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DEBIT AND CREDIT.

Translated from the German of Gustav Freytag,

BY L.C.C.

WITH A PREFACE,

By CHRISTIAN CHARLES JOSIAS BUNSEN,

D.D., D.C.L., D.PH.

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LETTER FROM CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

CHARLOTTENBERG, NEAR HEIDELBERG, *10th October, 1857*.

DEAR SIR,—It is now about five months since you expressed to me a wish that I might be induced to imbody, in a few pages, my views on the peculiar interest I attached—as you had been informed by a common friend—to the most popular German novel of the age, Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben*. I confess I was at first startled by your proposal. It is true that, although I have not the honor of knowing the author personally, his book inspired me with uncommon interest when I read it soon after its appearance in 1855, and I did not hesitate to recommend translation into English, as I had, in London, recommended that of the Life of Perthes, since so successfully translated and edited under your auspices. I also admit that I thought, and continue to think, the English public at large would the better appreciate, not only the merits, but also the importance of the work, if they were informed of the bearing that it has upon the reality of things on the Continent; for, although *Soll und Haben* is a work altogether of fiction, and not what is called a book of *tendency*, political or social, it exhibits, nevertheless, more strikingly than any other I know, some highly important social facts, which are more generally felt than understood. It reveals a state of the relations of the higher and of the middle classes of society, in the eastern provinces of Prussia and the adjacent German and Slavonic countries, which are evidently connected with a general social movement proceeding from irresistible realities, and, in the

main, independent of local circumstances and of political events. A few explanatory words might certainly assist the English reader in appreciating the truth and impartiality of the picture of reality exhibited in this novel, and thus considerably enhance the enjoyment of its poetical beauties, which speak for themselves.

At the same time, I thought that many other persons might explain this much better than I, who am besides, and have been ever since I left England, exclusively engaged in studies and compositions of a different character. As, however, you thought the English public would like to read what I might have to say on the subject, and that some observations on the book in general, and on the circumstances alluded to in particular, would prove a good means of introducing the author and his work to your countrymen, I gladly engaged to employ a time of recreation in one of our German baths in writing a few pages on the subject, to be ready by the 1st of August. I was the more encouraged to do so when, early in July, you communicated to me the proof-sheets of the first volume of a translation, which I found not only to be faithful in an eminent degree, but also to rival successfully the spirited tone and classical style for which the German original is justly and universally admired.

I began, accordingly, on the 15th July, to write the Introductory Remarks desired by you, when circumstances occurred over which I had no control, and neither leisure nor strength could be found for a literary composition.

Now that I have regained both, I have thought it advisable to let you have the best I can offer you in the shortest time possible, and therefore send you a short Memoir on the subject, written in German, placing it wholly at your disposal, and leaving it entirely to you to give it either in part or in its totality to the English public, as may seem best adapted to the occasion.

I shall be glad to hear of the success of your Translation, and remain, with sincere consideration,

Dear sir, yours truly,

BUNSEN.

TO THOMAS CONSTABLE, ESQ.

PREFACE BY CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

THE HISTORY AND SPIRIT OF THE BOOK.

Since our German literature attained maturity, no novel has achieved a reputation so immediate, or one so likely to increase and to endure, as *Soll und Haben*, by Gustav Freytag. In the present, apparently apathetic tone and temper of our nation, a book must be of rare excellence which, in spite of its relatively high price (15s.), has passed through six editions within two years; and which, notwithstanding the carping criticism of a certain party in Church and State, has won most honorable recognition on every hand. To form a just conception of the hold the work has taken of the hearts of men in the educated middle rank, it needs but to be told that hundreds of fathers belonging to the higher industrious classes have presented this novel to their sons at the outset of their career, not less as a work of national interest than as a testimony to the dignity and high importance they attribute to the social position they are called to occupy, and to their faith in the future that awaits it.

The author, a man about fifty years of age, and by birth a Silesian, is editor of the *Grenz-bote* (Border Messenger), a highly-esteemed political and literary journal, published in Leipsic. His residence alternates between that city and a small estate near Gotha. Growing up amid the influences of a highly cultivated family circle, and having become an accomplished philologist under Lachmann, of Berlin, he early acquired valuable life-experience, and formed distinguished social connections. He also gained reputation as an author by skillfully arranged and carefully elaborated dramatic compositions—the weak point in the modern German school.

The enthusiastic reception of his novel can not, however, be attributed to these earlier labors, nor to the personal influence of its author. The favor of the public has certainly been obtained in great measure by the rare intrinsic merit of the composition, in which we find aptly chosen and melodious language, thoroughly artistic conception, life-like portraiture, and highly cultivated literary taste. We see before us a national and classic writer, not one of those mere journalists who count nowadays in Germany for men of letters.

The story, very unpretending in its opening, soon expands and becomes more exciting, always increasing in significance as it proceeds. The pattern of the web is soon disclosed after the various threads have been arranged upon the loom; and yet the reader is occasionally surprised, now by the appearance on the stage of a clever Americanized German, now by the unexpected introduction of threatening complications, and even of important political events. Though confined within a seemingly narrow circle, every incident, and especially the Polish struggle, is depicted grandly and to the life. In all this the author proves himself to be a perfect artist and a true poet, not only in the treatment of separate events, but in the far more rare and higher art of leading his conception to a satisfactory development and *dénouement*. As this requirement does not seem to be generally apprehended either by the writers or the critics of our modern novels, I shall take the liberty of somewhat more earnestly attempting its vindication.

The romance of modern times, if at all deserving of the name it inherits from its predecessors in the *romantic* Middle Ages, represents the latest *stadium* of the epic.

Every romance is intended, or ought to be, a new Iliad or Odyssey; in other words, a poetic representation of a course of events consistent with the highest laws of moral government, whether it delineate the general history of a people, or narrate the fortunes of a chosen hero. If we pass in review the romances of the last three centuries, we shall find that those only have arrested the attention of more than one or two generations which have satisfied this requirement. Every other romance, let it moralize ever so loudly, is still immoral; let it offer ever so much of so-called wisdom, is still irrational. The excellence of a romance, like that of an epic or a drama, lies in the apprehension and truthful exhibition of the course of human things.

Candide, which may appear to be an exception, owes its prolonged existence to the charm of style and language; and, after all, how much less it is now read than *Robinson Crusoe*, the work of the talented De Foe; or than the *Vicar of Wakefield*, that simple narrative by Voltaire's English contemporary. Whether or not the cause can be clearly defined is here of little consequence; but an unskillfully developed romance is like a musical composition that concludes with discord unresolved—without perhaps inquiring wherefore, it leaves an unpleasant impression on the mind.

If we carry our investigation deeper, we shall find that any such defect violates our sense of artistic propriety, because it offends against our healthy human instinct of the fundamental natural laws; and the artistic merit, as well of a romance as of an epic, rises in proportion as the plot is naturally developed, instead of being conducted to its solution by a series of violent leaps and make-shifts, or even by a pretentious sham. We shall take occasion hereafter to illustrate these views by suitable examples.

That the work we are now considering fulfills, in a high degree, this requirement of refined artistic feeling and artistic treatment, will be at once apparent to all discriminating readers, though it can not be denied that there are many of the higher and more delicate chords which *Soll und Haben* never strikes. The characters to whom we are introduced appear to breathe a certain prosaic atmosphere, and the humorous and comic scenes occasionally interwoven with the narrative bear no comparison, in poetic delicacy of touch, with the creations of Cervantes, nor yet with the plastic power of those of Fielding.

The author has given most evidence of poetic power in the delineation of those dark characters who intrude like ghosts and demons upon the fair and healthy current of the book, and vanish anon into the caverns and cellars whence they came.

The great importance of the work, and the key to the almost unexampled favor it has won, must be sought in a quite different direction—in the close relation to the real and actual in our present social condition, maintained throughout its pages. Such a relation is manifested, in very various ways, in every novel of distinguished excellence. The object of all alike is the same—to exhibit and establish, by means of a narrative more or less fictitious, the really true and enduring elements in the complicated or contradictory phenomena of a period or a character. The poetic truthfulness of the immortal *Don Quixote* lies not so much in the absurdities of an effete Spanish chivalry as in the portraiture that lies beneath, of the insignificance and profligacy of the life of the higher ranks, which had succeeded the more decorous manners of the Middle Ages. Don Quixote is not the only hero of the book, but also the shattered Spanish people, among whom he moves with gipsies and smugglers for companions, treading with all the freshness of imperishable youth upon the buried ruins of political and spiritual life, rejoicing in the geniality of the climate and the tranquillity of the country, reposing proudly on his ancestral dignity. This conception—and not alone the pure and lofty nature of the crazy besieger of wind-mills, who, in spite of all, stands forth as at once the worthiest, and fundamentally the wisest character in the book—constitutes the poetic background, and the twilight glimmer amid the prevailing darkness in the life of the higher classes. We feel that there is assuredly something deeply human and of living power in these elements, and this reality will one day obtain the victory over all opponents.

By what an entirely different atmosphere do we feel ourselves to be surrounded in *Gil Blas*, where the highest poetry, the cunning dexterity of the modern Spanish Figaro, is manifested in the midst of a depraved nobility, and a priesthood alive only to their own material interests. It is only the most perfect art that could have retained for this novel readers in every quarter of the world. The *dénouement* is as perfect as with such materials it can be; and we feel that, instead of Voltaire's withering and satiric contempt of all humanity, an element of unfeigned good-humor lies in the background of the picture. How far inferior is Swift! and how utterly horrible is the abandoned humor of a despair that leaves all in flames behind it, which breathes upon us from the pages of the unhappy *Rabelais*!

Fielding's novels, *Tom Jones* in particular, bear the same resemblance to the composition of Cervantes that the paintings of Murillo bear to those of Rembrandt. The peculiarity of *Wilhelm Meister* as a novel is more difficult of apprehension, if one does not seek the novel where in truth it lies—in the story of Mignon and the Harper, and only sees in the remainder the certainly somewhat diffuse but deeply-thought and classically-delineated picture of the earnest striving after culture of a German in the end of the eighteenth century. It would argue, however, as it appears to me, much prejudice, and an utterly unreasonable temper, not to recognize a perfect novel in the *Wahlverwandschaften*, however absolutely one may deny the propriety of thus tampering with and endangering the holiest family relationships, or thus making them the subjects of a work of fiction. Goethe, however, has here placed before us, and that with the most

noble seriousness and the most artistic skill, a reality which lies deep in human nature and the period he represents. The tragical complications and consequences resulting even from errors which never took shape in evil deeds could not in the highest tragedy be represented more purely and strikingly than here. The stain of impurity rests upon the soul of him who thinks that he detects it, not in the book itself. Ottilie is as pure and immortal a creation of genius as Mignon.

As novel-literature has developed itself in Europe, an attempt has been made to employ it as a mirror of the past, into which mankind shall love to look, and thereby ascertain whether civilization has advanced or retrograded with the lapse of time. This is a reaction against the eighteenth century, and it appears under two forms—the idealistic-sentimental and the strongly realistic-social. The earliest instance in Germany of the romantic school, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, is the apotheosis of the art and literature of the Middle Ages. The writings of Walter Scott put an end to this sentimentalism, and this is indeed their highest merit. Those of his works will continue to maintain the most prominent place, standing forth as true and living representations of character, which deal with the events of Scottish history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Still more the work of genius, however, and of deeper worth, Hope's *Anastasius* must be admitted to be—that marvelous picture of life in the Levant, and in the whole Turkish Empire, as far as Arabia, as it was about the end of the last and the beginning of the present century. In this work truth and fiction are most happily blended; the episodes, especially that of Euphrosyne, may be placed, without disparagement, beside the novels of Cervantes, and strike far deeper chords in the human heart than the creations of Walter Scott. Kingsley's *Hypatia*, alone of modern works, is worthy to be named along with it. That, indeed, is a marvelous and daring composition, with a still higher aim and still deeper soul-pictures. Both of them will live forever as examples of union of the idealistic and the realistic schools, poetic evocations of a by-gone reality, with all the truth and poetry of new creations. In reading either of them we forget that the work is as instructive as it is imaginative.

The most vehement longing of our times, however, is manifestly after a faithful mirror of the present; that is to say, after a life-picture of the social relations and the struggles to which the evils of the present day have given rise. We feel that great events are being enacted; that greater still are in preparation; and we long for an epic, a world-moulding epic, to imbody and depict them. The undertaking is a dangerous one—many a lance is shivered in the first encounter. A mere tendency-novel is in itself a monster. A picture of the age must be, in the highest acceptation of the word, a poem. It must not represent real persons or places—it must create such. It must not ingraft itself upon the passing and the accidental, but be pervaded by a poetic intuition of the real. He that attempts it must look with a poet's eye at the real and enduring elements in the confusing contradictions of the time, and place the result before us as an actual existence. It has been the high privilege of the English realistic school, which we may call without hesitation the school of Dickens, that it has been the first to strike the key-note with a firm and skillful hand. Its excellence would stand out with undimmed lustre had it not, as its gloomy background, the French school of Victor Hugo and Balzac, that opposite of "the poetry of despair," as Goethe calls it. Here again, in this new English school, has the genius of Kingsley alighted. Most of his novels belong to it. And, besides himself and Dickens, there stand forth as its most brilliant members the distinguished authoress of *Mary Barton*, and the sorely-tried Charlotte Brontë, the gifted writer of *Jane Eyre*—too soon, alas! removed from us. This school has portrayed, in colors doubtless somewhat strong, the sufferings and the virtues, the dangers and the hopes of the working-classes, especially in towns and factories. But, instead of enjoining hatred of the higher classes, and despair of all improvement in the future for humanity, a healthy tone pervades their writings throughout, and an unwavering and cheering hope of better things to come shines through the gloomy clouds that surround the dreary present. There are throes of anguish—but they tell of coming deliverance; there are discords—but they resolve into harmony. The spirit finds, pervading the entire composition, that satisfaction of the desires of our higher nature which constitutes true artistic success.

Dickens, too, has at length chosen the real life of the working-classes in their relations to those above them as a subject for his masterly pen. *Dombey and Son* will not readily be forgotten.

It was necessary to take a comprehensive view of novel literature, and—although in the merest outline—still to look at it in its historical connection, in order to find the suitable niche for a book which claims an important place in its European development; for it is precisely in the class last described—that which undertakes faithfully, and yet in a poetic spirit, to represent the real condition of our most peculiar and intimate social relations—that our author has chosen to enroll himself. With what a full appreciation of this high end, and with what patriotic enthusiasm he has entered on his task, the admirable dedication of the work at once declares, which is addressed to a talented and liberal-minded prince, deservedly beloved and honored throughout Germany. In the work itself, besides, there occur repeated pictures of these relations, which display at once a clear comprehension of the social problem, and a poetic power which keeps pace with the power of life-like description. To come more closely to the point, however, what is that reality which is exhibited in the story of our novel? We should very inadequately describe it were we to say, the nobility of labor and the duties of property, particularly those of the proprietor of land. This is certainly the key-note of the whole conservative-social, or Dickens school, to which the novel belongs. It is not, however, the conflict between rich and poor, between labor and capital in general, and between manufacturers and their people in particular, whose natural course is here detailed. And this is a point which an English reader must above all keep clearly in view. He will otherwise altogether fail to understand the author's purpose; for it is just here that the entirely different blending of the social masses in England and in Germany is displayed. We have here the

conflict between the feudal system and that class of industrial and wealthy persons, together with the majority of the educated public functionaries, who constitute in Germany the citizen-class. Before the fall of the Prussian monarchy in 1807, the noble families—for the most part hereditary knights (Herrn *von*)—almost entirely monopolized the governmental and higher municipal posts, and a considerable portion of the peasantry were under servitude to them as feudal superiors. The numbers of the lesser nobility—in consequence of the right of every nobleman's son, of whatever grade, to bear his father's title—were so great, and since the introduction by the great Elector,[A] and his royal successors, of the new system of taxation, their revenues had become so small, that they considered themselves entitled to the monopoly of all the higher offices of state, and regarded every citizen of culture, fortune, and consideration with jealousy, as an upstart. The new monarchic constitution of 1808-12, which has immortalized the names of Frederick William III., and of his ministers, Stein and Hardenberg, altered this system, and abolished the vassalage and feudal service of the peasants in those provinces that lie to the east of the Elbe. The fruits of this wise act of social reform were soon apparent, not only in the increase of prosperity and of the population, but also in that steady and progressive elevation of the national spirit which alone made it possible in 1813-14 for the house of Hohenzollern to raise the monarchy to the first rank among the European powers.

The further development in Prussia of political freedom unfortunately did not keep pace with these social changes; and so—to say no more—it happened that the consequences of all half measures soon resulted. Even before the struggles of 1848, down to which period the story of our novel reaches, the classes of the more polished nobility and citizens, instead of fusing into one band of *gentry*, and thus forming the basis of a landed aristocracy, had assumed an unfriendly attitude, in consequence of a stagnation in the growth of a national lower nobility as the head of the wealthy and cultivated *bourgeoisie*, resulting from an unhappy reaction which then took place in Prussia. The feudal proprietor was meanwhile becoming continually poorer, because he lived beyond his income. Falling into embarrassments of every sort, he has recourse for aid to the provincial banks. His habits of life, however, often prevent him from employing these loans on the improvement of his property, and he seldom makes farming the steady occupation and business of his life. But he allows himself readily to become involved in the establishment of factories—whether for the manufacture of brandy or for the production of beet-root sugar—which promise a larger and speedier return, besides the enhancement of the value of the land. But, in order to succeed in such undertakings, he wants the requisite capital and experience. He manifests even less prudence in the conduct of these speculations than in the cultivation of his ancestral acres, and the inevitable result ensues that an ever-increasing debt at length necessitates the sale of his estate. Such estates are ever more and more frequently becoming the property of the merchant or manufacturer from the town, or perhaps of the neighboring proprietor of the same inferior rank, who has lately settled in the country, and become entitled to the exercise of equal rights with the hereditary owner. There is no essential difference in social culture between the two classes, but there is a mighty difference between the habits of their lives. The mercantile class of citizens is in Germany more refined than in any other country, and has more political ambition than the corresponding class in England has yet exhibited. The families of public functionaries constitute the other half of the cultivated citizen class; and as the former have the superiority in point of wealth, so these bear the palm in respect of intellectual culture and administrative talent. Almost all authors, since the days of Luther, have belonged to this class. In school and college learning, in information, and in the conduct of public affairs, the citizen is thus, for the most part, as far superior to the nobleman as in fashionable manners the latter is to him. The whole nation, however, enjoys alike the advantage of military education, and every man may become an officer who passes the necessary examination. Thus, in the manufacturing towns, the citizens occupy the highest place, and the nobility in the garrison towns and those of royal residence. This fact, however, must not be lost sight of—that Berlin, the most populous city of Germany, has also gradually become the chief and the richest commercial one, while the great fortress of Magdeburg has also been becoming the seat of a wealthy and cultivated mercantile community.

Instead of desiring landed property, and perhaps a patent of nobility for his children, and an alliance with some noble country family, the rich citizen rather sticks to his business, and prefers a young man in his own rank, or perhaps a clergyman, or professor, or some municipal officer as a suitor to his daughter, to the elegant officer or man of noble blood; for the richest and most refined citizen, though the wife or daughter of a noble official, is not entitled to appear at court with her husband or her father. It is not, therefore, as in England or Scotland, the aim of a man who has plied his industrious calling with success to assume the rank and habits of a nobleman or country squire. The rich man remains in town among his equals. It is only when we understand this difference in the condition of the social relations in Germany and in England that the scope and intention of our novel can be apprehended.

It would be a mistake to suppose that our remarks are only applicable to the eastern provinces of Prussia. If, perhaps, they are less harshly manifested in the western division of our kingdom, and indeed in Western Germany, it is in consequence of noble families being fewer in number, and the conditions of property being more favorable to the citizen class. The defective principle is the same, as also the national feeling in regard to it. It is easily understood, indeed, how this should have become much stronger since 1850, seeing that the greater and lesser nobility have blindly united in endeavoring to bring about a reaction—demanding all possible and impossible privileges and exemptions, or compensations, and are separating themselves more and more widely from the body of the nation.

In Silesia and Posen, however, the theatres on which our story is enacted, other and peculiar elements, though lying, perhaps, beneath the surface, affect the social relations of the various classes. In both provinces, but especially in Posen, the great majority of noblemen are the proprietors of land, and the enactment under Hardenberg and Stein in 1808-10, in regard to peasant rights, had been very imperfectly carried out in districts where vassalage, as in all countries of Slavonic origin, was nearly universal. Many estates are of large extent, and some, indeed, are strictly entailed. These circumstances naturally give to a country life in Silesia or Posen quite a different character than that in the Rhine provinces. In Posen, besides, two foreign elements—found in Silesia also in a far lesser degree—exercise a mighty influence on the social relations of the people. One is the Jewish, the other the Polish element. In Posen, the Jews constitute in the country the class of innkeepers and farmers; of course, they carry on some trade in addition. The large banking establishments are partly, the smaller ones almost exclusively, in their hands. They become, by these means, occasionally the possessors of land; but they regard such property almost always as a mere subject for speculation, and it is but rarely that the quondam innkeeper or peddler settles down as a tiller of the soil. In Silesia, their chief seat is in Breslau, where the general trade of the country, as well as the purchase and the sale of land, is for the most part transacted. It is a pretty general feeling in Germany that Freytag has not dealt altogether impartially with this class, by failing to introduce in contrast to the abandoned men whom he selects for exhibition a single honest, upright Jew, a character not wanting among that remarkable people. The inextinguishable higher element of our nature, and the fruits of German culture, are manifested, it is true, in the Jewish hero of the tale, ignorant alike of the world and its ways, buried among his cherished books, and doomed to early death; but this is done more as a poetic comfort to humanity than in honor of Judaism, from which plainly in his inmost soul he had departed, that he might turn to the Christianized spirit and to the poetry of the Gentiles.

The Polish element, however, is of still far greater importance. Forming, as they once did, with the exception of a few German settlements, the entire population of the province, the Poles have become, in the course of the last century, and especially since the removal of restrictions on the sale of land, less numerous year by year. In Posen proper they constitute, numerically, perhaps the half of the population; but in point of prosperity and mental culture their influence is scarcely as one fourth upon the whole. On the other hand, in some districts, as, for instance, in Gnesen, the Polish influence predominates in the towns, and reigns undisputed in the country. The middle class is exclusively German or Jewish; where these elements are lacking, there is none. The Polish vassal, emancipated by the enactment of 1810, is gradually ripening into an independent yeoman, and knows full well that he owes his freedom, not to his former Polish masters, but to Prussian legislation and administration. The exhibition of these social relations, as they were manifested by the contending parties in 1848, is, in all respects, one of the most admirable portions of our novel. The events are all vividly depicted, and, in all essential points, historically true. One feature here appears, little known in foreign lands, but deserving careful observation, not only on its own account, but as a key to the meaning and intention of the attractive narrative before us.

The two national elements may be thus generally characterized: The Prusso-German element is Protestant; the Polish element is Catholic. Possessing equal rights, the former is continually pressing onward with irresistible force, as in Ireland, in virtue of the principles of industry and frugality by which it is animated. This is true alike of landlord and tenant, of merchant and official.

The passionate and ill-regulated Polish element stands forth in opposition—the intellectual and peculiarly courteous and accomplished nobility, as well as the priesthood—but in vain. Seeing that the law secures perfect equality of rights, and is impartially administered; that, besides, the conduct of the German settlers is correct and inoffensive, the Poles can adduce no well-grounded causes of complaint either against their neighbors or the government. It is their innate want of order that throws business, money, and, at length, the land itself, into the hands of Jews and Protestants. This fact is also here worthy of notice, that the Jewish usurer is disappearing or withdrawing wherever the Protestant element is taking firmer ground. The Jew remains in the country, but becomes a citizen, and sometimes even a peasant-proprietor. This phenomenon is manifesting itself also in other places where there is a concurrence of the German and Slavonic elements. In Prussia, however, there is this peculiarity in addition, of which Freytag has made the most effective use—I mean the education of the Prussian people, not alone in the national schools, but also in the science of national defense, which this people of seventeen millions has in common with Sparta and with Rome.

It is well known that every Prussian not physically disqualified, of whatever rank he be, must become a soldier. The volunteer serves in the line for one year, and without pay; other persons serve for two or three years. Thereafter, all beyond the age of twenty-five are yearly called out as militia, and drilled for several weeks after harvest. This enactment has been in force since 1813, and it is a well-known fact, brought prominently forward in the work before us, that, notwithstanding the immense sacrifice it requires, it is enthusiastically cherished by the nation as a school of manly discipline, and as exercising a most beneficial influence on all classes of society. This institution it is which gives that high standard of order, duty, and military honor, and that mutual confidence between officers and men, which at the first glance distinguishes the Prussian, not only from the Russian, but the Austrian soldier. This high feeling of confidence in the national defenses is indeed peculiar to Prussia beyond the other German nations, and may be at once recognized in the manly and dignified bearing, even of the lowest classes, alike in town and country.

This spirit is depicted to the life in the striking episode of the troubles in the year 1848. Even in the wildest months of that year, when the German minority were left entirely to their own resources, this spirit of order and mutual confidence continued undisturbed. Our patriotic author has never needed to draw upon his imagination for facts, though he has depicted with consummate skill the actual reality. We feel that it has been to him a labor of love to console himself and his fellow-countrymen under so many disappointments and shattered hopes, to cherish and to strengthen that sense of independence, without which no people can stand erect among the nations.

The Prusso-German population feel it to be a mission in the cause of civilization to press forward in occupation of the Sarmatian territory—a sacred duty, which, however, can only be fulfilled by honest means, by privations and self-sacrificing exertions of every kind. In such a spirit must the work be carried forward; this is the suggestive thought with which our author's narrative concludes. It is not without a meaning, we believe, that the zealous German hero of the book is furnished with the money necessary for carrying out his schemes by a fellow-countryman and friend, who had returned to his fatherland with a fortune acquired beyond the Atlantic. Our talented author has certainly not lost sight of the fact that Germany, as a whole, has as little recovered from the devastation of the Thirty Years' War as the eastern districts of Prussia have recovered from the effects of the war with France in the present century. Let the faults and failings of our national German character be what they may (and we should like to know what nation has endured and survived similar spoliation and partition), the greatest sin of Germany during the last two hundred years, especially in the less-favored north, has always been its poverty—the condition of all classes, with few exceptions. National poverty, however, becomes indeed a political sin when a people, by its cultivation, has become constitutionally fit for freedom.

In the background of the whole picture of the disordered and sickly condition of our social circumstances here so vividly presented, the author has plainly discerned Dante's noble proverb —

"Di libertà indipendenza è primo grado."

The existence of independent citizen-families qualified and ready for every public service, though beyond the need of such employment—this is the fundamental condition of a healthy development of political freedom, alike impregnable by revolution and reaction; this is the only sure ground and basis on which a constitutional form of government can be reared and administered with advantage to every class, repressing alike successfully absolutism and democracy.

And now we have reached the point where we are enabled to gather up, and to express to the reader, without desiring to forestall his own judgment, or to load him with axioms and formulas beyond his comprehension, the beautiful fundamental idea of the book, clearly and simply.

We would express it thus: The future of all European states depends mainly on three propositions, and the politics of every statesman of our period are determined by the way in which he views them.

These propositions are,

1st. The fusion of the educated classes, and the total abolition of bureaucracy, and all social barriers between the ancient nobility and the educated classes in the nation, especially the industrial and mercantile population.

2d. The just and Christian bearing of this united body toward the working-classes, especially in towns.

3d. The recognition of the mighty fact that the educated middle classes of all nations, but especially of those of Germany, are perfectly aware that even the present, but still more the near future, is their own, if they advance along the legal path to a perfect constitutional monarchy, resisting all temptations to the right hand or to the left, not with imbittered feelings, but in the cheerful temper of a moral self-confidence.

It is faith in truths such as these that has inspired our author in the composition of the work which is here offered to the English reading public. It is his highest praise, however, that he has imbodied this faith in a true work of art, which speaks for itself. He has thereby enkindled or strengthened a like faith in many thousand hearts, and that with a noble and conciliatory intention which the dedication well expresses.

The admirable delineation of character, the richness of invention, the artistic arrangement, the lively descriptions of nature, will be ever more fully acknowledged by the sympathizing reader as he advances in the perusal of the attractive volumes.

[A] The friend and brother-in-law of William III.

TO HIS HIGHNESS ERNEST II.,

DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA.

I visited Kallenberg one lovely evening in the month of May. The high ground near the castle was steeped in perfume from the blossoms of the spring, and the leaves of the pink acacia cast their checkered shadows on the dewy grass. Beneath me, in the shady valley, deer bounded fearless from their covert in the wood, following greedily with their eyes the bright figure of that lady who greets with kind and hospitable welcome all who enter the precincts of the castle—men, and all living things. The repose of evening lay on hill and dale; no sound was heard save the occasional roll of thunder from afar above the bright and cheerful landscape. On this very evening, leaning against the wall of the ancient castle, your highness gazed with troubled aspect into the gloomy distance. What my noble prince then said about the conflicts of the last few years, the relaxed and utterly despondent temper of the nation, and the duty of authors, at such a time especially, to show the people, for their encouragement and elevation, as in a mirror, what they are capable of doing—those were golden words, revealing a great grasp of intellect and a warm heart, and their echo will not soon die away in the heart of him who heard them. It was on that evening the desire awoke within me to grace with your highness's name the work whose plan had been already in my mind.

Nearly two years have passed since then. A terrible war is raging, and Germans look with gloomy apprehension to the future of their fatherland. At such a time, when the strongest political feelings agitate the life of every individual, that spirit of cheerful tranquillity, so needful to an author for the artistic moulding of his creations, readily forsakes his writing-table. It is long, alas! since the German author has enjoyed it. He has far too little interest in home and foreign life; he wants that composure and proud satisfaction which the writers of other countries feel in dwelling on the past and present of their nation, while he has enough and to spare of humiliation on account of his country, of wishes unfulfilled and passionate indignation. At such a time, in drawing an imaginative picture, not love alone, but hatred too, flows freely and readily from the pen—practical tendencies are apt to usurp the place of poetic fancy; and, instead of a genial tone and temper, the reader is apt to find an unpleasing mixture of blunt reality and artificial sentiment.

Surrounded by such dangers, it becomes twofold the duty of an author carefully to avoid distortion in the outline of his pictures, and to keep his own soul free from unjust prepossession. To give the highest expression to the beautiful in its noblest form is not the privilege of every time; but, in all times alike, it is the duty of the writer of fiction to be true to his art and to his country. To seek for this truth, and where found to exhibit it, I hold to be the duty of my own life.

And now let me dedicate, with deepest reverence, my unimportant work to you, my honored lord. I shall rejoice if this novel leaves on the mind of your highness the impression that its conception is in faithful keeping with the laws of life and of art, without ever being a slavish copy of the accidental occurrences of the day.

GUSTAV FREYTAG.

LEIPSIC, *April*, 1855.

DEBIT AND CREDIT.

CHAPTER I.

Ostrau is a small town near the Oder, celebrated even as far as Poland for its gymnasium and its gingerbread. In this patriarchal spot had dwelt for many years the accountant-royal, Wohlfart, an enthusiastically loyal subject, and a hearty lover of his fellow-men—with one or two exceptions. He married late in life, and his wife and he lived in a small house, the garden of which he himself kept in order. For a long time the happy pair were childless; but at length came a day when the good woman, having smartened up her white bed-curtains with a broad fringe and heavy tassels, disappeared behind them amid the approbation of all her female friends. It was under the shade of those white bed-curtains that the hero of our tale was born.

Anton was a good child, who, according to his mother, displayed remarkable peculiarities from the very day of his birth. For instance, he had a great objection to going to bed at the proper hour; he would pore time untold over his picture-alphabet, and hold lengthy conversations with the red cock depicted upon its last page, imploring him to exert himself in the cause of his young family, and not allow the maid-servant to carry them off and roast them. Lastly, he would often run away from his playfellows, and sit lost in thought in a corner of the room. His greatest delight, however, was to perch himself on a chair opposite his father, cross his legs in the same way, and smoke a mimic pipe in emulation. Moreover, he was so seldom naughty, that all such of the female population of Ostrau as took a gloomy view of things in general held it doubtful that he could live to grow up, till one day Anton publicly thrashed the councilor's son, which in some

degree modified the opinions concerning him. In short, he was just the boy that the only child of warm-hearted parents might be expected to prove. At school he was an example of industry; and when the drawing-master began to declare that he must be a painter, and the classical teacher to devote him to Philology, the boy might have been in some danger of being diverted from the serious pursuit of any one specific calling but for an accident which determined his choice.

Every Christmas evening the mail brought to the house of the paternal Wohlfart a box containing a loaf of the finest sugar and a quantity of the best coffee. This sugar the good man himself broke into squares: the coffee was roasted by his wife's own hands; and the complacency with which they sipped their first cup was pleasant to behold. These were seasons when, to the childish soul of Anton, the whole house seemed pervaded with poetry, and his father was never weary of telling him the history of this periodical present. Many years ago, he had chanced to find, in a dusty bundle of law-papers, a document of great importance to a well-known mercantile house in the capital. This document he had at once forwarded, and, in consequence of it, the firm had been enabled to gain a long-pending lawsuit, which had previously threatened to go against them; upon which the young head of the concern had written his acknowledgments, and Wohlfart had refused to be thanked, having, he said, only done his duty. From that time forth the box we have described made its appearance every Christmas evening, accompanied by a few cordial lines, to which Wohlfart responded in a masterpiece of caligraphy, expressing his surprise at the unexpected arrival, and wishing a happy new year to the firm. The old gentleman persisted, even to his wife, in treating this Christmas box as a mere accident, a trifle, a whim of some clerk in the house of T. O. Schröter, and yearly protested against the expectation of its arrival, by which the good woman's household purchases were more or less influenced. But its arrival was, in reality, of the utmost importance in his eyes; and that, not for the sake of the actual coffee and sugar themselves, but of the poetry of this connecting link between him and the life of a perfect stranger. He carefully tied up all the letters of the firm, together with three love-letters from his wife. He became a connoisseur in colonial produce, an oracle in coffee, whose decision was much deferred to by the Ostrau shopkeepers. He began to interest himself in the affairs of the great firm, and never failed to note the ups and downs reported in a certain corner of the newspapers, wholly mysterious to the uninitiated. Nay, he even indulged in fancy speculations and an ideal partnership, chafed when sugars fell, and chuckled at the rise of coffee.

A strange, invisible, filmy thread it was, this which connected Wohlfart's quiet household with the activity of the great mercantile world, and yet it was by this that little Anton's whole life was swayed; for when the old gentleman sat in his garden of an evening in his satin cap, and pipe in his mouth, he would dilate upon the advantages of trade, and ask his son whether he should like to be a merchant; whereupon a kind of kaleidoscope-picture suddenly shaped itself in the little fellow's mind, made up of sugar-loaves, raisins, and almonds, golden oranges, his father's smile, and the mysterious delight which the arrival of the box always occasioned him, and he replied at once, "Yes, father, *that* I should!"

Let no one say that our life is poor in poetical influences; still does the enchantress sway us mortals as of old. Rather let each take heed what dreams he nurses in his heart's innermost fold, for when they are full grown they may prove tyrants, ay, and cruel ones too.

In this way the Wohlfart family lived on for many a year; and whenever the good woman privately entreated her husband to form some decision as to the boy's way of life, he would reply, "It is formed already; he is to be a merchant." But in his own heart he was a little doubtful as to how this dream of his could ever be realized.

Meanwhile a dark day drew on, when the shutters of the house remained late unclosed, the servant-girl with red eyes, ran up and down the steps, the doctor came and shook his head, the old gentleman stood in prayer near his wife's bed, and the boy knelt sobbing by, while his dying mother's hand still tried to stroke his curls. Three days later came the funeral, and father and son sat together alone. Both wept, but the boy's red cheeks returned. Not so the old man's health and strength. Not that he complained; he still sat and smoked his pipe as before, and still concerned himself about the price of sugars, but there was no heart in the smoking or the concern; and he would often look anxiously at his young companion, who wondered what his father could have on his mind. One evening, when he had for the hundredth time asked him whether he would really like to be a merchant, and received the unvarying answer, he rose from his seat with an air of decision, and told the servant-girl to order a conveyance to take him the next morning to the capital, but he said nothing about the object of his expedition.

Late on the following day he returned in a very different mood—happier, indeed, than he had ever been since his wife's death. He enchanted his son by his account of the incredible charms of the extensive business, and the kindness of the great merchant toward himself. He had been invited to dinner, he had eaten peewits' eggs, and drunk Greek wine, compared to which the very best wine in Ostrau was mere vinegar; and, above all, he had received the promise of having his son taken into their office, and a few hints as to the future course of his education. The very next day saw Anton seated at a ledger, disposing arbitrarily of hundreds of thousands, converting them into every existing currency, and putting them out at every possible rate of interest.

Thus another year passed away. Anton was just eighteen, when again the windows remained darkened, and the red-eyed servant-girl ran up and down, and the doctor shook his head. This time it was the old gentleman by whose bed Anton sat, holding both his hands. But there was no keeping him back; and after repeatedly blessing his son, he died, and Anton was left alone in the silent dwelling, at the entrance of a new life.

Old Wohlfart had not been an accountant for nothing; he left his house in the highest order; his affairs were balanced to a farthing, and he had written a letter of introduction to the merchant only a few days before his death. A month later, on a fine summer morning, Anton stood upon the threshold of his home, placed the key in a friendly hand, made over his luggage to the carrier, and, with his father's letter in his pocket, took his way to the great city.

CHAPTER II.

The new-mown grass was already fading in the sun when Anton shook the hand of the neighbor who had accompanied him as far as the nearest station to the capital, and then walked off merrily along the high road. The day was bright, the mower was heard whetting his scythe in the meadows close by, and the indefatigable lark sang high overhead. On all sides rose church-towers, central points of villages buried in woods, near many of which might be seen a stately baronial residence.

Anton hurried on as if his feet were winged; the future lay before him sunny as the plain, a life of radiant dreams and evergreen hopes; his heart beat high, his eyes beamed, he felt intoxicated by the beauty and the fragrance around him. Whenever he saw a mower, he called out to him that it was a lovely day, and got many a friendly greeting in return. The very birds seemed as though they congratulated him, and cheered him onward.

He now took a footpath that led through a meadow, crossed a bridge, and found himself in a plantation with neatly-graveled paths. As he went on, it more and more assumed the character of a garden; a sudden turn, and he stood on a grass-plot, and saw a gentleman's seat, with two side towers and a balcony, rise before him. Vines and climbing roses ran up the towers, and beneath the balcony was a vestibule well filled with flowers. In short, to our Anton, brought up as he had been in a small town, it all appeared beauteous and stately in the extreme. He sat down behind a bushy lilac, and gave himself up to the contemplation of the scene. How happy the inhabitants must be! how noble! how refined! A certain respect for every thing of acknowledged distinction and importance was innate in the son of the accountant; and when, in the midst of the beauty around him, his thoughts reverted to himself, he felt utterly insignificant, a species of social pigmy scarcely visible to the naked eye.

For some time he sat and looked in perfect stillness; at last the picture shifted. A lovely lady came out on the balcony clad in light summer attire, with white lace sleeves, and stood there like a statue. When a gay paroquet flew out of the room and lighted on her hand, Anton's admiration went on increasing; but when a young girl followed the bird, and wound her arms around the lovely lady's neck, and the paroquet kept wheeling about them, and perching now on the shoulder of one, and then on that of the other, his feeling of veneration became such that he blushed deeply, and drew back further into the lilac-tree's shadow.

Then, with his imagination filled by what he had seen, he went with elastic step along the broad walk, hoping to find a way of exit.

Soon he heard a horse's feet behind him, and saw the younger of the two ladies come riding after him, mounted upon a black pony, and using her parasol as a whip. Now the ladies of Ostrau were not in the habit of riding. He had, indeed, once upon a time, beheld a professional equestrian with very red cheeks and flowing garments, and had unspeakably admired her, but now the same feeling was far more intense. He stood still and bowed reverentially. The young girl acknowledged his homage by a gracious nod, pulled up her horse, and asked whether he wished to speak to her father.

"I crave your pardon," replied Anton, with the deepest respect; "probably I am in a path not open to strangers. I came across the meadow, and saw no gate and no hedge."

"The gate is on the bridge; it is open by day," said the young lady, with great benignity, for reverence was not the sentiment her fourteen years often inspired, and she was the more pleased therewith. "But, since you are in the garden," continued she, "will you not look around? We shall be very glad if it give you pleasure."

"I have already taken that liberty," replied Anton, with another bow. "I have been on the lawn before the castle: it is magnificent."

"Yes," said the young lady, reining in her pony; "the gardener laid it out under mamma's own direction."

"Then the lady who stood with you on the balcony was your mother?" timidly inquired Anton.

"What! you have been watching us, then? Do you know that that was wrong?"

"Forgive me," was the humble reply; "I retreated at once, but it was such a lovely sight—the two ladies, the roses in full blossom, the framework of vine leaves—I shall never forget it."

"He is charming!" thought the young girl. "Since you have already seen the garden," said she, condescendingly, "you must go to the point from which we have the best view. I am on my way thither now, if you like to follow."

Anton followed, lost in delight. The lady bade her horse walk slowly, and played the cicerone. At last she dismounted and led the pony, whereupon Anton ventured to stroke his neck—an attention which the little fellow took in good part, and returned by sniffing his coat pockets. "He trusts you," said the young lady; "he is a sagacious beast." She then tied the bridle round his neck, told him to go home, and turning to Anton, added, "We are going into the flower-garden, where he must not come; and so, you see, he trots back to his stable."

"This pony is a perfect wonder," cried Anton.

"He is very fond of me; he does all I tell him," was the reply.

Anton thought that the most natural thing in the world.

"I think you are of a good family," said the little lady, decidedly, looking at Anton with a discriminating air.

"No," replied he, sadly. "My father died last month, my dear mother a year ago; I am alone, and on my way to the capital." His lips quivered as he spoke.

The lady looked at him with the utmost sympathy, and in some embarrassment. "Oh, poor, poor lad!" cried she. "But come quickly; I have something to show you. These are the beds of early strawberries; there are still a few. Do, pray, take them. No guest must leave my father's house without partaking of the best each season brings. Pray, pray eat them."

Anton looked at her with tearful eyes.

"I am going to share with you," said she, taking two strawberries. Upon that, the youth obediently followed her example.

"And now I will take you across the garden," said she, leading him to a little lake where old swans and young were swimming about.

"They are coming hither," cried Anton, in delight.

"They know that I have something for them," said his companion, loosening the while the chain of a small boat. "Now, sir, jump in, and I will row you across, for yonder lies your way."

"I can not think of troubling you."

"No opposition!" said she, imperatively, and they set off.

Anton was entranced. Behind, the rich green trees; beneath, the clear water rippling round the prow; opposite him, the slender figure of his companion, and the swans, her snowy subjects, following in her train—it was a dream such as is only granted to youth.

The boat grounded; Anton leaped out, and involuntarily offered his hand, which the little lady touched with the tips of her fingers as she wished him good-by. He sprang up the hill and looked down. Through an opening in the wood he saw the castle with its flag floating, and its vines and roses shining in the sun.

"How noble! how magnificent!" said he, aloud.

"If you were to count out to that baron a hundred thousand dollars, he would not sell you the property he inherited from his father," said a sharp voice behind him. He angrily turned; the dream was gone; he stood on the dusty highway, and saw a meanly-dressed youth, with a great bundle under his arm, looking at him with cool familiarity.

"Is it you, Veitel Itzig?" cried Anton, without showing much pleasure at the meeting. Indeed, young Itzig was by no means a pleasant apparition, pale, haggard, red-haired, and shabbily clothed as he was. He came from Ostrau, and had been a schoolfellow of Anton's, who had once fought a battle on his behalf, and had stood between the young Jew and the general ill-will of the other boys. But of late they had seldom met, just often enough to give Itzig an opportunity of keeping up in some measure their old schooldays' familiarity.

"They say that you are going to the great city to learn business," added Veitel; "to be taught how to twist up paper bags and sell treacle to old women. I am going there too, but *I* mean to make my fortune."

To this Anton replied, dryly enough, "Go, then, and make it, and do not let me detain you."

"There's no need to hurry," said the other, carelessly; "I will walk on with you, if you are not ashamed of my dress." This appeal to our hero's humanity was successful, and, casting a last look at the castle, he went on his way, his unwelcome companion a foot or so behind him. At length he turned, and inquired who the proprietor was.

Itzig displayed wonderful familiarity with the subject. The baron, said he, had only two children, large flocks, and a clear estate. His son was at a military school. Finally, observing Anton's interest, he remarked, "If you wish for his property, I will buy it for you."

"Thanks," was the cold reply. "You have just told me he was not disposed to sell."

"When a man is not disposed to sell, he must be forced to do so."

"You are the very person to force him, I suppose," replied Anton, thoroughly out of patience.

"Whether I am or not, does not signify; there is a receipt for making any man sell."

"What! can they be bewitched, or given some magic potion?" asked Anton, contemptuously.

"A hundred thousand dollars is a potion that can work wonders; but a poor man must get hold of a secret to accomplish his ends. Now, I am on my way to town to get at the knowledge of this secret. It is all contained in certain papers, and I will search for those papers till I find them."

Anton looked askance at his companion as at a lunatic, and at length replied, "Poor Veitel, you never will find them."

However, Itzig went on to say confidentially, "Never repeat what I tell you. Those papers have been in our town; and a certain person, who is become a very great man now, got them from an old dying beggar-man, who gave them to him one night that he watched by his bedside."

"And do you know this man?" inquired Anton, in a tone of curiosity.

"Never mind whether I know him or not," answered the other, slyly. "I shall find out the receipt I spoke of. And if ever you wish to have this baron's property, horses, flocks, and his pretty daughter to boot, I'll buy them for you, for the sake of our old friendship, and the thrashing you once gave some of our schoolfellows on my account."

"Take care," said Anton, "that you don't turn out a thorough rascal; you seem to me to be in the fair way."

So saying, he crossed over to the other side of the road in high dudgeon; but Itzig took his caution with the utmost equanimity, and ever and anon, as they passed different country-seats, gave him an account of the names and rentals of their proprietors, so that Anton was perfectly stupefied with the extent of his statistical information. At length both walked on in silence.

CHAPTER III.

The Baron of Rothsattel was one of the few men whom not only the world pronounced happy, but who believed himself to be so. The descendant of an ancient and honorable house, he had married, out of sheer love, a beautiful young lady without any fortune. Like a sensible man, he had retired with her into the country, lived for his family, and within his means. He was a thoroughly noble-hearted man, still handsome and dignified in appearance, an affectionate husband, a hospitable host; in short, the very model of a landed proprietor. His means were not, indeed, very large, but he might have sold his property over and over again for a far higher sum than the sagacious Itzig had surmised, had he felt any inclination to do so. Two healthy, intelligent children completed his domestic happiness; the boy was about to enter the military career, which had been that of all his ancestors; the girl was to remain yet a while under her mother's wing. Like all men of old descent, our baron was a good deal given to speculate upon the past and the future of his family. We have said that his means were not large, and though he had always intended to lay by, the time for beginning to do so had never yet come. Either some improvement to house or grounds was wanted, or a trip to the baths—rendered necessary by his wife's delicate health—consumed the overplus income. Reflections of this nature were occupying him just now, as he came galloping up the great chestnut avenue. The cloud on his brow was, however, but a little one, and it soon vanished in sunshine when he saw the flutter of feminine garments, and found that his wife and daughter were coming to meet him. He leaped off his horse, kissed his favorite child on the brow, and cheerfully remarked to his wife, "We have capital weather for the harvest; the bailiff vows we never have had such a crop."

"You are a fortunate man, Oscar," said the baroness, tenderly.

"Yes, ever since I brought you here, seventeen years ago," replied he, with a politeness that came from the heart.

"There are indeed seventeen years since then," cried his wife, "and they have flown by like a summer day. We have been very happy, Oscar," said she, bending over his arm, and looking gratefully in his face.

"Been happy!" cried the baron; "why, so we still are, and I see not why we should not continue so."

"Hush!" implored she. "I often feel that so much sunshine can not last forever. I desire, as it were, to fast and do penance, thus to propitiate the envy of fortune."

"Come, come," was the good-humored reply; "fortune has given us a few rubs already: we have had our clouds, only this little hand has always conjured them away. Why, have you not had plague enough with the servants, the pranks of the children, and sometimes with your tyrant too, that you should be wishing for more?"

"You dear tyrant!" cried the wife, "I owe all my happiness to you; and, after seventeen years, I am as proud as ever of my husband and my home. When you brought me here, a poor maid of honor, with nothing but my trinket-box, and that a gift, I first learned the blessedness of being mistress in my own house, and obeying no other will than that of a beloved husband."

"And yet you gave up much for me," returned the baron; "I have had many a fear lest our country life should seem petty and dull to you, a favorite at court."

"There I obeyed, here I rule," said the baroness, laughing. "There I had nothing besides my fine dresses that I could call my own; here, every thing around is mine. You belong to me (she wound her arms around the baron), and so do the children, the castle, and our silver candlesticks."

"The new ones are only plated," suggested the baron.

"Never mind; no one finds it out," cried she, merrily. "When I look at our own dinner-service, and see your and my arms on the plates, two spoonfuls give me ten times more satisfaction than all the courses of the court dinner ever did."

"You are a bright example of contentment," said the baron; "and for your and the children's sake, I wish this property were ten times larger, so that I might keep a page and a couple of maids of honor for my lady wife."

"For heaven's sake, no maids of honor; and as for a page, I need none with such an attentive knight as yourself."

And so the pair walked on to the house, Lenore having taken possession of the horse's bridle, affectionately exhorting him to raise as little dust as possible.

"I see a carriage," said the baron, as they drew near the door; "have any visitors come?"

"It is only Ehrenthal, who wished to see you," replied his wife, "and meanwhile expended all his pretty speeches upon us. Lenore was so arrogant that it was high time I should carry her off—the droll man was quite put out of countenance by the saucy girl."

The baron smiled. "I like him the best of his class," said he. "His manners are at least not repulsive, and I have always found him obliging. How do you do, Mr. Ehrenthal; what brings you here?"

Mr. Ehrenthal was a portly man in the prime of life, with a face too yellow, fat, and cunning to be considered exactly handsome. He wore gaiters, and a large diamond breast-pin, and advanced with a series of low bows toward the baron.

"Your servant, good sir," said he, with a deferential smile; "although no business matters lead me here, I must sometimes crave permission to look round your farm, it is such a treat and refreshment to me; all your live-stock is so sleek and well-fed, and the barns and stables in such perfect order. The very sparrows look better off here than elsewhere. To a man of business, who is often obliged to see things going to wrack and ruin, it is a delight, indeed, to contemplate an estate like yours."

"You are so complimentary, Mr. Ehrenthal, that I can but believe you have some weighty business on hand. Do you want to make a bargain with me?" asked the count, good-naturedly.

