out of the bands and running into the straw. Please tell her we are obliged, just the same."

"I will tell her all," replied Hartman, making a laudable effort to keep from smiling, "and now good-bye, and a safe journey home."

The boys touched their hats, and turned their faces again toward the road, when Paul halted and looked back. "There now!" he said, "we forgot to thank the forest-keeper for his goodness to us, and we would have had to sleep in our wet clothes and had no good beds or breakfast, had it not been for him. Let us run back and thank him."

It seemed that Mr. Hartman had a presentiment that the triplets would have something more to say, for he had halted and was looking after them.

"We forgot to thank you for your goodness to us," they exclaimed when within speaking distance; "and we ran back to tell you."

"That is all right," he answered heartily. "We were glad to entertain you, and hope that you will come to see us again."

"Thank you; we will if we can," replied Paul, then all said good-bye, touched their hats and set out again for the road.

Presently Mr. Hartman saw their heads together in earnest conversation, and waited, believing that they had something more to say, and he was not mistaken, for they ran back, and Franz this time was spokesman.

"We forgot to invite you to come to see us," he said earnestly. "Fritz and Paul said that you would not care to visit boys not yet twelve years of age, but I said that my father is a forest-keeper like you, and I would invite you to visit him; so I do invite you and hope you will come."

"I thank you heartily and would be glad to make his acquaintance."

"And when you visit Franz's father, you can visit mine," suggested Fritz.

"And mine," echoed Paul.

"If it should suit me at any time to visit Michelstadt, I would certainly be pleased to make the acquaintance of the fathers of such gentlemanly boys."

The triplets smiled, touched their hats, started off again and were soon out of sight.

The journey that beautiful afternoon was truly charming, the sun shining brightly and all nature refreshed from its bath the evening before, and birds singing jubilantly in the trees by the roadside, but best of all, they were going home, would see all their loved ones before sunset, and would hear of the

many, many things that had transpired during their absence.

"When we come in sight of the village, we will be as quiet as mice," remarked Fritz. "I would not have the Trojans see us for anything."

"Why?" asked Paul.

"Because we look so shabby with our battered hats and our rusty shoes."

"I will tell you what we can do," suggested Franz. "Our house comes first, and although it is only on the edge of the forest, it is easy for you two to go through the woods back of it, and come out at your own houses, and not a person in the village will know that we are at home until we choose to show ourselves."

This stroke of policy was such a comfort that the spirits of the boys grew so jubilant that they laughed, chatted and sang, and even organized a parade in which Franz was drummer and Fritz and Paul fifers.

They were going along merrily, when they were startled by hearing "Hurrah!" shouted from behind a clump of bushes on the edge of the forest, and two of the Trojans came from behind it and stood grinning and pointing their fingers at the hats and shoes of the Grecian heroes. They were followed by a whole troop of their schoolmates, many of them Trojans, and accompanied by the Director, and Paul's father. They had been to a tournament and had made a short cut through the forest on their way to the village. The two teachers shook their heads and smiled at the appearance of the triplets, and the Trojans indulged in shouts and laughter.

"Let us stick a spray of laurel in their hats in token that they came back victors," and the Trojan who suggested it ran off to the bushes, followed by the others.

"I am glad that they have come back with whole shins," said Professor Roth as he embraced his son tenderly, and shook hands with Fritz and Franz.

"But we might not, if Pixy had not been there to defend us," said Fritz. "He saved us from an attack by street boys, and he earned five hundred marks, and found an English cousin of father's and Aunt Steiner's," and then followed the whole story.

The Trojans had come back with the sprays of laurel, but were so interested in the narrative that they paused to listen, and the Director made a sign to them to throw the branches away, and they knew better than to disobey orders.

"I am going on home now," said Franz. As Paul's father intended halting at the school building, Paul and Fritz walked on with Franz to the forest-house.

"Oh, boys!" cried Fritz when they neared the garden belonging to the forest-house, "there are our spears sticking in the corn-rows, and on them are kitchen aprons and other old rags, and there are our helmets on the top of the poles. Who did it?"

"Katharine, our old cook, is the one who did it," laughed the forest-keeper. "She was so angry at the birds for picking out her sweet corn that she made scare-crows to frighten them away, and she found nothing which served her purpose so well as did your spears and helmets."

"Made scare-crows of our weapons!" said Fritz. "It is certainly a shame!"

"No," said Paul, "it makes no difference. We found that they would be of no use to us on our travels or at Frankfort."

Franz embraced his father, then ran in the house, where he was joyously welcomed, as were Paul and Fritz when they hurried on to their homes.

Two days after, Mr. Heil returned and brought with him the satchel and also the bird cage in which was a fine singer, for he had visited the bird store and paid the difference between its cost and that of the mute one which Fritz had bought. The grater and tin trumpet were also appreciated by the recipients and the next morning Fritz was awakened from a sound sleep by a blast from the trumpet in the hands of his little brother.

The three went cheerfully to school that day, and their visit to Frankfort long remained a well-spring of pleasure.

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