With a virtuous shake of the head in refutation of the charge, Mr. Ehrenthal went on: "Not a word of business, baron, not a word. *Our* business, when we have any, admits of no compliments—good money and good stock, that is our plan; and so, please God, it will be. I merely came, in passing by"—here he waved his hand—"in passing by, to inquire about one of the horses the baron has to sell; I promised a friend to make inquiries. But I can settle the matter with the bailiff."

"No, no; come along with me, Ehrenthal—I am going to take my horse to the stable."

With many bows to the ladies, Ehrenthal followed, and, arrived at the stable-door, respectfully insisted that the baron should enter it first. After the customary questions and answers, the baron took him to the cow-house, and he then fervently requested to see the calves, and then the sheep. Being an experienced man, his praise, although somewhat exaggerated, was in the main judicious, and the baron heard it with pleasure.

After the inspection of the sheep, there was a pause, Ehrenthal being quite overcome by the thickness and fineness of their fleece. He nodded and winked in ecstasy. "What wool!" said he; "what it will be next spring! Do you know, baron, you are a most fortunate man? Have you good accounts of the young gentleman, your son?"

"Thank you, he wrote to us yesterday, and sent us his testimonials."

"He will be like his father, a nobleman of the first order, and a rich man too; the baron knows how to provide for his children."

"I am not laying by," was the careless reply.

"Laying by, indeed!" said the tradesman, with the utmost contempt for any thing so plebeian; "and why should you? When old Ehrenthal is dead and gone, you will be able to leave the young gentleman this property—with—between ourselves—a very large sum indeed, besides a dowry to your daughter of—of—what shall I say? of fifty thousand dollars, at least."

"You are mistaken," said the baron, gravely; "I am not so rich."

"Not so rich!" cried Ehrenthal, ready to resent the speech, if it had not been made by the baron himself. "Why, you may then be so any moment you like; any one, with a property like yours, can double his capital in ten years, without the slightest risk. Why not take joint-stock promissory

notes upon your estate?"

Ehrenthal alluded to a great joint-stock company of landed proprietors which lent money on a first mortgage on estates. This money took the form of promissory notes, made payable to the holder. The company itself paid interest to those who accepted the mortgages, and advanced money on them, raising from its own debtors, in addition to the interest, a small sum as commission, for the purpose of defraying expenses, and also for the gradual extinction of the debt incurred.

"I will have nothing to do with money transactions," said the baron, proudly. But the string the tradesman had touched went on vibrating notwithstanding.

"Transactions such as those I speak of are carried on by every prince," continued Mr. Ehrenthal, fervently. "If you were to do as I suggested, you might any day obtain fifty thousand dollars in good parchment. For it you would pay to the company four per cent.; and if you merely let the mortgages lie in your cash-box, they would bring you in three and a half. So you would only have a half per cent. to pay, and by so doing you would liquidate the capital."

"That is to say, I am to run into debt in order to get rich," said the baron, shrugging his shoulders.

"Excuse me, baron; if a nobleman like you has fifty thousand dollars lying by him, for which he only pays a half per cent., he may buy up half the world. There are always opportunities of getting estates for a mere nothing, or shares in mines, or something or other, if you only have the money ready. Or you might establish some kind of works on your property; as, for instance, for making beet-root sugar, like Herr von Bergue; or a brewery, like your neighbor, Count Horn. There is no possible risk to be feared. Why, you would receive ten, twenty, ay, fifty per cent. for the capital borrowed at four per cent."

The baron looked down thoughtfully. Ideas of the sort had often flitted across his mind. It was just the time when numerous industrial speculations had started up, and landed proprietors looked upon them as the best way to increase their means. Mr. Ehrenthal perceived the effect his words had taken, and concluded in the obsequious tone most natural to him: "But what right have I to give any advice to a nobleman like you? Only, every capitalist will tell you that in our days this is the surest method by which a man of rank can provide for his family; and, when the grass is growing over old Ehrenthal's grave, you will think of me and say, 'Ehrenthal was but a plain man, but he gave me advice which has proved advantageous to my family.'"

The baron still looked thoughtfully down. His mind was made up, but he merely replied, with affected indifference, "I will think the matter over." Ehrenthal asked no more.

It was a pity that the baron did not see the expression of the tradesman's face as he got into his conveyance and drove away. He told the coachman to go slowly through the grounds, and looked with delight at the flourishing crops on either side. "A fine property," he went on muttering to himself; "truly a fine property."

Meanwhile the baroness sat in the shrubbery, and turned over the leaves of a new magazine, every now and then casting a look at her daughter, who was occupied in framing, with old newspapers and flowers, a grotesque decoration for the pony's head and neck, while he kept tearing away all of it that he could reach. As soon as she caught her mother's glance, she flew to her, and began to talk nonsense to the smart ladies and gentlemen who displayed the fashions in the pages of the magazine. At first her mother laughed, but by-and-by she said, "Lenore, you are now a great girl, and yet a mere child. We have been too careless about your education; it is high time that you should begin and learn more systematically, my poor darling."

"I thought I was to have done with learning," said Lenore, pouting.

"Your French is still very imperfect, and your father wishes you to practice drawing, for which you have a talent."

"I only care for drawing caricatures," cried Lenore; "they are so easy."

"You must leave off drawing these; they spoil your taste, and make you satirical." Lenore hung her head. "And who was the young man with whom I saw you a short time ago?" continued the baroness, reprovingly.

"Do not scold me, dear mother," cried Lenore; "he was a stranger—a handsome, modest youth, on his way to the capital. He has neither father nor mother, and that made me so sorry for him."

Her mother kissed her, and said, "You are my own dear, wild girl. Go and call your father; his coffee will get cold."

As soon as the baron appeared, his head still full of his conversation with Ehrenthal, his wife laid her hand in his, and said, "Oscar, I am uneasy about Lenore!"

"Is she ill?" inquired her father, in alarm.

"No, she is well and good-hearted, but she is more free and unconventional than she should be at her age."

"She has been brought up in the country, and a fine, clever girl she is," replied the baron, soothingly.

"Yes, but she is too frank in her manner toward strangers," continued his wife; "I fear that she is in danger of becoming an original."

"Well, and is that a very great misfortune?" asked the baron, laughing.

"There can be no greater to a girl in our circle. Whatever is unusual in society is ridiculous, and the merest shade of eccentricity might ruin her prospects. I am afraid she will never improve in the country."

"What would the child do away from us, and growing up with strangers?"

"And yet," said the baroness, earnestly, "it must come to this, though I grieve to tell you so. She is rude to girls of her own age, disrespectful to ladies, and, on the other hand, much too forward to gentlemen."

"She will change," suggested the baron, after a pause.

"She will not change," returned the baroness, gently, "so long as she leaps over hedge and ditch with her father, and even accompanies him out hunting."

"I can not make up my mind to part with both children," said the kind-hearted father; "it would be hard upon us, indeed, and hardest upon you, you rigid matron!"

"Perhaps so," said the baroness, in a low voice, and her eyelids moistened; "but we must not think of ourselves, only of their future good."

The baron drew her closer to him, and said in a firm voice, "Listen, Elizabeth; when in earlier days we looked forward to these, we had other plans for Lenore's education. We resolved to spend the winter in town, to give the child some finishing lessons, and then to introduce her into the world. We will go this very winter to the capital."

The baroness looked up in amazement. "Dear, kind Oscar," cried she; "but—forgive the question—will not this be a great sacrifice to you in other respects?"

"No," was the cheerful reply; "I have plans which make it desirable for me to spend the winter in town."

He told them, and the move was decided upon.

CHAPTER IV.

The sun was already low when the travelers reached the suburbs of the capital. First came cottages, then villas, then the houses crowded closer, and the dust and noise made our hero's heart sink within him. He would soon have lost his way but for Veitel Itzig, who seemed to have a preference for by-streets and narrow flag-stones. At length they reached one of the main streets, where large houses, with pillared porticoes, gay shops, and a well-dressed crowd, proclaimed the triumph of wealth over poverty. Here they stopped before a lofty house. Itzig pointed out the door with a certain degree of deference, and said, "Here you are, and here you will soon get as proud as any of them; but, if you ever wish to know where I am to be found, you can inquire at Ehrenthal's, in Dyer Street. Good-night."

Anton entered with a beating heart, and felt for his father's letter. He had become so diffident, and his head felt so confused, that he would gladly have sat down for a moment to rest and compose himself. But there was no rest here. A great wagon stood at the door, and within, colossal bales and barrels; while broad-shouldered giants, with leathern aprons and short hooks in their belts, were carrying ladders, rattling chains, rolling casks, and tying thick ropes into artistic knots; while clerks, with pens behind their ears and papers in their hands, moved to and fro, and carriers in blue blouses received the different goods committed to their care. Clearly there was no rest to be had here. Anton ran up against a bale, nearly fell over a ladder, and was with difficulty saved by the loud "Take care!" of two leathern-aproned sons of Anak from being crushed flat under an immense tun of oil.

In the centre of all this movement—the sun around which porters, and clerks, and wagoners revolved—stood a young official, of decided air and few words, holding a large black pencil in his hand, with which he made colossal hieroglyphics on the bales before he desired the porters to move them. To him Anton addressed himself in a nearly inaudible voice, and was directed by a wave of the pencil to the counting-house. Slowly he approached the door, which it cost him a mighty effort to open, and as it gently yielded, and he saw the great room before him, his alarm was such that he could scarcely enter. His entrance, however, did not make much sensation. Half a dozen clerks were dashing in haste over the blue folio paper before them, to save the post. Only one of them, who sat next the door, rose, and asked what Anton was pleased to want.

Upon his replying that he wished to speak to Mr. Schröter, there emerged from an inner room a tall man, with a deeply-marked visage, standing shirt-collar, and thoroughly English aspect. Anton took a rapid survey of his countenance, and felt his courage return. He at once discovered uprightness and kindness of heart, though the air and manner were somewhat stern. He rapidly drew out his letter, gave his name, and, in a broken voice, mentioned his father's death.

At this a friendly light beamed from the merchant's eyes; he opened the letter, read it attentively, and stretched out his hand, saying, "You are welcome." Then turning to one of the clerks, who wore a green coat and a gray over-sleeve on the right arm, he announced, "Mr. Wohlfart enters our office from this day." For an instant the six pens were silent, and the principal went on to say to Anton, "You must be tired; Mr. Jordan will show you your room: the rest to-morrow." So saying, he went back to his office, and the six pens began again with fearful rapidity.

The gentleman in the green coat rose, drew off his over-sleeve, carefully folded and locked it up, and invited Anton to follow him. Anton felt a different man to that he had done ten minutes before; he had now a home, and belonged to the business. Accordingly, as he passed, he patted a great bale as though it had been the shoulder of a friend, at which his conductor turned and benevolently vouchsafed the word "cotton;" next he rapped a gigantic barrel, and received the information "currants." He no longer fell over ladders—nay, he boldly pushed one out of his way, bestowed a friendly greeting upon one of the leathern-aproned Anakims, and felt pleased to be politely thanked in return, especially when informed that this was the head porter.

They crossed the court, mounted a well-worn staircase, and then Mr. Jordan opened the door of a room which he told Anton would most probably be his, and had been formerly occupied by a friend of his own. It was a neat little room, with a beautiful stucco cat sitting on the writing-table, which had been left by the former tenant for the benefit of his successor.

Mr. Jordan hurried off to the office, where he had to be earliest and latest of all; and Anton, with the help of a friendly servant, arranged his room and his dress.

Soon the green coat reappeared, and said that Mr. Schröter was gone out, and not to be seen again that day. "Would the new-comer make the acquaintance of his colleagues? It was not necessary to dress."

Anton followed him down stairs, and Mr. Jordan was just about to knock at the door of a certain room, when it was opened by a handsome, slender young man, whose whole appearance made a great impression upon our hero.

He wore a riding-dress, had on a jockey's cap, and a whip in his hand. "So you are trotting your colt round already?" said the stranger, laughing. Mr. Jordan looked solemn, and went on to introduce Mr. Wohlfart, the new apprentice, just arrived; Herr von Fink, son of the great Hamburg firm, Fink and Becker.

"Heir of the greatest train-oil business in the world, and so forth," broke in Fink, carelessly. "Jordan, give me ten dollars; I want to pay the groom; add them to the rest." Then turning to Anton, he said, with some degree of politeness, "If you were coming to call upon me, as I guess from the festive air of your Mercury, I am sorry not to be at home, having to buy a new horse. I consider your visit paid, return you my most ceremonious thanks, and give you my blessing on your entrance." And, with a careless nod, he went rattling down the stairs.

Anton was a good deal discomposed by this cool behavior, and Jordan thought it desirable to add a short commentary of his own. "Fink only half belongs to us, and has been here but a short time. He was brought up in New York, and his father has sent him here to be made a rational being."

"Is he not rational, then?" inquired Anton, with some curiosity.

"Why, he is too wild, too full of mischief—else, a pleasant fellow enough. And now come with me; I have invited all our gentlemen to tea, that they may make your acquaintance."

Mr. Jordan's room was the largest of those appropriated to the clerks, and having a piano-forte and a few arm-chairs, it was occasionally used as a drawing-room.

Here, then, the gentlemen were sitting and standing, awaiting the new-comer. Anton went through the ceremony of introduction with becoming gravity, shaking each of them by the hand, and asking for their good-will and friendly assistance, as he had been but little in the world, and was totally inexperienced as to business. This candor produced a favorable impression. The conversation grew animated, and was seasoned with many allusions and jests wholly unintelligible to the stranger, who held his peace, and devoted himself to observation. First, there was the book-keeper, Liebold, a little, elderly man, with a gentle voice and a modest smile, that seemed to apologize to the world at large for his having taken the liberty of existing in it. He said but little, and had a way of always retracting what he had advanced, as, for example, "I admit this tea is too weak; though, to be sure, strong tea is unwholesome," and so on. Next came Mr. Pix, the despotic wielder of the black pencil, a decided kind of man, who seemed to look upon all social relations as mere business details, respectable but trivial. As a chair was wanting, he sat astride on a small table. Near him was Mr. Specht, who spoke much, and dealt in assertions that every one else disputed. Then there was a Mr. Baumann, with short hair and thoughtful aspect, very regular in his attendance at church, a contributor to every missionary association, and, as his friends declared, much inclined to be a missionary himself, but that the force of habit retained him in Germany and with the firm. Anton remarked with pleasure the courtesy and good feeling that prevailed. Being tired, he soon made his retreat; and having contradicted no one, and been friendly to all, he left a favorable impression behind.

Meanwhile, Veitel Itzig made his way through the narrow and crowded streets till he reached a large house, the lower windows of which were secured by iron bars; while, on the drawing-room floor, the panes of glass were large, and showed white curtains within; the attic windows again

being dirty, dusty, and here and there broken; in short, the house had a disreputable air, reminding one of an old gipsy who has thrown a new and gayly-colored shawl over her rags.

Into this house he entered, kissing his hand to a smart maid-servant, who resented the liberty. The dirty staircase led to a white door, on which the name "Hirsch Ehrenthal" was inscribed. He rang; and an old woman, with a torn cap, appeared, who, having heard his request, called out to those within, "Here is one from Ostrau, Itzig Veitel by name, who wishes to speak to Mr. Ehrenthal." A loud voice replied, "Let him wait;" and the clatter of plates showed that the man of business meant to finish his supper before he gave the future *millionnaire* a hearing. Accordingly, Veitel sat upon the steps admiring the brass plate and the white door, and wondering how the name of Itzig would look upon just such another. That led him to reflect how far he was from being as rich as this Hirsch Ehrenthal; and, feeling the half dozen ducats his mother had sewn into his waistcoat, he began to speculate how much he could daily add to them, provided the rich man took him into his service. In the midst of these reflections the door was flung open, and Mr. Ehrenthal stood before him, no longer the same man we saw in the morning; the deference, the kindness, all were gone. No Eastern despot so proud and lofty. Itzig felt his own insignificance, and stood humbly before his master.

"Here is a letter to Baruch Goldmann, in which Mr. Ehrenthal has sent for me," began Veitel.

"I wrote Goldmann word to send you, that I might see whether you would suit; nothing is yet settled," was the dignified reply.

"I came that you might see me, sir."

"And why did you come so late, young Itzig? this is not the time for business."

"I wished to show myself to-night, in case, sir, you should have any commission to give me for to-morrow. I thought I might be useful, as it is market-day; and I know most of the coachmen of the farmers who come in with rape-seed and other produce; and I know many of the brokers too."

"Are your papers in good order," was the reply, "so that I may have no trouble with the police?"

When Veitel had given satisfaction on this important subject, Ehrenthal vouchsafed to say, "If I take you into my house, you must turn your hand to any thing that I, or Mrs. Ehrenthal, or my son, may chance to order; you must clean the boots and shoes, and run errands for the cook."

"I will do any thing, Mr. Ehrenthal, to make you satisfied with me," was the humble reply.

"For this you will receive two dollars a month; and, if I make a good bargain by your assistance, you will have your share. As for your sleeping-quarters, they had better be with Löbel Pinkus, that I may know where to find you when wanted." So saying, Ehrenthal opened the door, and called, "Wife, Bernhard, Rosalie, come here."

Mrs. Ehrenthal was a portly lady in black silk, with strongly-marked eyebrows and black ringlets, who laid herself out to please, and was extremely successful, report averred. As for her daughter, she was, indeed, a perfect beauty, with magnificent eyes and complexion, and a very slightly aquiline nose. But how came Bernhard to be one of the family? Short, slight, with a pale, deeply-lined face, and bent figure, it was only his mouth and his clear eye that bespoke him young, and he was more negligently attired, too, than might have been expected. They all looked at Veitel in silence, while Ehrenthal proceeded to say that he had taken him into his service; and Veitel himself mentally resolved to be very subservient to the mother, to fall in love with the daughter, to clean carelessly Bernhard's boots, and carefully to search his pocket in brushing his coat. On the whole, he was well pleased with the arrangement made, and smiled to himself as he went along to Löbel Pinkus.

This Löbel Pinkus was a householder who kept a spirit-shop on the ground floor; but one thing was certain, no mere spirit-shop could have enriched him as this did. However, he bore a good character. The police willingly took a glass at his counter, for which he always declined payment. He paid his taxes regularly, and passed, indeed, for a friend of the executive. On the first floor he kept a lodging-house for bearded and beardless Jews. These gentlemen generally slipped in late and out early. Besides such regular guests, others of every age, sex, and creed arrived at irregular intervals. These had strictly private dealings with the host, and showed a great objection to having a lucifer match struck near their faces. The other lodgers took their own views of these peculiarities, but judged it best to keep them to themselves. In this house it was that Itzig went up a dark stair, and, groping along a dirty wall, came to a heavy oaken door, with a massive bolt, and, after a good push, entered a waste-looking room that ran the whole length of the house. In the middle stood an old table with a wretched oil lamp, and opposite the door a great partition, with several smaller doors, some of which were open, and showed that the whole consisted of narrow subdivisions, with hooks for hanging clothes. The small windows had faded blinds, but on the opposite side of the room the twilight entered through an open door that led to a wooden gallery running along the outside of the house.

Itzig threw down his bundle and went out on this gallery, which he viewed with much interest. Below him rolled a rapid stream of dirty water, hemmed in on either side by dilapidated wooden houses, most of which had similar galleries to every story. In olden times, the worthy guild of dyers had inhabited this street, but now they had changed their quarters, and instead of sheep and goat skins, there hung over the worm-eaten railings only the clothes of the poor put out to dry. Their colors contrasted strangely with the black woodwork; the light fell in a remarkable way

upon the rude carvings, and the dark posts that started here and there out of the water. In short, it was a wretched place, save for cats, painters, or poor devils.

Young Itzig had already been here more than once, but never alone. Now he observed that a long, covered staircase led down from the gallery to the water's edge, and that a similar one ran up to the next house, whence he concluded that it would be possible to go from one house to another without doing more than wetting the feet; also, that when the water was low, one could walk along at the base of the houses, and he wondered whether there were men who availed themselves of these possibilities. His fancy was so much excited by this train of thought, that he ran back, crept into the partition, and found out that the wall at the back of it was also of wood. As this was the wall dividing the neighboring house from the one in which he was, he considered it a pleasant discovery, and was just going to see whether some chink in the main wall might not afford a further prospect, when he was disturbed by a hollow murmur, which showed him that he was not alone. So he settled himself upon a bag of straw opposite his companion, who was too sleepy to talk much. By-and-by Pinkus came in, placed a jug of water on the table, and locked the door outside. Itzig ate in the dark the dry bread he had in his pocket, and at length fell asleep to the snoring of his companion.

At the same hour his fellow-traveler wrapped himself round in his comfortable bed, looked about him more asleep than awake, and fancied that he saw the stucco cat rise on his feet, stretch out his paws, and proceed to wash his face. Before he had time to marvel at this, he fell asleep. Both the youths had their dreams. Anton's was of sitting on a gigantic bale, and flying on it through the air, while a certain lovely young lady stretched her arms out toward him; and Itzig's was of having become a baron, and being teased into flinging an alms to old Ehrenthal.

The following morning each set to work. Anton sat at the desk and copied letters, while Itzig, having brushed the collective boots and shoes of the Ehrenthal family, stationed himself as a spy at the door of the principal hotel, to watch a certain gentleman who was discontented with his master, and suspected of applying to other moneyed men.

The first idle hour he had, Anton drew from memory the castle, the balcony, and the turrets, on the best paper the town could afford; the next, he put the drawing in a gilt frame, and hung it over his sofa.

CHAPTER V.

Just at first Anton found some difficulty in adapting himself to the new world in which he was placed.

The business was one of a kind becoming rare nowadays, when rail-roads and telegraphs unite remotest districts, and every merchant sends from the heart of the country to bid his agents purchase goods almost before they reach the shore. Yet there was a something about this old-fashioned house of a dignified, almost a princely character; and what was still better, it was well calculated to inspire confidence. At the time of which we speak, the sea was far off, facilities of communication were rare, so that the merchants' speculations were necessarily more independent, and involved greater hazard. The importance of such a mercantile house as this depended upon the quantity of stores it bought with its own money and at its own risk. Of these, a great part lay in long rows of warehouses along the river, some in the vaults of the old house itself, and some in the warehouses and stores of those around. Most of the tradesmen of the province provided themselves with colonial produce from the warehouses of the firm, whose agents were spread to east and south, and carried on, even as far as the Turkish frontier, a business which, if less regular and secure than the home trade, was often more lucrative than any other.

Thus it happened that the every-day routine afforded to the new apprentice a wide diversity of impressions and experiences. A varied procession poured through the counting-house from morning to evening; men of different costumes, all offering samples of different articles for sale—Polish Jews, beggars, men of business, carriers, porters, servants, etc. Anton found it difficult to concentrate his thoughts amid this endless going and coming, and to get through his work, simple as it was.

For instance, Mr. Braun, the agent of a friendly house in Hamburgh, had just come in and taken a sample of coffee out of his pocket. While it was being submitted to the principal, the agent went on gesticulating with his gold-headed cane, and talking about a recent storm, and the damage it had done. The door creaked, and a poorly-dressed woman entered.

"What do you want?" asked Mr. Specht.

Then came lamentable sounds, like the peeping of a sick hen, which changed, as soon as the merchant had put his hand into his pocket, into a joyful chuckle.

"Waves mountain-high," cried the agent.

"God reward you a thousand-fold," chuckled the woman.

"Comes to 550 merks, 10 shillings," said Baumann to the principal.

And now the door was vehemently pushed open, and a stoutly-built man entered, with a bag of money under his arm, which he triumphantly deposited on the marble table, exclaiming, with the air of one doing a good action, "Here am I; and here is money!"

Mr. Jordan rose immediately, and said, in a friendly voice, "Good-morning, Mr. Stephen; how goes the world in Wolfsburg?"

"A dreadful hole!" groaned Mr. Braun.

"Where?" inquired Fink.

"Not such a bad place either," said Mr. Stephen; "but little business doing."

"Sixty-five sacks of Cuba," returned the principal to a question of one of the clerks.

Meanwhile, the door opened again, and this time admitted a man-servant and a Jew from Brody. The servant gave the merchant a note of invitation to a dinner-party—the Jew crept to the corner where Fink sat.

"What brings you again, Schmeie Tinkeles?" coldly asked Fink; "I have already told you that we would have no dealings with you."

"No dealings!" croaked the unlucky Tinkeles, in such execrable German that Anton had difficulty in understanding him. "Such wool as I bring has never been seen before in this country."

"How much a hundred weight?" asked Fink, writing, without looking at the Jew.

"What I have already said."

"You are a fool," said Fink; "off with you!"

"Alas!" screamed he of the caftan, "what language is that? 'Off with you!'—there's no dealing so."

"What do you want for your wool?

"41-2/3," said Tinkeles.

"Get out!" suggested Fink.

"Don't go on forever saying 'Get out!'" implored the Jew, in despair; "say what you will give."

"If you ask such unreasonable prices, nothing at all," replied Fink, beginning another sheet.

"Only say what you will give."

"Come, then, if you speak like a rational man," answered Fink, looking at the Jew.

"I *am* rational," was the low reply; "what will you give?"

"Thirty-nine," said Fink.

At that Schmeie Tinkeles went distracted, shook his black greasy hair, and swore by all he held holy that he could not take it under 41, whereupon Fink signified that he should be put out by one of the servants if he made so much noise. The Jew, therefore, went off in high dudgeon; soon, however, putting his head in again, and asking, "Well, then, what will you give?"

"Thirty-nine," said Fink, watching the excitement he thus raised much as an anatomist might the galvanic convulsions of a frog. The words "thirty-nine" occasioned a fresh explosion in the mind of the Jew; he came forward, solemnly committed his soul to the deepest abyss, and declared himself the most unworthy wretch alive if he took less than 41. As he could not profit by Fink's repeated exhortations to quit, a servant was called. His appearance was so far composing, that Mr. Tinkeles now declared he could go alone, and would go alone; whereupon he stood still, and said 40-1/2. The agent, the provincials, and the whole counting-house watched the progress of the bargain with some curiosity; while Fink, with a certain degree of cordiality, proceeded to counsel the poor Jew to retire without further discussion, seeing that he was an utter fool, and there really was no dealing with him. Once more the Jew went out, and Fink said to the principal, who was reading a letter the while, "He'll let us have the wool if I let him have another half dollar."

"How much is there of it?" asked the merchant.

"Six tons," said Fink.

"Take it," said Mr. Schröter, reading on.

Again the door opened and shut, the chattering went on, and Anton kept wondering how they could speak of a purchase when the seller had been so decided in his refusal of their terms. Once more the door was gently pushed open, and Tinkeles, creeping behind Fink, laid his hand on his shoulder, and said, in a melancholy but confidential voice, "What will you give, then?"

Fink turned round, and replied with a good-natured smile, "If you please to take it, Tinkeles, 39-1/3; but only on the condition that you do not speak another word, otherwise I retract the offer."

"I am not speaking," answered the Jew. "Say 40."

Fink made a movement of impatience, and silently pointed to the door. The wool-dealer went out

once more.

"Now for it!" said Fink.

In a moment or two Tinkeles returned, and, with more composure of manner, brought out "39-1/2, if you will take it at that."

After some appearance of uncertainty, Fink carelessly replied, "So be it, then;" at which Schmeie Tinkeles underwent an utter transformation, behaving like an amiable friend of the firm, and politely inquiring after the health of the principal.

And so it went on; the door creaking, buyers and sellers coming and going, men talking, pens scratching, and money pouring ceaselessly in.

The household of which Anton now formed part appeared to him to be most impressive and singular. The house itself was an irregular and ancient building, with wings, court-yards, out-houses, short stairs, mysterious passages, and deep recesses. In the front part of it were handsome apartments, occupied by the merchant's family. Mr. Schröter had only been married for a very short time, his wife and child had died within the year, and his sister was now his only near relation.

The merchant adhered rigidly to the old customs of the firm. All the unmarried clerks formed part of the household, and dined with him punctually at one o'clock. On the day after Anton's arrival, a few minutes before that hour, he was taken to be introduced to the lady of the house, and gazed with wonder at the elegance and magnificence of the rooms through which he passed on his way to her presence.

Sabine Schröter's pale, delicate face, crowned with hair of raven black, shone out very fair above her graceful summer attire. She seemed about Anton's own age, but she had the dignity of a matron.

"My sister governs us all," said the merchant, looking fondly at her. "If you have any wish, make it known to her; she is the good fairy who keeps the house in order."

Anton looked at the fairy, and modestly replied, "Hitherto I have found every thing exceed my wishes."

"Your life will, in time, appear a monotonous one," continued the merchant. "Ours is a rigidly regular house, where you have much work to look forward to, and little recreation. My time is much engrossed; but, if you should ever need advice or assistance, I hope you will apply directly to myself."

This short audience over, he rose and led Anton to the dining-room, where all his colleagues were assembled; next, Sabine entered, accompanied by an elderly lady, a distant relation, who looked very good-natured. The clerks made their obeisance, and Anton took the seat appointed to him at the end of a long table, among the younger of his brethren. Opposite him sat Sabine, beside her brother, then the elderly relative, and next to her, Fink. On the whole, it was a silent dinner. Anton's neighbors said little, and that under their breath; but Fink rattled away with thorough unconcern, told droll stories, mimicked voices and manners, and was exaggerated in his attentions to the good-natured relative. Anton was positively horrified at this freedom, and fancied that the principal did not like it much better. The black-coated domestics waited with the utmost propriety; and Anton rose with the impression that this repast had been the most solemn and stately of which he had ever partaken, and that he should get on with all the household with the exception of "that Von Fink."

One day that they accidentally met on the staircase, Fink, who had not for some time appeared conscious of his existence, stopped and asked him, "Well, Master Wohlfart, how does this house suit you?"

To which Anton replied, "Exceedingly well, indeed. I see and hear so much that is new to me that I have hardly thought of myself as yet."

"You'll soon get accustomed to it," said Fink, laughing; "one day is the same as the other all the year long. On Sunday, an extra good dinner, a glass of wine, and your best coat—that's all. You are one of the wheels in the machine, and will be expected to grind regularly."

"I am aware that I must be industrious in order to merit Mr. Schröter's confidence," was the rather indignant reply.

"Truly a virtuous remark; but you'll soon see, my poor lad, what a gulf is fixed between the head of the firm and those who write his letters. No prince on earth stands so far removed above his vassals as this same coffee-lord above his clerks. But do not lay much stress on what I say," added he, more good-naturedly; "the whole house will tell you that I am not quite *compos*. However, I'll give you a piece of good advice. Get an English master, and make some progress before you got rusty. All they teach you here will never make a clever man of you, if you happen to want to be one. Good-night." And, turning upon his heel, he left our Anton somewhat disconcerted.

Indeed, he too, in course of time, began to be conscious of the monotony of a business life, but he did not fret about it, having been taught by his parents habits of industry and order.

Mr. Jordan took much pains to initiate him into the mysteries of divers wares; and the hours that he first spent in the warehouses, amid the varied produce of different lands, were fraught with a certain poetry of their own, as good, perhaps, as any other. There was a large, gloomy, vaulted room on the ground floor, in which lay stores for the traffic of the day. Tuns, bales, chests, were piled on each other, which every land, every race, had contributed to fill. The floating palace of the East India Company, the swift American brig, the patriarchal ark of the Dutchman, the stout-ribbed whaler, the smoky steamer, the gay Chinese junk, the light canoe of the Malay—all these had battled with winds and waves to furnish this vaulted room. A Hindoo woman had woven that matting; a Chinese had painted that chest; a Congo negro, in the service of a Virginian planter, had looped those canes over the cotton bales; that square block of zebra-wood had grown in the primeval forests of the Brazils, and monkeys and bright-hued parrots had chattered among its branches. Anton would stand long in this ancient hall, after Mr. Jordan's lessons were over, absorbed in wonder and interest, till roof and pillars seemed transferred to broad-leaved palm-trees, and the noise of the streets to the roar of the sea—a sound he only knew in his dreams; and this delight in what was foreign and unfamiliar never wore off, but led him to become, by reading, intimately acquainted with the countries whence all these stores came, and with the men by whom they were collected.

Thus the first months of his life in the capital fled rapidly away; and it was well for him that he took so much interest in his studies, for Fink proved right in one respect. In spite of the daily meal in the stately dining-room, Anton remained as great a stranger as ever to the principal and his family. He was too rational, indeed, to murmur at this, but he could not avoid feeling depressed by it; for, with the enthusiasm of youth, he was ready to revere his chief as the ideal of mercantile greatness. He admired his sagacity, decision, energy, and inflexible uprightness, and would have been devoted to him heart and soul, but that he so seldom saw him. When the merchant was not engaged by business, he lived for his sister, whom he most tenderly loved. For her he kept a carriage and horses which he himself never used, and gave evening parties to which Anton and his colleagues were not invited. Gay equipages rolled in one after the other, liveried servants ran up and down stairs, and graceful shadows flitted across the windows, while Anton sat in his little upper chamber, and yearned eagerly after the brilliant gayeties in which he had no part. True, his reason told him that they did not belong to men of his class, but at nineteen reason is not always supreme; and many a time he went back with a sigh from his window to his books, and tried to forget the alluring strains of the quadrille and waltz in the descriptions of the lion's roar and the bull-frog's croak in the far-off tropics.

CHAPTER VI.

The Baron of Rothsattel had moved to his town residence. It was not indeed large, but its furniture, the arabesques on its walls, the arrangement of its hangings were so graceful, that it ranked as a model of comfort and elegance. The baron had made all his preparations in silence. At length the day came when the new carriage stopped at the door, and, lifting down his wife, he led her through the suite of apartments to her own little boudoir, all fitted up with white silk. Enchanted beyond measure, she flew into his arms, and he felt as proud and happy as a king. They were soon perfectly settled, and able to begin their course of visiting.

It was the custom of a large portion of the nobility to spend the winter in town, and accordingly the Rothsattels met many friends, and several of their acquaintance. Every one was pleased to welcome them, and after a few weeks they found themselves immersed in gayety. The baroness soon became a leader of the feminine world, and her husband, after at first missing his walks through his farm and his woods, began to take equal pleasure in reviving his youthful acquaintance. He became member of a nobleman's club, indulged his virtuoso tendencies, played whist, and filled his idle hours with a little politics and a little art. And so the winter passed pleasantly on, and the baron and his wife often wondered why they had not earlier indulged in this agreeable variety.

Lenore was the only one dissatisfied with the change. She continued to justify her mother's fear lest she should become an original. She found it difficult to pay proper respect to the numberless elderly cousins of the family, and still more difficult to refrain from accosting first any pleasant gentleman she had known in the country, and now chanced to meet in the streets. Likewise, the Young Lady's Institution, which she had to attend, was in many ways objectionable to her. She had certain maps and tiresome lesson-books to take to and fro, and her mother did not approve of the servants' time being occupied in carrying them after her. One day, when walking like an angry Juno—the tokens of her slavery upon her arm, and her little parasol in her hand—she beheld the young gentleman to whom she had shown her flower-garden coming to meet her, and she rejoiced at it, for he was pleasantly associated in her mind with home, the pony, and the family of swans. He was still some way off when her hawk's eye discerned him, but he did not see her even when he came nearer. As her mother had forbidden her ever to accost a gentleman in the street, there was nothing for it but to stand still and to strike her parasol on the flags.

Anton looked up and saw to his pleasant surprise the lovely lady of the lake. Blushing, he took off his hat, and Lenore observed with satisfaction that, in spite of the satchel on her arm, she impressed him as much us ever.

"How are you, sir?" she inquired, in a dignified way.

"Very well," replied Anton; "how delighted I am to see you in town!"

"We are living here at present," said the young lady, with less stateliness, "at No. 20 Bear Street."

"May I inquire for the pony?" said Anton, respectfully.

"Only think, he had to be left behind!" was the sorrowful reply; "and what are you doing here?"

"I am in the house of T. O. Schröter," said Anton, bowing.

"Oh! a merchant; and what do you deal in?"

"In colonial produce. It is the largest firm in that department in the whole town," replied Anton, complacently.

"And have you met with kind people who take care of you?"

"My principal is very kind, but I must take care of myself."

"Have you any friends here with whom you can amuse yourself?"

"A few acquaintances. But I have much to do, and I must improve myself in my leisure hours."

"You look rather pale," said the young lady, with motherly interest; "you should move more about, and take long walks. I am glad to have met you, and shall be pleased to hear of your well-doing," added she, majestically; and, with an inclination of her pretty little head, she vanished in the crowd, while Anton remained gazing after her, hat in hand.

Lenore did not consider it necessary to mention this meeting. But a few days later, when the baroness happened to inquire where they should get some necessary stores, she looked up from her book and said, "The largest firm here is that of T. O. Schröter, dealer in colonial produce."

"How do you know that?" inquired her father, laughing; "you speak like an experienced merchant."

"All the result of the Young Lady's Institution," answered Lenore, pertly.

Meanwhile, in the midst of his social pleasures, the baron did not forget the chief end of his town life. He made close inquiries as to the speculations of other landed proprietors, visited the factories in the town, became acquainted with educated manufacturers, and acquired some knowledge of machinery. But the information thus gained was so contradictory, that he thought it best not to precipitate matters, but to wait till some specially advantageous and safe undertaking should offer.

We must not omit to mention that about this time the family property was increased by a small, handsome, brass-inlaid casket, with a lock that defied any thief's power of opening, so that, if minded to steal, he would have nothing for it but to carry off the casket itself. In it were laid forty-five thousand dollars in the form of new promissory notes. The baron contemplated these with much tenderness. At first he would sit for hours opposite the open casket, never weary of arranging the parchment leaves according to their numbers, delighting in their glossy whiteness, and forming plans for paying off the capital; and even when, for safety's sake, the casket had been made over to the keeping of the Joint-stock Company, the thought of it was a continual pleasure. Nay, the spirit of the casket began to peep out even in household arrangements. The baroness was surprised at her husband counseling certain economies, or telling with a degree of pleasure of ten louis d'or won last evening at cards. She was at first a little afraid that he had become in some way embarrassed; but, as he assured her, with a complacent smile, that this was far from being the case, she soon learned to treat these little attempts at saving as an innocent whim, especially as they only extended to trifling details, the baron insisting as much as ever upon keeping up a dignified and imposing social appearance. Indeed, it was impossible for him to retrench just now. The town life, the furnishing of the house, and the necessary claims of society, of course increased the outgoings.

And so it came to pass that the baron, after having paid a visit to his property to settle the yearly accounts, returned to town much out of tune. He had become aware that the expenditure of the last year had exceeded the income, and that the income of the next year gave no promise of balancing the existing deficit of two thousand dollars. The thought occurred that the sum must be taken from the white parchments; and the man who would have stood calm beneath a shower of bullets, broke out into a cold perspiration at the idea of the debts thus to be incurred. It was plain that there had been an error in his calculations. He who wishes to raise a sum by small yearly savings must not increase, but lessen his expenditure. True, the increase in his case had been unavoidable; but still, a most unlucky coincidence. The baron had not felt such anxiety since his lieutenant-days. There were a thousand good reasons, however, against giving up the town house; it was rented for a term of years; and then, what would his acquaintance say? So he kept his troubles to himself; quieted the baroness by talking of a cold caught on his journey; but all day long the same thought kept gnawing at his heart. Sometimes in the evening he was able to drive it away a while, but it was sure to return in the morning.

It was one of these weary mornings that Mr. Ehrenthal, who had to pay for some grain, was announced. The very name was at that moment unpleasant to the baron, and his greeting was colder than usual; but the man of business did not mind little ups and downs of temper, paid his money, and was profuse in expressions of devoted respect, which all fell coldly, till, just before

going away, he inquired, "Did the promissory notes duly arrive?"

"Yes," was the ungracious reply.

"It is sad," cried Ehrenthal, "to think of forty-five thousand dollars lying dead. To you, baron, a couple of thousands or so is a mere trifle, but not to one of my sort. At this moment I might speculate boldly, and safely too; but all my money being locked up, I must lose a clear four thousand." The baron listened attentively; the trader went on: "You have known me, baron, for years past, to be a man of honor, and of some substance too; and now I will make a proposition to you. Lend me for three months ten thousand dollars' worth of promissory notes, and I will give you a bill of exchange, which is as good as money. The speculation should bring in four thousand dollars, and that I will divide with you in lieu of interest. You will run no risk; if I fail, I will bear the loss myself, and pay back the principal in three months."

However uninteresting these words may appear to the reader, they threw the baron into such a state of joyous excitement that he could scarce command himself sufficiently to say, "First of all, I must know what sort of a bargain it is that you wish to drive with my money." Ehrenthal explained. The offer of purchasing a quantity of wood had been made to him, which wood lay on a raft in an upper part of the province. He would take all the expense of transport on himself; and he proceeded to demonstrate the certain profit of the transaction.

"But," said the baron, "how comes it that the present proprietor does not carry out this profitable scheme himself?"

Ehrenthal shrugged his shoulders. "He who means to speculate must not always inquire the reason of bargains. An embarrassed man can not wait two or three months; the river is at present frozen, and he wants the money in two or three days."

"Are you sure that his right to sell is incontestable?"

"I know the man to be safe," was the reply; "and that, if I pay him this evening, the wood is mine."

Now it was painful to the baron, much as he wanted money, to turn the embarrassment of another to his own profit; and he said, "I consider it unfair to reckon upon what is certain loss to the seller."

"Why should it be certain loss?" cried Ehrenthal. "He is a speculator—he wants money; perhaps he has a greater bargain still in his eye. He has offered me the whole quantity of wood for ten thousand dollars, and I have no business to inquire whether he can or can not make more of my money than I of his wood."

And so far Ehrenthal was right; but this was not all. The seller was an unlucky speculator, pressed by his creditors, threatened with an execution, and determined to frustrate their hopes by driving an immediate bargain with a stranger, and then making off with the money. Perhaps Ehrenthal knew this; perhaps the baron too surmised that there must be a mystery, for he shook his head. And yet *he* ran no risk, incurred no responsibility; he but lent his money to a safe man, whom he had known for years, and in a short time he should get rid of the evil genius that tormented him ceaselessly. Too much excited to reflect whether this was not a casting out of devils by Beelzebub, their chief, he rang the bell for his carriage, and said, in a lordly tone, "You shall have the money in an hour."

From that day the baron led a life of anxious suspense. He was always going over this interview, always thinking of the piles of wood; and, whenever he rode out, his horse's head was turned to the river, that he might watch the progress of the thaw.

He had not seen Ehrenthal for some time. At length he came one morning with his endless bows, and, taking out a large packet, said triumphantly, "Well, baron, the affair is settled. Here are your notes, and here the two thousand dollars, your share of the profit."

The baron snatched the packet. Yes; they were the very same parchments he had taken out of the casket with so heavy a heart, and a bundle of bank-notes besides. A weight fell from him. The parchments were safe, the deficit made up. Ehrenthal was courteously dismissed. That very day the baron bought a turquoise ornament for his wife, which she had long silently wished for, and sunshine prevailed in the family circle.

But a dark shadow from the recent past had yet to fall athwart it. The baron, reading the paper one day in his wife's room, observed an advertisement concerning a bankrupt dealer in wood, who had made his escape after swindling his creditors. He laid down the paper, and the drops stood on his brow. "If it should be the same man!"

Ehrenthal had given no name. Had he, a man of honor, been the means of defrauding just claims; had he taken part in a swindling transaction, ay, and gained by it too! The thought was too fearful. He hurried to his desk that he might pack up and send off the accursed profits—whither he knew not, but any where, away. He saw with horror that only a small portion of them remained. In extreme agitation, he rang the bell, and sent for Ehrenthal.

As chance would have it, Ehrenthal was gone on a journey. Meanwhile arose those soothing inward voices which know so well how to place things doubtful in a favorable light. "How foolish this anxiety! There were hundreds of dealers in wood in that part of the country; and was it likely that this very man should be Ehrenthal's client? Or, even if he were, in a business point of view,

how could they help the use he might make of their money? Nothing could be fairer than the transaction itself." Thus the voices within; and oh! how attentively the baron listened.

But still, when Ehrenthal at length appeared, the baron met him with an expression that positively appalled him. "What was the name of the man from whom you bought the wood?" cried he.

Ehrenthal had read the newspaper too, and the truth now flashed upon him. He gave a name at once.

"And the place where the wood lay?"

Ehrenthal named that too.

"Are you telling me the truth?" asked the baron, drawing a third deep breath.

Ehrenthal saw that he had a sick conscience to deal with, and treated the case with the utmost gentleness. "What is the baron uneasy about?" said he, shaking his head; "I believe that the man with whom I dealt has made a good profit out of the affair. Nothing could be more fair than the whole transaction. But, even had it not been so, why, my good sir, should you be troubled? There was no reason why I should not tell you the names, both of the man and place, before; but I did not do so, because the bargain was mine, not yours. I became your debtor, and I have repaid you with a bonus—a large one, it is true; but I have dealt with you for years, and why should I keep back from you the share of profit which I should have had to give any one else?"

"That is all right, Ehrenthal," said the baron, more graciously; "and I am glad that the case stands thus. But, had this man been the bankrupt in question, I should have broken off our connection, and should never have forgiven you for involving me in a fraudulent transaction."

Ehrenthal bowed himself out, muttering, as he went down stairs, "He's a good man, this baron; a good, good man."

CHAPTER VII.

We now return to Anton, who had been placed under the joint command of Messrs. Jordan and Pix, and who found himself the small vassal of a great body corporate, containing a variety of grades and functions little dreamed of by the uninitiated. First in the counting-house was the book-keeper Liebold, who, as minister of the home department, reigned supreme and solitary in a window of his own, forever recording figures in a colossal book, and seldom looking off their columns.

In the opposite part of the room ruled the second dignitary in the state, the cashier Purzel, surrounded by iron safes, heavy bags, and with a large stone table before him, on which dollars rung, or gray paper money fell noiselessly the whole day through.

Jordan was the principal person in the office. He was the head clerk, and his opinion was sometimes asked by the principal himself. In him Anton found, from the day of his arrival, a good adviser, and an example of activity and healthy common sense.

Of all the clerks under Jordan's superintendence, the most interesting to Anton was Baumann, the future missionary. Not only was he a truly religious man, he was an admirable and infallible accountant. But, besides all these, the firm had some officials who did not live in the house. One was Birnbaum, the custom-house clerk, who was seldom visible in the office, and only dined with the principal on Sundays. Then there was the head of the warehouse department, Mr. Balbus, who, though by no means a cultivated man, was always treated by the chief with great respect; and, as Anton heard it said, had a mother and sick sister entirely dependent upon him.

But of all these men, the most aggressively active, the most despotic in his measures, was Pix, the manager of the provincial traffic department. His domain began in the office, and extended throughout the house, and far into the street. He was the divinity of all the country shopkeepers, who looked upon him as the real head of the business. He arranged the whole exports of the house, knew every thing, was always to be found, and could do half a dozen things at once. Like all dignitaries, he was impatient of contradiction, and fought for his opinions against the merchant himself with a stiff-neckedness that often horrified Anton. One of his peculiarities was that of abhorring a vacuum as much as nature herself. Wherever there was an empty corner, a closet, a cellar, a recess to be discovered, there Pix would intrude with tuns, ladders, ropes, and all imaginable commodities; and wherever he and his giant band of porters had once got a footing, no earthly power could dislodge them—not even the principal himself.

"Where is Wohlfart?" called Mr. Schröter from the door of his office.

"Up stairs," calmly replied Pix.

"What is he doing there?" was the amazed inquiry.

At that moment loud voices were heard, and Anton came thundering down the steps, followed by a servant, and both laden with cigar-boxes, while behind them appeared the female relative in much excitement.

"They will not tolerate us up stairs," said Anton, hurriedly, to Pix.

"Now they have actually come to the laundry," said the lady, just as hurriedly, to the principal.

"The cigars can not stand down here," declared Pix to both.

"And I will not have cigars in the laundry," cried the distant cousin. "I declare there is not a place in the house safe from Mr. Pix. He has filled the maid-servants' rooms with cigars, and they complain that the smell is intolerable."

"It is dry up there," explained Mr. Pix to the merchant.

"Could you not, perhaps, place them elsewhere?" inquired the latter, respectfully.

"Impossible!" was the decided reply.

"Do you really require the whole laundry, my dear cousin?" said the principal, turning to the lady.

"The half of it were ample," interpolated Pix.

"I hope, Pix, you will content yourself with a corner," said the head of the firm, by way of decision. "Tell the carpenter to run up a partition at once."

"If Mr. Pix once gets admittance, he will take the whole of our laundry," expostulated the too experienced cousin.

"It is the last concession we will make," was the reply.

Mr. Pix laughed silently—or grinned rebelliously, as the lady phrased it; and, as soon as the authorities were out of sight, sent Anton up again with the cigar-boxes.

But what chiefly constituted the importance of Pix in the eyes of the community were the Herculean porters under his command. When these men rolled mighty casks about, and lifted hundred weights like pounds, they seemed to the new apprentice like the giants of fairy lore. Some of them belonged to this firm exclusively, others to a corporation of porters who worked for different houses, but T. O. Schröter's was the house they liked best. For more than one generation the head of this particular firm had enjoyed their highest consideration, and stood godfather to all their large-headed babies.

Among these men, the strongest and tallest was Sturm, their chief—a man who could hardly get through narrow streets, and was frequently called to move a weight found impracticable by his comrades. Wonderful stories were told of his exploits; and Specht affirmed that there was nothing on earth beyond his powers.

His relations with the firm were very intimate indeed; and having an only child, upon whom he doted, and who had early lost his mother, he placed him, at the age of fifteen, in T. O. Schröter's house, in a nondescript capacity. The boy was a universal favorite, knew every hole and corner, collected all the nails and pieces of packthread, folded all the packing-paper, fed Pluto the watch-dog, and did sundry other odd jobs. Up to every thing, invariably good-humored and ready-witted, the porters fondly called him "our Karl;" and his father often glanced aside from his work to look at him with delight.

But in one point Karl did disappoint him: he gave no promise of ever attaining to his father's stature. He was a handsome, fair-haired, rosy-cheeked youth; but all the giants agreed that he would never be more than a middle-sized man; and so his father fell into the habit of treating him like a sort of delicate dwarf, with the utmost consideration, and a certain touch of compassion.

"I don't care," said the indulgent parent to Mr. Pix, when introducing the boy into the business, "what the little fellow learns besides, so that he does learn to be honorable and practical." This was a speech after Mr. Pix's own heart; and this system of education was at once begun by Sturm taking his son into the great vaulted room, and saying, "Here are the almonds and the raisins—taste them."

"Oh, they are good, father," cried the boy.

"I believe you, Liliputian," nodded Sturm. "Now, see, you may eat as many of them as you like; neither Mr. Schröter, Mr. Pix, nor I shall interfere. But, my little lad, you had better see how long you can hold out without beginning. The longer the better for yourself, and the more honor in it; and when you can stand it no longer, come to me and say 'Enough;'" upon which he left him, having laid his great turnip of a watch on a chest standing by. The boy proudly placed his hands in his pockets, and walked up and down among the goods. After more than two hours, he came, watch in hand, to his father, exclaiming "Enough."

"Two hours and a half," said old Sturm, nodding at Mr. Pix. "Very well, child; come and nail up this chest; here is a new hammer for you; it cost tenpence."

"It's not worth it," was the reply. "You always pay too much." Such was Karl's education.

The day after Anton's arrival, Pix had introduced him to Sturm, and Anton had said, in a tone of respect, "this is my first experience of business; pray give me a hint whenever you can."

"Every thing is to be learned in time," replied the giant; "yonder is my little boy, who has got on capitally in a year. So your father was not a merchant?"

"My father was an accountant; he is dead," was the reply.

"I am sorry to hear it," said Sturm; "but you have still the comfort of a mother?"

"My mother, too, is dead."

"Alas! alas!" cried the porter, compassionately. He went on shaking his head for a long time, and at length added, in a low voice, to his Karl, "He has no mother."

"And no father either," rejoined Karl.

"Be kind to him, little one," said old Sturm; "you are a sort of orphan yourself."

"Not I," cried Karl; "any one with such a great father as mine to look after has his hands full."

"Why, you are a perfect little monster!" said his father, cheerfully hammering away at a cask.

From that hour Karl showed all manner of small attentions to Anton, and a species of affectionate intimacy sprang up between the two youths.

Indeed, Anton was on excellent terms with all the officials. He listened attentively to Jordan's sensible remarks, was prompt and unconditional in his obedience to Mr. Pix, entered into political discussions with Specht, read with interest Baumann's missionary reports, never asked Mr. Purzel for money in advance, and often encouraged Mr. Liebold to utter some palpable truth without retracting the statement. There was only one with whom he could not get on well, and that was the volunteer clerk, Fink.

One gloomy afternoon, Mr. Jordan chanced to give our hero a certain message to take to another house, and, as he rose, Fink looked up from his desk, and said to Jordan, "Just send him at the same time to the gunsmith—the good-for-nothing fellow can send my gun by him."

Our hero crimsoned. "Do not give me that commission," said he to Jordan; "I shall not execute it."

"Really!" asked Fink, in amazement; "and why not, my fine fellow?"

"I am not your servant," replied Anton, bitterly. "Had you requested me to do this for you, I might have complied; but I will take no orders from you."

"Dolt!" muttered Fink, and went on writing.

The whole office had heard him, and every eye turned to Anton, whose eyes flashed as he exclaimed, "You have insulted me—I will not bear an insult from any one—you must explain yourself."

"I am not fond of giving any one a thrashing," said Fink, negligently.

"Enough!" cried Anton, turning deadly pale; "you shall hear farther;" and off he rushed to deliver Jordan's message.

A cold rain was falling, but Anton was not aware of it: he felt nothing but an agonizing sense of insult and wrong. As he reached the establishment he sought, he saw his principal's carriage at the door, and as he came out again he met Sabine just about to enter it. He could not avoid handing her in; and, struck with his appearance, she asked him what was the matter.

"A trifle," was the reply.

Insignificant as the incident was, it changed Anton's mood. Her courteous greeting and kindly inquiry raised his spirits. He felt that he was no longer a helpless child; and, raising his hand to heaven, his resolve was taken.

On his return to the office, he quietly went on with his work, heedless of the inquiring glances around him; and, when the office was closed, he hurried to Jordan's room, where Pix and Specht were already met. They all treated him with a commiseration not quite free from contempt; but he, having inquired from Jordan, in their presence, whether Fink had any right to give him such an order, and whether in his (Jordan's) opinion he had done wrong in resenting it, and having been satisfactorily answered on both heads, requested a few moments' private conversation, and then proceeded to declare that he should demand a public apology from Fink.

"Which he will never consent to," said Jordan, with a shake of the head.

"In that case I challenge him, either with sword or pistols."

Now, if Jordan had seen a dusky vapor rise from his ink-bottle, and take the form of a hideous genie, after the manner of fairy tales, and this genie had announced his intention of strangling him on the spot, he could not have been more amazed. "The devil is in you, Wohlfart," said he at last; "you want to fight a duel with Herr von Fink, a dead shot, while you are only an apprentice, and not half a year in the business: impossible."

"I should now be a student if I had not been brought up to be a merchant. Curses on business, if it so degrades me that I can not even ask satisfaction for insult. I shall go to Mr. Schröter at once, and give in my resignation."

Jordan's surprise increased. Here was the good-natured apprentice transformed before his eyes. At length it was agreed that he should take the message; but Fink was not found at home. "Very

possibly he has forgotten all about it, and is amusing himself at some club or other," was Jordan's commentary on the fact.

"In that case," said Anton, "I shall at once write to him, and have the letter laid on his table."

Meanwhile great conferences were held in Jordan's room; for, although Pix and Specht had promised secrecy, they indulged in such dark and mysterious hints that the truth was soon known. Baumann stole up to Anton to implore him not to peril two human lives for the sake of a rough word; and, when he was gone, Anton found a New Testament on his table, open at the words, "Bless them that curse you." Although not exactly in the mood to enter into their spirit, he took up the sacred book, and, having read the passages his good mother so often repeated to him, he prepared for bed in a softened frame of mind.

Meanwhile, a rumor of some impending catastrophe pervaded the whole house.

Sabine was in her treasure-chamber. Along its walls stood great oaken presses, richly carved; in the middle, a table with twisted legs, and a few old-fashioned chairs around. On the shelves of the presses appeared piles of linen, and rows of glass, china, and plate, collected by the taste of more than three generations. The air was fragrant with old lavender and recent eau de Cologne. Here Sabine reigned supreme. She herself took out and replaced whatever was wanted, and was not fond of admitting any other person. She was now standing at the table, which was covered with newly-washed linen, and, as she looked over the arabesques of the exquisitely fine table-napkins, a cloud passed over her brow. Two, three, four holes! She rang for the servant.

"It is intolerable, Franz," said she; "there are three spoiled now in No. 24; one of the gentlemen runs his fork through the napkins. There is surely no need for that here."

"That there is not," was the indignant reply; "the plate is under my own care."

"Which of the gentlemen is so reckless?" asked Sabine, severely.

"It is Herr von Fink," was the reply; "he has a habit of constantly running his fork through the napkins. It goes to my heart, Miss Sabine; but what can I do?"

Sabine hung her head. "I knew that it was he," she sighed; "but we can not go on thus. I will give you a set for Herr von Fink's use, and we must sacrifice it." She went to the cupboard, and began to look for one, but the choice was difficult; the beautiful table-linen was dear to her heart. At length, with a lingering look at the pattern, she sorrowfully laid a set on the servant's arm.

Franz still lingered. "He has burned a curtain in his bed-room," said he; "the pair is spoiled."

"And they were quite new!" sighed Sabine again. "Take them away to-morrow. What more, Franz? What else has happened?"

"Ah! ma'am," replied the servant, mysteriously, "Herr von Fink has insulted Herr Wohlfart, who is quite raging, and Herr Specht says there is to be a duel."

"A duel!" cried Sabine; "you must have misunderstood Herr Specht."

"No, indeed, ma'am, it's all too true. Something dreadful will happen. Herr Wohlfart brushed past me angrily, and did not touch his tea."

"Has my brother returned?"

"He does not come back till late to-day; he is on committee."

"Very well," said Sabine; "say nothing about it, Franz, to any one."

And Sabine sat down again at the table, but the damask was forgotten. "So that was what made poor Wohlfart look so sad! This wild youth—he came to us like a whirlwind, and the blossoms all fall in his path. His whole life is confusion and excitement, and he carries away with him all who approach within his reach. Even me—even me! Do what I will, I too feel his spell—so beautiful, so brilliant, so strange. He is always grieving me, and yet all day long I am thinking and caring about him. Oh, my mother! it was in this room that I sat at your feet for the last time when, with your hand on my head, you prayed that Heaven might shield me from every sorrow. Beloved mother, shield thy daughter against her own beating heart. Strengthen me against him, his ensnaring levity, his daring mockery."

Long did Sabine sit thus, communing with her guardian spirits. Then wiping her eyes, she resolutely returned to count and arrange the table-linen.

Anton had got into bed, and was just going to put out his candle, when a loud knock was heard at the door, and the man he least expected stood before him—Herr von Fink himself, with his riding-whip, and his usual careless manner. "Ah! in bed already!" said he, sitting astride on a chair close by. "I am sorry to disturb you. You have written me a very spirited letter, and Jordan has told me the rest, so I am come to answer you in person."

Anton was silent, and looked darkly at him.

"You are all good and very sensitive people," continued Fink, whipping his boots; "I am sorry that you took my words so to heart, but I am glad you have so much spirit."

"Before I listen further," said Anton, angrily, "I must know whether it is your intention to make an

apology to me before the other gentlemen. Perhaps a more experienced man would not consider this sufficient, but it would satisfy me."

"There you are right," nodded Fink; "you *may* be quite satisfied."

"Will you make this apology to-morrow morning?" inquired Anton.

"Why should I not? I don't want to fight with you, and I will declare before the assembled firm that you are a hopeful young man, and that I was wrong to insult one younger and—forgive me the expression—much greener than myself."

Our hero listened with mingled feelings, and then declared that he was not satisfied with this explanation.

"Why not?" asked Fink.

"Your manner at this moment is unpleasant to me; you show me less respect than is conventional. I know that I am young, have seen little of the world, and that in many points you are my superior; but, for these very reasons, it would better become you to behave differently."

Fink stretched out his hand good-humoredly, and said in reply, "Do not be angry with me, and give me your hand."

"I can not do so yet," cried Anton, with emotion; "you must first assure me that you do not treat the matter thus because you consider me too young or too insignificant, or because you are noble and I am not."

"Hark ye, Master Wohlfart," said Fink, "you are running me desperately hard. However, we'll settle these points too. As for my German nobility"—he snapped his fingers—"I would not give that for it; and as for your youth and position, all I can say is, that, after what I have seen this evening, the next time we quarrel I will fight you with any murderous weapon that you may prefer." And again he held out his hand, and said, "Now, then, take it; we have settled every thing."

Anton laid his hand in his, and Fink, having heartily shaken it, wished him good-night.

The following morning, the clerks being all assembled earlier than usual, Fink made his appearance last, and said, in a loud voice, "My lords and gentlemen of the export and home-trade, I yesterday behaved to Mr. Wohlfart in a manner that I now sincerely regret. I have already apologized to him, and I repeat that apology in your presence; and beg to say that our friend Wohlfart has behaved admirably throughout, and that I rejoice to have him for a colleague." At this the clerks smiled, Anton shook hands with Fink, Jordan with both of them, and the affair was settled.

But it had its results. It raised Anton's position in the opinion of his brother officials, and entirely changed his relation to Fink, who, a few days after, as they were running up stairs, stopped and invited him into his own apartment, that they might smoke a friendly cigar.

It was the first time that Anton had crossed the threshold of the volunteer, and he stood amazed at the aspect of his room. Handsome furniture all in confusion, a carpet soft as moss, on whose gorgeous flowers cigar-ashes were recklessly strewed. On one side a great press full of guns, rifles, and other weapons, with a foreign saddle and heavy silver spurs hanging across it; on the other, a large book-case, handsomely carved, and full of well-bound books, and above, the outspread wings of some mighty bird.

"What a number of books you have!" cried Anton, in delight.

"Memorials of a world in which I no longer live."

"And those wings—are they a part of those memorials?"

"Yes, they are the wings of a condor. I am proud of them, as you see," answered Fink, offering Anton a packet of cigars, and propelling a great arm-chair toward him with his foot. "And now let us have a chat. Are you knowing in horses?"

"No," said Anton.

"Are you a sportsman?"

"Not that either."

"Are you musical?"

"Very slightly so," said Anton.

"Why, what specialities have you, then, in Heaven's name?"

"Few in your sense of the word," answered Anton, indignantly. "I can love those who please me, and can, I believe, be a true friend; I can also resent insolence."

"Very well," said Fink, "I am quite aware of that. I know there is plenty of spirit in you. Now let me hear what fate has hurled you into this dreary tread-mill, where all must at last go dusty and resigned, like Liebold, or, at best, punctual and precise, like Jordan."

"It was a kind fate, after all," replied Anton, and began to tell the story of his life.

Fink kept nodding approvingly, and then said, "After all, the greatest difference between us is that you remember your mother, and I do not mine. I have known people who found less love in their home than you have done."

"You have seen so much of the world," pleaded Anton; "pray let me hear how you chanced to come here."

"Very simply," began Fink; "I have an uncle at New York, one of the aristocrats of the Exchange. When I was fourteen, he wrote to my father to send me over, as he meant to make me his heir. My father was a thorough merchant. I was packed up and sent across. In New York I soon became an accomplished scapegrace, was up to every species of folly, and kept race-horses at an age when German boys eat bread and butter, and play with tops in the streets. I had my favorite *danseuses* and *cantatrices*, and so bullied my servants, both white and black, that my uncle had enough to do to bribe them into taking it quietly. My friends had torn me from my home without consulting my feelings, and I did not care a straw for theirs. In short, I was the most renowned of the young scamps who pique themselves upon their devilry on the other side the water. It was on one of my birth-days that, returning home from a certain *petit souper*, the thought suddenly struck me that this career must come to an end, or it would end me. So I went to the harbor instead of to my uncle's house, and having, on my way, bought a coarse sailor's dress and put it on, I hired myself to an English captain. We sailed round Cape Horn, and when we reached Valparaiso I thanked the Englishman for my passage, treated the crew, and jumped on shore with twenty doubloons in my pocket, to make my fortune by the strength of my arm. I soon fell in with an intelligent man, who took me to his *hacienda*, where I won my laurels as herdsman. I was about half a year with him, and liked the life. I was treated as a useful guest, and much admired as sportsman and horseman. What did I need further? We were just going to have a great buffalo hunt, when suddenly two soldiers made their appearance on the scene, and trotted me off with them to the town, where I was made over to the American consul; and as my uncle had moved heaven and earth to track me, and as I found, from a long letter he had written, that my father was really unhappy, I resolved to return to Europe by the next ship. I at once told my father that I did not mean to be a merchant, but an agriculturist. At this the firm of Fink and Becker went distracted; but I stood to my point. At last we came to a compromise. I went for two years to a business-house in North Germany; then I came here to learn office-work, through which discipline they hope to tame me. So here I am now in a cloister. But it's all in vain. I humor my father by sitting here, but I shall only stay long enough to convince him that I am right, and then I shall take to agriculture."

"Will you buy land in this country?" inquired Anton.

"Not I," returned Fink; "I prefer riding half the day without coming to the end of my property."

"Then you mean to return to America?"

"There or elsewhere. I am not particular as to hemisphere. Meanwhile, I live like a monk, as you see," said Fink, laughing, as he mixed for himself a fiery potion, and pushed the bottle to Anton. "Brew for yourself, my lad," said he; "and let us chat away merrily, as becomes good fellows and reconciled foes."

From that evening forth Fink treated our hero with a friendship that he showed to none of the other clerks. He often took him into his room, and even went up the long staircase to his. Anton soon discovered that his new friend was a well-known character in the town—a perfect despot among the fashionables, and the leader of all riding and hunting parties given. Accordingly, he was much in society, and often did not come home till morning. Anton could not help admiring the strength and energy of this man, who could take his place at the desk after only two or three hours' sleep without showing a trace of fatigue. Fink also departed from the rigid regularity of the house by sometimes appearing after office-hours had begun, or leaving before they ended. Of this, however, Mr. Schröter took no notice.

Thus the winter passed away, and signs of spring penetrated even here. The visitors no longer brought in snow-flakes, but left brown footmarks. The brokers began to speak of the yellow blossoms of the olive, and at length Mr. Braun came in with a rose in his button-hole.

A year was gone since Anton crossed the little lake with the fleet of swans behind him. The whole year through he had thought of that one day.

CHAPTER VIII.

Veitel Itzig still occupied the same sleeping-quarters as on the evening of his arrival. If, according to the assertions of the police, every man must have some home or other—and, according to popular opinion, our home be where our bed stands—Veitel was remarkably little at his home. Whenever he could slip away from Ehrenthal's, he would wander about the streets, and watch for such youths as were likely to buy from or sell to him. He had always a few dollars to rattle in his pocket. He never addressed the rawest of schoolboys but as a grown-up man; he was a proficient in the art of bowing, could brighten up old brass and silver as good as new, was always ready to buy old black coats, and possessed the skill of giving them a degree of gloss which insured their

selling again.

With every bargain that he made for Ehrenthal he combined one for himself, and soon won a reputation that excited the envy of gray-bearded fripperers. He did not confine his activity to any one department either, but became a horse-dealer's agent, the *employé* of secret money-lenders —nay, a money-lender himself. Then he had the faculty of never getting tired, was all day on his feet, would run any length for a few pence, and never resented a harsh word. He allowed himself no other recreation than that of counting over his different transactions and their probable results. He lived upon next to nothing; a slice or two of bread abducted from Ehrenthal's kitchen would serve for his supper. Only once during the first year of his town life did he allow himself a glass of thin small beer, and that after a very profitable bargain.

He was always remarkably neat in his attire, considering it essential that a man of business should bear the aspect of a gentleman. In short, at the end of twelve months his six ducats had increased thirty fold.

He soon became indispensable in Mr. Ehrenthal's household. Nothing escaped him. He never forgot a face, and was as familiar with the daily state of the funds as any broker on 'Change. He still occupied the post of errand-boy, blacked Bernhard's boots, and dined in the kitchen; but it was plain that a stool in the office, which Ehrenthal kept for form's sake, would ultimately be his. This was the goal of his ambition—the paradise of his hopes. He soon saw that he only wanted three things to attain to it—a more grammatical knowledge of German, finer caligraphy, and an initiation into the mysteries of book-keeping, of which he as yet knew nothing.

Meanwhile, he had become a distinguished man in his caravanserai, one whom even Löbel Pinkus himself treated with respect. Veitel owed this to his own sharp-wittedness. Ever since his first arrival, the hollow sound of the wooden partition had a good deal excited him, and he had often vainly sought to explore the mystery. At last, one Saturday evening, he pretended to be ill, and remained at home, when his host and the rest of the household had gone to the synagogue.

Having had the good fortune to widen a chink in the partition, he beheld what delighted him in the extreme. A large dirty room, quite full of chests, coffers, and a chaos of desirable articles—old clothes, beds, piles of linen, stuffs, hangings, hardware-goods, etc. Aladdin at his first entrance into the magician's cave was hardly so enraptured as Itzig by his discovery, which he carefully kept to himself. Sometimes at night he heard a stir in the mysterious room; nay, once whispers reached him, some of them in the deep voice of Pinkus himself. One evening, too, coming home late, he saw boxes and bundles in a little carriage before the next house, all modestly covered up with white linen; and that very night two silent guests disappeared, and came back no more; from all of which Veitel concluded that his host was a commission agent, who had his reasons for carrying on business by night rather than by day.

It was as clear as possible. These goods were taken eastward, smuggled over the border, and spread all over Russia.

Veitel used his discovery judiciously, only giving such hints of it to Pinkus as to insure his most respectful behavior.

On one eventful day Veitel returned in thoughtful mood to his lodgings, and sat in the public room. He was pondering how best to get hold of some scribe who would initiate him into the mysteries of grammar and book-keeping for the smallest possible fee; nay, perhaps for a certain old black coat, which, owing to the peculiarity of its cut, he had never yet been able to dispose of. Happening to look up in the midst of his reflections, his eye fell on a stranger who held a pen in his hand, and conversed with a tradesman. It was plain that this man was no Jew. He was little and fat. He had a red turned-up nose, bushy gray hair, and he wore an old pair of spectacles, which had great difficulty in keeping on the nose aforesaid. Veitel remarked that he had on an unusually bad coat, and took snuff. It was plain that this man was a writer of some kind; so, as soon as he had seen him hand over a paper to the tradesman, and receive a small piece of money, Veitel approached, and began:

"I wished, sir, to ask you if you happened to know any one who could give lessons in writing and book-keeping to a man of my acquaintance?"

"And this man of your acquaintance is yourself?" said the little man.

"Why should I make a secret of it?" said Veitel. "Yes, it is I; but I am only a beginner, and able to give but little."

"He who gives little receives little, my dear fellow," said the elderly scribe, taking a pinch of snuff. "What is your name, and with whom are you placed?"

"My name is Veitel Itzig, and I am in Hirsch Ehrenthal's office."

The stranger grew attentive. "Ehrenthal," he said, "is a rich man, and a wise. I have had dealings with him in my time; he has a very fair knowledge of law. What fee are you willing to pay, provided a master could be found?"

"I do not know what should be given," said Veitel.

"Then I will tell you," said he of the spectacles. "I might or might not give you instructions myself; but first I must know more about you. If I were to do so, in consideration of your being but poor,

and a beginner, as you say, and also of having myself a little spare time on hand, I should only ask fifty dollars."

"Fifty dollars!" cried Veitel, in horror, sinking down on a stool, and repeating mechanically, "fifty dollars!"

"If you think that too much," said he of the spectacles, sharply, "know that I am not going to deal with a greenhorn; secondly, that I never gave my assistance for so little before; and, thirdly, that I should never think of teasing myself with you if I had not a fancy to spend a few weeks here."

"Fifty dollars!" cried Itzig; "why, I had thought it would not cost more than three or four, and a waistcoat and a pair of boots, and"—for Veitel saw that a storm was coming, and that the hat on the table was much dilapidated—"a hat almost as good as new."

"Go, you fool!" said the old man, "and look out for a parish schoolmaster."

"Then," said Itzig, "you are not a writing-master?"

"No, you great donkey," muttered the stranger; then, in a soliloquy, "Who could have supposed that Ehrenthal would keep such a booby as this? He takes me for a writing-master!"

"Who are you, then?"

"One with whom you have nothing to do," was the curt reply, and the little man rose and betook himself to the loft, while Veitel went off to ask Pinkus, as unconcernedly as he could, the name and calling of the new guest.

"Don't you know him?" said Pinkus, with an ironical smile; "take care you don't know him to your cost. Ask him his name; he knows it better than I do."

"If you will put no confidence in me, I will in you," said Veitel, and told him the whole conversation.

"So he would have given you instruction?" said Pinkus, shaking his head in amazement; "fifty dollars is a large sum; but many a man would give a hundred times as much to know what he does. Not that I care what you learn, or from whom."

Veitel went to his lair in greater perplexity than ever. Soon came Pinkus with a slight supper for the stranger, to whom he manifested a remarkable degree of sociability.

He now called him out on the balcony, and after a short talk in the dark, of which Veitel guessed himself the subject, re-entered the room, saying,

"This gentleman wishes to spend a few weeks here in private; therefore, even if questioned, you will not mention it."

"I don't even know who the gentleman is," said Veitel; "how could I tell any one that he is living here?"

"You may trust this young man," observed Pinkus to the stranger, and then wished the two good-night.

The man in spectacles sat down to his supper, every now and then casting such a glance at Veitel as an old raven might do at an unfledged chicken, who had innocently ventured within his reach.

Meanwhile, the thought darted across Itzig's mind that this mysterious person might be one of the chosen few—a possessor of the infallible receipt by which a poor man could become rich. Veitel knew now that there was no magic in this, that the receipt consisted in being more cunning than the rest of the world, and that this cunning was not without its serious consequences to its possessor; nay, it seemed to him as though to acquire it were to make a compact with Satan himself. His hand trembled, his pale face glowed, but his desire for more certain knowledge on the subject prevailed; and he told the stranger that, having heard that there was an art of always buying and selling to the best advantage, and so of making a fortune, he wished to ask whether it was that art that he (the stranger) could impart if he chose.

The old man pushed his plate away, and looked at him with amazement. "Either," said he, "you are a great dolt, or the best actor I have ever seen."

"No; I am only a dolt, but I wish to become clever," was the reply.

"A singular fellow," said the other, adjusting his spectacles so as to see him better. After a long examination, he went on: "What you, my lad, call an art, is only a knowledge of law, and the wisdom to turn it to one's own profit. He who is up to this can not fail to be a great man, for he will never be hanged." At which he laughed in a way that made a painful impression even upon Itzig.

"This art," he went on, "is not easily acquired, my boy. It takes much practice, a good head, prompt decision, and, above all, what the knowing call 'character.'" At which he laughed again.

Veitel felt that a crisis in his life had come. He fumbled for his worn-out pocket-book, and held it for a moment in his trembling hand. During that moment, all manner of conflicting thoughts flashed like lightning through his mind. He thought of his worthy mother's tearful farewell, and how she had said, "Veitel, this is a wicked world; gain thy bread honestly." He saw his old father

on his death-bed, with his white head drooping over his emaciated frame. He thought, too, of his fifty dollars gathered together so laboriously—of the insults he had had to bear for their sake—the threatened blows. At that thought he threw his pocket-book on the table, and cried, "Here is the money!" but he knew, at the same time, that he was committing sin, and an invisible weight settled on his heart.

A few hours later, the lamp had burned low, but still Veitel sat with mouth open, eyes fixed, and face flushed, listening to the old man, who was speaking about what most people would vote a tiresome subject—promissory notes.

Later still, the light was gone out; and the stranger, having emptied his bottle of brandy, was asleep on his straw bed, but still Veitel sat and wrote in fancy on the dark walls fraudulent bonds and receipts, while the sweat ran down from his brow; then he opened the balcony door, and, leaning on the railing, saw the water rush by like a mighty stream of ink. Again he traced bonds on the shadows of the opposite walls, and wrote receipts on the surface of the stream. The shadows fled, the water ran away; but his soul had contracted, in that dark night, a debt to be one day required with compound interest.

From that night Veitel hurried home every evening, and the lessons went on regularly.

We may here briefly relate what he gradually discovered as to the history of his teacher.

Herr Hippus had seen better days. He had once been a leading attorney, and had then taken to the Bar, where he soon gained a high reputation for his skill in making a doubtful cause appear a good one. At first he had no intention of gaining a fortune by confounding right and wrong. On the contrary, he had a painful sense of insecurity when retained for a client whose cause seemed to him unjust. He differed but little, indeed, from the best of his colleagues; perhaps he had somewhat fewer scruples; and, certainly, he was too fond of good red wine. He had a caustic wit, made an admirable boon companion, and, having a subtle intellect, was fond of paradoxes and skillful hair-splitting. Thanks to the red wine, he fell into the habit of spending much, and so into the necessity of making much also. Vanity and the love of excitement led him to devote the whole energy of his brilliant intellect to winning bad cases, and thus that frequent curse of barristers overtook him; all who had bad cases applied to him. For a long time this annoyed him; but gradually, very gradually, he became demoralized by the constant contact with falsehood and wrong. His wants went on increasing, temptations multiplied, and conscience weakened. But, though long hollow within, he continued outwardly prosperous, and many prophesied that he, with his immense practice, would die one of the richest men in the city, when, cunning lawyer as he was, he had the misfortune to provoke inquiry by appearing in a desperate case. The result was, that he was at once disgraced, and vanished like a falling star from the circle of his professional brethren. He soon lost the last remains of respectability. In reality, he had amassed very little, and his love of drink went on increasing. He sunk to a mere frequenter of brandy-shops, a promoter of unfair litigation, and an adviser of rogues and swindlers. Owing to some of these practices it was that he now found it convenient, under the pretense of a long journey, to become for a time invisible. Pinkus was an old ally, and hence the opportunity for Veitel's lessons.

These lessons soon became an absolute necessity to the old man's heart—ay, to his heart; for, bad as he was, its warmth was not yet utterly extinguished.

It grew a melancholy pleasure to him to open out his mental resources to the youth, whose attention flattered him, and gradually he began to attach himself to him. He would put by a portion of his supper, and even of his brandy for him, and enjoy seeing him consume it. Once, when Veitel had caught a feverish cold, and lay shivering under his thin coverlet, the old man spread his own blankets over him, and felt a glow of pleasure on seeing his grateful smile.

Veitel repaid these sparks of friendly feeling with a degree of reverence, greater than ever pupil felt before. He did many small kindnesses on his side, and made Hippus the confidant of all his own transactions. It is true that this intimacy had its thorns. The old man could not refrain from practicing his sharp wit on Itzig, who called him, too, by many an irreverent name when he had stupefied himself with brandy; but, on the whole, they got on capitally, and were essential to each other.

During the months that the old man spent in this retreat, Veitel learned much besides the special science already alluded to; he improved in speaking and writing German, and gained a great amount of general information. This change did not escape Mr. Ehrenthal, who mentioned it in his family circle much as a farmer would the promising points of a young bullock; and, at the end of the quarter, announced of his own accord to Veitel that the shoe-blacking and kitchen dinner were to cease, and that he was prepared to give him a place in his office, and a small salary besides. Veitel received the long-desired intelligence with great self-command, and returned his humble thanks, adding, "I have still one very, very great favor to ask. May I have the honor of dining once a week at Mr. Ehrenthal's table, that I may see how people conduct themselves in good society? If you will do me this kindness, you may deduct it from my salary."

Ehrenthal shook his head, and said that he must refer the question to his wife; the result of which consultation was, that on the following Sabbath Veitel was invited to eat a roast goose with the family.

CHAPTER IX.

One warm summer evening, office hours being over, Fink said to Anton, "Will you accompany me to-day? I am going to try a boat that I have just had built." Anton was ready at once; so they jumped into a carriage, and drove to the river. Fink pointed out a round boat that floated on the water like a pumpkin, and said, in a melancholy tone, "There it is—a perfect horror, I declare! I cut out the model for the builder myself too; I gave him all manner of directions, and this is the sea-gull's egg he has produced."

"It is very small," replied Anton, with an uncomfortable foreboding.

"I'll tell you what it is," cried Fink to the builder, who now came forward, respectfully touching his hat, "our deaths will be at your door, for we shall inevitably be drowned in that thing, and it will be owing to your want of sense."

"Sir," replied the man, "I have made it exactly according to your directions."

"You have, have you?" continued Fink. "Well, then, as a punishment, you shall go with us; you must see that it is but fair that we should be drowned together."

"No, sir, that I will not do, with so much wind as this," returned the man, decidedly.

"Then stay ashore and make sawdust pap for your children. Give me the mast and sails." He fitted in the little mast, hoisted and examined the sails, then took them down again, and laid them at the bottom of the boat, threw in a few iron bars as ballast, told Anton where to sit, and, seizing the two oars, struck out from shore. The pumpkin danced gayly on the water, to the great delight of the builder and his friends, who stood watching it.

"I wanted to show these lazy fellows that it is possible to row a boat like this against the stream," said Fink, replacing the mast, setting the sail, and giving the proper directions to his pupil. The wind came in puffs, sometimes filling the little sail, and bending the boat to the water's edge, sometimes lulling altogether.

"It is a wretched affair," cried Fink, impatiently; "we are merely drifting now, and we shall capsize next."

"If that's the case," said Anton, with feigned cheerfulness, "I propose that we turn back."

"It doesn't matter," replied Fink, coolly; "one way or other, we'll get to land. You can swim?"

"Like lead. If we do capsize I shall sink at once, and you will have some trouble to get me up again."

"If we find ourselves in the water, mind you do not catch hold of me, which would be the surest way of drowning both. Wait quietly till I draw you out; and, by the way, you may as well be pulling off your coat and boots; one is more comfortable in the water *en négligé*." Anton did so at once.

"That's right," said Fink. "To say the truth, this is wretched sport. No waves, no wind, and now no water. Here we are, aground again! Push off, will you? Hey, shipmate! what would you say if this dirty shore were suddenly to sink, and we found ourselves out on a respectable sea—water as far as the horizon, waves as high as that tree yonder, and a good hearty wind, that blew your ears off, and flattened your nose on your face?"

"I can't say that I should like it at all," replied Anton, nervously.

"And yet," said Fink, "there are few plights so bad but they might be still worse. Just think; in that case it would be some comfort to have even these good-for-nothing planks between us and the water; but what if we ourselves lay on the stream—no boat, no shore—mountain waves all round?"

"I at least should be lost!" cried Anton, with genuine horror.

"I have a friend, a good friend, to whom I trust implicitly in any crisis, to whom this once happened. He sauntered down to the shore on a glorious evening, had a fancy to bathe, stripped, plunged, and struck out gayly. The waves lifted him up and drew him down; the water was warm, the sunset dyed the sea with ten thousand exquisite hues, and the golden sky glowed above him. The man shouted with ecstasy."

"You were that man?" inquired Anton.

"True. I went on swimming for about an hour, when the dull look of the sky reminded me that it was time to return; so I made for land; and what think you, Master Wohlfart, that I saw?"

"A ship?" said Anton; "a fish?"

"No. I saw *nothing*—the land had vanished. I looked on all sides—I rose as high as I could out of the water—there was nothing to be seen but sea and sky. The current that set out from the land had treacherously carried me out. I was in mid ocean, somewhere between England and America, that I knew; but this geographical fact was by no means soothing to one in my circumstances. The sky grew dark, the hollows filled with black uncanny shadows, the waves got higher, and a cold wind blew round my head; nothing was to be seen but the dusky red of the sky and the

rolling waters."

"Horrible!" cried Anton.

"It was a moment when no priest in the world could have prevented a poor human being from wishing himself a pike, or some such creature. I knew by the sky where the land lay. Now came the question, which was stronger—the current or my arm? I began a deadly struggle with the treacherous ocean deities. I should not have done much by such swimming as they teach in schools. I rolled like a porpoise, and struck out desperately for about two hours; then the labor got hard indeed. It was the fiercest battle I ever fought. The sky grew dark, the emerald waves pitchy black, only they were crested with foam that blew in my face. At times a single star peeped from the clouds—that was my only comfort. So I swam on and on, and still there was no land to be seen. I was tired out, and the hideous darkness sometimes made me think of giving up the struggle. The clouds gathered darker, the stars disappeared; I began to doubt whether I was taking the right direction, and I was making very little way. I knew the game was nearly up—my chest heaved—countless sparks rose before my eyes. Just then, my boy, when I had glided half unconsciously down the slope of a wave, I felt something under my feet that was no longer water."

"It was land!" cried Anton.

"Yes," said Fink; "it was good firm sand. I found myself on shore about a mile to leeward of my clothes, and fell down like a dead seal." Then stopping, and with a steady look at Anton, "Now, mate, get ready!" cried he; "take your legs from under the bench; I am going to tack and make for shore. Now for it!"

At that moment came a violent gust of wind; the mast creaked, the boat heeled over, and could not right herself. According to promise, Anton went to the bottom without any more ado. Quick as lightning Fink dived after him, brought him up, and, with a violent effort, reached a spot whence they could wade ashore. "Deuce take it," gasped Fink; "take hold of my arm, can't you?"

But Anton, who had swallowed a quantity of water, was hardly conscious, and only waved Fink off.

"I do believe he'll be down again," cried the latter, impatiently, catching hold of him and making for the shore.

A crowd had by this time assembled round the spot where Fink was holding his companion in his arms and exhorting him to recover himself. At length Anton opened his eyes.

"Why, Wohlfart," said Fink, anxiously, "how goes it, my lad? You have taken the matter too much to heart. Poncho y ponche!" cried he to the by-standers; "a cloak and a glass of rum—that will soon bring him round."

A cloak was willingly lent, and our hero carried to the builder's house.

"Here is an end of boat, sails, oars, and all," said Fink, reproachfully, "and of our coats into the bargain. Did not I tell you that it was a good-for-nothing tub?"

For an hour, at least, Fink tended his victim with the greatest tenderness, but it was late before Anton was sufficiently recovered to walk home.

The next day was Sunday, and the principal's birth-day besides. On this important occasion, the gentlemen of the office spent some hours after dinner with the family circle, and coffee and cigars were served. As they were sitting down to table, the good-natured cousin said to Fink, "The whole town is full of the fearful risk which you and Mr. Wohlfart ran yesterday."

"Not worth mentioning, my dear lady!" replied Fink, carelessly; "I only wanted to see how Master Wohlfart would behave in drowning. I threw him into the water, and he was within a hair's-breadth of remaining at the bottom, considering it indiscreet to give me the trouble of saving him. Only a German is capable of such self-sacrificing politeness."

"But," cried the cousin, "this is a sheer tempting of Providence. It is dreadful to think of it!"

"It is dreadful to think of the impurity of your river. The water sprites that inhabit it must be a dirty set. But Wohlfart did not mind their mud. He fell into their arms with enthusiasm. He threw both legs over the boat's edge before there was any occasion."

"You told me to do so," cried Anton, in self-exculpation.

"Poor Mr. Wohlfart!" exclaimed the astonished cousin. "But your coats! This morning I met a policeman with the wet bundle in his arms, and it was he who told me of your accident."

"The coats were fished up at an early hour," said Fink, "but Karl doubts whether they will ever dry. Meanwhile, Wohlfart's boots are on a voyage of discovery toward the ocean."

Anton blushed with anger at his friend's jests, and looked stealthily toward the upper end of the table. The merchant glanced darkly at the cheerful Fink. Sabine was pale and downcast—the cousin alone was fluent in her pity for the coats.

The dinner was more solemn than usual. After the plates were removed, Mr. Liebold rose to fulfill the arduous duty imposed upon him by his position—to propose the health of their principal. He

took all possible pains not to retract or qualify his eulogiums and good wishes; but even this toast fell flat—a certain painful excitement seemed to prevail at the head of the table.

After dinner they all stood round in groups, drinking their coffee; and bold spirits—Mr. Pix, for instance, ventured upon a cigar as well. Meanwhile, Anton roamed through the suite of rooms, looking at the paintings on the walls, turning over albums, and fighting off ennui as well as he could. In this way he reached the end room, and stopped there in amazement. Sabine stood before him, tears falling from her eyes. She was sobbing silently, her slender form shaken by the conflict within, but yet she was trying to repress her grief with an energy that only made it the more touching.

As Anton, filled with deepest sympathy, turned to go, she looked round, composed herself, passed her handkerchief over her eyes, and said kindly, "Take care, Mr. Wohlfart, that the foolhardiness of your friend leads you into no fresh danger. My brother would be very sorry that your intercourse with him should prove an injury to you."

"Miss Sabine," replied Anton, looking reverentially at her, "Fink is as noble as he is reckless. He saved me at the peril of his own life."

"Oh yes!" cried Sabine, with an expression Anton did not quite understand; "he loves to play with whatever is sacred to others."

At that moment Mr. Jordan came to request her to give them some music. She went at once.

Anton was excited to the utmost. Sabine Schröter stood so high in the estimation of the gentlemen of the counting-house that they paid her the compliment of rarely naming her. Most of the younger clerks had been desperately in love with her; and though the flames had burned down for want of fuel, yet the embers still glowed in the innermost recesses of their hearts. All alike would have fought for her against any enemy in the world. But they looked upon her as a marble saint, a being beyond the influence of human weaknesses.

Anton, however, now doubted whether she were really this. To him, too, the young lady of the house had been like the moon, only visible afar off, and on one side. Daily he sat opposite her, saw the delicate sadness of her face—the deep glance of her beautiful eyes—heard her speak the same commonplace sentences, and knew no more of her. All at once an accident made him her confidant. He felt sure, by many a token, that this grief was connected with Fink; and although he had for him the devoted admiration that an unsophisticated youth readily bestows upon a daring and experienced comrade, yet, in this case, he found himself enlisted on the lady's side against his friend; he resolved to watch him narrowly, and be to her a brotherly protector, a faithful confidant—all, in short, that was sympathizing and helpful.

A few hours later, Sabine sat in the window with folded hands. Her brother had laid aside his newspaper, and was watching her anxiously. At last he rose, stepped silently up to her, and laid his hand on her head. She clasped him in her arms. There they stood, leaning against each other, two friends who had so shared their lives that each knew the other's thoughts without a spoken word.

Tenderly stroking his sister's hair, the merchant began: "You know what large dealings we have with Fink's father?"

"I know that you are not satisfied with the son."

"I could not help taking him into our house, but I regret the hour I did so."

"Do not be hard upon him," pleaded the sister, kissing her brother's hand; "think how much there is that is noble in his character."

"I am not unjust toward him. But it is yet to be proved whether he will be a blessing or a curse to his fellow-men. He may become a more paltry aristocrat, who wastes his energies in refined self-indulgence, or a covetous, unscrupulous money-maker, like his uncle in America."

"He is not heartless!" murmured Sabine; "his friendship for Wohlfart shows that."

"He does but play with him—throws him into the water, and picks him out again."

"Nay," cried Sabine; "he esteems his good sense and high principles, and feels that he has a better nature than his own."

"Do not deceive yourself and me," replied the merchant; "I know the fascination that this strange man has long had for you. I have said nothing, for I could trust you. But, now that I see that he makes you really unhappy, I can not but wish for his absence. He shall leave our house without delay."

"Oh no, no!" cried Sabine, wringing her hands. "No, Traugott, that shall not, must not be! If there be any way of rescuing him from the evil influences of his past life, it is the being with you. To see, to take part in the regular activity, the high honor of your mercantile career, is salvation to him. Brother," continued she, taking his hand, "I have no secrets from you; you have found out my foolish weakness; but I promise you that henceforth it shall be no more to me than the recollection of some tale that I have read. Never by look or word will I betray it; only do not, oh! do not be angry with him—do not send him away, and that on my account."

"But how can I tell whether his remaining here may not subject you to a painful conflict?"

inquired the merchant. "Our position as regards him is difficult enough without this. He ranks as a brilliant match in every sense of the word. His father has intrusted him to me. If an attachment were to spring up between you, it would be treachery to his father to withhold it from him. It might seem to him as if we had a wish to secure the young heir; and he, accustomed as he is to easy conquests, might perhaps laugh at what he would call your weakness and my long-headedness. The very thought calls up all my pride."

"Brother," cried Sabine, with burning cheeks, "do not forget that I am your sister. I am a merchant's daughter, and he would never belong entirely to our class. I am as proud as you, and have always had the conviction that not all the love in the world could ever fill the gulf between us. Trust me," continued she, with tears; "you shall see no more sad looks. But be kinder to him; think what his fate has been, tossed about among strangers; think how he has grown up without affection, without a home; spoiled in many ways, but still with a high sense of honor, an abhorrence of all that is little. Trust me, and be kinder to him."

"He shall stay," said the merchant; "but besides, my darling, there is another whom we should seek to guard from his influence."

"Wohlfart!" cried Sabine, cheerfully; "oh, I will answer for him."

"You undertake a good deal. So he, too, is a favorite?"

"He is tender-hearted and honorable, and devoted to you; and he has plenty of spirit too. Trust him, he will be a match for Fink. I happened to meet him at the time that Fink had insulted him, and I have given him a place in my heart ever since."

"How does this heart find room for every thing?" cried the merchant, playfully; "above and beyond all, the great store-room, the oaken presses of our grandmother, and the piles of white linen; then, in a side-chamber apart, your strict brother; then—"

"Then all the others in the ante-chamber," broke in Sabine.

Meanwhile Fink entered Anton's room, humming a tune, little suspecting the storm in the front part of the house, and, truth to tell, little caring what they thought about him there. "I have fallen into disgrace on your account, my son," cried he, merrily. "His majesty has treated me all the day long with killing indifference, and the black-haired has not deigned me a single glance—good sort of people, but desperately matter of fact. That Sabine has at bottom plenty of life and spirit, but she plagues herself about the merest trifles. She would raise a question as to whether it was a fly's duty to scratch its head with the right leg or the left. Why, you are on the way to be looked upon as the 'Mignon' of the counting-house, and I as your evil genius. Never mind; to-morrow we will go together to the swimming-school."

And so it was. From that day forth Fink delighted to initiate his young friend into all his own pursuits. He taught him to swim, to ride, to leap, to shoot at a mark, and even threatened to get him an invitation to a hunting-party. Against this Anton vehemently protested.

Anton on his side rewarded him by the greatest devotion. They were happy evenings for both when, sitting under the shadow of the condor's wings, they chatted away and laughed so loud that through the open window the sound reached old Pluto the watch-dog, who, feeling himself the guardian of the establishment, and considered by all as a distinguished member of it, woke up to bay out his hearty sympathy with their enjoyment—ay, they were happy hours; for their intimacy ripened for the first time in the life of either into sincere friendship. And yet Anton never left off watching Fink's bearing to Sabine; although he did not name her to him, he was always expecting to hear of some important event: a betrothal, or a quarrel between Fink and the merchant, or something extraordinary. But nothing of the kind occurred; the solemn daily meals went on, and Sabine's behavior to both friends was the same as before.

Another year had passed away, the second since our apprentice's arrival, and again the roses blossomed. One evening Anton bought a large nosegay of them, and knocked with them at the door of Jordan, who was a great lover of flowers. He was surprised to find all the clerks assembled, as they had been on the day of his arrival, and he saw at a glance that they were embarrassed by his appearance. Jordan hurried to meet him, and, with a slight degree of confusion, requested that he would leave them for about an hour, as they were discussing a subject into which he, as an apprentice, could not enter. It was the first time that these kind-hearted men had ever allowed him to feel any difference between his position and theirs, and therefore his banishment slightly depressed him. He carried back his nosegay, placed it with a resigned air upon his own table, and took up a book.

Meanwhile a solemn deliberation was going on in Jordan's room. He rose, struck the table with a ruler, and went on to state that a colleague having, as they all knew, left the business, a vacancy had occurred, which Mr. Schröter himself wished should be filled by Wohlfart; but as his case would thus be made exceptional—he having been an apprentice only two years instead of four—the principal kindly referred the decision to the body of the clerks.

An imposing silence succeeded to these words, which was at length interrupted by Mr. Pix proposing punch, and that they should order in the kettle for the tea-drinkers.

The other gentlemen preserved a dignified silence, looked with solemnity at the preparations going forward, and each felt his responsibility and his importance as a man and a clerk.

The next question was, "How shall we vote?"

It was decided that the youngest should begin.

Specht was the youngest. "First of all, I have to remark that Herr von Fink is not present," said he, looking around in some excitement.

A general murmur arose, "He does not belong to us; he is a volunteer."

"In that case," continued Specht, somewhat taken down by this universal opposition, "I am of opinion that Anton ought, according to custom, to remain an apprentice for four years; but, as he is a good fellow, and likely to prove useful, I am also of opinion that an exception should be made in his favor; while I propose that, in order to remind him of his former position, he be appointed to make tea for us during a year, and to mend a hundred pens for each of his colleagues."

"Stuff and nonsense!" muttered Pix; "you have always such overstrained notions."

"What do you mean by overstrained notions?" inquired Specht, angrily.

"I must call you to order," said Mr. Jordan.

The rest of the colleagues proceeded to give in their adherence to the plan. Baumann did so with enthusiasm. At last it came to the turn of Pix. "Gentlemen," said he, "what is the use of much talking? His knowledge of business is fair, considering that he is but a young fellow; his manner is pleasant—the servants respect him. According to my notions, he is too tender and considerate; but it is not given to all to manage others. He is a poor hand at cards, and can make little or nothing of punch—that's about what he is. But, as these last peculiarities have nothing to do with the present proposal, I see no reason why he should not, from the present date, become our colleague."

Then came Purzel and Liebold, who each gave his vote in his own characteristic way, and the affair was settled. Baumann was about to rush off and call Anton, when Specht insisted upon the solemnity of a deputation, and Liebold and Pix were appointed to escort the astonished youth, who could not conceive what it all meant, till Jordan, advancing to meet him, said, with the utmost cordiality, "Dear Wohlfart, you have now worked with us two years; you have taken pains to learn the business, and have won the friendship of us all. It is the will of the principal, and our united wish, that the term of your apprenticeship should be abridged, and that you should to-morrow enter upon your duties as a clerk. We congratulate you sincerely, and hope that, as our colleague, you will show us the same friendly regard that you have hitherto shown." So said worthy Mr. Jordan, and held out his hand.

Anton stood for a moment as if stupefied, and then there followed an amount of hand-shaking and congratulation never witnessed before in that apartment. Next came toasts, speeches, and, after an evening of most hearty enjoyment, the colleagues separated at a late hour.

Anton could not go to bed, however, without imparting his good fortune to his friend Fink. So he went to meet him on his return home, and told him the important event in the bright moonlight. Fink made a grand flourish in the air with his riding-whip, and said, "Bravo! bravo! I should not have given our despot credit for such contempt of precedent. You will be launched a year the sooner into life."

The following day the principal called the new clerk into his own sanctuary, and received his thanks with a smile.

Last of all, at dinner, the ladies congratulated the new official. Sabine even came down the whole length of the table to where Anton stood, and greeted him in the kindest terms. A bottle of wine was placed beside each cover; while the merchant, raising his glass, and bowing to our happy hero, said, with earnest kindness, "Dear Wohlfart, we drink to the memory of your excellent father."

CHAPTER X.

One winter morning Anton was reading diligently the "Last of the Mohicans," while the first snow-flakes were dancing down outside his window, when Fink came in hurriedly, saying, "Anton, let me have a look at your wardrobe?" He opened the different drawers, examined their contents, and, shaking his head, said, "I will send my tailor to measure you for a new suit."

"I have no money," replied Anton, laughing.

"Nonsense!" cried Fink; "the tailor will give you as much credit as you like."

"I do not, however, choose to buy on credit," said Anton, settling himself upon the sofa to argue the point with his friend.

"You must make an exception in this case. It is high time that you should see more of society, and I am going to introduce you."

Anton started up, blushed, and exclaimed, "It won't do, Fink; I am quite a stranger, and have no position to give me confidence."

"That's the very reason why you must go into society," replied Fink, severely. "You must get rid of this miserable timidity as soon as possible. Can you waltz? Have you any remote conception of the figures of a quadrille?"

"A few years ago I had some dancing-lessons in Ostrau."

"Very well; now you shall have some more. Frau von Baldereck informed me yesterday that a few families purposed instituting a private assembly, where their half-grown chickens might learn to spread their wings, secure from birds of prey. It is to be held in her house, as she has a chicken of her own to bring up for the market. It's the very thing for you, and I will introduce you."

"Fink," said our hero, "this is another of your mad adventures. Frau von Baldereck belongs to the aristocratic set; you would only occasion me the mortification of being rejected, or, worse, treated with hauteur."

"Is he not enough to put a saint out of patience?" cried Fink, in dudgeon; "you and your class have more reason to hold your heads high than half of those here assembled. And yet you are the very people, with your timidity and subserviency, to keep up their foolish pretensions! How can you suppose yourself their inferior? I should never have expected to have found such meanness in you."

"You mistake me," replied Anton, angry in his turn. "I am not wanting in self-respect; but it would be foolish and unbecoming to intrude into a circle where I am not wished for, and where a man would be despised for being in a counting-house."

"Nonsense! you *are* wished for. There is a paucity of gentlemen. The lady of the house (I am a favorite—no honor, mind you) has asked me to introduce three young men of my acquaintance, and so nothing can be more simple. You pay for your lessons like another; and whether you whirl round a countess or a young *bourgeoise*, what matters it?"

"It won't do," replied Anton, shaking his head; "I have an inward conviction that it is unbecoming, and wish to be guided by this."

"Well, then," said Fink, impatiently, "I have one other proposal to make. You shall this very day call with me upon Frau von Baldereck. I will introduce you as Anton Wohlfart, one of the clerks in the firm of T. O. Schröter. Not a word shall be said of these dancing-lessons, and you shall see that she herself will invite you. If she does not, or if she shows the very least hauteur, you can stay away. This you can not object to."

Anton demurred. The case seemed by no means so clear as Fink made it out, but he was no longer able to weigh it dispassionately. For years past he had yearned for the free, dignified, refined life of the upper circles. Whenever he heard music—whenever he read of the doings of the aristocracy, the turreted castle and the noble maiden rose before him in the golden light of poetry. He consented to the proposal of his experienced friend.

An hour later came the tailor, and Fink himself determined the cut of the new suit with a technical precision which impressed the tailor no less than it did Anton.

That afternoon, as the November sun melted away the snow, Fink, with a large bundle of papers in his hand, loitered down the most unfrequented streets, evidently on the look-out for some one or other. At last he crossed over, and encountered, apparently to his surprise, two elegantly-dressed gentlemen who were sauntering, on the opposite side.

"Ah! Fink."

"Oh, how do you do?"

"Where are you wandering to in this absent mood?" inquired young Von Tönnchen.

"I am looking," replied Fink, in a melancholy voice, "for two good fellows who will come and drink a bottle of wine with me this gloomy afternoon, and assist me in a little matter of business beforehand."

"What! a duel?" inquired Herr von Zernitz.

"No, fair sir," replied Fink; "you know that I have forsworn all evil ways, and am become a hard-working man of business, a worthy son of the firm of Fink and Becker. I only want two witnesses to a legal document, which must be executed at once. Will you accompany me for a quarter of an hour to the notary—for the rest of the evening to Feroni's?"

The two gentlemen were only too happy. Fink took them to a well-known lawyer, to whom he delivered a long and important-looking document, written in English, and setting forth that Fritz von Fink was the lawful proprietor of the territory of Fowling-floor, in the State of New York. This, he explained to the lawyer, he now wished to make over to Anton Wohlfart, at present clerk in the house of T. O. Schröter, imploring the man of business, at the same time, to keep the matter secret, which he duly promised; and the two witnesses attested the deed. As they left, Fink earnestly besought them never to reveal the circumstance to Mr. Wohlfart. They both gave him their word of honor, evincing, however, some degree of curiosity as to the whole transaction.

"I can not explain it to you," said Fink, "there being about it a political mystery that is not quite clear even to myself."

"Is the estate large that you have just ceded?" inquired Von Tönnchen.

"An estate!" said Fink, looking up to the sky; "it is no estate. It is a district, mountain and vale, wood and water—but a small part, certainly, of America. But then, what *is* large? On the other side of the Atlantic we measure things by a very different scale to that used in this corner of Germany. At all events, I shall never again call the property mine."

"But who is this Wohlfart?" asked the lieutenant.

"You shall make his acquaintance," answered Fink. "He is a handsome youth from the heart of the province, over whom a remarkable destiny hovers—of which, however, he knows, and is to know, nothing. But enough of business. I have a plan for you this winter. You are old boys, it is true; but you must take dancing-lessons."

And, so saying, he led the way into Feroni's, where the three were soon deep in a bottle of port wine.

Frau von Baldereck was one of the main supports of the very best society, consisting as it did of the families of the county nobility, the officers, and a few of the highest officials. It was difficult to say what had given this lady her social importance, for she was neither very well connected, nor very rich, nor very elegant, nor very intellectual. Perhaps it was this absence of all marked superiority which accounted for it. She had a very large acquaintance, was rigidly conventional, valued every one according to a social standard, and, therefore, her estimate was always attended to. She had a young daughter who promised to be very like her, and she inhabited a suite of large rooms on a first floor, where for many years dramatic representations, *tableaux vivants*, rehearsals, etc., had been constantly held.

This influential lady was deep in consultation with her mantuamaker as to how the new dress of her daughter could be best made so as to display her faultless bust without exciting comment at the dancing-lesson, when her favorite, Fink, was announced. Dismissing a while the weighty consideration, she hurried down to give him a most gracious reception.

After a few introductory remarks upon the last evening party at which they had met, Fink began:

"I have obeyed your orders, lady patroness, and shall bring you three gentlemen."

"And who are they?"

"First, Lieutenant von Zernitz."

"A great acquisition," was the reply, for the lieutenant was considered an accomplished officer. He made neat verses, was great in the arrangement of *tableaux vivants*, and was said to have written a tale in some annual or other. "Herr von Zernitz is a delightful companion."

"Yes," said Fink; "but he can not bear port wine. The second is young Von Tönnchen."

"An old family," observed the mistress of the house; "but is he not a little—just a little—wild?" added she, modestly.

"By no means," said Fink; "though sometimes, perhaps, he makes other people so."

"And the third?" inquired the lady.

"The third is a Mr. Wohlfart."

"Wohlfart!" returned she, somewhat perplexed; "I do not know the name."

"Very likely not," said Fink, coolly; "Mr. Wohlfart came here from the country two or three years ago, to get an insight into the mysteries of business; he is now in Schröter's office, like myself."

"But, my dear Fink!" interposed the lady.

Fink was by no means taken aback. Comfortably reclining in his arm-chair, he went on: "Mr. Wohlfart is a striking and interesting person. There are some singular circumstances connected with him. I think him the finest fellow I ever met with. He comes from Ostrau, and calls himself the son of an accountant there, now dead. But there hangs a mystery over him, of which he himself knows nothing."

"But, Herr von Fink," said the lady, anxious to be heard.

Fink looked intently at the cornice, and went on. "He is already the possessor of certain lands in America. The title-deeds have passed through my hands confidentially; but he must know nothing of it for the present. I myself believe that he has every prospect of more than a million some future day. Did you ever see the late archduke?"

"No," said the lady, with some curiosity.

"There are people," continued Fink, "who maintain that Anton is strikingly like him. What I have said is a secret, however, of which my friend knows nothing. One thing is certain, that the late emperor, on the occasion of his last journey through the province, stopped at Ostrau, and had a long conversation with the pastor there."

Now this last circumstance was true, and Anton had chanced to mention it to Fink among other of his childish recollections. He had also stated that the pastor in question had been an army-

chaplain in the last war, and that the emperor had asked him in what corps he had served.

Fink, however, did not think it necessary to descend to such minutiæ. Frau von Baldereck declared herself ready to receive Mr. Wohlfart.

"One word more," said Fink, rising; "what I have confided to you, good fairy"—the fairy weighed upward of ten stone—"must remain a secret between us. I am sure I may trust to your delicacy what, were it to be spoken of by others, I should resent as a liberty taken with me and my friend, Mr. Wohlfart." He pronounced the name so ironically that the lady felt convinced that this gentleman, now under the disguise of a clerk, would soon burst upon the world as a prince.

"But," said she, as they parted, "how shall I introduce him to my acquaintance?"

"Only as my best friend; for whom I will answer, in every respect, as a great addition to our circle."

When Fink found himself in the street, he muttered irreverently enough, "How the old lady swallowed all my inventions, to be sure! As the son of plain honest parents, they would have given the poor lad the cold shoulder; now, however, they will all behave with a courtesy that will charm my young friend. I never thought that old sand-hole and its tumble-down hut would turn out so useful."

The seed that Fink had sown fell on fruitful soil. Frau von Baldereck, who had a maternal design upon him, was only too glad to have a chance of him as her daughter's partner in these dancing-lessons, which she had not expected him to attend. The few hints that she ventured to throw out about Anton being confirmed by certain mysterious observations made by two officers, a rumor became current that a gentleman of immense fortune, for whom the Emperor of Russia had purchased extensive possessions in America, would make his appearance at the dancing-lessons.

A few days later, Anton was taken by Fink to call upon Frau von Baldereck, from whom he received the most gracious, nay, pressing invitation to join their projected *réunions*.

The visit over, Anton, tripping down stairs on his Mentor's arm, remarked, in all simplicity, that he was surprised to find it so easy to converse with people of distinction.

Fink muttered something, which might or might not be an assent, and said, "On the whole, I am satisfied with you. Only you must, this winter, get over that confounded habit of blushing. It's bad enough in a black neckcloth, but what will it be in a white one? You will look like an apoplectic Cupid."

Frau von Baldereck, however, thought this modesty exceedingly touching; and when her daughter announced decidedly that she liked Fink much the best of the two, she shook her head, and smiling, replied, "You are no judge, dear; there is a nobility and natural grace in every thing the stranger does and says that is perfectly enchanting."

Meanwhile the great day of the opening lesson arrived, and Fink, having superintended Anton's toilette, carried him off to the scene of action.

As they went down stairs, the door of Jordan's room softly opened, and Specht, stretching out his long neck to look after them, cried out to those within, "He is gone. Did you ever hear of such a thing? Why, there are only the nobility there! A pretty story it will make."

"After all, why should he not go, since he is invited?" said the good-natured Jordan. To this no one knew exactly what to answer, till Pix cried angrily, "I do not like his accepting such an invitation. He belongs to us and to the office. He will learn no good among such people."

"These dancing-lessons must be curious scenes," chimed in Specht; "frivolous in the extreme, mere love-making and dueling—for which we know Wohlfart has always had a turn. Some fine morning we shall have him going out with pistols under his arm, and not returning on his feet."

"Nonsense!" replied the irritable Pix; "they don't fight more than other people."

"Then he will have to speak French?"

"Why not Russ?" asked Mr. Pix.

At which the two fell into a dispute as to what was the medium of communication in the great lady's *salon*. However, all the colleagues agreed in considering that Wohlfart had taken an exceedingly bold and mysterious step, and one pregnant with calamitous consequences.

Nor was this the only discussion on the subject. "He is gone!" announced the cousin, returning from an interview with some of the domestics.

"Another trick of his friend Fink," said the merchant.

Sabine looked down at her work. "I am glad," said she at length, "that Fink should use his influence to give his friend pleasure. He himself does not care for dancing, and I am sure that to attend these lessons is in him an act of self-denial; and I am also truly glad that Wohlfart, who has hitherto led such a solitary life, should go a little into society."

"But into such society as this? How is it possible!" cried the cousin.

Sabine tapped the table with her thimble. "Fink has spoken highly of him, and that was good and

kind. And, in spite of the grave face of my dear brother, he shall, as a reward, have his favorite dish to-morrow."

"Ham, with Burgundy sauce," added the cousin.

Meanwhile Fink and Anton were entering Frau von Baldereck's lighted rooms, and Fink, whispering, "Come, summon all your courage; you have nothing to fear," led his unresisting friend up to the lady of the house, by whom they were most graciously received, and who, saying at once to Anton, "I will introduce you to Countess Pontak," led him off to a gaunt lady of uncertain age, who sat on a slightly-elevated seat, surrounded by a small court of her own. "Dear Betty, this is Mr. Wohlfart." Anton saw at once that "dear Betty" had a nose of parchment, thin lips, and a most unpleasing countenance. He bowed before her with the resigned air of a prisoner, while she began to cross-examine him as to who he was and whence he came, till his shyness was fast changing into annoyance, when Fink stepped in.

"My friend, proud lady, is half Slavonic, though he passionately protests against any doubts cast upon his German origin. I recommend him to your kindness. You have just given a proof of your talent for investigation, now give my friend the benefit of the gentle indulgence for which we all admire you." The ladies smiled, the gentlemen turned away to hide their laughter, and Betty sat there with ruffled feathers, like some small bird of prey whom a larger has robbed of its victim.

As for Anton, he was hurrying away into a corner to recover, when he felt a light tap on his arm, and heard a fresh young voice say, "Mr. Wohlfart, do you not remember your old friend? This is the second time that I have been obliged to speak first."

Anton turned, and saw a tall, slight figure, with fair hair, and large dark blue eyes, smiling at him. The expression of delight on his face was so unmistakable that Lenore could not help telling him how glad she too was to see him again. Soon they were in full conversation; they had met but three times in their lives, and yet had so much to say. At last the young lady reminded him that he must now speak to others, told him to join her when the music began, and, with the majesty of a queen, crossed the room to her mother.

Anton was now hardened against all social terrors, and his embarrassment over and gone. He joined Fink, who introduced him to a dozen gentlemen, not one of whose names he remembered, caring for them no more than for poplars along a high road.

But this audacious mood vanished when he approached the baroness. There were the delicate features, the unspeakable refinement, which had so impressed him when he saw her first. She at once discovered that he was unaccustomed to society, and looked at him with a curiosity not unmingled with some misgiving; but Lenore cut the interview as short as she could by saying that it was time to take their places in the dance.

"He waltzes tolerably—too much swing, perhaps," muttered Fink to himself.

"A distinguished-looking pair," cried Frau von Baldereck, as Anton and Lenore whirled past.

"She talks too much to him," said the baroness to her husband, who happened to join her.

"To him?" asked he; "who is the young man? I have never seen the face before."

"He is one of the adherents of Herr von Fink—he is alone here—has rich relatives in Russia or America; I do not like the acquaintance for Lenore."

"Why not?" replied the baron; "he looks a good, innocent sort of youth, and is far better suited for this child's-play than the old boys that I see around. There is Bruno Tönnchen, whose only pleasure is to make the girls blush, or teach them to leave off blushing. Lenore looks uncommonly well to-night. I am going to my whist; send for me when the carriage is ready."

Anton heard none of these comments upon him; and if the hum of the company around had been as loud as that of the great bell of the city's highest steeple, he would not have heard it better. For him the whole world had shrunk to the circle round which he and his partner revolved. The beautiful fair head so near his own that sometimes they touched, the warm breath that played on his cheek, the unspeakable charm of the white glove that hid her small hand, the perfume of her handkerchief, the red flowers fastened to her dress—these he saw and felt; all besides was darkness, barrenness, nothingness.

Suddenly the music stopped, and Anton's world fell back into chaos. "What a pity!" said Lenore, as the last note died away.

"I thank you for this bliss!" said Anton, leading her back to her place.

As he moved to and fro in the crowd like a rudderless ship amid the waves, Fink took him in tow, and said, "I say, you hypocrite, you have either drunk sweet wine, or you are a quiet sort of Don Juan. How long have you known the Rothsattel? You have never spoken of her to me. She has a lovely figure and a classical face. Has she any sense?"

At that moment how unspeakably Anton despised his friend! Such an expression as that could only proceed from the most degraded of human beings.

"Sense!" exclaimed he, casting on Fink a look of deadly enmity; "he who doubts it must be utterly devoid of sense himself."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Fink, in amazement; "I am not in that melancholy plight, for I think the girl, or rather the young lady, uncommonly lovely; and, had I not some small engagements elsewhere, I might feel constrained to choose her for the mistress of my affections. As it is, I can only admire her afar off."

"You are right," said Anton, squeezing his arm.

"Really," returned Fink, in his usual careless tone, "you begin well, it must be allowed; go on, my son, and prosper."

And Anton did go on, and did his Mentor honor. He was indeed intoxicated, but not with wine. The music, the excitement of the dance, the gay scene around, inspired him; he felt self-confident, nay, daring; and, one or two trifling solecisms excepted, behaved as if he had been surrounded by waxlights and obsequious domestics all the days of his life. He was a good deal remarked—made, indeed, quite a sensation; while dark hints of a mystery attached to him spread from corner to corner of the spacious rooms.

At length came the cotillon. Anton sought out Lenore, who exclaimed, "I knew that you would dance it with me!" This was to both the happiest part of the whole happy evening.

As to all that followed, it was a mere indistinct vision. Anton was dimly conscious of walking about with Fink, of talking and laughing with him and others, of bowing before the lady of the house, and murmuring his thanks; of having his paletot reached him by a servant, and of putting something into his hand; but all this was shadowy and unreal. He only saw one thing clearly: a white cloak, with a silk hood and a tassel—oh, that tassel! Once more the large eyes shone full upon him, and he heard the whispered words, "Good-night!" Then came an uninteresting dream of going up stairs with Fink, and but half hearing his jesting comments; of entering a small room, lighting a lamp, and wondering whether it was really here he lived; of slowly undressing, and at length falling asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

Since the important evening above described, the dancing-lessons had gone on regularly, and Anton, having got over the purgatory of the first introduction, began to feel perfectly at home. Indeed, he became a useful member of the association, and was a pattern of assiduity and punctuality, and a striking contrast to Fink, who horrified the dancing-master by declaring that the *galop* step was fitted for every and all dances alike, and by waltzing in the most eccentric orbits conceivable.

The fact was, Anton was so happy that his transfigured aspect struck both the young and the old ladies, confirming the former in their conviction that he was good and true-hearted, and the latter in theirs, that he was a prince in disguise. He himself best knew the secret of his bliss. Every thought of his loyal heart revolved around its absolute mistress. All dances or conversations with others he looked upon as more flourishes surrounding her name; neither was he without his reward. She soon treated him like an old friend; and, whenever she entered the room, it was not till she had discovered his brown curls among the circle that she felt at home in the brilliant assembly.

It is, however, a melancholy fact, that destiny never long permits a child of earth to feel his whole nature and circumstances strung up to their utmost sweetness and power. It invariably contrives to let down some string while winding up another. Hence arises a discord, such as Anton was now called upon to experience.

It was plain that the gentlemen of the counting-house looked with critical eye upon the change in his way of life. There existed every possible diversity among them, it is true; but all were unanimous in pronouncing that, since he had attended these dancing-lessons, our hero had greatly changed for the worse. They declared that his increased silence was pride, his frequent absences in an evening tokens of unbecoming levity; and he who had once been a universal favorite was now in danger of being universally condemned. He himself considered the colder bearing of his colleagues very unkind; and so it came to pass that, for several weeks, he lived almost exclusively with Fink, and that the two formed, as it were, an aristocratic section in opposition to the rest.

Anton was more depressed by this state of things than he chose to confess: he felt it every where—at his desk, in his room, nay, even at dinner. If Jordan wanted a commission executed, it was no longer to him, but to Baumann, that he turned; when Purzel, the cashier, came into the office, he no longer accepted Anton's seat; and though Specht addressed him oftener than ever, it was no comfort to have questions like these whispered in his ear, "Is it true that Baron von Berg has dapple-gray horses?" or, "Must you wear patent leather boots, or shoes, at Frau von Baldereck's?" But Pix, his former patron, was the severest of all. Excessive toleration had never been one of this gentleman's weaknesses, and he now, for no very definite reasons, looked upon Anton as a traitor to himself and the firm. He was in the habit of keeping his birth-day in a most festal manner, surrounded by all his friends, and, knowing this, Anton had purposely refused an invitation of Herr von Zernitz; yet, when the day came, Fink and he were not included among the birth-day guests.

Anton felt this deeply; and, to make matters worse, Specht confidentially told him that Pix had declared that a young gentleman who associated with lieutenants, and frequented Feroni's, was no companion for a plain man of business. As he sat alone and heard the merry laughter of his colleagues, he fell into a melancholy mood, which none of his ball-room recollections had the power to dispel.

For, truth to tell, he was not satisfied with himself—he was changed. He was not exactly negligent of business, but it gave him no pleasure—his work was a task. Sometimes, in writing letters, he had forgotten the most important clauses; nay, once or twice he had made mistakes as to prices, and Jordan had handed him them back to re-write. He fancied, too, that the principal had not noticed him for some time past, and that Sabine's greeting had grown colder. Even the good-natured Karl had asked him, ironically he thought, whether he, as well as Fink, had a pass-key. It was in this mood that he now sat down to look over his own accounts, which of late he had omitted to keep punctually. He was horrified to find that his debts amounted to more than he could pay without mortgaging his little inheritance. He felt very unhappy and out of tune; but fate willed that the discord should increase.

Two or three evenings later, the merchant, returning early from his club, answered Sabine's greeting dryly, and paced up and down the room.

"What is the matter, Traugott?" asked she.

He threw himself into a chair. "Would you like to know how Fink got his protégé introduced into Frau von Baldereck's circle? You were so ready to admire this proof of his friendship! He has concocted a whole system of lies, and made the inexperienced Wohlfart play the part of a mere adventurer." And he went on to narrate all that we already know.

"But is it certain that Fink has done this?"

"Not a doubt of it. It is exactly like him. It is the same reckless, unscrupulous spirit, that neither heeds the life nor the reputation of a friend."

Sabine fell back in her chair, and again her heart swelled with indignation. "Oh, how sad it is!" cried she; "but Wohlfart is innocent, that I am convinced of. Such falsehoods are not in his nature."

"I shall know to-morrow," said the merchant; "for his own sake, I hope you are right."

The next day the principal summoned Anton to his own apartment, and telling him the rumors that had arisen, asked him what he had done to contradict them.

Anton replied in much amazement, "That he knew nothing of such rumors as these; that sometimes, indeed, he had been joked with as to his means, but that he had always avowed how small they were."

"Have you spoken decidedly?" asked the merchant, severely.

"I believe that I have," was the honest reply.

"These idle tales would not signify," continued the principal, "but that they expose you to the charge of having sought, by unworthy means, to gain a position to which you are not entitled, and also that they tend to degrade your parents' reputation, for it is given out that you are the son of a man of very high rank."

"Oh my mother!" cried Anton, wringing his hands, and the tears rolling down his cheeks. As soon as he could control his emotion, he said,

"The most painful part of all this is, that you should have supposed me capable of circulating these falsehoods. I implore you to believe that I never knew of them till now."

"I am glad to believe it," said the merchant; "but you have done much to substantiate them. You have appeared in a circle and incurred expenses which were alike unsuited to your position and your fortune."

Anton felt that he would greatly prefer the centre of the earth to its surface. At length he cried, "I know it—you are right—nay, I knew it all the time; and especially since I found that I had run into debt"—here the merchant smiled almost imperceptibly—"I have felt that I was on the wrong road altogether, though I did not know how to retrace my steps. But now I will lose no more time."

"Was it not Fink who introduced you to that circle? Perhaps," said the merchant, "he may be able to throw some light on the affair."

"Allow me to call him," said Anton, "and let him be witness as to whether I knew of this."

"Certainly, if it be any satisfaction to you;" and Fink was summoned. On entering, he looked with astonishment at Anton's excited aspect, and cried, without particularly heeding the principal's presence, "The devil! you have been weeping!"

"Over calumnies," said the merchant, gravely, "which affect his own character as a respectable man of business, and the honor of his family." And he proceeded to state the whole affair.

"He is quite innocent," said Fink, good-naturedly: "innocent and harmless as the violet that blows in the shade. He knew nothing of this ridiculous affair; and, if any one be to blame, it is I, and the

babbling fools who have spread the story. Don't torment yourself, Anton; since it annoys you, we will soon set it all to rights."

"I shall go once more," declared Anton, "to Frau von Baldereck, and tell her that I can no longer attend the dancing-parties."

"As you like," said Fink. "At all events, you have learned to dance, and to hold your hat like a gentleman."

Before dinner, the merchant said to his sister, "You were right, Wohlfart had nothing to do with it; it was all Fink's invention."

"I knew it," cried Sabine, drawing out her needle vehemently.

Anton worked hard all day, said little, and, when evening came, went up stairs to dress, like a man whose mind is made up.

If Fink could have seen into his heart, he would have been shocked at the sorrow there. It was not alone wounded self-love, mortification, shame, but the anguish of bidding farewell to Lenore. As it was, "I say," cried he, "I have a notion that you take this nonsense a great deal too tragically. Are you angry with me?" holding out his hand.

"Neither with you nor with any one else; but let me for once act for myself."

"What are you going to do?"

"Do not ask me. I have but one thing to do."

"So be it, then," was the good-humored reply; "but do not forget that any thing like a scene would only amuse those people."

"Trust me," said Anton, "I shall make none."

It happened to be a very gay meeting, and there were more gentlemen present than usual. Anton at once went up to Lenore, who came to meet him more lovely than ever, in her first ball-dress, saying, "How late you are! Come, papa is here, and I want to introduce you to him. But what is the matter, you look so grave?"

"Dear lady," returned Anton, "I do indeed feel sad. I can not dance the next dance with you, and am only come to apologize to you, and to the lady of the house, for my abrupt departure."

"Mr. Wohlfart!" cried Lenore, clasping her hands.

"Your good opinion is more to me than that of all others," said he, blushing; and proceeded rapidly to state the whole story, assuring her that he had known nothing of it.

"I believe you," said Lenore, cordially; "and, indeed, papa said that it was all most probably an idle tale. And because of this you will give up our dancing-parties!"

"I will," said Anton; "for, if I do not, I run a risk of being considered an intruder or an impostor."

Lenore tossed her little head. "Go, then, sir!" and she turned away.

Anton stood like one annihilated. Had he been ten years older, he might have interpreted her anger more favorably. As it was, a bitter pang thrilled through him. But the thought of what was still to be done nerved him to overcome it, and he walked steadily, nay, proudly to where Frau von Baldereck was doing the honors. All the most distinguished members of the party were around her. The gaunt old countess sat drinking a cup of tea. The baroness was there; and near her a tall, handsome man, whom Anton knew instinctively to be Lenore's father. As he advanced to make his bow to the lady of the house, his glance took in the whole scene at once. Years have passed since then; but still he knows the color of every dress, could count the flowers in the bouquet of the baroness, ay, and remembers the gilt pattern on the countess's tea-cup. Frau von Baldereck received his obeisance with a gracious smile, and was about to say something flattering, when Anton interrupted her, and in a voice that shook a little, perhaps, but was audible throughout the room, began his address, which was soon listened to in profound silence. "Madam, I have this day heard that a rumor has been spread of my possessing lands in America, and exciting an interest in certain high quarters. I now declare that this is all false. I am the son of a late accountant in Ostrau, and I inherit from my parents hardly any thing beyond an unsullied name. You, madam, have been kind enough to invite me, an insignificant stranger, to take part in your *réunions* this winter. After what I have just heard, I dare do so no longer, lest I should thus substantiate the idle reports I have mentioned, and be suspected of imposing upon your hospitality. Therefore I have only to thank you sincerely for your past kindness, and to take my leave."

The whole party was struck dumb. Anton bowed, and turned to go.

Just then there flew out from the paralyzed circle a brilliant form, and taking both his hands in hers, Lenore looked at him with tearful eyes, and said, in a broken voice, "Farewell!" The door closed, and all was over.

When life returned in the room he had left, the first words audible were the baroness's whisper to her daughter, "Lenore, you have forgotten yourself."

"Do not blame her," said the baron, aloud, with great presence of mind; "the daughter only did what the father should have done. The young man has behaved admirably, and we can not but esteem him."

A murmur, however, began to arise from different groups. "Quite a dramatic scene," said the lady of the house; "but who then said—"

"Ay, who was it that said," interposed Von Tönnchen. All eyes turned to Fink.

"It was you, Herr von Fink, who—" Frau von Baldereck majestically began.

"I, my dear lady!" said Fink, with the composure of a just man unjustly accused. "What have I to do with the report? I have always contradicted it as much as possible."

"Yes," said several voices; "but then you used to hint—"

"And you certainly did say—" interpolated Frau von Baldereck.

"What?" coldly inquired the imperturbable Fink.

"That this Mr. Wohlfart was mysteriously connected with the Czar."

"Impossible!" cried Fink, earnestly; "that is a complete misunderstanding. In describing the appearance of the gentleman, then unknown to you, I may possibly have mentioned an accidental likeness, but—"

"But the American property," chimed in Herr von Tönnchen; "why, you yourself made it over to him, and requested us to keep the transaction a profound secret."

"As you have kept my secret so well," replied Fink, "as to tell it every where, and now in my presence, before all assembled here, you and Zernitz are evidently answerable for the whole foolish rumor. And now listen, gentlemen; my friend Wohlfart having once expressed a playful wish to have land in America, I amused myself by making him a Christmas-box of a certain possession of mine on Long Island, near New York, which possession consists of a few sand-hills and a tumble-down hut, built for wild-duck shooting. It was natural that I should ask you not to mention this, and I am very sorry that, from such a trifle, you should have spun a web that excludes a delightful man from our circle." And then a cold irony spreading over his features, he went on: "I rejoice to see how strongly you all share my feeling, and despise the low snobbishness of soul which could consider a man more fitted for society because a foreign potentate had evinced an interest in him. And, since we have begun this evening's dance with explanations, let me further explain, that Mr. Anton Wohlfart is the son of a late accountant in Ostrau, and that I shall consider any further allusion to this misunderstanding as an insult to my most intimate friend. And now, my dear lady, I am engaged to your daughter for the first quadrille, and can positively wait no longer."

In the course of the evening Lieutenant von Zernitz came up and said, "Fink, you have made fun of us, and I am sorry to be under the necessity of demanding satisfaction."

"Be rational, and do nothing of the kind," replied Fink. "We have shot together so often, it would be a pity now to take each other for a mark."

Fink being by far the best shot in the room, Herr von Zernitz allowed himself to be convinced.

Anton had vanished from the fashionable circle like a falling star, and he never reappeared therein. True, it did occur to Frau von Baldereck, rather late in the day, that it would be proper occasionally to invite the young man, to prove that he had not been tolerated merely as—what he was not, and some other families thought the same; but as these invitations came, as before said, rather late, and as Anton declined them, his fate was that of many a greater man—society forgot him. For a short time the two chief hatchers of the grand report, Messrs. von Tönnchen and von Zernitz, spoke to him when they met him in the street; for a whole year they bowed, then they too knew him no more.

The following day Anton told the merchant all that had passed, begged him to forgive his late remissness, and promised greater attention in future.

"I have no fault to find," replied the merchant, kindly. "And now let me see the amount of your debts, that we may get your affairs in order." Anton drew a slip of paper from his pocket, the cashier was called, the sum paid, and put down to Anton's account, and that was settled.

In the evening Fink said to Anton, "You went off with flying colors; the oldest man there declared aloud that you had behaved admirably."

"Who said that?" Fink told him it was the Baron Rothsattel, and did not appear to remark his deep blush. "It would have been better," continued he, "if you had not taken such a decided step. Why avoid the whole circle, in which there are some who have a strong personal regard for you?"

"I have done what my own feelings prompted," said Anton; "perhaps one older and more experienced might have managed better; but you can not blame me for not taking *your* advice in this matter."

"It is singular," thought Fink, as he went down stairs, "what different events teach different men to have and exert wills of their own. This boy has become independent in one night, and whatever

Fate may now have in store for him, he is sure to acquit himself well."

It spoke highly, both for Anton and his friend, that their intimacy was by no means decreased by the circumstances just related. On the contrary, it was deepened. Fink behaved with more consideration, and Anton gained more freedom, both of opinion and action. The influence of the younger of the friends weaned the elder from many an evil habit. Anton being more than ever zealous in his office duties, and more obliging to his colleagues, Fink insensibly accustomed himself to greater application and punctuality. There was only one subject that he never touched upon, though he well knew that it was always uppermost in Anton's mind, and that was the lovely young girl who had shown so much heart and spirit on the occasion of his last dancing-lesson.

CHAPTER XII.

Never had the flowers bloomed so gorgeously, never had the birds sung so gayly, as they did this summer on the baron's estate. The season spent in town had greatly extended the family acquaintance, and the castle was, in consequence, almost always full of guests. Dances, rides, acted charades, amusements of every kind, filled up the laughing hours.

What happy days these were to Lenore! True, she still remained something of an original, and her mother would at times shake her head at some daring freak or over-emphatic speech. It came naturally to her to play the gentleman's part whenever there was a lack of gentlemen. She was the leader in every expedition, delighting to carry off all her young female friends to some distant spot whence there was a fine view, to force them into some little village inn, where they had only milk and black bread for supper, and then to carry them all home dead-tired in a wagon, which she herself would drive standing. She had a way of treating young men with a sort of motherly kindness, as though they were still little bread-and-butter-eating urchins; and on the occasion of a certain dramatic representation, she horrified her mother by appearing in a male character, with a riding-whip and a little beard, which she twisted about in the most fascinating way. But she looked so wondrously lovely, even thus attired, that her mother could not chide in earnest.

If, however, there was any one not entirely satisfied with this way of life, it was the baroness. A certain preoccupation and restlessness had stolen over her husband—the cloudless serenity of former years was gone. It was but a slight change, visible only to the wife's eyes; and even she owned to herself that she was hardly justified in grieving over it.

Just at this time, too, a great joy awaited her. Eugene had passed his examination, and promised them a visit to show them his epaulettes. His mother had his room newly fitted up, and his father placed some first-rate guns and a new hunting-dress in it as a present for him. On the day of his arrival he rode out to meet him, and it was a pleasant sight to see the two noble-looking men embrace, and then ride home together.

"We will surprise the ladies," said the baron, and soon the baroness clasped her son in her arms. This was the climax of happiness at the castle. Both parents' eyes glistened whenever they rested on their son. True, some of his expressions and gestures savored of the riding-school, but the baroness only smiled at them all. From time immemorial, indeed, the stable has been for the young cavalier the ante-chamber of the saloon. Eugene soon became supreme among the band of young ladies; he paid visits all around, invited friends in return; in short, one gayety succeeded another.

To all this there was only one drawback of which the baron was conscious. He could no longer live within his income. What had been possible for twenty years now became manifestly an utter impossibility. The winter residence in town, the epaulettes of his son, Lenore's gauzes and laces —even the additional interest of his promissory notes, all tended to embarrass him. The returns from his property were eagerly expected, and already in part forestalled; nor were they increased. Nay, many a projected improvement of former years remained unaccomplished. He had once meant to plant a sandy waste at the extremity of his estate, but even that small outlay was inconvenient, and the yellow sand still glistened in the sun. Again he was obliged to open the inlaid casket, and take out some of the fair parchments, and again his brow grew clouded and his mind troubled; but it was no longer the same agony of anxiety as before: he had had a little practice, and looked at things with a calmer eye. Something would turn up—there would be some way or other of becoming freed from these embarrassments; at most, he need only spend two more winters in town till Lenore's education should be quite completed, and then he would devote himself energetically to the care of his property. Meanwhile, he resolved to talk matters over a little with Ehrenthal, for, on the whole, he was an honorable man, that is, as far as a tradesman could be so; and, what was more, he knew the baron's circumstances exactly, and it was easier to discuss them with him than with a stranger.

As usual, Ehrenthal appeared just when wanted. His diamond breast-pin shone as usual, his obsequious compliments were as ludicrous as ever, and his admiration of the property as boundless. The baron took him all over the farm, and good-humoredly said, "You must give me some advice, Ehrenthal."

Only two or three years had passed since a similar walk over this farm, and how the times had changed! Then, Ehrenthal had to insinuate his advice to the proud baron, and now the baron himself asked him for it.

In the lightest tone that he could assume, he went on to say, "I have had greater expenses than usual this year. Even the promissory notes do not yield enough, and I must therefore think of increasing my income. What would you consider the best means of doing this?"

The usurer's eyes brightened; but he answered, with all due deference, "The baron must be a better judge of that than I can be."

"None of your bargains, however, Ehrenthal. I shall not enter into partnership with you again."

Ehrenthal replied, shaking his head, "There are not, indeed, many such bargains to be made, which I could conscientiously recommend. The baron has five-and-forty thousand dollars' worth of promissory notes. Why do you keep them when they pay so small an interest? If you were, instead, to buy a good mortgage at five per cent, you would pay four per cent to the Joint-stock Company, and one per cent. would be your own; in other words, a yearly addition of four hundred and fifty dollars. But you might make a better thing of them than that. There are many safe mortgages which are offered to sale for ready money, at a great profit to the purchaser. You might, perhaps, for forty thousand dollars, or even less, get a mortgage that would bring you in five per cent. on forty-five thousand dollars."

"I have thought of that," replied the baron; "but the security for such mortgages as these, which come into the hands of you brokers, is exceedingly poor, and I can not rely on it."

Ehrenthal waived off this reproach, and said, in a tone of virtuous indignation against all dealers in insecure mortgages, "For my own part, I am very shy of mortgages altogether, and such as are in the market are not fit for the baron, of course. You must apply to a trustworthy man; your own lawyer, for instance, may be able to procure you a good mortgage."

"Then you really know of none?" said the baron, secretly hoping that he did.

"I know of none," was the positive reply; "but if you wish, I can inquire; there are always some to be had. Your lawyer can tell you what he would consider good security; only you would have to pay down the sum total in case you procured it from him, whereas, if you could get one from a commercial man, you might make a profit of some thousands."

Now this profit was a most important point to the baron, and his mind was made up to realize it if possible. But he only said, "There is no hurry; should you hear of any thing desirable, you can let me know."

"I will do all I can," was the cautious reply; "but it will be well that the baron should also make inquiries himself, for I am not accustomed to deal in mortgages."

If this assertion were not strictly true, it was, at all events, politic, for the cool indifference of the tradesman increased the baron's confidence in him tenfold. The following day he went to town, and had a consultation with his lawyer, who strongly advised him to give up the idea of making any such profit as he contemplated, because such a mortgage would infallibly prove insecure. But this good advice only confirmed the baron in his intention of taking his own way in the matter.

A few days later, a tall stout man, with a shining red face, called upon the baron—a Mr. Pinkus, from the capital. He had heard, he said, that the baron wished to invest, and he knew of a remarkably safe and desirable mortgage, on a large property in the neighboring province, belonging to the rich Count Zaminsky, who lived abroad. This property had every possible advantage, including two thousand acres of magnificent natural wood. The mortgage was at present in Count Zaminsky's own hands. It was possible, Pinkus mysteriously hinted, to purchase it for ninety per cent.; in other words, for thirty-six thousand dollars. Certainly, it was a pity that the property lay in another province, where agriculturists had many primitive peculiarities. But it was only six miles from the frontier—the neighboring town was on the high road—the estate was princely. In short, the drawbacks were so small, and the advantages so great, that Pinkus never could have made up his mind to let a stranger purchase it, had he not been such an example of human perfection as the baron.

The baron received the compliment in a dignified manner, and before his departure Pinkus laid down a heavy roll of parchment, that the question of the security might be carefully investigated.

Early the next morning the baron took the deeds to his man of business, and himself ascended the dirty staircase that led to the white door of Ehrenthal, who was overjoyed to hear of his visit —dressed himself with the utmost rapidity, and insisted upon the baron doing him the infinite honor of breakfasting with him. The baron was not cruel enough to refuse, and accordingly he was ushered into the state apartment, where the contrast between splendor and shabbiness amused him not a little, as did also that between the gorgeous attire of the beautiful Rosalie, and the sneaking, crouching manner of her father.

During breakfast the baron asked Ehrenthal whether he happened to know a Mr. Pinkus.

At this business-like inquiry Rosalie vanished, and her father sat bolt upright. "Yes, I do know him," said he; "he is in a very small way, but I believe him an upright man. He is in a very small way, and all his business is with Poland."

"Have you mentioned to him my wish to buy a mortgage?"

"How should I have thought of mentioning it to him? If he has offered you a mortgage, he must have heard of it from another dealer, of whom I did make inquiries. But Pinkus is in a small way;

how can he procure a mortgage for you?" And Ehrenthal indicated by a gesture how small Pinkus was, and by a look upward how immeasurably great his guest.

The baron then told him all particulars, and asked about the property and circumstances of the count.

Ehrenthal knew nothing; but he bethought himself that there was then in town a respectable tradesman from that very district, and promised to have him sent to the baron, who soon after took his leave, Ehrenthal accompanying him down stairs, and saying, "Be cautious about the mortgage, baron; it is good money, and there are many bad mortgages. To be sure, there are good mortgages too; and, of course, people will say a good deal to recommend their own. As to Löbel Pinkus, he is in but a small way of business; but, so far as I know, a trustworthy man. All you tell me about the mortgage sounds well, I own; but I humbly entreat you, baron, to be cautious—very cautious."

The baron, not much enlightened by this worthy address, went to his town house, and impatiently awaited for the arrival of the stranger, who soon came. His name was Löwenberg, and his appearance was a sort of medley of that of Ehrenthal and Pinkus, only he was thinner. He gave himself out as a wine-merchant, and appeared intimately acquainted with the count and his property. He said that the present possessor was young, and lived abroad; that his father had been rather a bad manager; but that, though the estate was burdened, it was not in the very least endangered. The land was not in high cultivation, therefore was susceptible of improvement, and he hoped the young count was the very man to see to it. On the whole, his report was decidedly favorable; there was no exaggeration about it—all was sensible and straightforward. The baron's mind was very nearly made up, and he went off straightway to one of his acquaintance, who knew the Zaminsky family. He did not hear much from him certainly, but still it was rather favorable than otherwise. On the other hand, Ehrenthal called to inform him that the wool of the sheep of that district was seldom fine, and to beg that he would consult his lawyer before he decided.

Ehrenthal's little office was on the same floor as the rest of the apartments, and opened out upon the hall. It was evening before he returned to it, in a state of great excitement. Itzig, who had been sitting before a blank book, wearily waiting for his master, wondered what could be the matter, when Ehrenthal eagerly said to him, "Itzig, now is the time to show whether you deserve your wages, and the advantage of a Sabbath dinner in good society."

"What am I to do?" replied Veitel, rising.

"First, you are to tell Löbel Pinkus to come here, and then to get me a bottle of wine and two glasses. Next go and bring me word to whom in Rosmin, Councilor Horn, who lives near the market-place, has written to-day, or, if not to-day, to whom he writes to-morrow. In finding this out you may spend five dollars, and if you bring me back word this evening you shall have a ducat for yourself."

Veitel felt a glow of delight, but replied calmly, "I know none of Councilor Horn's clerks, and must have some time to become acquainted with them."

He ordered the bottle of wine, and ran off into the street like a dog in scent of game.

Meanwhile Ehrenthal, his hat still on, his hands behind his back, walked up and down, nodding his head, and looking in the twilight like an ugly ghost who once has had his head cut off and can not now keep it steadily on.

As Veitel went on his way, his mind kept working much as follows: "What can be in the wind? It must be an important affair, and I am to know nothing about it! I am to send Pinkus. Pinkus was with Ehrenthal a few days ago, and the next morning he went to Baron Rothsattel's place in the country; so it must have something to do with the baron. And now, as to these letters. If I could catch the clerk who takes them to the post, and contrive to read the directions, I should save money. But how manage this? Well, I must find out some way or other." And, accordingly, Veitel posted himself at the door, and soon saw a young man rush out with a packet of letters in his hand. He followed him, and, turning sharply round a corner, contrived to meet him. Touching his hat, "You are from Councilor Horn's office?"

"Yes," said the clerk, in a hurry to get on.

"I am from the country, and have been waiting for three days for an important letter from the councilor; perhaps you may have one for me."

"What is your name?" said the clerk, looking at him mistrustfully.

"Bernhard Madgeburg, of Ostrau," said Veitel; "but the letter may be addressed to my uncle."

"There is no letter for you," replied the clerk, hurriedly glancing at the directions.

Do what he would, Veitel's eyes could not follow this rapid shuffling, so he seized the packet, and while the enraged official, catching hold of him, exclaimed, "What are you about, man! how dare you?" he devoured the directions, gave back the letters, and touching his hat, coolly said, "Nothing for me; do not lose the post; I am going to the councilor," turned on his heel and made his escape.

Spite of this bold stroke, he could only remember two or three of the addresses. "Perhaps I have made my money," thought he; "and if not, there's no time lost." So he went back, and, creeping to

the office door, stood and listened. The worthy Pinkus was speaking, but very low, and Veitel could make little of it. At last, however, the voices grew louder.

"How can you ask such a large sum!" cried Ehrenthal, angrily; "I have been mistaken in thinking you a trustworthy man."

"I am trustworthy," replied Pinkus; "but I must have four hundred dollars, or this affair will fall through."

"How dare you say it will fall through? What do you know about it?"

"I know this much, that I can get four hundred dollars from the baron by telling him what I know," screamed Pinkus.

"You are a rascal! You are a traitor! Do you know who it is that you use thus? I can ruin your credit, and disgrace you in the eyes of all men of business."

"And I can show the baron what sort of a man you are," cried Pinkus, with equal vehemence.

At this the door opened, and Veitel plunged into the shadow of the staircase.

"I will give you till to-morrow to consider," were Pinkus's parting words.

Veitel coolly stepped into the office, and his patron hardly noticed him. He was pacing up and down the little room, like a wild beast in its cage, and exclaiming, "Just heavens! that this Pinkus should turn out such a traitor! He will blab the whole matter; he will ruin me!"

"Why should he ruin you?" asked Veitel, throwing his hat on the desk.

"What are you doing here? What have you overheard?"

"Every thing," was the cool reply. "You have both screamed so as to be heard all over the hall. Why do you keep the affair a secret from me? I could have compelled Löbel to give you better terms."

Ehrenthal stared in utter amazement at the audacious youth, and could only bring out, "What does this mean?"

"I know Pinkus well," continued Veitel, determined henceforth to take a part in the game. "If you give him a hundred dollars, he will readily sell you a good mortgage for the baron."

"How should you know any thing about the mortgage?"

"I know enough to help in the matter," replied Itzig; "and I will help you, if you trust me."

Ehrenthal continued to stare and stare, till at last it dawned upon him that his assistant had more coolness and decision than himself. Accordingly, he said, "You are a good creature, Veitel; go and bring in Pinkus; he shall have the hundred dollars."

"I have seen the directions of the councilor's letters: there was one to Commissary Walter."

"I thought so," cried Ehrenthal, with delight. "All right, Itzig; now for Löbel."

"I have to pay five dollars to the councilor's clerk," continued the youth, "and I am to have a ducat for myself."

"All right! you shall have the money; but first I must see Pinkus."

Veitel hastened to his lodgings, and found Pinkus still much excited, and revolving all Ehrenthal's injurious speeches.

In a few decided words, he gave him to understand that he was quietly to accept a hundred dollars, and to help Ehrenthal in this matter, else he, Veitel, would give the police a hint of the mysterious chamber in the next house, and of the smuggling guests; and further, that henceforth he must have a comfortable room on reasonable terms, and be treated no longer like a poor devil, but an equal. The result of which address was, that, after a good deal of useless fuming and fretting, Pinkus accompanied Veitel to Ehrenthal's house, where both worthies shook hands and came to terms; soon after which Veitel opened the door for Löwenberg, the wine-merchant, and was politely dismissed. This time he did not care to listen, but returned to enjoy his supper in his new apartment.

Meanwhile Ehrenthal said, over a glass of wine, to Löwenberg, "I have heard that Councilor Horn has written for information respecting this mortgage to Commissary Walter, in your town. Is there any thing to be made of him?"

"Not by money," answered the stranger, thoughtfully, "but possibly by other means. He does not know that I have been authorized by the count's attorney to sell this mortgage. I shall go to him, as if on business of my own, and take some opportunity of praising the property."

"But if he knows it himself, of what use is that?" said Ehrenthal, shaking his head.

"There will still be some use; for, after all, those lawyers must trust to us traders for details. How can they know, as we do, how wool and grain sell on estates? At all events, we must do what we can."

Ehrenthal sighed, "You can believe, Löwenberg, that it makes me anxious."

"Come, come," said the other, "it will be a profitable concern. The buyer you have in view pays ninety per cent., and seventy is sent to the count in Paris; of the twenty per cent. remaining, you pay the count's attorney five, and me five for my trouble, and you keep ten. Four thousand dollars is a pretty profit where no capital has been risked."

"But it makes me anxious," said Ehrenthal. "Believe me, Löwenberg, it excites me so much that I can not sleep at night; and when my wife asks me, 'Are you asleep, Ehrenthal?' I have always to say, 'I can not sleep, Sidonie; I must think of business.'"

An hour later a carriage with four horses rolled away from the door. The following morning Commissary Walter received a business call from Löwenberg, and was convinced, by the cool, shrewd manner of the man, that the circumstances of the Count Zaminsky could not be so desperate as was commonly believed.

Eight days after, the baron received a letter from his legal adviser, containing a copy of one from Commissary Walter. These experienced lawyers both agreed in thinking that the mortgage in question was not positively undesirable; and when Ehrenthal next called, he found the baron's mind made up to the purchase. The irresistible inducement was the making a few thousand dollars. He was resolved to think the mortgage good, and would perhaps have bought it even had his lawyer positively dissuaded him.

Ehrenthal, having a journey to take to that part of the country, most unselfishly offered to complete the purchase for the baron, who was pleased with this arrangement.

In about a fortnight he received the deeds. All were well contented with their share in the business, but Veitel Itzig with most reason, for he had by it got a hold over his master, and was now friend and confidant in the most secret transactions. The baron took out his richly-inlaid casket, and, in place of the fair white parchments, put in a thick, dirty bundle of deeds. Having done this, he joined the ladies, and gave a humorous account of Ehrenthal's bows and compliments.

"I hate that man," said Lenore.

"On this occasion he has behaved with a certain disinterestedness," replied her father. "But there is no denying that people of his class have their absurdities of manner, and it is difficult to help laughing at them."

That evening Ehrenthal was so cheerful in his family circle that his wife asked him whether he had settled the affair with the baron.

"I have," he gayly replied.

"He is a handsome man," remarked the daughter.

"He is a good man," rejoined Ehrenthal, "but he has his weaknesses. He is one of those who require low bows and civil speeches, and pay others to think for them. There must be such people in the world, or what would become of people of our profession?"

About the same time Veitel was relating to his friend, the ex-advocate, the whole particulars of the affair. Hippus had taken off his spectacles, and sat on a corner of the four-cornered chest Mrs. Pinkus was pleased to call a sofa, looking like a sagacious elderly ape who despises the race of men, and bites his keeper when he can. He listened with critical interest to his pupil's narrative, and shook his head or smiled, according as he dissented or approved.

When Veitel had done, Hippus cried, "Ehrenthal is a simpleton. He is up to nothing great; he is always trying half-measures. If he goes on thus, the baron will throw him overboard yet."

"What more can he do?" asked Veitel.

"He must give him anxieties—the anxieties of business, extensive business, ceaseless activity, daily cares—that's what the baron could not stand. That class is accustomed to little work and much enjoyment. Every thing is made easy to them from their childhood. There are few of them who may not be ruined by having some great care always boring at their brains. If Ehrenthal wishes to have the baron in his power, he must entangle him in business."

So said the advocate, and Veitel understood him, and looked with a mixture of respect and aversion at the ugly little imp gesticulating before him. At last Hippus took out the brandy bottle, and cried, "An extra glass to-day. What I have just told you, you young gallows-bird, is worth more than a bottle of brandy."

CHAPTER XIII.

"I am eighteen years old to-day," said Karl to his father, who was sitting at home one Sunday morning, never weary of contemplating the handsome youth.

"So you are," replied the father; "there are eighteen tapers round the cake."

"Therefore, father," Karl went on, "it is time that I should turn to, something, and make some money. I will be a porter."

"Make some money!" repeated old Sturm, looking at his son in amazement. "Do I not make as much, and more than we want? Why, you are going to turn a miser!"

"I can't always hang to your apron," said Karl; "and if you were to earn a thousand dollars, would that make an active, useful man of me? Or, if I were to lose you, what would become of me?"

"You will lose me, boy," said the giant, nodding, "in a few years, perhaps, and then you may become what you like, so it be not a porter."

"But why should I not be what you are? Do not be unreasonable."

"You know nothing about the matter. Do not be covetous; I can not bear covetous people."

"But, father, if I am not to be a porter, I must learn *something*," cried Karl.

"Learn!" exclaimed his father; "how much learning have you not had stuffed into your little head already! Two years at the infant school, four at the city school, two at the industrial. Why, you have had eight years' schooling, and you know the different goods as well as a clerk. Why, you are an insatiable youth."

"Yes; but I must have a calling," replied Karl. "I must be a shoemaker, tailor, shopkeeper, or mechanic."

"Don't tease yourself about that," said his father; "I have provided for all that in your education. You are practical and honorable too."

"Yes; but can I make a pair of boots? can I cut out a coat?"

"You can," replied old Sturm; "try, and you'll succeed."

"Very well; to-morrow I'll buy you some leather, and make you a pair of boots: you shall feel how they'll pinch. But, once for all, I can't go on as I am, and I'll set some one at you who will tell you the same."

"Don't be covetous, Karl," said his father, "or spoil this day for me. Give me the can of beer, and be a good boy."

Karl placed the great can before his father, and soon took up his cap and went out. Old Sturm sat still a while, but his comfort was destroyed, and the house seemed dull without his son's cheerful face. At length he went into the next room, and drew out a heavy iron chest from under the bed. He opened it with a little key that he took out of his waistcoat pocket, lifted one bag after another, began a long mental calculation, then pushed the chest under the bed again, and returned to his can of beer with a calmer aspect.

Meanwhile Karl had hurried off to the town, and soon made his appearance in Anton's apartment. After the kindly greeting on both sides, he began:

"I am come, sir, to ask your advice as to what is to become of me? I can make nothing of my father. He won't hear of my being a porter; and if I speak of another calling, he comforts me with saying that he shall not live long. A pretty comfort that! Would you be so good as to speak to him about me? He has a high opinion of you, and knows that you are always kind to me."

"That I will, gladly," replied Anton; "but what do you think of becoming?"

"It's all one to me," said Karl, "so that it's something regular. Here I turn my hands to all sorts of things, but that's different to regular work."

The next Sunday Anton went to old Sturm's. The home of the head porter was a small house near the river, distinguished from those of his neighbors by its red-washed walls. Anton opened the low door, and wondered how the giant could possibly live in so small a space. It must have required constant patience and forbearance; for, had he ever drawn himself up to his full height, he would infallibly have carried off the roof.

"I am delighted to see you in my house, sir," said Sturm, taking Anton's hand in his immense grasp as gently as he could.

"It is rather small for you, Mr. Sturm," answered Anton, laughing. "I never thought you so large as I do now."

"My father was still taller," was the complacent reply; "taller and broader. He was the chief of the porters, and the strongest man in the place; and yet a small barrel, not half so high as you are, was the death of him. Be seated, sir," said he, lifting an oaken chair, so heavy that Anton could hardly move it. "My Karl has told me that he has been to see you, and that you were most kind. He is a good boy, but he is a falling off as to size. His mother was a little woman," added Sturm, mournfully, draining a quart of beer to the last drop. "It is draught beer," he said, apologetically; "may I offer you a glass? It is a custom among us to drink no other, but certainly we drink this the whole day through, for our work is heating."

"Your son wishes to become one of your number, I hear," said Anton.

"A porter!" rejoined the giant. "No, that he never shall." Then laying his hand confidentially on Anton's knee, "It would never do; my dear departed wife besought me against it on her death-bed. And why? Our calling is respectable, as you, sir, best know. There are not many who have the requisite strength, and still fewer who have the requisite—"

"Integrity," said Anton.

"You are right," nodded Sturm. "Always to have wares of every kind in immense quantities under our eyes, and never to touch one of them—this is not in every body's line. And our earnings are very fair too. My dear departed saved a good deal of money, gold as well as silver. But that is not my way. For why? If a man be practical, he need not plague himself about money, and Karl will be a practical man. But he must not be a porter. His mother would not hear of it, and she was right."

"Your work is very laborious," suggested Anton.

"Laborious!" laughed Sturm; "it may be laborious for the weak, but it is not that. It is this," and he filled his glass; "it is the draught beer."

Anton smiled. "I know that you and your colleagues drink a good deal of this thin stuff."

"A good deal," said Sturm, with self-complacency; "it is a custom of ours—it always has been so—porters must be strong men, true men, and beer-drinkers. Water would weaken us, so would brandy; there is nothing for it but draught beer and olive oil. Look here, sir," said he, mixing a small glassful of fine oil and beer, stirring plenty of sugar into it, and drinking off the nauseous compound; "this is a secret of ours, and makes an arm like this;" and he laid his on the table, and vainly endeavored to span it. "But there is a drawback. Have you ever seen an old porter? No; for there are none. Fifty is the greatest age they have ever reached. My father was fifty when he died, and the one we lately buried—Mr. Schröter was at the funeral—was forty-nine. I have still two years before me, however."

Anton looked at him anxiously. "But, Sturm, since you know this, why not be more moderate?"

"Moderate!" asked Sturm; "what is moderate? It never gets into our heads. Twenty quarts a day is not much if you know nothing of it. However, Mr. Wohlfart, it is on this account that my dear departed did not choose that Karl should be a porter. As for that, few men do live to be much more than fifty, and they have all sorts of ailments that we know nothing about. But such were my wife's wishes, and so it must be."

"And have you thought of any other calling? True, Karl is very useful in our house, and we should all miss him much."

"There it is," interrupted the porter; "you would miss him, and so should I. I am alone here; when I see my little lad's red cheeks, and hear his little hammer, I feel my heart glad within me. When he goes away, and I sit here by myself, I know not how I shall bear it." And his features worked with strong emotion.

"But must he leave you at present?" inquired Anton; "perhaps he may remain on for another year."

"Not he; I know him; if he once thinks of a thing at all, he thinks of nothing else. And, besides, I have been considering the matter these last days, and I see I have been wrong. The boy did not come into the world merely to amuse me; he must turn to something or other; so I try to think of what my dear departed would have liked. She had a brother, who is my brother-in-law, you know, and who lives in the country; I should like my boy to go to him. It is far away, but then there's kinship."

"A good thought, Sturm; but, since you are resolved, keep your son no longer in uncertainty."

"He shall know at once; he is only in the garden." And he went and called him in stentorian tones.

Karl hastened in, greeted Anton, and looked expectantly first at him and then at his father, who had seated himself, and now inquired, in his usual voice, "Little mannikin, will you be a farmer?"

"A farmer! that never occurred to me. Why, I should have to leave you, father."

"He thinks of that," said the father, nodding his head to Anton.

"Do you then wish that I should leave you?" asked Karl, in amazement.

"I must, my little man," said Sturm, gravely; "I must wish it, because it is necessary for your dear departed mother's sake."

"I am to go to my uncle!" cried Karl.

"Exactly so," said his father; "it's all settled, provided your uncle will have you. You shall be a farmer, you shall learn something regular, you shall leave your father."

"Father," said Karl, much downcast, "I do not like leaving you. Can't you come with me to the country?"

"*I* go to the country! Ho, ho, ho!" Sturm laughed till the house shook again. "My mannikin would put me into his pocket, and take me to the country." Then wiping his eyes: "Come here, my Karl,"

said he, holding the youth's head between his two great hands; "you are my own good lad; but there must be partings on this earth, and if it were not now, it would be in a couple of years."

And thus Karl's departure from the firm was arranged.

As the time drew near, he tried in vain to conceal his emotion by a great deal of cheerful whistling. He stroked Pluto tenderly, executed all his various odd jobs with intense zeal, and kept as close as he could to his father, who often left his barrels to place his hand in silence on his son's head.

"Nothing heavy in farming!" said the paternal Sturm to Anton, looking anxiously into his face.

"Heavy!" replied Anton; "it will be no light matter to learn all connected with it."

"Learn!" cried the other; "the more he has to learn the better, so it be not very heavy."

"No," said Pix, who understood his meaning, "nothing heavy. The heaviest are sacks of corn—hundred and eighty; beans—two hundred pounds. And those he need not lift; the servants do it."

"If that's the case with farming," cried Sturm, contemptuously rearing himself to his full height, "it's all one to me whether he lifts them or not. Even my mannikin can carry two hundred pounds."

CHAPTER XIV.

Anton was now the most assiduous of all the clerks in the office. Fink was seldom able to persuade him to accompany him out riding or to the shooting gallery, but, on the other hand, he made diligent use of his friend's book-shelves, and having, after arduous study, gained some insight into the mysteries of the English language, he was anxious to exercise his conversational powers upon Fink. But the latter proving a most irregular and careless master, Anton thought it best to put himself in the hands of a well-educated Englishman.

One day, looking up from his desk as the door opened, he saw, to his amazement, Veitel Itzig, his old Ostrau schoolfellow. Hitherto they had but seldom met, and whenever they did so, Anton had taken pains to look another way.

"How are you getting on?" asked he, coldly enough.

"Poorly," was the reply; "there is nothing to be made in our business. I was to give you this letter, and to inquire when Mr. Bernhard Ehrenthal may call upon you."

"Upon me!" said Anton, taking the letter and a card with it.

The letter was from his English master, asking whether he would join young Ehrenthal in a systematic course of some of the older English writers.

"Where does Mr. Bernhard Ehrenthal live?" asked Anton.

"At his father's," said Itzig, making a face. "He sits in his own room all the day long."

"I will call upon him," rejoined Anton; and Itzig took his departure.

Anton was not much inclined to agree to the proposal. The name of Ehrenthal did not stand high, and Itzig's appearance had not conferred any pleasant associations upon it. But the ironical way in which he had mentioned his master's son, and something Anton had heard of him besides, determined him to take the matter at least into consideration.

Accordingly, one of the next days he mounted the dingy staircase, and was at once ushered into Bernhard's room, which was long and narrow, and filled with books great and small.

A young man came toward him with the uncertainty of manner that short-sight gives. He had fine features, a fragile frame, brown curling hair, and deep, expressive gray eyes. Anton mentioned the reason of his visit, and inquired the terms for the course. To his astonishment, young Ehrenthal did not know them, but said that, if Anton insisted upon sharing the expense, he would inquire. Our hero next asked whether Bernhard was in business with his father.

"Oh no," was the reply; "I have been at the University, and as it is not easy for a young man of my creed to get a government appointment, and I can live with my family, I occupy myself with my books." And, casting a loving glance at his book-shelves, he rose as if to introduce his guest to them.

Anton looked at their titles, and said, "They are too learned for me."

Bernhard smiled. "Through the Hebrew I have gone on to the other Asiatic languages. There is much beauty in them, and in their Old-World legends. I am now engaged upon a translation from the Persian, and some day or other, when you have a few idle minutes, I should like to inflict a short specimen upon you."

Anton had the politeness to beg to hear it at once. It was one of those countless poems in which a votary of the grape compares his beloved to all fair things in heaven and earth. Its complicated

structure impressed Anton a good deal, but he was somewhat amazed at Bernhard exclaiming, "Beautiful! is it not? I mean the thought, for I am unable to give the beauty of language;" and he looked inspired, like a man who drinks Schiraz wine, and kisses his Zuleika all day long.

"But must one drink in order to love?" said Anton; "with us the one is very possible without the other."

"With us, life is very commonplace."

"I do not think so," Anton replied, with fervor. "We have the sunshine and the roses, the joy in existence, the great passions and strange destinies of which poets sing."

"Our present time is too cold and uniform," rejoined Bernhard.

"So I read in books, but I do not believe it. I think that whoever is discontented with our life would be so still more with life in Teheran or Calcutta, if he remained there long enough. It is only novelty that charms the traveler."

"But how poor in vivid sensations our civilized existence is," rejoined Bernhard. "I am sure you must often feel business very prosaic."

"That I deny," was the eager reply; "I know nothing so interesting as business. We live amid a many-colored web of countless threads, stretching across land and sea, and connecting man with man. When I place a sack of coffee in the scales, I am weaving an invisible link between the colonist's daughter in Brazil, who has plucked the beans, and the young mechanic who drinks it for his breakfast; and if I take up a stick of cinnamon, I seem to see, on the one side, the Malay who has rolled it up, and, on the other, the old woman of our suburb who grates it over her pudding."

"You have a lively imagination, and are happy in the utility of your calling. But if we seek for poetry, we must, like Byron, quit civilized countries to find it on the sea or in the desert."

"Not so," replied Anton, pertinaciously; "the merchant has just as poetical experiences as any pirate or Arab. There was a bankruptcy lately. Could you have witnessed the gloomy lull before the storm broke, the fearful despair of the husband, the high spirit of his wife, who insisted upon throwing in her own fortune to the last dollar to save his honor, you would not say that our calling is poor in passion or emotion."

Bernhard listened with downcast eyes, and Anton remarked that he seemed embarrassed and distressed.

Changing the conversation, he proposed that they should both walk together to the English master, and make the final arrangements. They left the house like two old acquaintances; Anton surprised that Ehrenthal's son should be so little of a trader, Bernhard delighted to find a man with whom he could discuss his favorite subjects.

That evening he joined the family circle in a cheerful mood, and placing himself behind his sister, who was practicing a difficult piece on a costly piano, he kissed her ear. "Do not disturb me, Bernhard," said she; "I must get this piece perfect for the large party on Sunday, when I shall be asked to play."

"Of course you will be asked," said her mother. "There is no company that does not wish to hear Rosalie play. If you could only be persuaded to come with us, Bernhard—you are so clever and so learned. It was but the other day that Professor Starke, of the University, spoke of you to me in the highest terms. It is so pleasant for a mother to feel proud of her children! Why will you not join us? The society will be as good as any in the town."

"You know, mother, that I am not fond of strangers."

"And I desire that my son Bernhard should have his own way," cried Ehrenthal from a neighboring room, having chanced, during a pause in Rosalie's practice, to hear the last sentence, and now joining his family: "our Bernhard is not like other people, and his way is sure to be a good one. You look pale, my son," stroking his brown curls; "you study too much. Think of your health. The doctor recommended exercise. Will you have a horse, my son Bernhard? I will get the most expensive horse in the town for you, if you like."

"Thank you, dear father; but it would give me no pleasure," and he gratefully pressed the hand of his father, who looked sorrowfully at his pale face.

"Do you always give Bernhard what he likes to eat? Get him some peaches, Sidonie; there are hot-house peaches to be had. You shall have any thing you like; you are my good son Bernhard, and my delight is in you."

"He will not have any thing of the kind," interposed his mother. "All his joy is in his books. Many a day he never asks for Rosalie and me. He reads too much, and that's why he looks like a man of sixty. Why will he not go with us on Sunday?"

"I will, if you like," said Bernhard, mournfully; adding soon after, "Do you know a young man of the name of Wohlfart, in Schröter's house?"

"No," said his father, decidedly.

"Perhaps you do, Rosalie. He is handsome and refined-looking; I think you must have met him."

"Hardly, if he is in an office."

"Our Rosalie dances chiefly with officers and artists," explained her mother.

"He is a clever and a delightful man," continued Bernhard; "I am going to study English with him, and rejoice to have made his acquaintance."

"He shall be invited," decreed Ehrenthal; "if he pleases our Bernhard, he shall be welcome to our house. Let us have a good dinner on Sunday, Sidonie, at two o'clock. He shall come to all our parties; Bernhard's friend shall be the friend of us all."

The mother gave her consent, and Rosalie began to ponder what dress she should wear, so as to make the greatest impression.

But whence came it to pass that Bernhard did not communicate to his family the subject of the conversation that had so much interested him? that he soon relapsed into silence and returned to his study? that, when there, he bowed his head over his old manuscripts, while large drops rolled down on them, erasing the much-prized characters unobserved? Whence came it that the young man, of whom his mother was so proud, whom his father so loved and honored, sat alone, shedding the bitterest tears that an honest man can, while in another part of the house Rosalie's white fingers were flying over the keys, practicing the difficult piece that was to astonish the next soiree? From that day dated a friendship between Anton and Bernhard which was a source of pleasure and profit to both. Anton described the studious youth to the free and easy Fink, and expressed his wish to bring about a meeting between the two by a tea-drinking in his rooms.

"If it amuses you, Tony," said Fink, shrugging his shoulders, "I will come; but I warn you that of all living characters I most dislike a book-worm. No one theorizes more presumptuously upon every possible subject, or makes a greater fool of himself when it comes to practice. And, besides, a son of the worthy Ehrenthal! Don't be angry if I soon run away."

On the evening appointed, Bernhard sat on Anton's sofa in anxious expectation of the arrival of this well-known character, many wild anecdotes of whom had found their way even into his study.

At first Anton feared that the two would never suit. Two greater contrasts could hardly be imagined; the thin, transparent hand of Bernhard, and the healthy, muscular development of Fink; the bent form of the one, the elastic strength of the other; here, a deeply-lined face, with dreamy eyes; there, a proud set of features, lighted up by a glance like an eagle's—how could these possibly harmonize? But all turned out better than he had expected. Bernhard listened with much interest to what Fink had to say of foreign countries, and Anton did all he could to turn the conversation to subjects likely to bring out Bernhard.

The result was, that a few days later Bernhard found himself sitting in one of Fink's easy-chairs, and even ventured to invite him, with Anton, to spend an evening with him. Fink consented.

And now arose great excitement in the Ehrenthal circle.

Bernhard dusted his books and set them in order, and for the first time in his life troubled himself about household matters. "We must have tea, supper, wine, and cigars," said he.

"You need not be uneasy," replied his mother; "Herr von Fink shall find every thing well arranged."

"I will buy you some of the very finest cigars, and see to the wine," added his father.

As the hour drew near, Bernhard grew increasingly anxious, nay, irritable. "Where is the tea-kettle? The tea-kettle is not yet in my room! Nothing is ready!" cried he to his mother.

"I will make the tea and send it in—that is the fashionable way," replied his mother, rustling up and down in a new silk.

"No," said Bernhard, decidedly, "I will make the tea myself. Anton makes it, and so does Von Fink."

"Bernhard will make the tea himself!" cried the astonished mother to Rosalie. "Wonderful! he will make his own tea!" exclaimed Ehrenthal, who was in his room drawing on his boots. "He is going to make the tea!" cried the cook in the kitchen, clapping her hands in amazement.

On their way, Anton said to Fink, "It is very kind of you, Fritz, to come; Bernhard will be delighted."

"One must make sacrifices," replied Fink. "I have taken the liberty to eat my supper beforehand, for I have a horror of Jewish cookery. But the handsomest girl in town is worth a little effort. I saw her lately at a concert—a gorgeous figure, and such eyes! The old usurer, her father, has never seen such diamonds pass through his hands."

"We are invited to see Bernhard," replied Anton, somewhat reproachfully.

"And we shall certainly see his sister too," said Fink.

"I hope not," thought Anton.

Bernhard's room was wonderfully adorned for their reception, and he himself was a most pleasant host. The three were soon in full talk. Fink was in one of his most benevolent moods, and Anton mentally prayed that the beautiful sister might be kept out of sight.

But, just as the clock struck nine, the door opened, and Madam Ehrenthal majestically crossed the threshold. "Bathsheba entering in to Solomon," whispered Fink to Anton, who angrily trod upon his foot in return. Bernhard, in some embarrassment, introduced his mother, and she invited them all three to the next room, where Ehrenthal and the fair Rosalie awaited them. Fink soon fell into a lively discussion with her about music, for which, in reality, he little cared; promised her an excellent place at the ensuing races, and told her and her mother satirical anecdotes of the best society, which, as they were excluded from it, they particularly enjoyed. A princess of celebrated beauty came under discussion. Fink, who had been introduced to her once upon a time, declared that the young lady now before him might be taken for her, except, indeed, that the princess was not quite so tall and majestic-looking; and then he went into ecstasies over Mrs. Ehrenthal's mosaic brooch. The paternal Ehrenthal, however, tried in vain to keep up a conversation with him. Fink contrived not to appear aware of his presence, without, however, being in any way rude. Every one felt it to be in the nature of things; and Ehrenthal himself humbly acted the part of nonentity assigned to him, and consoled himself by eating a whole pheasant.

The supper lasted till midnight, and then Rosalie moved to the piano, after which Fink ran his fingers over the keys, and sang a wild Spanish song. When at length the guests took their departure, the family remained perfectly enraptured. Rosalie ran to the piano to try and remember the air Fink had sung; her mother was full of his praises, and her father, spite of his temporary annihilation, was enchanted with the visit of the rich young heir, and kept repeating that he must be worth more than a million. Even Bernhard's ingenuous spirit was captivated by his manner and brilliant rattle. True, he had occasionally felt an uncomfortable misgiving, as though Fink might be making fun of them all; but he was too inexperienced to feel sure of it, and soothed himself by thinking that it was only the way of all men of the world.

Anton alone was dissatisfied with his friend, and he told him so as they walked home.

"Why, you sat there like a stock," replied Fink; "I entertained the good people, and what more would you have? Change yourself into a mouse, creep into the decked-out room, and hear how they are singing my praises. What more can be wanted than that our behavior to people should be what they themselves find pleasant?"

"I think," said Anton, "that our aim should rather be to behave in a manner worthy of ourselves. You went on like a frivolous nobleman who meant to ask a loan from old Ehrenthal on the morrow."

"I choose to be frivolous," cried Fink; "and perhaps I may want a loan from the Ehrenthal house. And now have done with your preachments—it is past one o'clock."

A few days later, Anton remembered, at the close of the office, that he had promised to send on a book to the young student. As Fink, who had gone out an hour before, had carried off his paletot, which indeed often happened, Anton wrapped himself in Fink's burnoose, which chanced to lie in his room, and hurried off to Ehrenthal's house. As he reached the door, he was not a little amazed to see it noiselessly open, and a shawled and veiled figure come out. A soft arm wound itself round his, and a low voice said, "Come quickly; I have waited for you long." Anton recognized Rosalie's voice, and stood petrified. At length he said, "You are mistaken." With a suppressed scream the young lady rushed up stairs, and Anton, little less confused, entered his friend's room, where he had the shock of being at once addressed by the short-sighted Bernhard as Herr von Fink. A dreadful suspicion crossed his mind; and, pretending to be in the utmost haste, he carried the luckless cloak home, over a heart full of grief and anger. If it were, indeed, Fink that Ehrenthal's fair daughter had been expecting! The longer Anton had to wait for his friend, the more angry he grew. At last he heard his step in the court-yard—ran down to meet him—told him the circumstance—and ended by saying, "Look! I wore your cloak; it was dusk; and I have a horrible suspicion that she mistook me for you, and that you have most unjustifiably abused Bernhard's friendship."

"Ah ha!" said Fink, shaking his head, "here we have a proof of how ready these virtuous ones are to throw a stone at others. You are a child. There are other white cloaks in the town; how can you prove that mine was the one waited for? And then allow me to remark, that you showed neither politeness nor presence of mind on the occasion. Why not have led the lady down stairs, and when the mistake became apparent, have said, 'It is true that I am not he you take me for, but I am equally ready to die in your service,' and so forth?"

"You don't deceive me," rejoined Anton; "when I think the matter over, I can not, spite of your lies, shake off the belief that you were the one expected."

"You cunning little fellow," said Fink, good-humoredly, "confess, at least, that when a lady is in the case, I needs must lie. For seest thou, my son, to admit this were to compromise the fair daughter of an honorable house."

"Alas!" said Anton, "I fear that she already feels herself compromised."

"Never mind," said Fink, coolly, "she will bear it."

"But, Fritz," said Anton, wringing his hands, "have you, then, no sense of the wrong you are doing to Bernhard? It is just because his pure heart beats in the midst of a family circle that he only endures because he is so trusting and inexperienced, that this injury pains me so bitterly."

"Therefore you will do wisely to spare your friend's sensitiveness, and keep his sister's secret."

"Not so," replied Anton, indignantly; "my duty to Bernhard leads me to a different course. I must demand from you that you break off your connection with Rosalie, whatever its nature, and strive only to see in her what you always should have seen—the sister of my friend."

"Really," returned Fink, in a mocking tone, "I have no objection to your making this demand; but if I do not comply with it, how then?—always supposing, which, by the way, I deny, that I was the fortunate expected one."

"If you do not," cried Anton, in high excitement, "I can never forgive you. This is more than mere want of feeling—it is something worse."

"And what, pray?" coldly asked Fink.

"It is base," cried Anton. "It is bad enough to take advantage of the young girl's coquetry, but worse to forget her brother as well as me, through whom you made this unfortunate acquaintance."

"Be so good as to hear me say," replied Fink, lighting the lamp of his tea-kettle, "that I never gave you any right to speak to me thus. I have no wish to quarrel with you, but I shall be much obliged to you henceforth to drop this subject."

"Then I must leave you, for I can speak of nothing else while I have the conviction that you are acting unworthily."

Anton moved to the door. "I give you your choice; either you break with Rosalie, or, dreadful as it is to me to think of it, you break with me. If you do not by to-morrow evening give me an assurance that this intrigue is at an end, I go to Rosalie's mother."

"Good-night, thou stupid Tony!" said Fink.

The following day was a gray one for both.

It was Fink's constant custom, on entering the office, to beckon to his friend, whereupon Anton would leave his place, and exchange a few words as to how Fink had spent the previous evening. But this morning Anton doggedly remained where he was, and bent down over his letters when Fink took his seat opposite him. Whenever they looked up, they had to make as though empty space were before them, and not each other's faces. Fink had found it easy to treat the paternal Ehrenthal as a nonentity, but it was not so in this case; and Anton, who had had no practice in the art of overlooking others, felt himself supremely uncomfortable. Then every thing conspired to make it peculiarly difficult to each to play his part. Schmeie Tinkeles, the unfortunate little Jew who spoke such execrable German, and whom Fink always found especial pleasure in badgering and beating down, made his appearance in the office, and, as usual, a laughable scene ensued. All the clerks watched Fink, and chimed in with him, but Anton had to behave as though Tinkeles were a hundred miles away. Then Mr. Schröter gave him a commission, which obliged him to ask Fink a question, and he had to cough hard to get out the words at all. He received a very short answer, which increased his anger. Finally, when the dinner hour struck, Fink, who used regularly to wait till Anton came for him, walked off with Jordan, who wondered what could keep Wohlfart, to which Fink could only reply that he neither knew nor cared.

During the afternoon Anton could not avoid a few furtive glances at the haughty face opposite him. He thought how dreadful it would be to become estranged from one he so dearly loved; but his resolve was firm as ever. And so it happened that Fink, chancing to look up, met his friend's eyes mournfully fixed upon his face, and this touched him more than the anger of the previous night. He saw that Anton's mind was made up, and the side of the scale in which sat the fair Rosalie kicked the beam. After all, if Anton did, in his virtuous simplicity, tell her mother, the adventure was spoiled, and, still worse, their friendship forever at an end. These reflections furrowed his fine brow.

A little before seven o'clock a shadow fell on Anton's paper, and, looking up, he saw Fink silently holding out a small note to him, directed to Rosalie. He sprang up at once.

"I have written to tell her," said Fink, with icy coldness, "that your friendship left me no other choice than that of compromising her or giving her up, and that, therefore, I chose the latter. Here is the letter; I have no objection to your reading it; it is her dismissal."

Anton took the letter out of the culprit's hand, sealed it in all haste with a little office seal, and gave it to one of the porters to post at once.

And so this danger was averted, but from that day there was an estrangement between the friends. Fink grumbled, and Anton could not forget what he called treachery to Bernhard; and so it was, that for some weeks they no longer spent their evenings together.

CHAPTER XV.

The firm of T. O. Schröter had one day in the year invariably dedicated to enjoyment. It was the anniversary of their principal's first entrance into partnership with his father. Upon this festive occasion there was a dinner given to the whole counting-house assembled, after which they all drove to a neighboring village, where the merchant had a country house, and whither a number of public gardens and summer concerts always attracted the inhabitants of the town. There they drank coffee, enjoyed nature, and returned home before dark.

This year was the five-and-twentieth of these jubilees. Early in the morning came deputations of servants and porters to congratulate, and all the clerks appeared at the early dinner in full state; M. Liebold in a new coat, which, for many years past, he had been in the habit of first wearing upon this auspicious day.

After dinner, the carriages drove up and took them to the great "Restauration" of the village. There they got out, the gentlemen all surrounding their young lady, and loud music sounding a welcome as they entered the beechen avenues of the garden, which was bright to-day with gay toilettes from the town.

Sabine floated on with a perfect nebula of gentlemen around her. Possibly this court would have given more pleasure to most other women, but, at all events, the effect was very striking. The gentle Liebold's face wore a continual smile of delight, which he was obliged to suppress, as well as he could, from the fear of being supposed to laugh at the passers-by: Sabine's shawl hung on his arm. Specht had, by a bold *coup de main*, possessed himself of her parasol, and walked on, hoping that some falling blossom, some passing butterfly, might afford him a pretext for beginning a conversation with her. But this was no easy matter, for Fink was on the other side. He was in one of his most malevolent moods, and Sabine could not help laughing against her will at his unmerciful comments upon many of the company. And so they walked on among the tripping, rustling crowd of pleasure-seekers. There was a constant bowing, smiling, and greeting; the merchant had each moment to take off his hat, and, whenever he did so, the fourteen clerks took off theirs too, and created quite a draught; and very imposing it was. After having swum thus with the stream for some time, Sabine expressed a wish to rest. Instantly benches were set, the table got ready, and an ubiquitous waiter brought a giant coffee-pot and the number of cups required. Sabine's office was no sinecure. She chose Anton for her adjutant, and it was a pretty sight to see how kindly she gave each one his cup, how watchful she was lest the sugar-bowl and the cream-jug should be interrupted in their rounds, and at the same time how she contrived to bow to her passing acquaintance, and to carry on a conversation with any friends of her brother's who came up to her. She was very lovely thus. Anton and Fink both felt how well her serene activity became her; and Fink said, "If this be for you a day of recreation, I do not envy your other days. No princess has such a reception—so many to bow, smile, and speak to as you; but you get on capitally, and have no doubt studied it. Now comes the mayor himself to pay his compliments. I am really sorry for you; you have to lend me your ear; Liebold's cup is in your hand, and your eyes must be reverentially fixed upon the great civic official. I am curious to know whether you understand my words."

"Take your spoon out of your cup, and I will fill it immediately," said Sabine, laughing, as she rose to greet her old acquaintance. Meanwhile, Anton amused himself by listening to the remarks made on his party by the passers-by. "That is Herr von Fink," whispered a young lady to her companion. "A pretty face; a capital figure," drawled a lieutenant. "What is one among so many?" muttered another idler. "Hush! those are the Schröters," said a clerk to his brother. Then two tall handsome forms came slowly by—Dame Ehrenthal and Rosalie. Rosalie passed next to the table: a deep flush suffused her face. She threw a troubled glance at Fink, who, in spite of the lively conversation he was carrying on with Sabine, had eyes for every thing that was going on. Anton rose to bow; and the imperturbable Fink coolly took off his hat, and looked at the two ladies with as much unconcern as though he had never admired the bracelets on Rosalie's white arm. Anton's bow, Rosalie's striking beauty, and, perhaps, some peculiarity in their dress, had attracted Sabine's attention.

Ehrenthal's daughter did not heed the bow, but fixed her dark eyes on Sabine, whom she took for her fortunate rival, with such a flashing glance of anger and hatred that Sabine shrank as though to avoid the spring of a beast of prey.

Fink's lip curled, and he slightly shrugged his shoulders. When the ladies had passed by, Sabine asked who they were.

"Some acquaintances of Anton's," said he, satirically.

Anton named them as the mother and sister of the young student of whom he had lately told her.

Sabine was silent, and leaned back on the bench; her gay spirits were over. The conversation flagged; and when her brother returned from a visit to the next table, she rose and invited the party to come and see her garden. Again the nebula followed her, but Fink was no longer at her side. That burning glance had withered the green tendrils that had been drawing them together. Sabine turned to Anton, and tried to be cheerful, but he saw the effort it cost her.

This large garden, with its hot-houses and conservatories, was one of Sabine's favorite resorts, both in summer and winter. While the merchant carried off Fink to look at a plot of neighboring ground which he thought of buying, the clerks besieged Sabine with questions as to the names

and peculiarities of the different plants. She showed them a great palm-tree that her brother had given her, tropical ferns, gorgeous cactuses, and told them that she often drank coffee under these large leaves on sunny winter days. Just then the gardener came up to her with crumbs of bread and bird-seed on a plate. "Even when I have not so large a party with me as to-day, I am not quite alone," said she.

"Pray let us see your birds," cried Anton.

"You must go out of sight, then, and keep quite still. The little creatures know *me*, but so many gentlemen would terrify them."

Sabine then went out a few steps, scattered the crumbs on the gravel, and clapped her hands. A loud chirping instantly succeeded, and numbers of birds shot down, hopping boldly about, and picking up the crumbs close to her feet. They were not a very distinguished company—finches, linnets, and a whole nation of sparrows. Sabine gently stepped back to the door, and said, "Can you see any difference among these sparrows? They have, I assure you, individualities of dress and character. Several of them are personal acquaintances of mine." She pointed to a large sparrow with a black head and a bright brown back. "Do you see that stout gentleman?"

"He is the largest of them all," said Anton, with delight.

"He is my oldest acquaintance, and it is my dinners that have made him so fat. He moves about among the others like a rich banker. Only hear him! His very chirp has in it something aristocratic and supercilious. He looks upon this crumb-scattering as a duty society owes him, and determines generously to leave for the others all he can not eat up himself. But I think I see a tuft on his little breast."

"A loose feather?" whispered Specht.

"Yes," continued Sabine; "I much fear his wife has pulled it out; for, important as he seems, he is under petticoat government. That gray little lady yonder, the lightest of them all, is his wife. Now look, they are going to quarrel." And a great contest began for an especially large crumb, in which all the birds manifested a strong dislike to the banker, and the wife came off victorious.

"And now, do look!" cried Sabine, joyfully; "here comes my little one—my pet;" and down plumped a young sparrow, with helpless outspread wings, and fluttered up to the maternal bird, who hacked the large crumb into little bits, and put them into its wide-opened beak, while the father hopped up and down, at a little distance, looking with a certain misgiving at his energetic better half.

"What a pretty sight!" cried Anton.

"Is it not?" said Sabine. "Even these little creatures have characters and a family life."

But the scene was suddenly changed; a quick step came round the hot-house; the birds flew away, and the mother called piteously to her child to follow. But the little thing, heavy and stupefied with all it had eaten, could not so quickly lift its weak wings. A cut from Fink's riding-whip caught him, and sent its little body dead among the flowers. An angry exclamation arose, and all faces looked darkly on the murderer. As for Sabine, she went to the bed, picked up the bird, kissed its little head, and said, in a broken voice, "It is dead." Then she put it down on the bench near the door, and covered it with her handkerchief.

An awkward silence ensued. At length Jordan said reproachfully, "You have killed Miss Sabine's favorite bird."

"I am sorry for it," replied Fink, drawing a chair to the table. Then turning to Sabine, "I did not know that you extended your sympathy to this class of rogues. I really believed that I deserved the thanks of the house for disposing of the young thief."

"The poor little fellow!" said Sabine, mournfully; "his mother is calling for him; do you hear her?"

"She will get over it," rejoined Fink; "I consider it overdone to expend more feeling upon a sparrow than his own relatives do. But I know you like to consider all around you in a tender and pathetic light."

"If you have not this peculiarity yourself, why ridicule it in others?" asked Sabine, with a quivering lip.

"Why," cried Fink, "because this eternal feeling, which here I meet with every where, expended on what does not deserve it, makes people at length weak and trivial. He who is always getting up emotions about trifles will have none to give when a strong attachment demands them."

"And he who ever looks on all around him with cold unconcern, will not he too be wanting in emotion when a strong attachment becomes a duty?" returned Sabine, with a mournful glance.

"It would be impolite to contradict you," said Fink, shrugging his shoulders. "At all events, it is better that a man should be too hard than too effeminate."

"But just look at the people of this country," said he, after another uncomfortable pause. "One loves the copper kettle in which his mother has boiled sausages; another loves his broken pipe, his faded coat, and with these a thousand obsolete customs. Just look at the German emigrants! What a heap of rubbish they take away with them—old birdcages, worm-eaten furniture, and

every kind of lumber! I once knew a fellow who took a journey of eight days merely to eat *sauer-kraut*. And when once a poor devil has squatted in an unhealthy district, and lived there a few years, he has spun such a web of sentimentalism about it that you can not stir him, even though he, his wife and children, should die there of fever. Commend me to what you call the insensibility of the Yankee. He works like two Germans, but he is not in love with his cottage or his gear. What he has is worth its equivalent in dollars, and no more. 'How low! how material!' you will say. Now, I like this. It has created a free and powerful state. If America had been peopled by Germans, they would be still drinking chicory instead of coffee, at whatever rate of duty the paternal governments of Europe liked to impose."

"And you would require a woman to be thus minded?" asked Sabine.

"In the main, yes," rejoined Fink. "Not a German housewife, wrapped up in her table-linen. The larger her stock, the happier she. I believe that they silently rate each other as we do men on 'Change—worth five hundred, worth eight hundred napkins. The American makes as good a wife as the German, but she would laugh at such notions. She has what she wants for present use, and buys more when the old set is worn out. Why should she fix her heart on what is so easily replaced?"

"Oh, how dreary you make life!" rejoined Sabine. "Our possessions lose thus their dearest value. If you kill the imagination which lends its varied hues to lifeless things, what remains? Nothing but an egotism to which every thing is sacrificed! He who can thus coldly think may do great deeds perhaps, but his life will never be beautiful nor happy, nor a blessing to others;" and unconsciously she folded her hands and looked sadly at Fink, whose face wore a hard and disdainful expression.

The silence was broken by Anton's cheerfully observing, "At all events, Fink's own practice is a striking refutation of his theory."

"How so, sir?" asked Fink, looking round.

"I shall soon prove my case; but first a few words in our own praise. We who are sitting and standing around are working members of a business that does not belong to us, and each of us looks upon his occupation from the German point of view which Fink has been denouncing. None of us reasons, 'The firm pays me so many dollars, consequently the firm is worth so many dollars to me.' No; when the house prospers we are all pleased and proud; if it loses, we regret it perhaps more than the principal does. When Liebold enters his figures in the great book, and admires their fair caligraphical procession, he silently smiles with delight. Look at him; he is doing so now."

Liebold, much embarrassed, pulled up his shirt collar.

"Then there is our friend Baumann, who secretly longs for another calling. A short time ago he brought me a report of the horrors of heathenism on the African coast, and said, 'I must go, Wohlfart; the time is come.' 'Who will attend to the calculations?' asked I; 'and what will become of the department which you and Balbus keep so entirely in your own hands?' 'Ay, indeed,' cried Baumann, 'I had not thought of that; I must put it off a little longer.'"

The whole party looked smilingly at Baumann, who said, as if to himself, "It was not right of me."

"As for the tyrant Pix, I will only say that there are many hours in which he is not quite clear as to whether the concern is his or Mr. Schröter's."

All laughed. Mr. Pix thrust his hand into his breast, like Napoleon.

"You are an unfair advocate," said Fink; "you enlist private feelings."

"You did the same," replied Anton. "And now I will soon dispose of you. About half a year ago, this Yankee went to our principal and said, 'I wish no longer to be a volunteer, but a regular member of your house.' Why was this? Of course, only for the sake of a certain number of dollars."

Again all smiled and looked kindly at Fink, for it was well known that he had said on that occasion, "I wish for a regular share of employment, I wish for the responsibility attached to it, and I thoroughly like my work."

"And then," continued Anton, triumphantly, "he shares all the weak sentimentalities he so condemns. He loves his horse, as you all know, not as the sum of five hundred dollars represented by so many hundred weight of flesh, and covered by a glossy skin—he loves it as a friend."

"Because he amuses me," said Fink.

"Of course," said Anton; "and thus table-linen amuses our housewives, so that is even. And then his pair of condor wings, his pistols, riding-whips, red drinking-glasses, are all trifles that he values, just as a German emigrant does his birdcages; and, in short, he is, in point of fact, nothing more than a poor-spirited German, like the rest of us."

Sabine shook her head, but she looked more kindly at the American, and his face too had changed. He looked straight before him, and there was a something playing over his haughty features that, in any one else, would have been called emotion.

"Well," said he, at length, "both the lady and I were perhaps too positive." Then pointing to the

dead sparrow, "Before this serious fact I lay down my arms, and confess that I wish the little gentleman were still alive, and likely to reach a good old age among the cherries and other delicacies of the firm. And so," turning to Sabine, "you will not be angry with me any more, will you?"

Sabine smiled, and cordially answered "No."

"As for you, Anton, give me your hand. You have made a brilliant defense, and gained me a verdict of 'Not guilty' from a German jury. Take your pen and scratch out a few weeks from our calendar; you understand?" Anton pressed his hand, and threw his arm around his shoulder.

Once more the party was in a thoroughly genial mood. Mr. Schröter joined them, cigars were lit, and all tried to be as pleasant as possible. Mr. Liebold rose to ask permission from the principal and his sister—that is, if it would not be considered an interruption—to sing a few concerted pieces with some of his colleagues. As he had for several years regularly made the same proposition in the same words, all were prepared for it, and Sabine good-naturedly cried, "Of course, Mr. Liebold; half the pleasure would be gone if we had not our quartette." Accordingly, the four singers began. Mr. Specht was the first tenor, Liebold the second, Birnbaum and Balbus took the base. These formed the musical section of the counting-house, and their voices went really very well together, with the exception of Specht's being rather too loud, and Liebold's rather too low; but their audience was well-disposed, the evening exquisite, and all listened with pleasure.

"It's an absurd thing," began Fink, when the applause was over, "that a certain sequence of tones should touch the heart, and call forth tears from men in whom all other gentle emotions are dead and gone. Every nation has its own simple airs, and fellow-countrymen recognize each other by the impression these make. When those emigrants of whom we spoke just now have lost all love for their fatherland—nay, have forgotten their mother tongue, their home melodies still survive, and many a foolish fellow, who piques himself on being a naturalized Yankee, suddenly feels himself German at heart on chancing to hear a couple of bars familiar to him in youth."

"You are right," said the merchant. "He who leaves his home is seldom aware of all that he relinquishes, and only finds it out when home recollections become the charm of his later years. Such recollections often form a sanctuary, mocked and dishonored indeed, but always revisited in his best hours."

"I confess, with a certain degree of shame," said Fink, "that I am little conscious of this charm. The fact is, I do not exactly know where my home is. Looking back, I find that I have lived most of my years in Germany, but foreign countries have left a livelier impression on my mind. Destiny has always torn me away before I could take deep root any where. And now, at times, I find myself a stranger here. For example, the dialects of the provinces are unintelligible to me. I get more presents than I deserve on Christmas-day, but am not touched by the magic of the Christmas-tree; and few of the popular melodies you are all so proud of, haunt my ear. And, besides these smaller matters, there are other things in which I feel deficient," continued he, more earnestly; "I know that at times I make too heavy demands upon the indulgence of my friends. I shall have to thank your house," said he, in conclusion, turning to the merchant, "if I ever acquire a knowledge of the best side of the German character."

Fink spoke with a degree of feeling he rarely showed. Sabine was happy; the sparrow was forgotten; and she cried, with irrepressible emotion, "That was nobly said, Herr von Fink."

The servants then announced that supper was ready.

The merchant took his place in the middle, and Sabine smiled brightly when Fink sat down, at her side.

"I must have you opposite me, Liebold," cried the principal; "I must see your honest face before me to-day. We have now been connected for five-and-twenty years. Mr. Liebold joined us a few weeks after my father took me into partnership," said he, by way of explanation to the younger clerks; "and while I am indebted to you all, I am most indebted to him." He held up his glass: "I drink your good health, my old friend; and so long as our desks stand side by side, separated only by a thin partition, so long shall there exist between us, as heretofore, a full and firm confidence, without many spoken words."

Liebold had stood at the beginning of this speech, and he remained standing. He wished to propose a health, it was evident, for he looked at the principal, held up his glass, and his lips moved. At last he sat down again, speechless. Straightway, to the amazement of all, Fink rose, and said, with deep earnestness, "Join me in drinking to the prosperity of a German house where work is a pleasure, and honor has its home. Hurrah for our counting-house and our principal!"

Thundering hurrahs followed, in which Sabine could not help joining. The rest of the evening was unbroken hilarity, and it was long past ten when they reached the town.

As they went up stairs, Fink said to Anton, "To-day, my boy, you are not to pass me by. I have found it a great bore to be so long without you;" and the reconciled friends sat together far into the night.

Sabine went to her own room, where her maid gave her a note in an unknown handwriting. The smell of musk and the delicate characters showed that it came from a lady.

"Who brought it?" inquired she.

"A stranger," replied the maid; "he said that there was no answer, and would not give his name."

Sabine read, "Do not triumph too soon, fair lady. You have by your coquetry allured a gentleman who is accustomed to mislead, to forget, and shamefully to use those who trust him. A short time ago he said to another all he now says to you. He will but betray and forsake you also."

The note was not signed: it came from Rosalie.

Sabine knew well who had written it. She held it to the taper, and then flinging it on the hearth, silently watched spark by spark die out. Long did she stand there, her head against the mantel-piece, her eyes fixed upon the little heap of ashes.

Tearless, voiceless, she held her hand pressed firmly on her heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

Veitel Itzig was in the highest excitement. After many consultations with his adviser Hippus, many nightly calculations as to the state of his purse, he had ventured upon a bold stroke of business, and had succeeded in it. He had wormed himself into a not very creditable secret, and had sold it for eight thousand dollars. The happy day had at length arrived when he was to carry home this large capital. After his long endeavor to appear calm, while his heart was beating with anxious suspense like a smith's hammer, he was now happy as a child; he jumped round the room, laughed with pleasure, and asked Hippus what sort of wine he would like to drink to-day. "Wine alone will not do," replied Hippus, ominously. "However, it is long since I have tasted any Hungarian. Get a bottle of old Upper Hungarian; or, stay, it is dark enough, I will go for it myself."

"How much does it cost?"

"Two dollars."

"That is a good deal, but 'tis all one; here they are;" and he threw them on the table.

"All right," said Hippus, snatching at them. "But this alone will not do, I must have my percentage. However, as we are old acquaintances, I will be satisfied with only five per cent. of what you have made to-day."

Veitel stood petrified.

"Not a word against it," continued Hippus, with a wicked glance at him over his spectacles; "we know each other. I was the means of your getting the money, and I alone. You make use of me, and you see that I can make use of you. Give me four hundred of your eight thousand at once."

Veitel tried to speak.

"Not a word," repeated Hippus, rapping the table with the dollars in his hand; "give me the money."

Veitel looked at him, felt in the pocket of his coat, and laid down two notes.

"Now two more," said Hippus, in the same tone. Veitel added another.

"And now for the last, my son," nodded he, encouragingly.

Veitel delayed a moment and looked hard at the old man's face, on which a malevolent pleasure was visible. There was no comfort there, however; so he laid down the fourth note, saying, in a stifled voice, "I have been mistaken in you, Hippus;" and, turning away, he wiped his eyes.

"Do not take it to heart, you booby," said his instructor; "if I die before you, you shall be my heir. And now I am off to taste the wine, and I will make a point of drinking your health, you sensitive Itzig;" and, so saying, he crept out of the door.

Veitel once more wiped away a bitter tear that rolled down his cheeks. His pleasure in his winnings was gone. It was a complex sort of feeling, this grief of his. True, he mourned the lost notes, but he had lost something more. The only man in the world for whom he felt any degree of attachment had behaved unkindly and selfishly toward him. It was all over henceforth between him and Hippus. He could not, indeed, do without him, but he hated him from this hour. The old man had made him more solitary and unscrupulous than before. Such is the curse of bad men; they are rendered wretched not only by their crimes, but even their best feelings turn to gall.

However, this melancholy mood did not long continue. He took out his remaining treasure, counted it over, felt cheered thereby, and turned his thoughts to the future. His social position had been changed at a stroke. As the possessor of eight thousand dollars—alas! there were but seven thousand six hundred—he was a small Crœsus among men of his class: many carried on transactions involving hundreds of thousands without as much capital as he had; in short, the world was his oyster, and he had but to bethink himself with what lever he should open it—how invest his capital—how double it—how increase it tenfold. There were many ways before him: he

might continue to lend money on high interest, he might speculate, or carry on some regular business; but each of these involved his beloved capital in some degree of risk; he might win, indeed, but then he might lose all, and the very thought so terrified him that he relinquished one scheme after another.

There was, indeed, one way in which a keen-witted man might possibly make much without great danger of loss.

Veitel had been accustomed, as a dealer in old clothes, to visit the different seats of landed proprietors; at the wool market he was in the habit of offering his services to gentlemen with mustaches and orders of merit; in his master's office he was constantly occupied with the means and affairs of the nobility. How intimately he knew old Ehrenthal's secret desire to become the possessor of a certain estate! And how came it that in the midst of his annoyance with Hippus, the thought of his schoolfellow Anton suddenly flashed across him, and of the day when he had walked with him last? That very morning he had walked about the baron's estate, and lounged by the cow-house, counting the double row of horns within, till the dairy-maid ordered him away. Now the thought passed like lightning through his brain that he might as well become the owner of that estate as Ehrenthal, and drive with a pair of horses into the town. From that moment he had a fixed plan, and began to carry it out.

And he speculated cunningly too. He determined to acquire a claim upon the baron's property by a mortgage; thus he would safely invest his capital, and work on quietly till the day came when he could get hold of the property itself. At all events, if he did not succeed in that, his money would be safe. Meanwhile, he would become an agent and commissioner, buy and sell, and do many clever things besides. Also, he must remain Ehrenthal's factotum as long as it suited him. Rosalie was handsome and rich, for Bernhard would not live to inherit his father's wealth. Perhaps he might desire to become Ehrenthal's son-in-law, perhaps not; at all events, there was no hurry about that. There was one other whom he must get on a secure footing—the little black man now drinking that expensive wine down stairs. Henceforth he would pay him for whatever he did for him, but he would not confide in him.

These were the resolves of Veitel Itzig; and, having concocted his plans, he locked his door, threw himself down exhausted on his hard bed, the imaginary possessor of Baron Rothsattel's fair property.

That evening the baroness and her daughter sat together in the conservatory, and both were silent; the baroness intently watching a bright moth, which was bent upon flying into the lamp, and came knocking its thick little body over and over against the glass which saved its life.

Lenore bent over her book, but often cast an inquiring glance at her mother's thoughtful face.

There came a quick step along the gravel, and the old bailiff, cap in hand, asked for the master.

"What do you want?" said Lenore; "has any thing happened?"

"It's all over with the old black horse," said the bailiff, in great concern; "he has been biting and kicking like mad, and now he is gasping his last."

Lenore sprang up with an exclamation for which her mother chid her.

"I will come and see to him myself," said she, and hurried off with the old man.

The sick horse lay on his straw, with the sweat running down, and his sides heaving violently. The stable-boys stood around, looking at him phlegmatically. When Lenore entered, the horse turned his head toward her as if asking help.

"He knows me yet," cried she. Then turning to the head groom, "Ride off instantly for a veterinary surgeon."

The man did not like the thought of a long ride at night, and replied, "The doctor is never at home, and the horse will be dead before he can come."

"Go at once!" commanded Lenore, pointing to the door.

"What is the matter with the groom?" asked Lenore, as they left the stable.

"He is grown good for nothing, and ought to be sent off, as I have often told my master; but the lout is as obedient to him as possible—he knows the length of his foot—while to every one else he is cross-grained, and gives me daily trouble."

"I will speak to my father," replied Lenore, with a slight frown.

The old servant continued: "Ah! dear young lady, if you would but look after things a little, it would be a good thing for the property. I am not satisfied with the dairy either: the new housekeeper does not know how to manage the maids; she is too smart by half—ribbons before and behind. Things used to go on better; the baron used to come and look at the butter-casks, now he is busy with other things; and when the master grows careless, servants soon snap their fingers at the bailiff. You can be sharp enough with people; it's a thousand pities you are not a gentleman."

"You are right; it is a thousand pities," said Lenore, approvingly; "but there's no help for it. However, I will see to the butter from this very day. How is corn now? You have been buying

some lately?"

"Yes," said the old man, dejectedly, "my master would have it so. I don't know what's come to him: he sold the whole granary full to that Ehrenthal in winter."

Lenore listened sympathizingly, with her hands behind her.

"Do not fret about it, my old friend," said she; "whenever papa is not at home, I will go about the fields with you, and you shall smoke your pipe all the same. How do you like the new one I brought you?"

"It has a beautiful color already," said the bailiff, chuckling, and drawing it out of his pocket. "But to return to the black horse; the baron will be very angry when he hears of it, and we could not help it either."

"Well, then," said Lenore, "if it could not be helped, it must be endured. Good-night. Go back now to the horse."

"I will, dear young lady; and good-night to you too," said the bailiff.

The baroness had remained in the conservatory, thinking of her husband, who formerly would have been by her side on an evening like this. Yes, there was a change in him: kind and affectionate toward her as ever, he was often absent and preoccupied, and more easily irritated by trifles; his cheerfulness was of a more boisterous character, and his love for men's society increasing; and she mournfully asked herself whether it were the fading of her youth that accounted for this.

"Is not my father yet returned?" asked Lenore, as she entered.

"No, my child, he has much to do in town; perhaps he will not be back till to-morrow morning."

"I do not like papa being so much away," said Lenore; "it is long since he has read aloud to us in the evening, as he used to do."

"He means you to be my reader," said her mother, with a smile; "so take your book, and sit down quietly by me, you impetuous child."

Lenore pouted, and instead of taking up the book, threw her arms round her mother, and said, "Darling, you too are sad and anxious about my father. Things are no longer as they used to be. I am no child now; tell me what he is doing."

"Nonsense," calmly replied the baroness. "I am keeping nothing back from you. If there really be any reason for your father's frequent absence, it is our duty to wait till he chooses to communicate it; and this is not difficult to those who love and trust him as we do."

"And yet your eyes are tearful, and you do seek to hide your anxiety from me. If you will not, I will ask my father myself."

"No, you shall not," said the baroness, in a tone of decision.

"My father!" cried Lenore; "I hear his step."

The stately form came rapidly toward them. "Good-evening, my home treasures!" he called out. Then clasping wife and daughter at once in his arms, he looked so cheerfully at them that the baroness forgot her anxiety and Lenore her question. The baron sat down between them, and asked whether they saw any thing unusual about him.

"You are cheerful," said his wife, fondly, "as you always are."

"You have been paying visits," said Lenore; "I know that by your white cravat."

"Right," replied the baron; "but there's something more: the king has been graciously pleased to give me the Order my father and grandfather have both worn, and I am much pleased that the cross should thus become, as it were, hereditary in our family. And with the Order came a most gracious letter from the prince."

"How charming!" cried his wife, throwing her arms around him; "I have longed for this star for some years past. We will put on the decoration;" and, having done so, she loyally kissed, first her husband, and then the cross.

"We know indeed," said the baron, "how such things are rated in our days, and yet I confess that the rank implied by such a decoration is intensely precious to me. Our family is one of the oldest in the kingdom, and there has never been a *mésalliance* among us. However, at the present time, money is beginning to replace our former privileges, and even we nobles must take thought for it if we wish to preserve our families in the same position as ourselves. I must provide for you, Lenore, and your brother."

"As for me," said Lenore, crossing her arms, "I can do nothing for the honor of the family. If I marry, which I have, however, no inclination to do, I must take some other name; and little will my old ancestors, in armor yonder in the hall, care whom I choose for master. I can not remain a Rothsattel."

The father drew her toward him laughingly. "If I could only find out how my child has got these

heretical notions!" said he.

"She has always had them," said her mother.

"They will pass," answered the baron, kissing his daughter's brow. "And now read the prince's letter, while I go and look after the black horse."

"I will go with you," said Lenore.

The order, a memorial of the chivalrous past, was a source of still more satisfaction to the baron than he cared to avow. The congratulations of his numerous acquaintance pleased him, and he felt it a prop to his self-respect, which it often needed. A week later, Ehrenthal came on his way to the neighboring village to offer his congratulations too, and just as he was making his final bow he said, "You had once a notion, baron, of setting up a beet-root-sugar factory. I find that a company is about to be formed to build one in your neighborhood. I have been asked to take shares, but first of all I thought I would ascertain your views."

This intelligence was very unwelcome; for though, after much deliberation and consultation, he had resolved, for the present, to postpone the project, the baron did not like it to be hopelessly interfered with by a rival factory.

In a tone of vexation, he exclaimed, "Just now, when I have, for a time, that capital to dispose of!"

"Baron," said Ehrenthal, heartily, "you are a rich man, and much respected. Give out that you mean to set up a factory yourself and the company will be dispersed in a few days."

"You know I can not do so at present," said the baron, reluctantly.

"You can, gracious sir, if you choose. I am not the man to urge you to it. What do you want with money-making? But if you say to me, 'Ehrenthal, I will set up a factory,' why, I have capital for you as much as you like. I myself have a sum of ten thousand dollars ready; you may have it any day. And now I will make a proposal. I will get you the money you want, at a moderate rate of interest; and for the money I myself advance, you shall give me a share of the business until you are able to repay the sum. Should you require further money, you must take a mortgage on your property until you can replace the whole."

The proposal appeared disinterested and friendly, but the baron felt a certain misgiving, and declined it.

Accordingly, Ehrenthal had to retire, saying, "You can think the matter over; I shall, at all events, put off the forming of the company for a month."

From that day forth the baron was deluged with letters, notes, and messages. First Ehrenthal wrote to say he had got the month's delay; then Herr Karfunkelstein, one of the projected company, wrote to say he resigned his pretensions; then Ehrenthal wrote again, inclosing the yearly accounts of a similar factory, that the profits might be judged of. Then a Herr Wolfsdorf wrote to offer capital at a low rate of interest. Then, lastly, an unknown person of the name of Itzigveit wrote to beg that at least the baron would not enter into partnership with Ehrenthal, as was rumored in the town, for, though a rich, he was a very selfish man, and that the writer could advance capital on much better terms; whereupon Ehrenthal wrote again that some of his enemies were, he knew, intriguing against him, and wishing to make money themselves in the baron's promising undertaking, but that the baron must please himself; that, for his part, he was an honorable man, and did not wish to push himself forward.

The consequence of all these communications was, that the baron grew familiar with the thought of building his factory with borrowed money. However, there was one thing that offended his pride, and that was the thought of Ehrenthal as a shareholder; so far the letter of the unknown Itzigveit had taken effect.

During the next month he was the prey of a miserable irresolution, and his wife, in silent sorrow, observed his excitement. He often went to town, and often inspected similar factories. True, the evidence thus collected was not encouraging, but this he attributed to dread of his competition, or to unfavorable details of site or management.

The month was over, and a letter came from Ehrenthal to beg for a decision, as some members of the company were impatient of further delay.

It was on the evening of a hot day that the baron wandered restlessly over his grounds. Heavy black, clouds gathered over an arch of yellow sky. The grasshoppers chirped far louder than their wont. The little birds twittered as if in apprehension of some coming evil. The swallows flew low, and darted by close to the baron, as if they did not see him. The wild flowers along the road hung down covered with dust. The shepherd who passed him looked gray and spectral in the lurid light.

The baron strolled on to the other side of the lake whence Anton had taken his last look of the lordly home. The castle now stood before him in a crimson glow; every window-pane seemed on fire, and the red roses lay like drops of blood upon the dark green climbers beneath. And nearer and nearer rolled on the black clouds, as if to shroud the bright pile from sight. Not a leaf stirred, not a ripple curled the water. The baron looked down into the water for some living thing, a spider, a dragon-fly, and started back from the pale face that met him, and which at first he did not recognize as his own. There was a sultry, boding, listless gloom over his heart, as over all

nature.

Suddenly a strange shivering sound in the tree-tops—a signal to the storm. Again a pause, and then down rushed the mighty wind, bending the trees, curling the lake, driving the dust in wild whirls along. The bright light faded from the castle, and all the landscape toned down into bluish gray. Then forked lightning, and a long and solemn peal.

The baron drew himself up to his full height, and turned to meet the storm. Leaves and branches flew round him, big drops fell on his head, but he kept looking up at the clouds, and at the lightning that flashed from them, as though expecting a decision from on high.

Then came the galloping of a horse's feet, and a gay voice cried out, "Father!" A young cavalry officer had drawn up beside him.

"My son! my beloved son!" cried the baron, with a quivering voice; "you are come at the right time;" and he clasped the youth to his heart, and then held his hands and looked long into his face. All indecision, all mournful forebodings were over; he felt again as the head of his house should feel. Before him stood, blooming in youth and health, the future of his family. He took it as an omen, as the voice of fate to him in the hour of decision. "And now," said he, "come home; there is no further need for our remaining in the rain."

While the baroness drew her son down by her on the sofa, and never wearied of looking at and admiring him, the baron sat at the window and watched the torrents of rain. Brighter grew the flashes, and shorter the interval between them and the thunder's roll.

"Shut the window," said she; "the storm comes this way."

"It will do our house no harm," replied her husband, encouragingly. "The conductor stands firm on the roof, and shines through the clouds. And now look there where the clouds are blackest, behind those bright green ash-trees."

"I see the spot," returned she.

"Make up your mind," continued he, smiling, "always to have your beloved blue sky covered with gray smoke in that direction. Above those trees will rise the factory chimney."

"You mean to build?" inquired the baroness, anxiously.

"I do," was the reply. "The undertaking will involve much that will be disagreeable to you and me, and will require all my energies. If I venture upon it, it is not for our own sake, but our children's. I wish to secure this property to our family, and so to increase its return that the owner may be able amply to provide for the rest of his children, and yet leave the estate to the eldest son. After much painful deliberation, I have this day taken my resolve."

CHAPTER XVII.

The baron carried on his undertaking with the greatest possible spirit. He superintended the burning of the bricks; he himself marked the trees destined to be cut down for the building. Ehrenthal had recommended a builder, and the baron had found out a manager for the concern. He had made careful inquiries as to this man's past career, and congratulated himself upon the amount of his theoretical knowledge. Possibly this was not wholly an advantage, for plain practical men declared that he could never let a factory go quietly on, but was always interrupting the daily work with new inventions and contrivances, and was therefore both expensive and unsafe. But the baron, naturally enough, considered his probity and intelligence to be the main point, and valued the theoretical skill of the manager in proportion to his own ignorance.

Pleasant as his prospects were, there were yet many drawbacks. Order and comfort had flown away with the storks, who had for years been accustomed to make their nests on the great barn. Every body suffered from the new undertaking. The baroness lost a corner of the park, and had the grief of seeing a dozen noble old trees felled. The gardener wrung his hands over the thefts committed by the strange laborers that swarmed in all directions. The bailiff was in perfect despair at the disorders in his jurisdiction. His horses and oxen were taken from him to carry timber when he wanted them to plow. The wants of the household increased; the returns from the property became less and less. Lenore had much to do to comfort him, and brought him many pounds of tobacco from the town, that he might smoke off his annoyance. But the heaviest burden of course pressed upon the baron himself. His study was now become a place of public resort, like any tradesman's shop. He had to give advice, to come to a decision, to overcome difficulties in a dozen directions at once. He went almost daily to town, and when he returned he was absent and morose in the midst of his family. His was a fair hope indeed, but it was one very difficult to realize.

The baron found some comfort, however, in Ehrenthal's cheerful devotedness. He was always useful, and fertile in expedient, and never appeared doubtful as to the result of the undertaking. He was now a frequent visitor, welcome to the master of the house, but less so to the ladies, who suspected him of having been the prompter of the factory scheme.

One sunny day, Ehrenthal, with shirt-frill and diamond pin, made his appearance in his son's room. "Will you drive with me to-day to the Rothsattel's Castle, my Bernhard? I told the baron that I should bring you with me to introduce you to the family."

Bernhard sprang up from his seat. "But, father, I am an utter stranger to them all."

"When you have seen and spoken to them, you will no longer be a stranger," replied his father. "They are good people—good people," added he, benevolently.

Bernhard had still some modest scruples, but they were overruled, and the two set out together—the pale student in much excitement at the novelty of the drive, and the prospect of seeing a renowned beauty like Lenore.

Meanwhile, his father overflowed with the praises of the family. "Noble people," said he; "if you could only see the baroness as she is in her lace cap, so delicate and so refined! Too refined for this world as it is! Every thing so elegant! To be sure, the pieces of sugar are too large, and the wine is too dear, but it all seems of a piece with their rank."

"Is Fräulein Lenore a great beauty?" inquired Bernhard. "Is she very proud?"

"She is proud, but she is a beauty indeed. Between ourselves, I admire her more than Rosalie."

"Is she a blonde?"

Ehrenthal took some time to consider. "Blonde? what should she be but a blonde or a brunette? One thing I know, she has blue eyes. You can look over the farm, and do not forget to walk round the park. See whether you can find a spot where you would like to sit with your book."

The guileless Bernhard heard in silence.

The carriage stopped at the castle door. The servants announced that the baron was in his room—the baroness not visible, but that the young lady was walking in the garden. Ehrenthal and his son went round the house, and saw Lenore's tall figure slowly crossing the grass-plot. Ehrenthal threw himself into a deferential attitude, and presented his son, who bowed low. Lenore bestowed a cool sort of salutation upon the student, and said, "If you want my father, he is up stairs in his room."

"I will go to him, then. Bernhard, you may, I am sure, remain with the young lady."

Arrived in the baron's room, the trader placed some thousand dollars on the table, saying, "Here is the first sum. And now, what does the baron wish as to the security?"

"According to our agreement, I must give you a mortgage on the property," was the reply.

"Do you know what, baron? It would never do for you to grant a fresh mortgage for every thousand dollars that I might happen to pay in; it would be very expensive, and would bring the property into disrepute. Rather have a deed of mortgage drawn up for some considerable sum, say twenty thousand dollars, and let it stand in the name of the baroness; you will then have a security that you may sell any day. And every time I pay you, give me a simple note of hand, pledging your word of honor that I have a claim to that amount on the mortgage. That is a simple plan, and remains a secret between you and me. And when you need no further advances, we can settle the matter finally before an attorney. You can make over the mortgage to me, and I return you the notes of hand, and repay you whatever may be wanted to make up the twenty thousand. I only ask your word of honor on a slip of paper no longer than my finger, and when the deed is ready, I should wish to have it executed in my house. You can not object to that. Any lawyer would tell you that I am not dealing in a business-like way. A man's word is often broken, but if there is one thing sure and steadfast in the world, I believe it is your word of honor, baron."

Ehrenthal said this with an expression of sincerity, which was not altogether assumed. This plan of his was the result of many a consultation with Itzig. He knew that the baron would require far more than twenty thousand dollars, and it was to his advantage that he should procure them easily; besides which, he, the thorough rogue, had firm trust in the nobleman's integrity.

Meanwhile, Lenore had asked Bernhard whether he would like to walk in the park. He followed her in silence, looking timidly at the fair young aristocrat, who carried her head high, and troubled herself but little about her companion. When she reached the grass-plot station that had once so enchanted Anton, she stood still, and pointed to the gravel-walk, saying, "That way leads to the lake, and this to the garden again."

Bernhard looked up in amazement at the castle and its turrets, its balcony and creeping plants, and exclaimed, "I have seen all this before, and yet I have never been here."

"And certainly," said Lenore, "the castle has never been to the town; there may be others like it."

"No," replied Bernhard, trying to collect his ideas, "no; I have seen a drawing of it in a friend's room. He must know you," cried he, with delight; "and yet he never told me so."

"What is your friend's name?"

"Anton Wohlfart."

The lady turned round at once with sudden animation. "Wohlfart? a clerk in T. O. Schröter's house? Is it he? And this gentleman is your friend? How did you become acquainted with him?"

And she stood before Bernhard with her hands behind her back, like a severe schoolmistress cross-examining a little thief about a stolen apple.

Bernhard told her how he had learned to know and love Anton; and in doing so, he lost some of his embarrassment, while the young lady lost some of her haughty indifference.

She asked him many questions about his friend, and Bernhard grew eloquent as he replied.

Then she led him through the park, as once she had led Anton. Bernhard was a son of the city. It was not the lofty, wide-spreading trees, nor the gay flower-beds, nor the turreted castle which made an impression on him; his eyes were riveted on Lenore alone. It was a bright September evening; the sunlight fell through the branches, and whenever Lenore's hair caught its rays, it shone like gold. The proud eye, the delicate mouth, the slender limbs of the noble girl took his fancy prisoner. She laughed, and showed her little white teeth—he was enraptured; she broke off a twig, and struck the shrubs with it as she passed—it seemed to him that they bent before her in homage to the ground.

They came to the bridge between the park and the fields, where a few little girls ran to Lenore and kissed her hands; she received the tribute of respect as a queen might have done. Two other children had made a long chain of dandelion stalks, and with it barred Bernhard's way.

"Away with you, rude little things," cried Lenore; "how can you think of barring our way? The gentleman comes from the castle."

And Bernhard felt with pride that, for the moment, he belonged to her. He put his hand in his purse, and soon got rid of the children. "It is long," said he, "since I have seen a dandelion chain. I have an indistinct recollection of sitting as a little boy in a green nook, and trying to make one;" and, gathering a few dandelion stalks, he began the childish task.

"If you are so expert in such childish play," said Lenore, "here is something for you," and she pointed to a great burdock near the road-side. "Have you ever seen a cap of burs?"

"No," answered Bernhard, with some slight misgiving.

"You shall have one immediately," said Lenore. She went to the burdock; Bernhard gathered her some handfuls of burs. She fitted one into the other, and made a cap with two little horns. "You may put it on," said she, graciously.

"I dare not; the very birds would be frightened. If you too would—"

"You can not expect me to wear burs," replied she; "but you shall have your wish." She led him back to a group of sunflowers in the shrubbery, and, gathering a few of them, she made a kind of helmet, which she laughingly put on. "Now for your cap," commanded she. Bernhard obeyed, and his thoughtful, deeply-marked features, black coat, and white cravat looked so strange and incongruous beneath the cap of burs, that Lenore could not help laughing. "Come with me," said she; "you shall look at yourself in the lake." And she led him past the site of the factory—a rough place, with heaps of earth, tiles, beams, in utmost confusion. It was a holiday; all the laborers had left, but some village children were playing about and collecting chips. A few steps farther on they came to a little bay, covered with water-lilies and surrounded by brushwood. "How desolate it looks!" said Lenore; "the bushes half pulled away—even the trees injured: all the result of this building. We seldom come here on account of the strange workmen. The village children, too, are become so bold, they make this their play-ground, and there is no keeping them away."

That moment a boat came in sight. A little village girl, a red-faced chubby thing, stood up tottering in it, while her older brother tried to get as far from shore as with one oar he could. "Look!" cried Lenore, angrily, "the little wretches have actually taken our boat. Come back instantly to the shore." The children were startled, the boy dropped the oar, the little girl tottered more than before, and, in the terror of a guilty conscience, lost her balance and fell into the water. Her brother drifted helplessly into the bay. "Save the child!" screamed Lenore. Bernhard ran into the lake forgetting that he could not swim, waded in a few steps, and then stood up to the breast in mud and water. He stretched out his arms to the spot where the child had sunk, but could not reach it. Meanwhile Lenore had sprung, quick as lightning, behind a bush. After a few seconds she returned and ran to a projecting bank.

Bernhard looked with rapture and terror at her tall figure. She still wore her fantastic coronal, her light garments floated round her, her eyes were fixed upon the spot where the child would reappear. Raising her arms above her head, she leaped in and swam toward it, seized its frock, struck out with her free arm, and soon reached the boat. Exerting all her strength, she lifted the child in, and then drew the boat to land. Bernhard, who, pale as death, had stood watching her efforts, fought his way back to the land, gave her his hand, and drew in the boat. Lenore carried the unconscious child. Bernhard lifted out the boy, and both hurried to the gardener's house, while the little lad ran screaming behind them. Lenore's soaked garments clung closely to her beautiful form, and every movement of her fair limbs was seen almost unveiled by her companion. She did not heed it. Bernhard went with her into the room, but she hastily sent him out again; while, with the help of the gardener's wife, she undressed, and sought by friction and other means to restore the child to life. Meanwhile Bernhard stood without, his teeth chattering with cold, but in a state of excitement which made his eyes glow like fire. "Is the child alive?" he called through the door.

"She is," answered Lenore from within.

"Thank God!" cried Bernhard; but his thoughts rose no higher than the fair being within. Long he stood there shuddering and dreaming, till at length a tall figure in woolen garments came out of the door. It was Lenore in the clothes of the gardener's wife, still agitated by all she had gone through, but with a happy smile on her lips. Bernhard, beside himself, kissed her hand more than once.

"You look very well," said Lenore, cheerfully; "but you will catch cold."

He stood before her, wet and dripping, covered with weeds and mud. "I do not feel cold," cried he, but his limbs shook.

"Go in at once," urged Lenore; and, opening the door, she called to the good woman, "Give this gentleman your husband's clothes."

Bernhard obeyed, and when he came out metamorphosed into a rustic, he found Lenore rapidly walking up and down.

"Come to the castle," said she, with all her former dignity.

"I should like once more to see the child," replied he.

They went to the bed on which the little girl lay. She looked up dreamingly at Bernhard, who bent over her and kissed her forehead. "She is the child of a laborer in the village," said the gardener's wife. Unobserved by Lenore, Bernhard laid his purse on the bed.

On their return they found Ehrenthal impatient to depart. His amazement at recognizing his Bernhard in the rustic before him was boundless.

"Give the gentleman a cloak," said Lenore to the servants; "he is benumbed with cold. Wrap yourself up well, or you may long have cause to remember your march among the water-lilies."

And Bernhard did remember it. He wrapped the cloak about him, and squeezed himself up into a corner of the carriage. A burning heat had succeeded to the chill, and his blood rushed wildly through his veins. He had seen the fairest woman on the earth; he had experienced realities more transporting, more absorbing, than any of his favorite poet's dreams. He could hardly answer his father's questions. There they sat side by side, cold cunning and burning passion personified. This excursion had been propitious to both; the father had got the long-desired hold on the Rothsattel property, the son had had an adventure which gave a new coloring to his whole existence.

On the baron's estate the factory slowly rose; in Ehrenthal's coffers the baron's casket was filled by notes of hand and the new deed of mortgage; and while Bernhard's tender frame drooped under the effects of the cold bath above described, he gave his spirit up to the intoxication of the sweetest fancies.

CHAPTER XVIII.

One afternoon the postman brought to Fink a letter with a black seal. Having opened it, he went silently to his own room. As he did not return, Anton anxiously followed, and found Fink sitting on the sofa, his head resting on his hand.

"You have had bad news?" inquired Anton.

"My uncle is dead," was the reply; "he, the richest man, perhaps, in Wall Street, New York, has been blown up in a Mississippi steamer. He was an unapproachable sort of man, but in his way very kind to me, and I repaid him by folly and ingratitude. This thought imbitters his death to me. And, besides that, the fact decides my future career."

"You will leave us!" cried Anton, in dismay.

"I must set off to-morrow. My father is heir to all my uncle's property, with the exception of some land in the Far West, to which I am left executor. My uncle was a great speculator, and there is much troublesome business to be settled. Therefore my father wishes me to go to New York as soon as possible, and I plainly see that I am wanted there. He has all at once conceived a high idea of my judgment and capacity for business. Read his letter." Anton scrupled to take it. "Read it, my boy," said Fink, with a sad smile; "in my family circle, father and son write each other no secrets." Anton read. "The excellent accounts which Mr. Schröter sends me of your practical sense and shrewdness in business lead me to request you to go over yourself, in which case I shall send Mr. Westlock, of our house, to assist you."

Anton laid the letter down, and Fink asked, "What say you to this praise of the principal's? You know that I had some reason to believe myself far from a favorite."

"Be that as it may, I consider the praise just, and his estimate correct," replied Anton.

"At all events," said Fink, "it decides my fate. I shall now be what I have long wished, a landed proprietor on the other side of the Atlantic. And so, dear Anton, we must part," he continued, holding out his hand to his friend; "I had not thought the time would so soon come. But we shall meet again."

"Possibly," said Anton, sadly, holding the young nobleman's hand fondly in his. "But now go to Mr. Schröter; he has the first claim to hear this."

"He knows it already; he has had a letter from my father."

"The more reason why he should expect you."

"You are right; let us go."

Anton returned to his desk, and Fink went to the principal's little office. The merchant came to meet him with a serious aspect; and, after having expressed his sympathy, invited him to sit down, and quietly to discuss his future prospects.

Fink replied with the utmost courtesy: "My father's views for me—based on your estimate—agree so well with my own wishes, that I must express my gratitude to you. Your opinion of me has been more favorable than I could have ventured to expect. If, however, you have really been satisfied with me, I should rejoice to hear it from your own lips."

"I have not been entirely satisfied, Herr von Fink," replied the merchant, with some reserve; "you were not in your proper place here. But that has not prevented my discerning that for other and more active pursuits you were eminently well fitted. You have, in a high degree, the faculty of governing and arranging, and you possess uncommon energy of will. A desk in a counting-house is not the place for such a nature."

Fink bowed. "Nevertheless, it was my duty," said he, "to fill that place properly, and I own that I have not done so."

"You came here unaccustomed to regular work, but during the last few months you have differed but little from a really industrious counting-house clerk. Hence my letter to your father."

Fink rose, and the merchant accompanied him to the door, saying, "Your departure will be a great loss to one of our friends."

Fink abruptly stopped, and said, "Let him go with me to America. He is well fitted to make his fortune there."

"Have you spoken to him on the subject?"

"I have not."

"Then I may state my opinion unreservedly. Wohlfart is young, and I believe the defined and regular work of a house like this very desirable discipline for him for some years to come. Meanwhile, I have no right to sway his decision. I shall be sorry to lose him, but if he thinks he will make his fortune more rapidly with you, I have no objection to make."

"If you will allow me, I will ask him at once," said Fink.

Then calling Anton into the office, he went on to say, "Anton, I have requested Mr. Schröter to allow you to accompany me. It will be a great point to me to have you with me. You know how much attached to you I am; we will share my new career, and get on gloriously, and you shall fix your own conditions. Mr. Schröter leaves you to decide."

Anton stood for a moment thoughtful and perplexed; the future so suddenly opened out to him looked fair and promising, but he soon collected himself, and, turning to the principal, inquired, "Is it your opinion that I should do right to go?"

"I can not say it is, dear Wohlfart," was the merchant's grave reply.

"Then I remain," said Anton, decidedly. "Do not be angry with me, Fritz, for not following you. I am an orphan, and have now no home but this house and this firm. If Mr. Schröter will keep me, I will remain with him."

Evidently touched by the words, the merchant replied: "Remember, however, that thus deciding you give up much. In my counting-house you can neither become a rich man, nor have any experience of life on a large and exciting scale; our business is limited, and the day may come when you will find this irksome. All that tends to your future independence, wealth, connections, and so forth, you will more readily secure in America than with me."

"My good father often used to say to me, 'Dwell in the land; and verily thou shalt be fed.' I will live according to his wish," said Anton, in a voice low with emotion.

"He is, and always will be, a mere cit," cried Fink, in a sort of despair.

"I believe that this love of country is a very sound foundation for a man's fortune to rise upon," said the merchant, and there was an end of the matter.

Fink said nothing more about the proposal, and Anton tried, by countless small attentions, to show his friend how dear he was to him, and how much he regretted his departure.

That evening Fink said to Anton, "Hearken, my lad; I have a fancy to take a wife across with me."

Anton looked at his friend in utter amazement, and, like one who has received a great shock and wishes to conceal it often does, he inquired, in forced merriment, "What! you will actually ask Fräulein von Baldereck—"

"That's not the quarter. What should I do with a woman whose only thought would be how she could best amuse herself with her husband's money?"

"But who else can you be thinking of? Not of the ancient cousin of the house?"

"No, my fine fellow, but of the young lady of the house."

"For Heaven's sake, no!" cried Anton, springing up; "that would, indeed, be a pretty business."

"Why so?" was the cool reply. "Either she takes me, and I am a lucky man, or she takes me not, and I start without a wife."

"But have you ever thought of it before?" inquired Anton, uneasily.

"Sometimes—indeed often during the last year. She is the best housewife, and the noblest, most unselfish creature in the world."

Anton looked at his friend in growing astonishment. Not once had Fink given him the remotest hint of such a thing.

"But you never told me of it."

"Have you ever told me of your feelings for another young lady?" replied Fink, laughing.

Anton blushed and was silent.

"I think," continued Fink, "that she does not dislike me; but whether she will go with me or not I can not tell; however, we shall soon know, for I am going at once to ask her."

Anton barred the way. "Once more I implore you to reflect upon what you are going to do."

"What is there to reflect upon, you simple child?" laughed Fink; but an unusual degree of excitement was visible in his manner.

"Do you then love Sabine?" asked Anton.

"Another of your home questions," replied Fink. "Yes, I do love her in my own way."

"And do you mean to take her into the back woods?"

"Yes; for she will be a high-hearted, strong-minded wife, and will give stability and worth to my life there. She is not fascinating—at least one can't get on with her as readily as with many others; but if I am to take a wife, I need one who can look after me. Believe me, the black-haired one is the very one to do that; and now let me go; I must find out how I stand."

"Speak at least to the principal in the first instance," cried Anton after him.

"First to herself," cried Fink, rushing down the stairs.

Anton paced up and down the room. All that Fink had said in praise of Sabine was true; that he warmly felt. He knew, too, how deep her feeling for him was, and yet he foresaw that his friend would meet with some secret obstacle or other. Then another thing displeased him. Fink had only spoken of himself; had he thought of her happiness in the matter—had he even felt what it would cost her to leave her beloved brother, her country, and her home? True, Fink was the very man to scatter the blossoms of the New World profusely at her feet, but he was always restless; actively employed, would he have any sympathy for the feelings of his German wife? And involuntarily our hero found himself taking part against his friend, and deciding that Sabine ought not to leave the home and brother to whom she was so essential; and, absorbed in these thoughts, Anton paced up and down, anxious and heavy-hearted. It grew dark, and still Fink did not return.

Meanwhile he was announced to Sabine. She came hurriedly to meet him, and her cheeks were redder than usual as she said, "My brother has told me that you must leave us."

Fink began in some agitation, "I must not, I can not leave without having spoken openly to you. I came here without any interest in the quiet life to which I had been so unaccustomed. I have here learned the worth and the happiness of a German home. You I have ever honored as the good spirit of the house. Soon after my arrival, you began to treat me with a distance of manner which I have always lamented. I now come to tell you how much my eyes and heart have clung to you. I feel that my life would be a happy one if I could henceforth ever hear your voice, and if your spirit could accompany mine along the paths of my future life."

Sabine became very pale, and retreated. "Say no more, Herr von Fink," said she, imploringly, raising her hand unconsciously, as if to avert what she foresaw.

"Nay, let me speak," rapidly continued he. "I should consider it the greatest happiness if I could take with me the conviction of not being indifferent to you. I have not the audacity to ask you to follow me at once into an uncertain life, but give me a hope that in a year I may return and ask you to become my wife."

"Do not return," said Sabine, motionless as a statue, and in a voice scarcely audible; "I implore you to say no more."

Her hands convulsively grasped the back of the chair next to her, and, supporting herself by it, she stood with bloodless cheeks, looking at her suitor through her tears with eyes so full of grief

and tenderness that the wild-hearted man before her was thoroughly overcome, and lost all self-confidence—nay, forgot his own cause in his distress at her emotion, and his anxiety to soothe it.

"I grieve that I should thus have shocked you," said he; "forgive me, Sabine."

"Go! go!" implored Sabine, still standing as before.

"Let me not part from you without some comfort; give me an answer; the most painful were better than this silence."

"Then hear me," said Sabine, with unnatural calmness, while her breast heaved and her hands trembled; "I loved you from the first day of your arrival; like a childish girl, I listened with rapture to the tone of your voice, and was fascinated by all your lips uttered; but I have conquered the feeling. I have conquered it," she repeated. "I dare not be yours, for I should be miserable."

"But why—why?" inquired Fink, in genuine despair.

"Do not ask me," said Sabine, scarce audibly.

"I must hear my sentence from your own lips," cried Fink.

"You have played with your own life and with the life of others; you would always be unsparing in carrying out your plans; you would undertake what was great and noble—that I believe—but you would not shrink from the sacrifice of individuals. I can not bear such a spirit. You would be kind to me—that, too, I believe; you would make as many allowances for me as you could, but you would always have to make them: that would become burdensome to you, and I should be alone—alone in a foreign land. I am weak, spoiled, bound by a hundred ties to the customs of this house, to the little domestic duties of every day, and to my brother's life."

Fink looked down darkly. "You are punishing severely in this hour all that you have disapproved in me hitherto."

"No," cried Sabine, holding out her hand, "not so, my friend. If there have been hours in which you have pained me, there have been others in which I have looked up to you in admiration; and this is the very reason that keeps us apart forever. I can never be at rest near you; I am constantly tossed from one extreme of feeling to another; I am not sure of you, nor ever should be. I should have to conceal this inward conflict in a relation where my whole nature ought to be open to you, and you would find that out, and would be angry with me."

She gave him her hand. Fink bent low over the little hand, and pressed a kiss upon it.

"Blessings on your future!" said Sabine, trembling all over. "If ever you have spent a happy hour among us, oh! think of it when far away. If ever in the German merchant's house, in the career of my brother, you have found any thing to respect, think, oh! think of it in that far country. In the different life that awaits you, in the great enterprises, the wild struggles that you will engage in, never think slightly of us and of our quiet ways;" and she held her left hand over his head, like an anxious mother blessing her parting darling.

Fink pressed her right hand firmly in his own; both looked long into each other's eyes, and both faces were pale. At last Fink said, in his deep, melodious voice, "Fare you well!"

"Fare you well!" replied she, so low that he hardly caught the words. He walked slowly away, while she looked after him motionless, as one who watches the vanishing of an apparition.

When the merchant, after the close of his day's work, went into his sister's room, Sabine flew to meet him, and, clasping him in her arms, laid her head on his breast.

"What is it, my child?" inquired he, anxiously stroking back her hair from her damp brow.

"Fink has been with me; I have been speaking with him."

"About what? Has he been disagreeable? Has he made you an offer?" asked the merchant, in jest.

"He has made me an offer," said Sabine.

Her brother started: "And you, my sister?"

"I have done what you might expect me to do—I shall not see him again."

Tears started at the words; she took her brother's hand and kissed it.

"Do not be angry with me for weeping. I am still a little shaken: it will soon pass."

"My precious sister—dear, dear Sabine!" cried the merchant; "I can not but fear that you thought of me when you refused."

"I thought of you and of your self-sacrificing, duty-loving life, and his bright form lost the fair colors in which I had once seen it clothed."

"Sabine, you have made a sacrifice for my sake," cried her brother.

"No, Traugott; if this has been a sacrifice, I have made it to the home where I have grown up under your care, and to the memory of our good parents, whose blessing rests on our quiet life."

It was late when Fink re-entered Anton's room; he looked heated, threw his hat on the table,

himself on the sofa, and said to his friend,

"Before any thing else, give me a cigar."

Anton shook his head as he reached him a bundle, and asked, "How have you fared?"

"No wedding to be," coolly returned Fink. "She plainly showed me that I was a good for nothing sort of fellow, and no match for a sensible girl. She took the matter rather too seriously, assured me of her regard, gave me a sketch of my character, and dismissed me. But, hang me!" cried he, springing up, and throwing away his cigar, "if she be not the best soul that ever preached virtue in a petticoat. She has only one fault, that of not choosing to marry me; and even there she is right."

Fink's strange bearing made Anton feel anxious.

"Why have you been so long away, and where have you been?" said he.

"Not to the wine-shop, as your wisdom seems to surmise. If a man be refused, he has surely a good right to be melancholy for a couple of hours or so. I have done what any one would in such desperate circumstances. I have walked about and philosophized. I have quarreled with the world—that is to say, with the black-haired and myself—and then ended by standing still before a lamp-lit stall, and buying three oranges." So saying, he drew them out of his pocket. "And now, my son, the past is over and gone; let us speak of the future: this is the last evening that we shall spend together; let no cloud hang over our spirits. Make me a glass of punch, and squeeze these fat fellows in. Orange-punch-making is one of the accomplishments you owe to me. I taught it you, and now the rogue makes it better than I do. Come and sit down beside me."

The next morning old Sturm himself came to carry off the luggage. Fink took Anton's hand, and said, "Before I go through my leave-taking of all the others, I repeat to you what I said in our early days. Go on with your English, that you may come after me. And be I where I may, in log hut or cabin, I shall always have a room ready for you. As soon as you are tired of this Old World, come to me. Meanwhile, I make you my heir; you will take possession of my rooms. For the rest, be perfectly sure that I have done with all bad ways. And now—no emotion, my boy!—there are no great distances nowadays on our little earth." He tore himself away, hurried into the counting-house, returned, bowed to the ladies at the window, clasped his friend once more to his heart, leaped into the carriage, and away—away to the New World.

Meanwhile Anton mournfully returned to the office, and wrote a letter to Herr Stephan in Wolfsburg, inclosing that worthy man a new price current and several samples of sugar.

CHAPTER XIX.

A bad year came upon the country. A sudden rumor of war alarmed the German borderers in the east, and our province among the rest. The fearful consequences of a national panic were soon perceptible. Trade stood still; the price of goods fell. Every one was anxious to realize and withdraw from business, and large sums embarked in mercantile speculations became endangered. No one had heart for new ventures. Hundreds of ties, woven out of mutual interest, and having endured for years, were snapped at once. Each individual existence became more insecure, isolated, and poor. On all sides were anxious faces and furrowed brows. The country was out of health; money, the vital blood of business, circulated slowly from one part of the great body to the other—the rich fearing to lose, the poor becoming unable to win. The future was overcast all at once, like the summer sky by a heavy storm.

That word of terror, "Revolution in Poland!" was not without serious effects in Germany. The people on the other side of the frontier, excited by old memories and by their landed proprietors, rose, and, led by fanatical preachers, marched up and down the frontier, falling upon travelers and merchandise, plundering and burning small towns and noblemen's seats, and aiming at a military organization under the command of their favorite leaders. Arms were forged, old fowling-pieces produced from many a hiding-place; and, finally, the insurgents took and occupied a large Polish town not far from the frontier, and proclaimed their independent national existence. Troops were then assembled in all haste by government, and sent to invest the frontier. Trains filled with soldiers were incessantly running up and down the newly-constructed railway. The streets of the capital were filled with uniforms, and the drum every where heard. The army, of course, was all at once in the ascendant. The officers ran here and there, full of business, buying maps, and drinking toasts in all sorts of wines. The soldiers wrote home to get money if possible, and to send more or less loving greetings to their sweethearts. Numberless young clerks grew pale; numberless mothers knit strong stockings through their tears, and providently made lint for their poor sons; numberless fathers spoke with an unsteady voice of the duty of fighting for king and country, and braced themselves up by remembering the damage they had in their day done to that wicked Napoleon.

It was on a sunny autumn morning that the first positive intelligence of the Polish insurrection reached the capital. Dark rumors had indeed excited the inhabitants on the previous evening, and crowds of anxious men of business and scared idlers were crowding the railway terminus. No sooner was the office of T. O. Schröter open, than in rushed Mr. Braun, the agent, and breathlessly related (not without a certain inward complacency, such as the possessor of the least

agreeable news invariably betrays) that the whole of Poland and Galicia, as well as several border provinces, were in open insurrection, numerous quiet commercial travelers and peaceable officials surprised and murdered, and numerous towns set fire to.

This intelligence threw Anton into the greatest consternation, and with good cause. A short time before, an enterprising Galician merchant had undertaken to dispatch an unusually large order to the firm; and, as is the custom of the country, he had already received the largest part of the sum due to him for it (nearly twenty thousand dollars) in other goods. The wagons that were to bring the merchandise must now, Anton reckoned, be just in the heart of the disturbed district. Moreover, another caravan, laden with colonial produce, and on its way to Galicia, must be on the very confines of the enemy's land. And, what was still worse, a large portion of the business of the house, and of the credit granted it, was carried on in, and depended upon, this very part of the country. Much—nay, every thing, he apprehended, would be endangered by this war. So he rushed up to his principal, met him coming down, and hastily related the news just heard; while Mr. Braun hurried to deliver a second edition in the office, with as many further particulars as were compatible with his love of truth.

The principal remained for a moment silent where he stood, and Anton, who was watching him anxiously, fancied that he looked a shade paler than usual; but that must have been a mistake, for the next moment, directing his attention to the porters beyond, he called out, in the cool, business-like tone which had so often impressed Anton with respect, "Sturm, be good enough to remove that barrel: it's in the very middle of the way; and bestir yourselves, all of you; the carrier will set out in an hour." To which Sturm, with a sorrowful look upon his broad face, replied, "The drums are beating, and our men marching off. My Karl is there as a hussar, with gay lace on his little coat. It is unlucky, indeed. Alas for our wares, Mr. Schröter!"

"Make the more haste on that account," replied the principal, smiling. "Our wagons are going to the frontier too, laden with sugar and rum; our soldiers will be glad of a glass of punch in the cold weather." Then turning to Anton, he said, "These tidings are not satisfactory, but we must not believe all we hear." And then, going into his office, he spoke rather more cheerfully than usual to Mr. Braun; and, having quietly heard his whole story, made a few comforting observations as to the probability of the wagons not having yet reached the frontier.

And so the great subject of interest was laid aside for the day, and office-work went on as usual. Mr. Liebold wrote down large sums in his ledger; Mr. Purzel piled dollar on dollar; and Mr. Pix wielded the black brush and governed the servants with his wonted decision. At dinner the conversation was as calm and cheerful as ever; and after it, the principal went out walking with his sister and a few ladies of his acquaintance, while all business men who met him exclaimed in amazement, "He goes out walking to-day! As usual, he has known it all before the rest of us. He has a good head of his own. The house is a solid house. All honor to him!"

Anton sat all day at his desk in a state of nervous excitement till then unknown to him. He was full of anxiety and suspense, and yet there was something of enjoyment in his feelings. He was keenly alive to the danger in which his principal and the business were placed, but he was no longer dejected or spiritless—nay, he felt every faculty enhanced; never had he written so easily; never had his style been so' clear, or his calculations so rapidly made. He remarked that Mr. Schröter moved with a quicker step, and looked round with a brighter glance than usual. Never had Anton so honored him before; he seemed, as it were, transfigured in his eyes. In wild delight, our hero said to himself, "This is poetry—the poetry of business; we can only experience this thrilling sense of power and energy in working our way against the stream. When people say that these times are wanting in inspiration, and our calling wanting most of all, they talk nonsense. That man is at this very moment staking all he has at a single cast—all that he holds dearest, the result of a long life, his pride, his honor, his happiness; and there he sits coolly at his desk, writes letters about logwood, and examines samples of clover-seed—nay, I believe that he actually laughs within himself." So mused Anton while locking up his desk and preparing to join his colleagues. He found them discussing, over a cup of tea, the news of the day, and its probable effect upon business, with a pleasant sort of shudder. All agreed that the firm must indeed suffer loss, but that they were the men to retrieve it sooner than ever was done before. Various views were then propounded, till at length Mr. Jordan pronounced that it was impossible to know beforehand what turn things would take, which profound opinion was generally adopted, and the conference broke up. Through the thin wall of his room Anton heard his neighbor Baumann put up a fervent prayer for the principal and the business, and he himself worked off his excitement by walking up and down till his lamp burned low.

It was already late when a servant noiselessly entered, and announced that Mr. Schröter wished to speak to him. Anton followed in all haste, and found the merchant standing before a newly-packed trunk, with his portfolio on the table, together with that unmistakable symptom of a long journey, his great English cigar-case of buffalo hide. It contained a hundred cigars, and had long excited the admiration of Mr. Specht. Indeed, the whole counting-house viewed it as a sort of banner never displayed but on remarkable occasions. Sabine stood at the open drawers of the writing-table, busily and silently collecting whatever the traveler might want. The merchant advanced to meet Anton, and kindly apologized for having summoned him so late, adding that he had not expected him to be still up.

When Anton replied that he was far too excited to sleep, such a ray of gratitude for his sympathy shone from Sabine's eyes that our hero was mightily moved, and did not trust himself to speak.

The principal, however, smiled. "You are still young," he said; "composure will come by-and-by. It

will be necessary that I go and look after our merchandise to-morrow. I hear that the Poles show special consideration to our countrymen; possibly they imagine that our government is not disaffected toward them. This illusion can not last long; but there will be no harm in our trying to turn it to advantage for the safety of our goods. You have conducted the correspondence, and know all that is to be done for me. I shall travel to the frontier, and, when there, shall decide what steps should next be taken."

Sabine listened in the utmost excitement, and tried to read in her brother's face whether he was keeping back any thing out of consideration for her. Anton understood it all. The merchant was going over the frontier into the very heart of the insurrection.

"Can I not go in your stead?" said he, imploringly. "I feel, indeed, that I have hitherto given you no grounds for trusting me in so important an affair, but, at least, I will exert myself to the utmost, Mr. Schröter." Anton's face glowed as he spoke.

"That is kindly said, and I thank you," replied the principal; "but I can not accept your offer. The expedition may have its difficulties, and as the profits will be mine, it is but fair that the trouble should be so too." Anton hung his head. "On the contrary, I purpose leaving definite instructions with you, in case of my not being able to return the day after to-morrow."

Sabine, who had been anxiously listening, now seized her brother's hand, and whispered, "Take him with you."

This support gave Anton fresh courage. "If you do not choose to send me alone, at least allow me to accompany you; possibly I may be of some use; at least I would most gladly be so."

"Take him with you," again implored Sabine.

The merchant slowly looked from his sister to Anton's honest face, which was glowing with youthful zeal, and replied, "Be it so, then. If I receive the letters I expect, you will accompany me to-morrow to the frontier; and now good-night."

The following morning, Anton, who had thrown himself ready dressed on the bed, was awakened by a slight knock. "The letters are come, sir." And, hurrying into the office, he found the principal and Mr. Jordan already there, engaged in earnest conversation, which the former merely interrupted for a moment by the words "We go." Never had Anton knocked at so many doors, run so quickly up and down stairs, and so heartily shaken the hands of his colleagues, as in the course of the next hour. As he hurried along the dim corridor, he heard a slight rustling. Sabine stepped toward him and seized hold of his hand. "Wohlfart, protect my brother." Anton promised, with inexpressible readiness, to do so; felt for his loaded pistols, a present from Mr. Fink, and jumped into the railway carriage with the most blissful feelings a youthful hero could possibly have. He was bent on adventure, proud of the confidence of his principal, and exalted to the utmost by the tender relation into which he had entered with the divinity of the firm. He was indeed happy.

The engine puffed and snorted across the wide plain like a horse from Beelzebub's stables. There were soldiers in all the carriages—bayonets and helmets shining every where; at all the stations, crowds of curious inquirers, hasty questions and answers, fearful rumors, and marvelous facts. Anton was glad when they left the railroad and the soldiers, and posted on to the frontier in a light carriage: The high road was quiet, less frequented indeed than usual, but when they drew near the border they repeatedly met small detachments of military. The merchant did not say any thing to Anton about the business in hand, but spoke with much animation on every other subject, and treated his traveling companion with confidential cordiality. Only he showed an aversion to Anton's pistols, which a little damped the latter's martial ardor; for when, at the second station, he carefully drew them out of his pocket to examine their condition, Mr. Schröter pointed toward their brown muzzles, saying, "I do not think we shall succeed in getting back our goods by dint of pocket pistols. Are they loaded?"

Anton bowed assent, adding, with a last remnant of martial vanity, "They are at full cock."

"Really!" said the principal, seriously, taking them out of Anton's pocket, and then calling to the postillion to hold his horses, he coolly shot off both barrels, remarking good-naturedly as he returned the pistols to their owner, "It is better to confine ourselves to our accustomed weapons: we are men of peace, and only want our own property restored to us. If we can not succeed in convincing others of our rights, there is no help for it. Plenty of powder will be shot away to no purpose—plenty of efforts without result, and expenditure which only tends to impoverish. There is no race so little qualified to make progress, and to gain civilization and culture in exchange for capital, as the Slavonic. All that those people yonder have in their idleness acquired by the oppression of the ignorant masses they waste in foolish diversions. With us, only a few of the specially privileged classes act thus, and the nation can bear with it if necessary; but there, the privileged classes claim to represent the people. As if nobles and mere bondsmen could ever form a state! They have no more capacity for it than that flight of sparrows on the hedge. The worst of it is that we must pay for their luckless attempt."

"They have no middle class," rejoined Anton, proudly.

"In other words, they have no culture," continued the merchant; "and it is remarkable how powerless they are to generate the class which represents civilization and progress, and exalts an aggregate of individual laborers into a state."

"In the town before us, however," suggested Anton, "there is Conrad Gaultier, and the house of the three Hildebrands in Galicia as well."

"Worthy people," agreed the merchant, "but they are all merely settlers, and the honorable burgher-class feeling has no root here, and seldom goes down to a second generation. What is here called a city is a mere shadow of ours, and its citizens have hardly any of those qualities which with us characterize commercial men—the first class in the state."

"The first?" said Anton, doubtingly.

"Yes, dear Wohlfart, the first. Originally individuals were free, and, in the main, equal; then came the semi-barbarism of the privileged idler and the laboring bondsman. It is only since the growth of our large towns that the world boasts civilized states—only since then is the problem solved which proves that free labor alone makes national life noble, secure, and permanent."

Toward evening our travelers reached the frontier station. It was a small village, consisting, in addition to the custom-house and the dwellings of the officials, of only a few poor cottages and a public house. On the open space between the houses, and round about the village, bivouacked two squadrons of cavalry, who had posted themselves along the narrow river that defined the border, and who were appointed to guard it in company with a detachment of riflemen. The public house presented a scene of wild confusion: soldiers moving to and fro, and sitting cheek by jowl in the little parlor; gay hussars and green coats camped round the house on chairs, tables, barrels, and every thing that could by any contrivance be converted into a seat. They appeared to Anton so many Messrs. Pix, such was the peremptoriness with which they disposed of the little inn and its contents. The Jew landlord received the well-known merchant with a loud welcome, and his zeal was such that he actually cleared out a small room for the travelers, where they could at least spend the night alone.

The merchant had scarcely dismounted when half a dozen men surrounded him with shouts of joy. They were the drivers of the wagons that had been recently expedited. The oldest of their party related that, when just beyond the frontier, they had been induced to make a hasty retreat by the alarming spectacle of a body of armed peasants. In turning round, the wheel of the last wagon had come off; the driver, in his fright, had unharnessed the horses and left the wagon. While the delinquent stood there, flourishing his hat in the air, and excusing himself as well as he could, the officer in command came up and confirmed the story.

"You may see the wagon on the road, about a hundred yards beyond the bridge," he went on to say; and when the merchant begged leave to cross the bridge, he offered to send one of his officers with him.

A young officer belonging to a squadron just returned from a patrol was curbing his fiery steed at the door of the tavern.

"Lieutenant von Rothsattel," called the captain, "accompany the gentlemen beyond the bridge."

It was with rapture that Anton heard a name linked with so many sweet recollections. He knew at once that the rider of the fiery charger could be no other than the brother of his lady of the lake.

The lieutenant, tall and slender, with a delicate mustache, was as like his sister as a young cavalry officer could be to the fairest of all mortal maidens. Anton felt at once a warm and respectful regard for him, which was perhaps discernible in his bow, for the young gentleman acknowledged it by a careless inclination of his small head. His horse went prancing on by the side of the merchant and his clerk. They hurried to the middle of the bridge, and looked eagerly along the road. There lay the colossal wagon, like a wounded white elephant resting on one knee.

"A short time ago it had not been plundered," said the lieutenant; "the canvas was stretched quite tightly over it; but they have been at it now, for I see a corner fluttering."

"There does not appear to have been much mischief done," replied the principal.

"If you could get over a wheel and a pair of horses, you might carry off the whole affair," replied the lieutenant, carelessly. "Our men have had a great hankering after it all day. They were very anxious to ascertain whether there was any thing drinkable in it or not. Were it not that we are commanded not to cross the borders, it would be a mere trifle to bring the wagon here, if the commanding officer allowed you to pass the sentinels, and if you could manage those fellows yonder." So saying, he pointed to a crowd of peasants, who were camping behind some stunted willows just out of reach of shot, and who had stationed an armed man on the high road as sentinel.

"We will fetch the wagon if the officer in command permit us to do so," said the principal. "I hope we may find a way of dealing with those people yonder."

Meanwhile Anton could not refrain from murmuring, "The whole day long these gentlemen have allowed two thousand dollars' worth to lie there on the highway; they have had plenty of time to get back the wagon for us."

"We must not be unreasonable in our demands upon the army," replied the merchant, with a smile. "We shall be satisfied if they only allow us to rescue our property from those boors;" and, accordingly, they turned back to make their wishes known to the captain.

"If you can find men and horses, I have nothing to object," replied he.

As soon as the wagoners were reassembled, the principal inquired which of them would accompany him, engaging to make good any harm that might happen to the horses.

After some scratching and shaking of their heads, most of them declared their willingness to go. Four horses were speedily harnessed, a child's sledge belonging to the landlord produced, a wheel and some levers placed thereon, and then the little caravan set off in the direction of the bridge, pursued by the jocular approbation of the soldiers, and accompanied by some of the officers, who showed as much interest in the expedition as comported with their martial dignity.

On the bridge the captain said, "I wish you success, but unfortunately I am unable to send any of my men to assist you."

"It is better as it is," answered the principal, bowing; "we will proceed to recover our goods like peaceable people, and while we do not fear those gentry yonder, we do not wish to provoke them. Be so good, Mr. Wohlfart, as to leave your pistols behind you; we must show these armed men that we have nothing to do with war and its apparatus."

Anton had replaced his pistols in his pocket, whence they peeped out with an air of defiance, but now he gave them to a soldier called by Lieutenant von Rothsattel. And so they crossed the bridge, at the end of which the lieutenant reluctantly reined up his charger, muttering, "These grocers march into the enemy's country before us;" while the captain called out, "Should your persons be in danger, I shall not consider it any departure from duty to send Lieutenant Rothsattel and a few soldiers to your aid." The lieutenant rushed back and gave the word of command to his troop, which was not far off, to sit still, and then he dashed again to the end of the bridge, and watched with great interest and warlike impatience the progress of the grocers, as he called them. To his and his country's honor, be it here said, that they all alike wished the poor civilians a warm reception, and some serious inconvenience, that they might have a right to interfere, and cut and hack a little on their behalf.

Meanwhile, the march of the merchants into the enemy's country had nothing very imposing about it; lighting his cigar, and walking with a brisk step, the principal went on, Anton close by his side, and behind them three stout wagoners with the horses. When they had got within about thirty yards of certain peasants in white smock frocks, these brandished their weapons, and cried out to them in Polish to halt.

The principal, raising his voice, addressed them in their own tongue, desiring that they would call their leader.

Accordingly, some of the savages began by wild gesticulations to communicate with their companions at a distance, while others held their weapons in readiness, and aimed, as Anton remarked without any particular satisfaction, pretty exactly at him. Meanwhile the leader of the band advanced with long strides. He wore a blue coat with colored lace, a square red cap trimmed with gray fur, and he carried a wild-duck gun in his hand. He seemed a dark-hued fellow, of a formidable aspect, enhanced by a long black mustache falling down on each side of his mouth. As soon as he came near, the merchant addressed him in a loud voice, and rather imperfect Polish. "We are strangers. I am the owner of that wagon yonder, and am come to fetch it; tell your people to help me, and I will give them a good gratuity." At which word all the weapons were reverentially lowered. The chief of the krakuse, or irregulars, now placed himself pathetically in the middle of the highway, and began a long oration, accompanied by much action, of which Anton understood very little, and his principal not all, but which, being interpreted by one of the wagoners, was found to signify that the leader much regretted his inability to serve the gentlemen, as he had received orders from the corps stationed behind him to keep watch over the wagon till the horses should arrive which were to take it to the nearest town.

The merchant merely shook his head, and replied, in a tone of quiet command, "That won't do. The wagon is mine, and I must carry it off. I can not wait the permission of your expected wagoners;" and, putting his hand into his pocket, he displayed to the owner of the blue coat half a dozen shining dollars, unseen by the rest. "So much for you, and as much for your people." The leader looked at the dollars, scratched his head vehemently, and turned his cap round and round; the result of which was, that he at last arrived at the conclusion that, since things stood thus, the worthy gentleman might drive off his wagon.

The procession now triumphantly proceeded; the drivers seized the levers, and, by their united efforts, raised the fallen side, detached the fragments of the broken wheel, put on the new one, and harnessed the horses; and all this with the active assistance of some of the peasants, and the brotherly support of their commandant, who himself wielded a lever. Then the horses were set off with a good will, and the wagon rolled on toward the bridge amid the loud acclamations of the krakuse, which were perhaps intended to drown a dissentient voice in his innermost breast.

"Go on with the wagon," said the merchant to Anton; and when the latter hesitated to leave his principal alone with the boors, the command was still more peremptorily repeated. And so the wagon slowly progressed toward the frontier; and Anton already heard from a distance the laughing greetings of the soldiers.

Meanwhile the merchant remained in animated conversation with the peasant band, and at length parted on the best possible terms with the insurgents' leader, who, with true Slavonic politeness, acted the part of landlord on the public road, and, cap in hand, accompanied the travelers till within gunshot of the military on the bridge. The principal got into the wagon, underwent the warlike ceremonial of "Halt!" &c., on the part of the sentinels, and received the

smiling congratulations of the captain, while the lieutenant said satirically to Anton, "You have had no cause to lament the want of your pocket pistols."

"All the better," answered Anton; "it was a tame affair indeed. The poor devils had stolen nothing but a small cask of rum."

An hour later, the travelers were sitting with the officers of both regiments, in the little tavern parlor, over a bottle of old Tokay, which the host had disinterred from the lowest depths of his cellar. Not the least happy of the party was Anton. For the first time in his life he had experienced one of the small perils of war, and was, on the whole, pleased with the part he had played; and now he was sitting by a young soldier, whom he was prepared to admire to the utmost, and had the privilege of offering him his cigars, and discussing with him the day's adventures.

"The boors pointed their guns at you at first," said the young nobleman, carelessly curling his mustache; "you must have found that a bore."

"Not much of one," replied Anton, as coolly as he could. "For a moment I felt startled as I saw the guns aimed at me, and behind them men with scythes, pantomiming the cutting off of heads. It struck me uncomfortably at first that all the muzzles should point so directly at my face; afterward I had to work away at the wagon, and thought no more about it; and when, on our return, each of our wagoners affirmed that the guns had pointed at him and no one else, I came to the conclusion that this many-sidedness must be part of the idiosyncrasy of guns—a sort of optical unmannerliness that does not mean much."

"We should soon have cut you out if the peasants had been in earnest," replied the lieutenant, benevolently. "Your cigars are remarkably good."

Anton was rejoiced to hear it, and filled his neighbor's glass. And so he entertained himself, and looked at his principal, who seemed to be unusually inclined to converse with the gay gentlemen around him on all subjects connected with peace and war. Anton remarked that he treated the officers with a degree of formal politeness, which considerably checked the free and easy tone which they had at first adopted. The conversation soon became general, and all listened with attention to the merchant while he spoke of the disturbed districts, with which former journeys had made him familiar, and sketched some of the leaders of the insurrection. Young Von Rothsattel alone, to Anton's great distress, did not seem to like the attention lent by his comrades to the civilian, nor the lion's share of the conversation conceded him. He threw himself carelessly back on his chair, looked absently at the ceiling, played with his sword-hilt, and uttered curt observations, intended to denote that he was not a little bored. When the captain mentioned that he expected their commander-in-chief to arrive in the morning, and the merchant said in reply, "Your colonel will not be here till to-morrow evening, so at least he said to me when I met him at the station," the demon of pride in the young officer's breast became uncontrollable, and he rudely said, "You know our colonel, then? I suppose he buys his tea and sugar from you."

"At all events, he used to do so," politely replied the merchant; "indeed, as a younger man, I have sometimes weighed out coffee for him myself."

A certain degree of embarrassment now arose among the officers, and one of the elder attempted, according to his light, to rectify the intentional rudeness by saying something about a most highly-respectable establishment where civilians or military alike might procure, with perfect satisfaction, whatever they needed.

"I thank you, captain, for the confidence you repose in my house," replied the merchant, with a smile, "and I am indeed proud that it should have become respectable through my own active exertions and those of my firm."

"Lieutenant Rothsattel, you head the next patrol; it is time that you should set out," said the captain. Accordingly, with clink and clatter, the lieutenant rose.

"Here comes our landlord with a new bottle on which he sets great value; it is the best wine in his cellar. May not Herr von Rothsattel take a glass of it before he goes to watch over our night's rest?" inquired the merchant, with calm politeness.

The young man haughtily thanked him and clattered out of the room. Anton could have thrashed his new favorite with all his heart.

It was now late; and Anton saw, with some astonishment, that the merchant still continued with the utmost politeness to play the host, and to evince a pleasure in every fresh experience of the Tokay not easy to reconcile with the purpose of his journey. At last, another bottle having been uncorked, and the captain having taken and commenced a fresh cigar of the merchant's, the latter casually observed, "I wish to travel to the insurgent capital to-morrow, and request your permission, if it be necessary."

"You do!" cried all the officers round the table.

"I must!" said the merchant, gravely, and proceeded briefly to state the reasons for his resolve.

The captain shook his head. "It is true," said he, "that the exact terms in which my orders are couched leave it optional whether I bar the frontier against all alike, but yet the chief aim of our occupying this position is the closing up of the disturbed district."

"Then I must make known my wishes to the commander-in-chief; but this will delay me more than a day, and this delay will very probably defeat the whole object of my journey. As you have kindly informed me, there still exists a certain degree of order among the insurgents, but it is impossible to say how long this may last. Now it is upon the existence of this very order that I must depend for the recovery of my property, for I can only get the loaded wagons out of the town with the consent of the revolutionary party."

"And do you hope to obtain it?"

"I must endeavor to do so," was the reply; "at all events, I shall oppose might and main the plundering and destroying of my goods."

The captain mused a while. "Your plans," said he, "place me in a strait; if any harm should befall you, which is, I fear, only too likely, I shall be reproached for having allowed you to cross the frontier. Can nothing persuade you to give up this undertaking?"

"Nothing," said the merchant—"nothing but the law of the land."

"Are the wagons, then, of such consequence to you, that you are willing to risk your life for them?" asked the captain, rather morosely.

"Yes, captain, of as much consequence as the doing your duty is to you. To me their safety involves far more than mere mercantile profit. I must cross the frontier unless prevented by a positive prohibition. That I should not actually resist, but I should do all in my power to have an exception made in my favor."

"Very good," said the captain; "I will lay no hinderance in your way; you will give me your word of honor that you will disclose nothing whatever as to the strength of our position, the arrangement of our troops, or as to what you have heard of our intended movements."

"I pledge my word," said the merchant.

"Your character is sufficient guarantee that your intentions in taking this journey are upright; but officially I could wish to see the papers connected with it, if you have them by you."

"Here they are," said the merchant, in the same business-like tone. "There is my passport for a year, here the bill of goods of the Polish seller, the copies of my letters to the custom-house officer, and the replies to them."

The captain glanced over the papers, and gave them back. "You are a brave man, and I heartily wish you success," said he, in a dignified tone. "How do you mean to travel?"

"With post-horses. If I can not hire, I shall buy, and drive them myself. Our host will let me have a carriage, and I shall set out to-morrow morning, as I might cause more suspicion traveling by night."

"Very well, then, I shall see you again at break of day. I believe that we ourselves are to move over into the enemy's country in three days' time; and if I hear no tidings from you in the mean time, I shall look you out in the conquered city. We must disperse, gentlemen; we have already sat here too long."

The officers then retired with clank of arms, and Anton and his principal remained alone with the empty bottles. The merchant opened the window, and then turning to Anton, who had listened to the foregoing conversation in the greatest excitement, began, "We must part here, dear Wohlfart —"

Before he could finish his sentence Anton caught hold of his hand, and said, with tears in his eyes, "Let me go with you; do not send me back to the firm. I should reproach myself intolerably my whole life through if I had left you on this journey."

"It would be useless, perhaps unwise, that you should accompany me. I can perfectly well do alone all that has to be done; and if there be any risk to run, which, however, I do not believe, your presence could not protect me, and I should only have the painful feeling of having endangered another for my sake."

"Still, I should be very grateful to you if you would take me with you," urged Anton; "and Miss Sabine wished it too," added he, wisely keeping his strongest argument for the last.

"She is a terrible girl," said the merchant, with a smile. "Well, then, so let it be. We will go together; call the landlord, and let us make all our traveling arrangements."

CHAPTER XX.

It was still night when Anton stepped over the threshold of the tavern. A thick cloud hung over the plain. A red glare on the horizon marked the district through which the travelers had to pass. The mist of night covered, with a gray veil, a dark mass on the ground. Anton went nearer, and found that it consisted of men, women, and children, cowering on the earth, pale, hungry, and emaciated. "They are from the village on the other side of the boundary," explained an old watchman, who stood wrapped in his cavalry cloak. "Their village was on fire; they had run into

the forest, and during the night they had come down to the river, stretching out their hands, and crying piteously for bread. As they were mostly women and children, our captain allowed them to cross, and has had a few loaves cut up for them. They are half famished. After them came larger bodies, all crying 'Bread! bread!' and wringing their hands. We fired off a few pistol-shots over their heads, and soon scattered them."

"Ha!" said Anton, "this is a poor prospect for us and our journey. But what will become of these unfortunate creatures?"

"They are only border rascals," said the watchman, soothingly. "Half the year they smuggle and swill, the other half they starve. They are freezing a little just now."

"Could one not have a caldron full of soup made for them?" inquired Anton, compassionately, putting his hand into his pocket.

"Why soup?" replied the other, coldly; "a drink of brandy would please the whole fry better. Over there they all drink brandy, even the child at the breast; if you are inclined to spend something upon them in that way, I'll give it out, not forgetting a loyal old soldier at the same time."

"I will request the landlord to have something warm got ready for them, and you will have the goodness to see that it is all right." And again Anton's hand went into his pocket, and the watchman promised to keep his warlike heart open to compassion.

An hour later the travelers were rolling along in an open britzska. The merchant drove; Anton sat behind him, and looked eagerly out into the surrounding landscape, where, through darkness and mist, a few detached objects were just beginning to appear. When they had driven about two hundred yards, they heard a Polish call. The merchant stopped, and a single man cautiously approached. "Come up, my good friend," said the merchant; "sit here by me." The stranger politely took off his cap, and swung himself up to the driving-box. He turned out to be the chief krakuse of the day before—the man with the drooping mustache.

"Keep an eye on him," said the merchant in English to Anton; "he shall serve us as a safe-conduct, and be paid for it too; but if he touches me, lay hold of him from behind."

Anton took his despised pistols out of an old leathern pouch on one side of the carriage, and, in sight of the krakuse, arranged them ostentatiously in the pocket of his paletot. But the latter only smiled, and soon showed himself a creature of a friendly and social nature, nodding confidentially to both travelers, drinking some mouthfuls out of Anton's traveling flask, trying to keep up, over his left shoulder, a conversation with him, calling him "your grace" in broken German, and giving him to understand that he too smoked, though he did not happen to have any tobacco. At last he requested the honor of driving the gentlemen.

In this manner they passed a group of fallen houses, which lay on a flat close to a marsh, looking like giant fungi that had shot up on a malarian soil, when they suddenly found themselves surrounded by a band of insurgents. It was a general levy, such as they had seen the day before. There were flails in abundance, a few scythes, old muskets, linen smock-frocks, a strong smell of spirits, and wild, staring eyes. This troop at once seized the horses by the bridles, and quick as lightning began to unharness them. The krakuse now sprang up lion-like from his seat, and displayed, in his Polish tongue, a vast amount of eloquence, aided by much gesticulation with hands and feet. He declared that these gentlemen were great noblemen, who were traveling to the capital that they might speak with the government, and that it would cost the head of every man who presumed to pull a hair out of one of their horses' tails. This speech provoked several animated replies, during which some clenched their fists, and some took off their caps. Upon that the driver began a still more powerful oration, setting before the patriots a prospective quartering if they even ventured to look askance at the heads of the horses. This had the effect of diminishing the number of clenched fists, and increasing that of the doffed caps. At length the merchant put an end to the whole scene by suddenly flogging the horses, and thus compelling the last recusants to jump aside as fast as they could. The horses galloped off, loud interjections were heard in the distance, and a few shots passed harmlessly over the heads of the travelers, probably fired out of a general enthusiasm for fatherland rather than with any definite purpose.

So the hours passed on. They not unfrequently met bands of armed peasantry screaming and brandishing their cudgels, or else following, with bent heads and hymn-singing, a priest who bore a church banner displayed. The travelers were sometimes, indeed, stopped and threatened, but at other times saluted with the utmost reverence, especially Anton, who, sitting as he did behind, was taken for the most important personage.

At length they approached a larger village, the bands grew closer, the uproar greater, and here and there a uniform, a cockade, or a bayonet appeared among the smock-frocks. Here, too, the driver began to show symptoms of disquiet, and announced to the merchant that he could not take them any farther, and that they must report themselves to the leader in command. To this Mr. Schröter made no objection, but paid the driver and stopped the carriage.

A young man with a blue head-piece, and a red and white scarf about his waist, stepped forward, obliged the travelers to dismount, and with a great display of zeal led them to the chief. The merchant still held the reins in his hand, and whispered to Anton that he was on no account to lose sight of the carriage. Anton pretended the utmost unconcern, and pressed a coin into the hand of the friendly krakuse, who had crept behind the carriage, that he might go and get the horses a bundle of hay.

The sentry was in a house whose thatched roof had been dignified by the whitewashing of the walls. A few muskets and guns leaned up against it, watched by a youthful volunteer in blue coat and red cap. Near at hand sat the commanding officer, whose flat face was surmounted by an immense white plume, and whose person was adorned by an enormous white scarf, and a sword with elaborate hilt. This dignitary was considerably excited when he beheld the strangers; he clapped his hat more firmly on his head, stroked his unkempt beard, and began to give audience. After a few preliminary remarks, the travelers told him that they had weighty business to transact with the heads of the government. They refused, however, to give any account of its purport. This statement wounded the dignity of the authority before them. He made harsh allusions to suspicious characters and spies, and called to his guard to stand to their arms. Instantly five youths in blue caps rushed out of the house, ranged themselves in order, and were commanded to hold their guns in readiness. Involuntarily Anton sprang between them and his principal. Meanwhile the man of the giant sword, on seeing that the merchant still stood quietly by the post round which he had fastened the reins, changed his murderous intent, contenting himself with assuring him that he considered him a very dangerous character, and was much inclined to shoot him as a traitor.

The merchant shrugged his shoulders, and said, with calm politeness, "You are entirely mistaken as to the object of our journey. You can not seriously believe us to be spies, for we have just been brought to you by one of your own people, in order that we might obtain from your kindness a convoy to the capital. I must once more request you not to detain us, as our business with the government is of a pressing nature, and I shall be obliged to make you responsible for all unnecessary delay." This address led to another volley of oaths on the part of the man in authority, who snorted violent defiance against the travelers, drank off a large glass of brandy, and finally came to a decision. He called three of his men, and desired them to take their seats in the carriage, and to convey it to the capital. A bundle of fresh straw was thrown in, two youths with arms in their hands placed themselves behind the travelers, while a white-frocked peasant sat on the box, took the reins, and indifferently drove the whole cargo, suspicious characters, patriots, and all, at a gallop toward the capital.

"Our condition has changed for the worse," said Anton. "Five men in this little carriage, and the poor horses tired already."

"I told you," replied the merchant, "that our journey would have some inconveniences. Men are never more troublesome than when they play at being soldiers. In other respects, this guard over us does no harm; at least, with such an escort, we are sure to be admitted into the city."

It was evening when they reached the capital. A red glare in the sky showed them their goal while they were still far from it. As they approached, they met numerous companies of armed men moving in and out. Next came a long detention at the gates—an interchange of questions and answers—an examination of the travelers by the aid of lanterns and pine torches, angry looks, and even intelligible threats, and, finally, a long drive through the streets of the old capital. Sometimes all around them was still as death; sometimes a wild cry resounded from the crowd, all the more alarming because the words were not understood.

At length the driver turned into a square, and stopped before a handsome house. The travelers were surrounded and pushed up a broad staircase by a crowd of gay uniforms, laced coats, and clean smock frocks. Next they were thrust into a large apartment, and placed before a gentleman wearing white silk gloves, who looked into a written report, and briefly informed them that, according to the report of the commandant at the station, they were suspected of being spies, and were to undergo a court-martial. The merchant at once broke out in high displeasure: "I am sorry that your informant should have told you a great falsehood, for we have undertaken this journey on the highway and in broad daylight, for the express purpose of speaking to your governors. The horses and carriage which brought me here are both mine, and it was an uncalled-for act of politeness on the part of your commandant to furnish me with an escort. I wish to see the gentleman in command here as soon as possible; it is to him alone that I mean to impart the motive of my journey; be so good, therefore, as to hand him my passport."

The official examined the passport, and, looking at Anton, proceeded to inquire, with somewhat more consideration, "But this gentleman? He has the appearance of an officer in your army."

"I am a clerk of Mr. Schröter's," returned Anton, with a bow; "and out and out a civilian."

"Wait a while," said the young man, superciliously, going with the passport into a neighboring room.

As he remained away some time, and no one interfered with the travelers, they sat down on a bench, and tried to appear as unconcerned as possible. Anton first cast an anxious glance at his principal, who was looking down gloomily, and then gazed about him in amazement. The room in which they were was lofty, and the ceiling much ornamented, but the walls were dirty and smoke-stained; tables, chairs, and benches stood about in confusion, and seemed as if just brought in from the nearest tavern. A few writers bent over their papers, while soldiers sat or lay along the walls, asleep or talking loudly, several of them in French. A room like this, dimly lighted, was not calculated to make a cheerful impression upon Anton, who whispered to the merchant, "If revolutions in general look like this, they are ugly things."

"They always destroy, and seldom recreate," was the reply. "I am afraid that this room is an emblem of the whole town: the painted coat of arms on the ceiling, and the dirty bench on which

we are sitting. When such contrasts as these are brought into juxtaposition, it is enough to make a sober-minded man cross himself in horror. The nobles and the people are bad enough, taken separately, when they each try their hands at government; but when they unite, they are sure to bring down the house that holds them."

"The nobles are the most troublesome," said Anton. "Commend me to our krakuse; he was a polite insurgent, and knew the value of a half dollar; but these gentlemen seem to have no business notions at all."

"Let us wait a little," said the principal.

A quarter of an hour had passed, when a young man, tall in stature and stately in aspect, followed by the white-gloved gentleman, politely approached the merchant, saying so loudly that even the sleepers could hardly fail to hear, "I rejoice to see you here, and have indeed been expecting it; have the goodness to follow me with your companion."

"By Jove, we are looking up!" thought Anton.

They followed their majestic guide into a small corner room, which was evidently the boudoir of the quarters, for it contained an ottoman, easy chairs, and a handsome writing-table. Different uniforms and articles of dress were carelessly thrown upon the furniture; and on the table lay, in the midst of papers, a pair of double-barreled pocket pistols, and a large seal richly set in gold.

While Anton was noticing that the whole room was very elegant, but, at the same time, very untidy, the young chief turned to the merchant and said, with somewhat more reserve and less amenity, "You have, through a misunderstanding, been exposed to some rudeness, as is indeed often unavoidable in troubled times. Your escort has confirmed your statements. I now beg you to impart to me the reason of your visit."

The merchant accordingly briefly but precisely explained the purpose of his journey, named those men in the place with whom he was connected in business, and appealed to them to ratify his statements.

"I know both those gentlemen," answered the officer, carelessly. Then looking fixedly at the merchant, he asked, after a pause, "Have you nothing further to communicate?"

The principal said he had not; but the other rapidly continued, "I quite understand that our peculiar position prevents your government from treating with us directly, and that, in the event of your being charged with a commission, you must proceed with the utmost caution."

Here the merchant hastily interrupted him. "Before you say more, I again assure you, as a man of honor, that I am come merely on my own business, and that my business is only what I have already stated. But as I conclude from your words, as well as much that I have heard on my way hither, that you take me for a delegate, I feel constrained to tell you that I never could have been charged with any commission such as you seem to expect, its very existence being an utter impossibility."

The noble looked grave, and said, after a moment's silence, "Very well; you shall not suffer on that account. The wish that you express is so singular, that it would be impossible, in the common course of things, to grant it. If we are not permitted to consider you a friend, the rules of war command us to deal with you and yours as enemies. But the men of my nation have ever possessed, in taking up arms, the rare virtue of trusting to the virtue of others, as well as of acting nobly, even when they could expect no gratitude in return. Be assured that I will, as far as in me lies, assist you to recover your property."

So said the nobleman with self-conscious dignity; and Anton was keenly alive to the true nobility of the words, though too thoroughly a man of business to give himself up to the impression they made, his budding enthusiasm being frostbitten by a very matter-of-fact thought: "He promises to help us, and yet he is not quite convinced that the property we wish to carry off is of right our own."

"I am not, alas! so absolute," continued the chief, "as to be able to gratify you at once. However, I hope in the morning to furnish you with a pass for your wagons. First of all, try to find out where your property now is, and I will send one of my officers with you as a protection. The rest to-morrow."

With these words the travelers were courteously dismissed; and as Anton went out he saw the officer wearily throw himself back into an easy-chair, and with bent head begin to play with the trigger of his pistols.

A slight youth, with a large scarf, almost a child in years, but of a most noble bearing, accompanied our friends. As they left the house, they were politely saluted by several present, and it was plain that the ante-chamber still believed in their diplomatic character.

The officer inquired whether he should accompany the gentlemen, as it was his duty not to lose sight of them.

"Is this by way of protection or surveillance?" inquired Anton, who now felt in good spirits.

"You will give me no occasion, I am sure, to exercise the latter," returned the small warrior in exquisite French.

"No," said the merchant, looking kindly at the youth; "but we shall weary you, for we have yet to get through a good deal of uninteresting and commonplace business this evening."

"I am only doing my duty," replied their escort, with some haughtiness, "in accompanying you wherever you wish."

"And in order to do ours, we must make all the haste we can," said the merchant. And so they traversed the streets of the capital. Night had set in, and the confusion and bustle seemed sadder still under her cloak. Crowds of the lowest of the populace, patrols of military, bands of fugitive peasantry jostled each other, snatching, shrieking, cursing. Many windows were illuminated, and their brilliance cast a shadowless, ghostly glare over the streets. Thick red clouds rolled above the roofs of the houses, for one of the suburbs was on fire, and the wind blew swarms of golden sparks and burning splinters over the heads of the travelers. Meanwhile the bells of the churches kept up a monotonous tolling. The strangers hurried silently along, the imperious tones of their escort always making way for them through the most unruly throng. At length they reached the house of the agent of their firm. It was shut up, and they had to knock long and loud before a window was opened, and a piteous voice heard asking who was there.

When they entered the agent ran to meet them, wringing his hands, and tearfully falling on the merchant's neck. The presence of the young insurgent prevented him from expressing his feelings. He threw open the nearest door, and in lamentable tones apologized for the exceeding disorder in which the room was. Chests and coffers were being packed up; male and female servants were running to and fro, hiding silver candlesticks here, thrusting in silver spoons there. Meanwhile the master of the house never left off wringing his hands, lamenting his misfortunes and those of the firm, welcoming, and, in the same breath, regretting the arrival of the principal, and every now and then assuring the young officer, with choking voice, that he too was a patriot, and that it was only owing to an unaccountable mistake on the part of one of the maids that the cockade had been taken off his hat. It was plain that the man and his whole family had quite lost their wits.

The merchant had much trouble before he could get him into a corner and hear some business details. It appeared that the wagons had arrived in town on the very day that the insurrection broke out. Through the foresight of one of the wagoners, they had been taken into the great court-yard of a remote inn, but as to what had become of them since then the agent knew nothing.

After some further conversation the merchant said, "We shall not claim your hospitality to-night; we shall sleep wherever our wagons are." All the persuasions of the agent were peremptorily rejected.

This worthy but weak man seemed really distressed at the new danger into which his friend was determined to run.

"I shall call you up early," said the merchant, as he left; "I propose setting out to-morrow with my wagons, but first I wish to make a few, as you know, necessary visits to our customers, and to have your company during them." The agent promised to do his best by daylight.

Again our travelers went forth into the night, accompanied by the Pole, who had scornfully listened to the half-whispered conversation. As they went along the street, the principal, angrily throwing away his cigar, said to Anton,

"Our friend will be of little use to us; he is helpless as a child. In the beginning of the disturbance, he neglected to do his duty—to collect money, and seek for reimbursement."

"And now," said Anton, sorrowfully, "no one will be inclined to pay or reimburse us."

"And yet we must bring this about to-morrow, and you shall help me to do so. By heaven, these warlike convulsions are in themselves inconvenient enough to trade without this addition, paralyzing as they do all useful activity, which is the only thing that prevents us from becoming mere animals. But if a man of business allows himself to be more crushed than is absolutely unavoidable, he does an injury to civilization—an injury for which there is no compensation."

They had now reached a part of the town where empty streets, and the silence of the grave immediately at hand, only enhanced the horrors of the distant clamor and the red glare in the sky. At length they stopped before a low building with a large gateway. Entering, they looked into the bar, a dirty room with blackened rafters, in which loud-voiced and brandy-drinking patriots clustered on bench and table. The young officer called for the landlord. A fat figure with a red face appeared.

"In the name of the government, rooms for myself and my companions," said the young man. The host sullenly took up a bundle of rusty keys and a tallow candle, and led them to an upper floor, where he opened the door of a damp room, and morosely declared that he had no other for them.

"Bring us supper and a bottle of your best wine," said the merchant; "we pay well, and at once."

This announcement occasioned a visible improvement in the mood of the fat landlord, who even made an unsuccessful attempt to be polite. The merchant next asked for the wagons and wagoners. These questions were evidently unwelcome. At first Boniface pretended to know nothing about them, declaring that there were a great many wagons coming and going in his court-yard, and that there were several wagoners too, but that he did not know them.

It was in vain that the merchant tried to make him understand the object of his coming; the landlord remained obtuse, and was about to relapse into his former moroseness, when the young Pole came forward, and informed Mr. Schröter that this was not the way of dealing with such people. He then faced the landlord, called him all manner of hard names, and declared that he would arrest and carry him off on the spot unless he at once gave the most exact information.

The landlord looked timidly at the officer, and begged to be allowed to retire and send up one of the wagoners.

Soon a lanky figure with a brown felt hat came lumbering up stairs, started at the sight of the merchant, and at last announced, with pretended cheerfulness, that there he was.

"Where are the wagons? where are the bills of lading?"

The wagons were in the court-yard. The bills were reluctantly produced from the dirty leather purse of the wagoner.

"You guarantee me that your load remains complete and undisturbed?" asked the merchant.

The felt hat ungraciously replied that he could do nothing of the kind. The horses had been unharnessed and hid in a secret stable, that they might not be confiscated by the government; as to the fate of the wagons, he could neither prevent nor ascertain it, and all responsibility ceased in troublous times like these.

"We are in a den of thieves," said the merchant to his escort; "I must request your assistance in bringing these people to reason."

Now bringing people to reason was just what the young Pole believed to be his speciality; so, with a smile, he took a pistol in one hand, and said aside to Anton, "Do as I, and have the goodness to follow me." Next he seized the wagoner by the throat, and dragged him down the stair. "Where is the landlord?" cried he, in the most formidable tone he could raise. "The dog of a landlord and a lantern!" The lantern being brought, he drove the whole pack—the strangers, the fat landlord, the captured wagoner, and all others assembled by the noise, before him into the court-yard. Arrived there, he placed himself and his prisoner in the centre of the circle, bestowed a few more injurious epithets upon the landlord, rapped the wagoner on the head with his pistol, and then courteously observed in French to the merchant, "This fellow's skull sounds remarkably hollow; what next do you require from the boobies?"

"Have the goodness to summon the wagoners."

"Good," said the Pole; "and then?"

"Then I will examine the freight of the wagons, if it be possible to do so in the dark."

"Every thing is possible," said the Pole, "if you like to take the trouble to search through the old canvas in the night. But I should be inclined to advise a bottle of Sauterne and a few hours' repose instead. In times like these, one should not lose an opportunity of refreshing one's self."

"I should prefer to inspect the wagons at once," said the merchant, with a smile, "if you have no objection to it."

"I am on duty," replied the Pole, "therefore let's to work at once; there are plenty of hands here to hold lights for you. You confounded rascals," continued he, in Polish, again cuffing the wagoner and threatening the landlord, "I will carry you all off together, and have a court-martial held upon you, if you do not instantly bring all the drivers belonging to this gentleman into my presence. How many of them?" inquired he, in French, from the merchant.

"There are fourteen wagons," was the reply.

"There must be fourteen wagoners," thundered the Pole again to the people; "the devil shall fly away with you all if you do not instantly produce them." With the help of an old domestic servant, a dozen of the drivers were at length brought forward; two, however, were in no way to be recovered, and finally the landlord confessed that they had gone to join the patriots.

The young Pole did not seem to attach much value to this instance of patriotism. Turning to the merchant, he said, "Here you have the men, now see to the freight; if a single article be found wanting, I will have the whole of these fellows tried by court-martial." Then he carelessly sat down on the pole of a carriage, and looked at the points of his polished boots, which had got a good deal bemired.

A number of lanterns and torches were now brought, and after a few encouraging words from the merchant, the wagoners proceeded to roll away some empty carts, and to open out a passage to their own goods. Most of these men had been employed by him before, and knew him and Anton personally; some of them proved themselves trustworthy and obliging; and while Mr. Schröter was cross-questioning the most intelligent of their number, Anton hastened to ascertain, as well as he could, the condition of the freight, which mostly consisted of wool and tallow. Some wagons were untouched; one was entirely unloaded, and many had lost their canvas covering, and been otherwise plundered. The merchant had once more recourse to the young Pole. "It is just as we supposed," said he; "the landlord has persuaded some of the drivers that, now the revolution has set in, their obligations have ceased, and they have begun to unload the wagons. Had we been a day later, every thing would have been carried off. The landlord and a few of his associates have

been the instigators, and some of the wagoners have been frightened into compliance."

At this announcement a new volley of imprecations proceeded from the lips of the small authority, and the landlord, from whose face all ruddiness had vanished, was soon on his knees before the officer, who pulled him by the hair, and treated him very roughly indeed. Meanwhile Anton and some of the men laid siege to a locked-up coach-house, broke open the door, and disclosed the bales of wool and the remainder of the stolen goods.

"Let these people reload," said the merchant; "they may well work the night through as a punishment." After some opposition, the wagoners set to, overpowered by a combination of threats and promises. The Pole drove the drunken guests out of the tavern, had the outer door closed, and all the candles and lanterns of the establishment brought into the court-yard. Next he dragged the host by the hair of his head to the upper story, and then, by the help of some patriots with great cockades, tied him to a bedpost, and gave him to understand that that was the nearest approach to a night's rest which he had to expect. "In the event of the freight being found entire, and safely removed from your premises, you shall be forgiven," said the Pole; "in the opposite case, I shall have you tried at once, and shot."

Meanwhile the uproar in the court was great indeed. Anton had the wagons reloaded and the freight properly secured. Full of his work, he scarcely looked around, and only realized at odd moments his singular *entourage*, and the exciting nature of the scene. It was a large square court, surrounded by low, ruinous wooden buildings, stables, and coach-houses, and having two entrances, one through the inn itself, and one through a gate opposite. It occupied a space of several acres, as is often the case with these hostelries of eastern Europe, stationed on great thoroughfares; and afforded, as do the caravanseries of Asia, shelter for large transports of goods, as well as for multitudes of the poor and needy. All sorts of wagons were now assembled in the square court in question, and it was crowded besides with ladders, poles, wheels, gigantic hampers, gray canvas coverings, bundles of hay and straw, old tar-barrels, and portable racks. Besides the stable lanterns and flaming pine torches, there was the red glare in the sky, and the lurid clouds of smoke and sparks rolling still over the heads of the travelers. This strange sort of twilight shone here at least upon a peaceful task. The wagoners worked hard, shouting loudly the while; dark forms now vanished in the shadow of the bales, now sprang on the top of them, while their animated gesticulations made them look, in the red light, like a crowd of savages holding some mysterious nocturnal orgies.

The merchant, meanwhile, walked up and down between the inn and the scene of action. It was in vain that Anton implored him to rest for a few hours. "This is no night for us to sleep in," said he, gloomily; and Anton read in his dark glance the resolve of a man who is ready to stake his all upon the accomplishment of his inflexible will.

It was nearly morning when the last giant bale was firmly secured with ropes and chains on the wagon top. Anton, who had himself been lending a hand, now slipped down, and announced to his principal that their work was done.

"At last!" replied the merchant, drawing a long breath; and then he went up to announce the fact to their friendly escort.

He, for his part, had contrived to get through the night in his own way; first, he thoroughly enjoyed the supper and wine brought him by the terrified maids, and found leisure to say a few encouraging words to the prettiest of them. Then he contemplated the dirty bed, and at last threw himself, with a French oath, upon it, looking now at the distorted countenance of the roguish host, who sat opposite him on the ground, now at the ceiling; and, while half asleep himself, complimenting the merchant, who looked in from time to time, upon his capacity of keeping awake a whole night. At length the youth fell fast asleep. At least the merchant found him in the morning outstretched on the coarse coverlet, his delicate face shaded by his long black hair, his small hands crossed, and a pleasant smile playing around his lips.

As he lay there he afforded no incorrect type of the aristocracy of his nation: noble child that he was, with the passions, and perhaps the sins of a man; while over against him crouched the coarse build of the fettered plebeian, who pretended to sleep too, but often cast a malicious glance at the recumbent form before him.

The aristocrat sprang up when the merchant approached the bed, and, throwing the window open, said, "Good-day: it is morning, I see; I have slept admirably." Next he called to a patrol passing by, briefly informed the leader how things stood, made over to him the landlord and the remainder of the supper, and desired him to stop at once, and keep guard over the house until he should return. Then he ordered the wagoners to harness the horses, and led the travelers out into the gray dawn of a comfortless-looking day.

On their way to the agent the merchant said to Anton, "We shall divide the most necessary visits between us. Tell our customers that we have no kind of intention of oppressing them; that, on the restoration of some degree of order, they may reckon upon the greatest forbearance and consideration—nay, under conditions, upon an extension of credit, but that at present we insist upon securities. We shall not effect much in this confusion; but that these gentlemen should be, at a time like this, even reminded of our firm, is worth a good deal." Then, in a lower tone, he added, "The town is doomed: we shall do little business here for some time to come; remember that, and be firm." And, turning to the Pole, he said, "I request you to allow my fellow-traveler to pay a few business calls in the company of our agent."

"If your agent will answer with his person for the gentleman's return," returned the Pole, with some reluctance, "I consent."

The light of day had exercised its gracious office of giving color to flowers and courage to the faint-hearted, even in favor of the agent. He declared himself ready to accompany Anton upon the terms proposed. Accordingly, under the protection of the great cockade upon his companion's hat, Anton hurried from house to house, pale indeed from loss of rest, but with an undaunted heart. Every where he was received with amazement not always free from confusion. "How could people think in such a time about winding up matters of business, with the noise of arms all round, and in deadly fear of a horrible future?"

Anton coolly replied, "Our firm is not accustomed to trouble itself about rumors of war when not absolutely obliged to do so. All times are suited for the fulfillment of obligations; and if this be a fit season for us to come here, it is also a fit season for you to arrange matters with me;" through which representations he succeeded here and there in obtaining definite promises, commissions, nay, even reimbursement.

After a few hours' hard work, Anton met his principal in the agent's house. When he had made his report, the merchant said, reaching out his hand to him, "If we can succeed in getting our wagons safely out of the town, we shall have done enough to enable us to bear the unavoidable losses that we must undergo. Now, then, to the commandant." He gave a few further instructions to the agent, whispering to him in parting, "In a few days our troops will enter; I take it for granted that you will not leave your house till then. We shall thus meet again."

With upraised hands the agent invoked the protection of all the saints in the calendar upon the travelers, locked and bolted the house door behind them, and hid his revolutionary cockade in the stove.

Our friends now hurried on through the tumult, led by the Pole. The streets were full again; bands of armed men passed by, the populace was in wilder excitement, and the noise greater than on the previous evening. The houses were thundered at, and an entrance insisted on. Brandy-casks were rolled on to the flags, and surrounded by drunken men and women. Every thing denoted that the authorities were not sufficiently strong to enforce street-discipline. Even in the house of the commandant there was agitation and restlessness, soldiers were hurrying to and fro, and the messages which they brought were evidently unfavorable, for there was much whispering going on in the great ante-chamber, and anxious suspense was visible on every face.

As soon as the young Pole entered he was surrounded by his friends and drawn into a corner. After some hasty questions, he seized a musket, called off a few soldiers by name, and left the room, without troubling himself any further about the travelers.

The merchant and Anton were shown into the next room, where the young commander-in-chief received them. He too looked pale and dejected, but it was with the bearing of a true nobleman that he addressed Mr. Schröter: "I have forwarded your wishes; here is a passport for you and your wagons. I pray you to infer from this that we are anxious to treat the citizens of your state with consideration, possibly even more than the duty of self-preservation would dictate."

The merchant received the important document with shining eyes. "You have shown me a remarkable degree of kindness," said he; "I feel myself deeply indebted to you, and wish that I may one day be permitted to prove my gratitude."

"Who knows?" answered the young commandant, with a melancholy smile; "he who stakes all upon a cast may lose all."

"He may lose much," replied the merchant, courteously, "but not all, if he has striven honorably."

At that moment a hollow sound was heard, a sound like the sweep of a howling wind, or the roaring of a rushing flood. The commandant stood motionless and listened. Suddenly a discordant scream of many voices resounded close by, and some shots followed. Anton, made susceptible by a night of wakefulness and long-continued excitement, started with terror, and remarked that his principal's hand, in which was the passport, shook violently. The door of the cabinet now burst open, and a few stately-looking men rushed in, with garments torn, arms in their hands, the traces of a street combat visible on their excited countenances, and at their head the young escort of the travelers.

"Mutiny!" cried the youth to his commanding officer; "they are seeking you. Save yourself. I will keep them off."

Quick as thought Anton sprang toward his principal, dragged him away, and both flew through the ante-chamber, and down the staircase to the ground floor. Here they came upon a band of soldiers who were endeavoring to garrison the house against masses of the populace. But, swift as were the movements of the travelers, those of their last night's escort were quicker still, as, with a loud shout, he rushed to head his friends in their resistance to the invaders. His black hair flew wildly around his bare head, and his eyes shone out from his beautiful and now pallid face with the unconquerable energy of a brave man.

"Back!" he cried, with a loud, clear voice, to the raging people, and sprang like a panther in among them, dealing sword-strokes round. The masses gave way; the comrades of the brave youth ranged themselves behind him. Again Anton seized his principal's arm, and dragged him off with such speed as is only possible to men under the influence of strong excitement. They had

just got behind a projection of the house when they heard a shot fired, and saw with horror the young Pole fall backward bleeding, and heard his last cry, "The *canaille*!"

"To the wagons!" said the merchant, dashing down a narrow cross-street. They still heard in the distance shots and cries of discord; and breaking through bands of curious and terrified inhabitants, who hindered their progress, they arrived breathless, and fearing the worst, at the door of the inn.

Here, too, there was mutiny. The soldiers left in charge of the house had loosed the landlord, and speedily made their retreat as soon as news of the tumult reached them. The court-yard was now a scene of wrangling and confusion. The landlord, supported by a number of idlers collected from the street, was disputing violently with the wagoners. Some of the wagons were harnessed and ready for departure, but from others the canvas covering had been again dragged off. The case was a desperate one. The merchant tore away from Anton, who tried to detain him, and, rushing into the midst of the disputants, called out in Polish as loudly as he could, while holding the passport above his head, "Stop, I say; here is the order of the commander-in-chief authorizing the departure of our wagons. Whoever resists it will be punished. We are under the protection of the government."

"What government, you rogue of a German?" screamed the landlord, with ominous face; "the old government is done away with; the traitors have had their reward, and their spies shall be hanged as well;" and, rushing at the merchant, he brandished an old sword at his head.

Our Anton shuddered; but man being in the most critical moments liable to strange associations of idea, which play like meteors across the anguish of his spirit, it chanced that the broad back of the landlord suddenly reminded him of the back of a squat schoolfellow of his at Ostrau, a good-natured baker's son, upon whom, in many a scuffle, he had often practiced the boyish trick of tripping an adversary from behind. Quick as lightning he sprang upon the landlord, and most skillfully threw him. The falling sword swerved from its fatal aim, only striking the arm of the merchant, cutting through the coat and into the flesh. As the fat fellow lay struggling on his back like a beetle, Anton drew out his trusty pistols, and cried, with the inspiration of despair, "Back, you rascals, or I shoot him dead!"

This rapid diversion had more effect than could reasonably have been hoped; the people that the landlord had collected around him, and who, after all, were only working for his interest, fell back, while half a dozen wagoners, with bars of iron and other implements of the kind, crowded round the merchant, and now screamed as loudly as the other party had done a short time before, declaring that no harm should happen to the gentleman and his wagons. The merchant cried, "Drive these strangers out!" and, taking up the sword that the landlord had dropped, at the head of his adherents stormed the latter's abettors, and drove them through the house. The most stiff-necked of them tried to intrench themselves in the bar, but one after the other was cast out, roaring and cursing the while. The door was then locked, and the merchant hastened back to the court-yard, and found Anton still kneeling by the incorrigible landlord to prevent him from rising. The rest of the wagoners having timidly got out of the way, the merchant now summoned them all, and ordered them to put the horses to, saying to Anton, "We must leave this place. Better the street pavement than this den of thieves."

"You bleed!" cried Anton, in great distress, his eye falling on the merchant's arm.

"It must be a mere scratch; I can move the arm," was the prompt reply. "Open the gate; out with the wagons. Forward, my men! Anton, one of the wagoners will help you to bind the landlord."

"And where shall we go?" inquired Anton, in English. "Are we to take these wagons into the bloodshed of the streets?"

"We have a passport, and will leave the town," answered the merchant, doggedly.

"They will not respect our passport," cried Anton in return, while he held a pistol at the head of the obstreperous landlord.

"If the worst come to the worst, there are other inns in this part of the town; any of them will be a better refuge."

"But we have not the full complement of drivers, and some of our number are disaffected."

"I will manage the disaffected," answered the merchant, sternly; "we have the full number of horses, we only want the men. Those to whom the horses belong will remain with them. The gate is open—out with the wagons!"

The gate led to an open space covered with building-stones and *débris*, and surrounded by a few poor houses. The merchant hastened thither to superintend the departure. A stout youth came to Anton's assistance. They were anxious moments these. Near the house, he and his helper were struggling with the prostrate man, whose ugly wife and her two maid-servants were howling at the house door. As the first wagon rolled away, their screams became louder: the landlady called out "help" and "murder!" and the maids wailed all the louder the more fervently the young wagoner assured them that no harm would befall his worship, the landlord, if he would only lie still, and that, moreover, they would all pay their bills besides.

Just then loud knocks were heard at the house door; the women rushed in and unlocked it at once; and so great had been the hopeless excitement of the last few minutes, that it was almost

with a sense of relief that Anton saw a strong body of soldiery defile into the court. He rose from the ground, and left the landlord free. But the merchant walked slowly, and with uncertain steps, like a broken-down man, to meet the enemies who, at this decisive moment, frustrated his will.

The leader of the band, one of those whom the young Pole had in the morning summoned to the inn, said to the merchant, "You are prisoners; neither you nor your wagons can leave the town."

"I have a passport," eagerly replied Mr. Schröter, feeling for his pocket-book.

"The new government forbids your journey," was the curt rejoinder.

"I must submit," said the merchant, mechanically sitting down on a wagon-pole, and clinging to the body of the vehicle.

Anton held the half-unconscious man in his arms, and said, in utmost indignation, "We have been twice robbed in this inn; we were in danger of being killed; my companion is wounded, as you see; if your government is determined to detain us and our wagons, at least protect our lives and our property. The wagons can not remain here, and if we are separated from them, it will be still more difficult to prevent their being plundered."

The soldiers now held a consultation, and at length their leader called Anton to share in it. After much discussion, it was finally arranged that the wagons should be moved to a neighboring establishment, equal to this in accommodation, but superior in character. Anton obtained leave to move to it with his companion, and there remain under surveillance till something further should be decided. Meanwhile the merchant sat leaning against the canvas covering, and taking, apparently, no interest in what was going on. Anton now rapidly told him the decision arrived at.

"We must bear it," said the principal, rising slowly and with difficulty. "Ask the landlord for our bill."

"We will pay the landlord," said the soldier in command, roughly pushing the functionary aside. "Think of yourself," added he, kindly catching hold of the wounded man's arm to support him.

"Pay for us and for the horses," repeated Mr. Schröter to Anton; "we can not remain in these people's debt."

Anton accordingly took out his pocket-book, called the drivers together, and, in their presence, made over a banknote to the landlord, saying to him, "I now pay you this sum provisionally, until you shall have made out your account. You men are witnesses." The drivers respectfully bowed, and hurried back to their wagons.

The procession now set forth. First a portion of the armed escort, then the heavy wagons, which slowly and helplessly rumbled along over the stones; some of them without drivers, but kept in line by their well-trained horses.

Mr. Schröter stood at the gate, leaning upon Anton, and counted each wagon as it passed; and as the last rolled off, he said, "Done at last," and consented to be led away.

In the very next cross-street the procession turned into the great court-yard of another inn. When the last of the wagons had at length had its horses unharnessed, and the soldiers had barred the gate from within, the merchant fell down in a swoon, and was carried into the house.

He was placed in a small room, a guard stationed at his door, and another in the court. Anton remained alone with the sufferer. Full of anxiety, he knelt by his bed, unfastened his clothes, and bathed his face with cold water. After a time Mr. Schröter revived, opened his eyes, looked gratefully at Anton, and pointed to the window.

Anton looked out, and said, joyously, "It opens upon the court-yard. I can overlook and count the wagons. I really think that here, although prisoners, we are tolerably safe. But, first of all, allow me to look to your wound: your clothes are much stained with blood."

"My weakness proceeds more from over-excitement than loss of blood," replied the merchant, raising himself up.

Anton opened the door, and begged for a surgeon. Their guard was prepared to go for one, and after an anxious hour had passed, he introduced a shabby-looking individual, who hurriedly produced a razor and a dirty pocket-handkerchief, wiping the razor on his sleeve, and bringing the handkerchief into alarming proximity with Anton's chin. It was with some difficulty that the reason of his being sent for was conveyed to him.

Anton cut away the sleeve of the coat and shirt, and himself examined the wound. It was a cut in the upper arm; not a deep one, indeed, but the arm was stiff, and Mr. Schröter suffered severely. The barber attempted to bandage it, and went off, promising to return on the morrow. The merchant fell back, exhausted with the pain of the bandaging, and Anton sat by him the remainder of the day, laying wet cloths around the arm, and watching the feverish slumber of the patient.

Soon he sank himself into a sort of half sleep, a dull apathy, which made him indifferent to all that was going on without. Thus evening wore away, and night came on. Anton occasionally dipped his fingers in cold water, and crept from the bed to the window to watch the wagons, or to the door to exchange a whisper with the guard, who showed a friendly interest in the case.

Meanwhile the fire continued its ravages, and the sound of musketry thundered at the gates. Anton looked carelessly at the burning fragments which the wind drove over the unhappy town, and heard, with a faint degree of surprise, that the noise of the firing grew louder and louder, and at last became a deafening crash; all the sounds that struck his ear from the street appearing to him as unimportant as the ringing of a little early church-bell which he had often heard from his own room in the principal's house, and which never disturbed any one out of his morning repose. The whole night through he kept mechanically wetting and applying cold-water poultices to the patient's arm, and rising whenever the latter groaned or turned; but when, toward morning, the merchant fell into a sounder sleep, Anton forgot his task, his head fell heavy upon his hands outstretched on the table, he neither saw nor heard; and amid the screams of the wounded, and the thundering of cannon which attended the taking of a stoutly-defended town, amid all the horrors of a bloody conflict, he slept like a tired boy over his school-task.

When he awoke, after the lapse of a few hours, it had long been morning. The merchant smiled kindly at him from his bed, and reached out his hand. Anton pressed it with all his heart, and hurried to the window. "They are all right," said he. He then opened the door; the guard of the previous night had vanished; and on the street he heard the beat of drums, and the regular tramp of regiments marching in.

CHAPTER XXI.

"We gave you up for lost," cried the newly-arrived captain to Mr. Schröter. "They manage inns wretchedly here, and all my inquiries after you proved fruitless. It was a fortunate thing that your letter found me out in this confusion."

"We have accomplished our purpose," said the merchant, "but not, as you see, without drawbacks;" and he pointed, smiling, to his wounded arm.

"First and foremost, let me hear your adventures," said the captain, sitting down by the bedside. "You have more tokens of the fight to show than I."

The merchant told his story. He dwelt warmly upon Anton's courage, to which he ascribed his safety, and ended by saying, "My wound does not prevent my traveling, and my return is imperative. I shall go with the wagons as far as the frontier."

"Early to-morrow morning one of our companies returns to the frontier; you can send your wagons under its escort; besides which, the high roads are now safe. To-morrow the mails begin to run again."

"I must still further request your assistance. I am anxious to write home by a courier this very day."

"I will take care," promised the captain, "that your return to-morrow shall meet with no impediments."

As soon as the officer had left the room, Mr. Schröter said to Anton, "I have a surprise for you, dear Wohlfart, which will, I fear, be an unwelcome one. I wish to leave you here in my place." Anton drew nearer in amazement. "There is no relying on our agent at a time like this," continued the merchant, "and I have, during the last few days, rejoiced to discover how perfectly I can depend upon you. What you have just done to save my head-piece will be unforgotten as long as I live. And now draw a writing-table here beside me; we have still some plans to arrange."

The next morning a post-chaise stood before the inn door, into which Mr. Schröter was lifted by Anton. It was then drawn up to the side of the street till he had seen the wagons pass one by one out of the gateway. Then pressing Anton's hand once more, he said, "Your stay here may last weeks, nay, months. Your work will be very disagreeable, and often fruitless. But I repeat it, do not be too anxious; I trust to your decision as to my own. And do not be afraid of incurring contingent loss, if you can only get unsafe debtors to pay up. This place is devastated and lost to us for the future. Farewell till our happy meeting at home."

Thus Anton remained alone in the strange town, in a position where great trust imposed upon him great responsibility. He went back to his room, called the landlord, and at once made arrangements for his further stay there. The town was so filled with military that he preferred to remain in the small quarters that he had already occupied, and to put up with their inconveniences, having little expectation of changing for the better.

It was indeed a devastated town which Anton now explored. A few days back, crowds of passionately-excited men had filled the streets, and every kind of daring enterprise was to be read on their wild faces. Where was now the haughty defiance, the thirst of battle, that inspired all those thousands?

The crowds of peasants, the swarming town populace, the soldiers of the patriot army, had vanished like ghosts scared by the presence of an enchanter. The few men to be seen were foreign soldiers. But their gay uniforms did not improve the aspect of the town. True, the fire was quenched, whose clouds of smoke had darkened the sky. But there stood the houses in the pale light, looking as if they had been gutted. The doors remained closed; many of the window-panes

were broken; on the flags lay heaps of mud, dirty straw, and fragments of furniture. Here, a car with a broken wheel; there, a uniform, arms, the carcass of a horse. At the corner of a street stood barrels and pieces of furniture which had been thrown out of the houses, as a last barricade to impede the advancing troops; and behind them lay, carelessly strewn over with straw, the corpses of slaughtered men. Anton turned away in horror when he saw the pale faces through the straw. Newly-arrived troops were bivouacking in the square—their horses stood in couples round; in all the streets the tramp of patrols was heard; while it was only at rare intervals that a civilian was seen to pass along the flag-stones; with his hat drawn low over his face, and casting timid sidelong glances at the foreign troops. Sometimes, too, a pale-looking man was seen, led along by soldiers, and pushed onward with the bayonet if he went too slowly. The town had worn an ugly appearance during the insurrection, but it was still worse now.

When Anton returned from his first walk, with these impressions upon his mind, he found a hussar walking up and down before his door like a sentinel.

"Mr. Wohlfart!" shouted the hussar, rushing at him.

"My dear Karl," cried Anton; "this is the first pleasure I have had in this wretched town. But how came you hither?"

"You know that I am serving my time. We joined our comrades at the frontier a few hours after you had left. The landlord knew me, and told me of your departure. You may imagine the fright I was in. To-day I got leave of absence for the first time, and had the good luck to meet one of the drivers, else I should not have found you out yet. And now, Mr. Wohlfart, what of our principal, and what of your goods?"

"Come with me into my room, and you shall hear all," replied Anton.

"Stop a moment," cried Karl; "you speak to me more formally than you used to do, and I can't stand that. Please to speak just as if I was Karl in our old place yonder."

"But you are no longer so," said Anton, laughing.

"This is only a masquerade," said Karl, pointing to his uniform; "in my heart I am still a supernumerary porter of T. O. Schröter's."

"Have it your own way, Karl," replied Anton; "but come in, and hear all about it."

Karl soon fell, as might have been expected, into a violent rage with the good-for-nothing landlord. "The thievish dog! he has dared to attack our firm and our head! To-morrow I'll take a whole troop of our fellows there. I'll drive him into his own yard, and we'll all play at leap-frog over him by the hour, and at every leap we'll give a kick to that wicked head of his."

"Mr. Schröter let him go unpunished," said Anton; "don't be more cruel than he. I say, Karl, you are become a handsome youth."

"I shall do," returned Karl, much flattered. "I've got reconciled to agriculture. My uncle is a worthy man. If you picture my father to yourself about half his own size, thin instead of stout, and with a small stumpy nose instead of a large one, and a long face instead of a round, with a gray coat and no leather apron, and with a pair of great boots up to his knees, why then you have my uncle—a most capital little fellow. He is very kind to me. At first I found it dull in the country, but I got used to it in time; one is always going about the farm, and that's pleasant. It was a blow to my gray-headed uncle when I had to turn soldier, but I was delighted to get upon a horse in right down earnest, and to see something of the scuffle here. There are wretched inns in this country, Mr. Wohlfart, and this place is a horrible scene of desolation."

Thus Karl rattled on. At last he caught up his cap: "If you remain here, will you allow me often to spend a quarter of an hour with you?"

"Do as at home," said Anton; "and if I happen to be out, the landlord will have the key, and here are the cigars."

And so Anton found an old friend; but Karl was not his only military acquaintance. The captain was delighted with a countryman who had played so bold a part against the insurgents. He introduced him to the colonel who commanded the division. To him Anton had to tell his adventures, and to receive high commendation from a large circle of epaulets; and the following day the captain invited him to dinner, and introduced him to the officers of his own squadron. Anton's modest composure made a favorable impression upon them all. At home they would probably have been restricted by their views of human greatness from becoming intimate with a young merchant, but here in the camp they were themselves wiser men than in the idle days of peace, their social prejudices were fewer, and their recognition of others' deserts less impeded. Consequently, they soon came to consider the young clerk as a "deuced good fellow," fell into the habit of calling him by his Christian name, and whenever they were going to drink their coffee or to play a game of dominoes, they invariably invited him to join them. An obscure tradition of large means and mysterious relationship once more emerged from the abyss of past years, but, to do the squadron justice, it was not this which prompted their kind attentions to their countryman. Anton himself was more exalted by this good fellowship with these noble lads than he would have chosen to confess to himself or to Mr. Pix. He now enjoyed a free intercourse with men of mark, and felt as if born to many enjoyments which heretofore he had only contemplated with silent reverence from afar. Old recollections began to reassert their sway, and he felt once more drawn

into the magic circle, where every thing appeared to him free, bright, and beautiful. Lieutenant von Rothsattel belonged to the number of Anton's friendly acquaintance. Our hero treated him with the tenderest consideration, and the lieutenant, who was at bottom a reckless, light-hearted, good-natured fellow, was readily pleased by Anton's cordial admiration, and repaid him with peculiar confidence.

Fortunately, however, for our hero, his business prevented him losing his independence among his new allies. The town was indeed devastated; the wild uproar was over; but all peaceful activity seemed exhausted too. The necessaries of life were dear, and work scarce. Many who once wore boots went barefoot now. He who could formerly have bought a new coat, now contented himself with having the old one mended; the shoemaker and tailor breakfasted on water-gruel instead of coffee; the shopkeeper was unable to pay his debts to the merchant, and the merchant unable to discharge his obligations to other firms. He who had to recover money from men thus depressed had a hard task indeed, as Anton soon found out. On every side he heard lamentations which were but too well founded; and frequently every species of artifice was employed to evade his claims. Every day he had to go through painful scenes, often to listen to long legal proceedings carried on in Polish, out of which he generally came with an impression of having been "*done*," though the agent played the part of interpreter. It was a strange commercial drama in which Anton had now to take a share. Men from every portion of Europe were here, and trade had many peculiarities, which to German eyes seemed irregular and insecure. Nevertheless, habits of duty exercise so great an influence even over weaker natures, that Anton's perseverance more than once won the day.

The greatest claim that his house had was upon a Mr. Wendel, a dry little man, who had done a great deal of business on every side. People said that he had become rich by smuggling, and was now in great danger of failing. He had received the principal himself with something of contumely, and had at first comported himself toward his young deputy like a man distracted. Anton had again spent an hour in reasoning with him, and, in spite of all the latter's twistings and turnings, had remained firm to his point. At length Wendel broke out, "Enough; I am a ruined man, but you deserve to get your money. Your house has always dealt generously by me. You shall be reimbursed. Send your agent to me again in the course of the day, and come to me early to-morrow morning."

On the morrow, when Anton, accompanied by the agent, appeared before their debtor, Wendel, after a gloomy salutation, seized hold of a great rusty key, slowly put on a faded cloak on which countless darns showed like cobwebs on an old wall, and led his creditors to a remote part of the town, stopping before a ruined monastery. They went through a long cloister. Anton looked admiringly at the exquisite moulding of the arches, from which, however, time had worn off many a fragment that encumbered the pavement. Monuments of the old inhabitants of the place were ranged along the walls, and weather-stained inscriptions announced to the inattentive living that pious Slavonic monks had once sought peace within this shelter. Here in this cloister they had paced up and down; here they had prayed and dreamed till they had to make over their poor souls to the intercession of their saints. In the centre of this building Wendel now opened a secret door, and led his companions down a winding staircase into a large vault. This had once been used as the cellar of the rich cloister, and down that same staircase the cellarer had gone—ah! how often—wandering between the casks, tasting here and tasting there; and at the ringing of the little bell above him, bowing his head and saying a short prayer, and then returning to taste again, or in comfortable mood to walk up and down. The prayer-bell of the cloister had been melted down long ago; the empty cells were in ruins, the cattle fed where once the prior sat at the head of his brethren at their stately meal. All had vanished; the cellar only remained, and the casks of fiery Hungarian wine stood as they did five hundred years before. Still the rays of light converged into a star on the beautiful arch of the roof; still the vault was kept stainlessly whitewashed, and the floor strewn with finest sand; and still it was the cellarer's custom only to approach the noble wine with a waxlight. True, they were not the identical casks out of which the old monks drew their potions, but they were now, as then, filled with the produce of the vine-clad hills of Hegyalla, with the rosy wine of Menes, with the pride of Œdenburg, and the mild juice of the careful vintage of Rust.

"A hundred and fifty casks at eighteen, four-and-twenty, and thirty ducats the cask," said the agent, beginning the inventory.

Meanwhile Wendel went from one cask to another, the waxlight in his hand. He stood a little time before each, carefully wiping off with a clean linen cloth the very slightest trace of mould. "This was my favorite walk," said he to Anton. "For twenty years I have attended every vintage as a purchaser. Those were happy days, Mr. Wohlfart, and now they are gone forever. I have often walked up and down here, looking at the sunlight that shone down upon the barrels, and thinking of those that walked here before me. To-day I am here for the last time. And what will become of the wine? It will all be exported; they will drink it in foreign parts, without knowing its merits; and some brandy distiller will take possession of this cellar, or some new brewer will keep his Bavarian beer in it. The old times are over for me too. This is the noblest wine of all," said he, going up to a particular cask. "I might have excepted it from my surrender. But what should I do with this barrel only? Drink it? I shall never drink wine more. It shall go with the rest, only I must take leave of it." He filled his glass. "Did you ever drink wine like that before?" asked he, mournfully, holding out the glass to Anton, who willingly owned he never had.

They slowly reascended the steps. Arrived at the top, the wine-merchant cast one last long look into the cellar, then turned round like one fully resolved, locked the secret door, took out the key,

and laid it solemnly in Anton's hand. "There is the key of your property. Our accounts are settled. Fare you well, gentlemen." Slowly and with bent head he went through the ruined cloister, looking, in the gray light of the early morning, like the ghost of some ancient cellarer still haunting the relics of his past glory.

The agent called after him, "But our breakfast, Mr. Wendel!" The old man shook his head, and made a gesture of refusal.

Yes, indeed, the breakfast. Every transaction was drowned in wine in this town. The long sittings in drinking-houses, which even the bad times did not prevent, were no small sorrow to Anton. He saw that men worked much less, and talked and drank much more in this country than in his. Whenever he had succeeded in getting a matter arranged, he could not dispense with the succeeding breakfast. Then buyers, sellers, assistants, and hangers-on of every kind sat at a round table together in one of the taverns; began with porter, ate Caviare by the pound, and washed it down with red Bordeaux wine. Hospitality was dispensed on all sides; every familiar face must come and take a share in the banquet; and so the company went on increasing till evening closed. Meanwhile the wives, accustomed to such proceedings, would have dinner brought up and removed three successive times, and at last adjourned till the next day. At times like these Anton often thought of Fink, who, despite his reluctance, had at least taught him to get through such ordeals as these respectably.

One afternoon, while Anton was sitting watching a game at dominoes, an old lieutenant, looking off his newspaper, called to the players, "Yesterday evening one of our hussars had two fingers of his right hand smashed. The ass who was quartered with him had been playing with his carabine, which was loaded. The doctor thinks amputation unavoidable. I am sorry for the fine fellow: he was one of the most efficient of our squadron. These misfortunes always happen to the best."

"What is the man's name?" asked Herr von Bolling, going on with his game.

"It is Corporal Sturm."

Anton sprang up, making all the pieces on the table dance again, and asked where he was to be found.

The lieutenant described the situation of the Lazaretto. In a dark room, full of beds and invalid soldiers, Karl lay pale and suffering, and reached out his left hand to Anton. "It is over," he said; "it hurt me most confoundedly, but I shall be able to use the hand again. I can still guide a pen, and shall try to do every thing else, if not with the right hand, why, with the left. Only I shall never again cut a figure in gold rings."

"My poor, poor Karl," cried Anton; "it's all over with your soldiering."

"Do you know," said Karl, "I can stand that misfortune pretty well. After all, it was not a regular war; and when spring and sowing-time comes, I shall be all right again. I could get up now if the doctor were not so strict. It is not pleasant here," added he, apologetically; "many of our people are sick, and one must shift for one's self in a strange town."

"You shall not remain in this room," said Anton, "if I can help it. There is such an atmosphere of disease here that a man in health becomes quite faint; I shall ask permission to have you moved into my lodging."

"Dear Mr. Anton!" cried Karl, overjoyed.

"Hush!" said the other; "I do not yet know whether we shall get leave."

"I have one other request to make," said the soldier, at parting, "and that is, that you will write the circumstance off to Goliath, so as not to make him too uneasy. If he first heard of it from a stranger, he would go on like a madman, I know."

Anton promised to do this, and then hurried to the surgeon of the regiment, and next to his kind friend the captain.

"I will answer for his getting leave," said the latter. "And as, from the account of his wound, his dismissal from the service seems to me unavoidable, he may as well stay with you till he receives it."

Three days later, Karl, with his arm in a sling, entered Anton's room. "Here I am," said he. "Adieu my gay uniform! adieu Selim, my gallant bay! You must have patience with me, Mr. Anton, for one other week, then I shall be able to use my arm again."

"Here is an answer from your father," said Anton, "directed to me."

"To you?" inquired Karl, in amazement. "Why to you? why has he not written to me?"

"Listen." Anton took up a great sheet of folio paper, which was covered over with letters half an inch long, and read as follows: "Worshipful Mr. Wohlfart, this is a great misfortune for my poor son. Two fingers from ten—eight remain. Even though they were but small fingers, the pain was all the same. It is a great misfortune for both of us that we can no longer write to each other. Therefore I beg of you to have the goodness to tell him what follows: 'He is not to grieve overmuch. Boring can still perhaps be done, and a good deal with the hammer. And even if it be Heaven's will that this too should be impossible, still he is not to grieve overmuch. He is provided for by an iron chest. When I am dead, he will find the key in my waistcoat pocket. And so I greet

him with my whole heart. As soon as he can travel, he must come to me; all the more, as I can no longer tell him in writing that I am his true and loving father, Johann Sturm.'" Anton gave the letter to the invalid.

"It is just like him," said Karl, between smiles and tears; "in his first sorrow he has imagined that he can no longer write to me, because I have hurt my hand. How he will stare when he receives my letter!"

Karl spent the next few weeks with Anton. As soon as he could move his hand, he took possession of the wardrobe of his friend, and began to render him the little services that he had undertaken long ago in the principal's house. Anton had some difficulty to prevent him from playing the superfluous part of valet.

"There you are brushing my coat again," said he one day, going into Karl's room. "You know I will not stand it."

"It was only to keep mine in countenance," said Karl, by way of excuse; "two look so much better hanging together than one. Your coffee is ready, but the coffee-pot is good for nothing, and always tastes of the spirit of wine."

When he found that, as he said, he could be of no use to Anton, he began to work on his own account. Owing to his old love of mechanics, he had collected a quantity of tools of all sorts, and whenever Anton left the house, he began such a sawing, boring, planing, and rasping, that even the deaf old artillery officer, who was quartered in the neighboring house, was under the impression that a carpenter had settled near him, and sent a broken bedstead to be repaired. As Karl was still obliged to spare his right hand, he used one tool after the other with the left, and was as pleased as a child with the progress he made. And when the surgeon forbade such exertions for a week to come, Karl began to write with his left hand, and daily exhibited to Anton samples of his skill. "Practice is all that is wanted," said he; "man has to discover what he can do. As for that, writing with the hands at all is merely a habit; if one had no hands, one would write with one's feet; and I even believe that they are not essential, and that it could be managed with the head."

"You are a foolish fellow," laughed Anton.

"I do assure you," continued Karl, "that with a long reed held in the mouth, with two threads fastened to the ears to lessen the shaking, one might get on very tolerably. There is the setting of your keyhole come off; we'll glue that on in no time."

"I wonder that it does not stick of itself," said Anton, "for a most horrible smell of glue comes from your room. The whole atmosphere is impregnated with glue."

"God forbid!" said Karl; "what I have is perfectly scentless glue—a new invention."

When this true-hearted man set out homeward, with his dismission in his pocket, Anton felt as if he himself then first exchanged the counting-house for the foreign city.

One day our Anton passed the inn where his principal had been wounded. He stood still a moment, and looked with some curiosity at the old house and at the court-yard, where white-coated soldiers were now occupied in blacking and polishing their belts. At that moment he perceived a form in a black caftan glide away like a shadow out of the bar across the entrance. It had the black curls, the small cap, the figure and bearing of his old acquaintance, Schmeie Tinkeles. Alas! but it was his face no longer. The former Tinkeles had been rather a smart fellow of his kind. He had always worn his long locks shining and curled; he had had red lips, and a slight tinge of color on his yellow cheeks. The present Schmeie was but a shadow of him of yore: he looked pale as a ghost, his nose had become pointed and prominent, and his head drooped down like the cup of a fading flower.

Anton cried out in amazement, "Tinkeles, is it really you?" and went up to him. Tinkeles collapsed as if struck by a thunderbolt, and stared with wide-opened eyes at Anton, an image of horror and alarm.

"God of justice!" were the only words that escaped his white lips.

"What is the matter with you, Tinkeles? you look a most miserable sinner. What are you doing in this place, and what in the world leads you to this house, of all others?"

"I can not help being here," answered the trader, still half unconscious. "I can not help our principal being so unfortunate. His blood has flowed on account of the goods which Mausche Fischel sent off, having been paid for them. I am innocent, Mr. Wohlfart, on my eternal salvation. I did not know that the landlord was such a worthless being, and that he would lift his hand against the gentleman who stood before him there without hat, without cap on—without cap on," he whined out still more loudly; "bareheaded. You may believe that it was with me as though a sword had fallen upon my own body when I saw the landlord use such violence to a man who stood before him like a nobleman as he is, and has been all his life long."

"Hear me, Schmeie," said Anton, looking wondering at the Galician, who still harped upon the same string, trying to regain his composure by dint of speaking. "Hear me, my lad; you were in this town when our wagons were plundered—you saw from some hiding-place or other our quarrel with the landlord—you know this man's character, and yet you remain here; and now I

will just tell you, in so many words, what you have half confessed to me—you knew of the unloading of the wagons, and, more, you had an interest in the carriers remaining behind; and in short, you and the landlord are in the same boat. After what you have now said, I shall not let you go till I know all. You shall either come with me to my room, and there freely confess, or I will take you to the soldiers, and have you examined by them."

Tinkeles was annihilated. "God of my fathers, it is fearful—it is fearful!" whined he, and his teeth chattered.

Anton felt compassion for his great terror, and said, "Come with me, Tinkeles, and I promise you that if you make a candid confession nothing shall be done to you."

"What shall I confess to the gentleman?" groaned Tinkeles; "I, who have nothing to confess."

"If you will not come at once, I call the soldiers," said Anton, roughly.

"No soldiers," implored Tinkeles, shuddering again. "I will come with you, and will tell you what I know, if you will promise to betray me to no one, not to your principal, not to Mausche Fischel, and not either to the wicked man, the landlord, and not to any soldiers."

"Come," said Anton, pointing down the street. And so he led away the reluctant Tinkeles like a prisoner, and never took his eyes off him, fearing that he would follow the suggestions of his evil conscience, and run off down some side street. The Galician, however, had not courage to do this, but crept along by Anton, looked toward him every now and then, sighing deeply, and gurgled out unintelligible words. Arrived at Anton's lodging, he began of his own accord: "It has been a weight on my heart—I have not been able to sleep—I have not been able to eat or drink; and whenever I ran here or there on business, it has lain on my soul just as a stone does in a glass—when one tries to drink, the stone falls against the teeth, and the water spills. Alas! what have I not spilled!"

"Go on," said Anton, again mollified by the candid confession.

"I came here on account of the wagons," continued Tinkeles, looking timidly at Anton. "Mausche has dealt with your firm for ten years, and always uprightly, and you have made a good sum of money out of him, and so he thought that the time was come when he might do a business of his own, and settle his account with you. And when the uproar began, he came to me and said, 'Schmeie,' said he, 'you are not afraid,' said he. 'Let them shoot away, and go you among them and see that you keep the wagons for me. Perhaps you can sell them, perhaps you can bring them back; at all events, it is better that we should have them than any one else.' And so I came and waited till the wagons arrived, and I spoke with the landlord, saying that, since the goods could not reach you, it was better they should fall into our hands. But that the landlord should prove such a man of blood, that I did not wish, and did not know; and since I saw how he cut your master's arm, I have had no peace, and I have ever seen before me the bloody shirt, and the fine cloth of his great-coat, which was cut in two."

Anton listened to this confession with an interest that outweighed the aversion he felt for these—not uncommon—manœuvres of Galician traders. He contented himself with saying to the delinquent, "Your rascality has cost Mr. Schröter a wounded arm; and, had we not appeared upon the scene, you would have stolen from us twenty thousand dollars."

"Not twenty thousand," cried Schmeie; "wool is very low, and there's nothing to be made of tallow. Less than twenty thousand."

"Indeed!" said Anton, disdainfully; "and now, what am I to do with you?"

"Do nothing with me," implored Schmeie, laying his hand on Anton's coat. "Let the whole matter go to sleep. You have the goods, be satisfied with that. It was a good business that which Mausche Fischel was not able to undertake because you hindered him."

"You still regret it," said Anton, indignantly.

"I am glad that you have the property," replied the Jew, "because you shed your blood about it; and therefore do nothing with me; I will see whether I can't please you in other matters. If you have any thing for me to do in this place, it will be a satisfaction to me to help you."

Anton coldly replied, "Although I have promised not to bring your thievishness to judgment, yet we can never deal with you again. You are a worthless man, Tinkeles, and have dealt unfairly with our house. Henceforth we are strangers."

"Why do you call me worthless?" complained Tinkeles. "You have known me as an upright man for years past; how can you call me worthless because I wanted to do a little stroke of business, and was unfortunate and could not do it? Is that worthless?"

"Enough," said Anton; "you may go." Tinkeles remained standing, and asked whether Anton required any new imperial ducats. "I want nothing from you," was the reply. "Go."

The Jew went slowly to the door, and then turning round, observed, "There is an excellent bargain to be made with oats; if you will undertake it with me, I will go shares with you; there is much money to be made by it."

"I have no dealings with you, Tinkeles. In Heaven's name, go away."

The Jew crept out, once more scratching at the door, but not venturing in. A few minutes later, Anton saw him cross the street, looking much dejected.

From that time Anton was regularly besieged by the repentant Tinkeles. Not a day passed without the Galician forcing an entrance, and seeking a reconciliation after his fashion. Sometimes they met in the streets, sometimes Anton was disturbed when writing by his unsteady knock; he had always something to offer, or some tidings to impart, through which he hoped to find favor. His power of invention was quite touching. He offered to buy or sell any thing or every thing, to transact any kind of business, to spy or carry messages; and when he found out that Anton was a good deal with the military, and that a certain young lieutenant, in particular, went often with him to the "Restauration," Tinkeles began to offer whatever he conceived might prove attractive to an officer. True, Anton remained firm in his resolve of not dealing with him, but at last he had no longer the heart to treat the poor devil roughly; and Tinkeles found out from many a suppressed smile, or short question put, that Anton's intercession for him with the principal was not quite hopeless. And for this he served with the perseverance of his ancestor Jacob.

One morning young Rothsattel came clattering into Anton's room. "I have been on the sick-list. I had a bad catarrh, and was obliged to remain in my comfortless quarters," said he, throwing himself on the sofa. "Can you help me to while away time this evening? We are to have a game at whist. I have invited our doctor and a few of our men. Will you come?" Pleased and a little flattered, Anton accepted. "Very well," continued the young gentleman; "then you must give me the power of losing my money to you. That wretched *vingt-et-un* has emptied my pockets. Lend me twenty ducats for eight days."

"With pleasure," said Anton; and he eagerly produced his purse.

Just as the lieutenant carelessly pocketed it, a horse's hoofs were heard in the street, and he rushed to the window. "By Jove, that is a lovely thing—pure Polish blood—the horse-dealer has stolen it from one of the rebels, and now wants to tempt an honest soldier with it."

"How do you know that the horse is to be sold?" asked Anton, sealing a letter at the writing-table.

"Don't you see that the creature is led about by a rogue to attract notice?"

At that moment there was a light knock at the door, and Schmeie Tinkeles first inserted his curly head, and then his black caftan, and gurgled submissively, "I wished to ask their honors whether they would look at a horse that is worth as many louis-d'or as it cost dollars. If you would just step to the window, Mr. Wohlfart, you would see it—seeing is not buying."

"Is this one of your mercantile friends, Wohlfart?" asked the lieutenant, laughing.

"He is so no longer; he is fallen into disgrace," replied Anton, in the same tone. "This time his visit is intended for you, Herr von Rothsattel. Take care, or he will tempt you to buy the horse."

The dealer listened attentively to the dialogue, and looked with much curiosity at the lieutenant.

"If the gracious baron will buy the horse," said he, coming forward, and staring at the young officer, "it will be a beautiful saddle-horse for him on his estate."

"What the deuce do you know about my estate?" said the lieutenant; "I have none."

"Do you know this gentleman?" asked Anton.

"How should I not know him, if it be he who has the great estate in your country, in which he has built a factory, where he makes sugar out of fodder."

"He means your father," explained Anton. "Tinkeles has connections in our province, and often stays months there."

"What do I hear?" cried the Galician; "the father of this worshipful officer! Your pardon, Mr. Wohlfart; so you are acquainted with the baron, who is the father of this gentleman!" A smile hovered over the lieutenant's mustache.

"I have, at all events, seen this gentleman's father," replied Anton, annoyed with the pertinacious questioning of the trader, and with himself for blushing.

"And forgive me if I ask whether you know this gentleman intimately, and whether he is what one calls your good friend?"

"What are you driving at, Tinkeles?" said Anton, sharply, and blushed still deeper, not knowing exactly how to answer the question.

"Yes, Jew, he is my good friend," said the lieutenant, clapping Anton on the shoulder. "He is my cashier; he has just lent me twenty ducats, and he won't give me any money to buy your horse. So go to the devil."

The trader listened attentively to every word spoken, and looked at the young men with curiosity, but, as Anton remarked, with a degree of sympathy foreign to his nature. "So," he repeated, mechanically, "he has lent you twenty ducats; he would lend you more if you asked him; I know—I know. So you do not want the horse, Mr. Wohlfart? My services to you, Mr. Wohlfart;" and, so saying, he vanished, and soon the quick trot of a horse was heard.

"What a fellow that is!" cried the lieutenant, looking out after him.

"He is not generally so easy to get rid of," said Anton, perplexed at the strange conduct of the Jew. "Perhaps your uniform expedited his departure."

"I hope it was of some use to you, then. Good-by till the evening," said the lieutenant, taking his leave.

That afternoon the light knocking was heard again, and Tinkeles reappeared. He looked cautiously around the room, and approached Anton. "Allow me to ask," said he, with a confidential wink, "is it really true that you lent him twenty ducats, and would lend him more if he wished?"

Anton assented to both these propositions. "And now," said he, "tell me plainly what is running in your head, for I see you have something to disclose."

Tinkeles made a sly face, and winked harder. "Even though he be your good friend, beware of lending him money. If you know what you are about, you will lend him no more money."

"And why not?" inquired Anton. "Your good advice is useless, unless I know on what it is founded."

"And if I tell you what I know, will you intercede for me with Mr. Schröter, so that he may not think about the wagons when he sees me in his counting-house?"

"I will tell him that you have behaved well in other respects. It will be for him to decide what he will do."

"You will intercede for me," said Tinkeles; "that's enough. Things are going ill with Von Rothsattel, the father of this young man—very ill. Misfortune's black hand is raised over him. He is a lost man. There is no saving him."

"How do you know this?" cried Anton, horrified. "But it is impossible," he added, more calmly; "it is a lie, a mere idle rumor."

"Believe my words," said the Jew, impressively. "His father is in the hands of one who walks about in secret, like the angel of destruction. He goes and lays his noose around the necks of the men he has singled out without any one seeing him. He tightens the noose, and they fall around like ninepins. Why should you lend your money to those who have the noose around their neck?"

"Who is this demon who has the baron in his power?" cried Anton, in uncontrollable excitement.

"What signifies the name?" coolly replied the Galician. "Even if I knew it I would not tell it, and if I told it it could do you no good, nor the baron either, for you know him not, and he knows him not."

"Is it Ehrenthal?" inquired Anton.

"I can not tell the name," rejoined the trader, shrugging his shoulders; "but it is not Hirsch Ehrenthal."

"If I am to believe your words, and if you wish to do me a service," continued Anton, more composedly, "you must give me exact information. I must know this man's name—must know all that you have heard of him and of the baron."

"I have heard nothing," replied the trader, doggedly, "if you wish to examine me as they do in the courts of law. A word that is spoken flies through the air like a scent; one perceives it, another does not. I can not tell you the words I have heard, and I will not tell them for much money. What I say is meant for your ear alone. To you I say that two men have sat together, not one, but many evenings—not one, but many years; and they have whispered in the balcony of our inn, under which the water runs; and the water whispered below them, and they whispered above the water. I lay in the room on my bed of straw, so that they believed I was asleep; and I have often heard the name of Rothsattel from the lips of both, and the name of his estate too; and I know that misfortune hovers over him, but further I know not; and now I have said all, and will go. The good advice I have this day given you will make up for the day when you fought for the wool and the hides; and you will remember the promise you have made me."

Anton was lost in thought. He knew from Bernhard that Ehrenthal was in many ways intimately connected with the baron, and this link between the landed proprietor and the ill-spoken-of speculator had often seemed to him unaccountable. But Tinkeles' story was too incredible, for he had never himself heard any unfavorable account of the baron's circumstances. "I can not," said he, after a long pause, "be satisfied with what you have told me. You will think the matter over, and perhaps you will remember the name, and some of the words you heard."

"Perhaps I may," said the Galician, with a peculiar expression, which Anton in his perplexity quite lost. "And now we have squared our accounts. I have occasioned you anxiety and danger, but, on the other hand, I have done you a service—a great service," he repeated, complacently. "Would you take louis-d'or instead of bank-notes?" asked he, suddenly falling into a business tone; "if so, I can let you have them."

"You know that I have no money transactions," replied Anton, absently.

"Perhaps you can give Vienna bills drawn upon safe houses."

"I have no bills to give," said Anton, with some irritation.

"Very well," said the Jew; "a question does no harm;" and he turned to go, stopping, however, when he reached the door. "I was obliged to give two florins to Seligmann, who led the horse, and waited half a day upon the gentleman's pleasure. It was a mere advance that I made for you; will you not give me my two florins back?"

"Heavens be praised!" cried Anton, laughing in spite of himself; "now we have the old Tinkeles once more. No, Schmeie, you won't get your two florins."

"And you will not take louis-d'or in exchange for Vienna notes?"

"I will not."

"Adieu!" said Tinkeles; "and now, when we meet again, we are good friends." He lifted the latch. "If you want to know the name of the man who can make Von Rothsattel as small as the grass in the streets which every one treads upon, inquire for Hirsch Ehrenthal's book-keeper, of the name of Itzig. Veitel Itzig is the name." With these words he made his exit so rapidly that, although Anton tried, he could not overtake him.

He determined at once to inform the baron's son of what he had heard, though he feared that it would occasion his tender nature great distress. "But it must be done this very evening," thought he. "I will go early, or remain till the others have left."

Fate, however, did not favor this intention. Early as Anton went, he found five or six young cavalry officers already arrived at young Rothsattel's rooms before him. Eugene lay in his dressing-gown on the sofa, the squadron encamping round him. The doctor succeeded Anton. "How are you?" said he to the patient.

"Well enough," replied Eugene. "I don't want your powders."

"A little fever," continued the doctor. "Pulse full, and so on. It is too hot here. I propose that we open the window."

"By Jove, doctor, you shall do no such thing," cried a young gentleman, who had made himself a sort of couch of two chairs; "you know that I can't stand a draught except when on duty."

"Leave it alone," cried Eugene; "we are homœopathists here; we will drive out heat by heat. What shall we drink?"

"A mild punch would be best for the patient," said the doctor.

"Bring the pine-apple, my good Anton; it is somewhere there, with the rest of the apparatus."

"Ha!" cried the doctor, as Anton produced the fruit, and the servant came in with a basket of wine; "a sweet Colossus, a remarkable specimen indeed! With your leave, I'll make the punch. The proportions must have some reference to the state of the patient."

So saying, the doctor put his hand into his pocket, and brought out a black case, in which he looked for a knife to cut the fruit.

The young hussars broke out at once into a volley of oaths.

"My good sirs," cried the doctor, little moved by the storm he had raised, "has any one of you got a knife? Not one, I know. There is nothing to be found in your pockets but looking-glasses and brushes; and which of you understands the making of a bowl that a man of the world can drink? You can, indeed, empty one, but make it you can not."

"I will try what I can do, doctor," said Bolling, from a corner.

"Ah! Herr von Bolling, are you here too?" replied the doctor, with a bow.

Bolling took the pine-apple, and carefully held it out of reach of the medical arm. "Come here, Anton," said he, "and take care that that monster of a doctor does not approach our punch with his dissecting-knife."

While these two were brewing, the doctor took out two packs of cards, and solemnly laid them on the table.

"None of your cards!" cried Eugene; "to-day, at least, let us be together without sinning."

"You can't," said the doctor, mockingly; "you'll be the first to touch them. I thought of nothing but a quiet game at whist, a game for pious hermits. Time, however, will show what you will make of these packs; there they lie by the candlesticks."

"Don't listen to the tempter," cried one of the lieutenants, laughing.

"Whoever touches the cards first shall forfeit a breakfast to the party," said another.

"Here is the punch," said Bolling, setting down the bowl. "Taste it, oh man of blood!"

"Raw!" pronounced the oracle; "it would be drinkable to-morrow evening."

While these gentlemen were disputing about the merits of the beverage, Eugene took up one of the packs of cards, and mechanically cut them. The doctor exclaimed, "Caught, I declare! He

himself is the one to pay the forfeit." All laughed, and crowded round the table. "The bank, doctor," cried the officers, throwing him the cards. Soon other packs came out of other pockets; and the doctor laying a little heap of paper and silver on the table, the game began. The stakes were not high, and light jests accompanied the loss and gain of the players. Even Anton took a card and staked away without much thought. He found it difficult, though, to take any cordial part in the entertainment, and looked with sincere sympathy at young Rothsattel bending, in his ignorance, over the cards. He himself won a few dollars, but remarked with pain that Eugene was invariably unlucky. As, however, he was a party concerned in this, he made no remark; but the doctor himself said to his patient, after having again swept away the ducats the former had put down, "You are getting hot; you are feverish; if you are prudent, you will play no more. I have never yet had a fever-patient who did not lose at Pharao."

"That won't do, doctor," replied Eugene, sharply, and staked again.

"You are unlucky, Eugene," cried the good-humored Bolling. "You go on too fast."

His deal over, the doctor took up the cards and placed them in his pocket. "The bank has won immensely," said he; "but I leave off; I have made enough."

Again a storm arose among the officers. "I will hold the bank," cried Eugene; "give me your cash, Wohlfart."

The doctor protested, but at length gave in, thinking, "Perhaps he'll have a run of luck as banker; one must not refuse a man a chance of compensation."

Anton took some bank-notes out of his pocket, and laid them down before Eugene, but he himself played no more. He sat there sadly, and looked at his friend, who, heated by wine and fever, stared fixedly at the cards of the players. Deal succeeded deal, and Eugene lost all he had before him. The officers glanced at each other in amazement.

"I too propose that we leave off," said Bolling; "we will give you your revenge another time."

"I will have it to-day," cried Eugene, springing up and shutting the door. "Not one of you shall stir. Keep your places and play; here is money." He threw a bundle of matches on the table. "Every match stands for a dollar; no stake under. I will pay to-morrow." The game went on; Eugene continued to lose; the matches were scattered in all directions, as by some secret spell. Eugene got another bundle, exclaiming wildly, "We'll reckon when we separate."

Bolling rose and stamped with his chair.

"Whoever leaves the room is a scoundrel!" cried Eugene.

"You are a fool!" said the other, angrily. "It is a shame to take all a comrade's money as we are doing to-day. I have never seen such a thing. If it be Satan's contriving, I will not help him further." He rose and sat apart. Anton joined him. Both looked on in silence at the desperate way in which gold was flung about.

"I too have had enough of it," said the doctor, showing a thick bundle of matches in his hand. "This is a singular evening; since I have known cards, such a case as this has never come within my experience."

Once more Eugene sprang to the side-table where the matches lay, but Bolling seized the whole box and flung them into the street. "Better that they burn our boots than your purse," cried he. Then throwing the cards on the floor, "The game shall cease, I say."

"I will not be dictated to thus," retorted Eugene, in a rage.

Bolling buckled on his sword and laid his hand on the belt. "I will talk to you to-morrow. And now make your reckoning, gentlemen," said he; "we are going to break up."

The counters were thrown on the table, the doctor counting. Eugene gloomily took out his pocket-book, and entered into it the amount of his debt to each. The company retired without any courteous greetings.

On the way the doctor said, "He owes eight hundred dollars."

Bolling shrugged his shoulders. "I hope he can raise the money; but I do wish you had kept your cards in your pocket. If the story gets about, Rothsattel will have cause to regret it. We shall all do our best to hush it up, and I request you, Mr. Wohlfart, to do the same."

Anton returned to his lodgings in the utmost excitement. The whole evening he had sat upon thorns, and silently reproached the spendthrift. He regretted having lent him money, and yet felt it would have been impossible to refuse.

The following morning, just as he was setting out to pay Eugene a visit, the door opened, and Eugene himself entered, out of tune, dejected, unsteady.

"A horrid piece of ill luck yesterday," cried he. "I am in great straits; I must get hold of eight hundred dollars, and have not in all this luckless town a friend to whom I can turn except you. Exert your faculties, Anton, and contrive to get me the money."

"It is no easy matter for me to do so," replied Anton, gravely. "The sum is no inconsiderable one, and the money which I have here at my disposal is not my own."

"You will contrive it, though," continued Eugene, persevering; "if you do not help me out of this scrape, I know not where to turn. Our colonel is not to be trifled with. I risk the loss of all if the matter be not soon settled and hushed up." And in his distress he took Anton's hand and pressed it.

Anton looked at the troubled face of Lenore's brother, and replied with an inward struggle: "I have a little sum belonging to me invested in the funds of our house, and have now got money to transmit thither; it would be possible to tell the cashier to take my money and to keep back the sum you require."

"You are my deliverer," cried Eugene, suddenly relieved; "in a month, at latest, I will repay you the eight hundred dollars," added he, inclined at the speedy prospect of money to hope the best.

Anton went to his desk and counted out the sum. It was the larger part of what still remained of his inheritance.

When Eugene had with warmest thanks pocketed the money, Anton began: "And now, Herr von Rothsattel, I wish to communicate something which weighed upon my heart all yesterday evening. I beg that you will not consider me intrusive if I tell you what you ought to know, and yet what a stranger has hardly a right to say."

"If you are going to sermonize me, the moment is ill chosen," replied the lieutenant, sulkily. "I know perfectly that I have done a stupid thing, and am in for a lecture from my papa. I do not wish to hear from another what I must listen to from him."

"You trust very little to my good feeling," cried Anton, indignantly; "I yesterday heard from a very singular source that your father has got into difficulties through the intrigues of an unprincipled speculator. I even heard the name of the man who is plotting his ruin."

The lieutenant looked in amazement at Anton's earnest face, and at last said, "The devil! you frighten me. But no, it is impossible. Papa has never told me any thing about his affairs being out of order."

"Perhaps he himself does not know the schemes, or the worthlessness of the men who mean to use his credit for their own ends."

"The Baron of Rothsattel is not the man to be made a tool of by any one."

"That I agree to," said Anton, readily; "and yet I must beg you to reflect that his late extensive undertakings may have brought him into contact with cunning and unprincipled traders. He who gave me this information evidently did it with a good purpose. He announced his belief, which is, I fear, widely shared by a number of inferior men of business, that your father is in grave danger of losing severely. I now request that you will go with me to the man; perhaps we shall succeed in eliciting more from him. He is the very Jew you saw with me yesterday."

The lieutenant looked down in deep dejection, and, without saying a word, took up his cap and accompanied Anton to the inn at which Tinkeles was staying.

"It will be better that you should ask for him," said Anton on the way. So the officer entered and asked every servant that he met, and then the landlord. Schmeie had left in the middle of the previous day. They hurried from the inn to the government offices, and there found that Tinkeles had taken out his passport for the Turkish frontier. His departure made his warning appear the more important. The longer they discussed the matter, the more excited the lieutenant became, and the less he knew what to do. At last he broke out: "My father is perhaps now distressed for money, and how am I to tell him of my debt? It is a dreadful case. Wohlfart, you are a good fellow for lending me the money, though this wandering Jew's report was in your head. You must be still more accommodating, and lend me the sum for a longer time."

"Until you yourself express a wish to repay it."

"That is kind," cried the lieutenant; "and now do one thing more: write to my father. You know best what this confounded man has told you, and it would be a great bore to me to have to tell a thing of the kind to papa."

"But your father may well consider the interference of a stranger unwarrantable impertinence," rejoined Anton, oppressed by the idea of having to write to Lenore's father.

"My father already knows you," said Eugene, persuasively; "I remember my sister talking to me about you. Just say that I entreated you to write. It would really be better that you should do so."

Anton consented. He sat down at once, and informed the baron of the warning given by the wool-dealer. And thus he, while far away, came into new relations with the family of the baron, which were destined to have important consequences for him and them alike.

CHAPTER XXII.

Happy the foot that can roam over a wide expanse of property—happy the head which knows how to subject the forces of ever-fresh nature to an intelligent human will. All that makes man strong,

healthy, worthy, is given in portion to the agriculturist: his life is a ceaseless battle and a ceaseless victory. The pure air of heaven steels the muscles of his body, and the primeval order of nature forces his thoughts too into a regular orbit. Other species of industry may become obsolete; his is enduring as the earth: other tastes may prison men in narrow walls, in the depths of the earth, or between the planks of a ship; his glance has only two boundaries—the blue sky above, the firm earth below. His is almost the rapture of creation; for whatever his edict demands from organic or inorganic nature, springs up beneath his hand. Even the townsman's heart is refreshed by the green blade and the golden ear, the quietly pasturing cow and the frisking colt, the shade of the woods and the perfume of the fields; but far stronger, higher, nobler is the enjoyment of the man who, walking over his own land, can say, "All this is mine; all this is a blessing upon my energy and insight." For he does not merely supinely enjoy the picture before him: some definite wish accompanies every glance, some resolve every impression. Every thing has a meaning for him, and he a purpose regarding it. Daily labor is his delight, and it is a delight that quickens each faculty. So lives the man who is himself the industrious cultivator of his own soil.

And three times happy the proprietor of land where a battle with nature has been carried on for long years. The plowshare sinks deep into the well-cleaned ground, the ears hang heavy on the well-grown corn, and the turnip swells to colossal size. Then comes the time when a new form of industry is added to the old. Strange shapes of machinery are seen near the farm-buildings, giant caldrons, mighty wheels, and huge pipes, while the grinding and turning of the engines goes on ceaselessly by day and night. A noble industry, this! It springs from the energies of the soil, and increases them a hundred-fold. When the fruits of his own ground are devoted to the factory, the ancient plow without, the new steam-engine within, unite in perfect harmony to make their owner richer, stronger, and wiser. His life is linked by many ties to men of other callings, and strangers rejoice to hold out their hands to him, and unite their efforts with his. The circle of his interests goes on widening, and his influence over others increasing.

Near to the dwelling of a man like this a new race of laborers build cottages of every degree, all comes right to him, and can be turned to profit. The value of the land rises yearly, and the tempting prospect of great returns impels even the obstinate peasantry out of the old accustomed track. The wretched path becomes a good road, the marshy ditch a canal. Wagons pass along from field to field, red-tiled roofs rise in once desolate stations; the postman, who formerly came in twice a week, appears daily now, his bag heavy with letters and newspapers, and as he stops at some new house to bring the young wife, lately settled there, a letter from her home, he gratefully accepts the glass of milk she offers him in her delight, and tells her how long the way used to be from village to village in the summer heat. Soon new wants arise—the childish hangers on to all progress. The needle of the tailor has many a new stuff to pierce, the small shopkeeper sets up his store between the cottages, the village schoolmaster complains of the multitude of his scholars; a second school is built, an adult class established; the teacher keeps the first germ of the lending library in a cupboard in his own room, and the bookseller in the next town sends him books for sale; and thus the life of the prosperous agriculturist is a blessing to the district, nay, to the whole country.

But woe to the landed proprietor when the ground he treads has fallen into the power of strangers. He is lost if his crops fail to satisfy their claims, and the genii of nature give their smiles to him only who confronts them freely and securely—they revolt when they discern weakness, precipitation, and half measures. No undertaking any longer prospers. The yellow blossoms of the turnip and the blue flowers of the flax wither without fruit. Rust and gangrene appear among the cattle, the shriveled potato sickens and dies; all these, long accustomed to obey skill, now cruelly avenge neglect. Then the daily walk through the fields becomes a daily curse; the very lark that springs from the corn reminds him that it is all sold as it stands; the yoke of oxen carrying the clover to the barn suggests that the whole yield of the dairy belongs to a creditor. Gloomy, morose, despairing, the man returns home. It is natural that he should become a stranger to his farm, should seek to escape from painful thoughts in change of scene, and his absence precipitates his downfall. The one thing that might yet save him, a complete surrender of himself to his avocations, is become intolerable.

Woe, threefold woe, to the landed proprietor who has precipitately invoked the black art of steam to settle on his land, in order to educe from it energies which it does not possess! The heaviest curse that mortal man can know has fallen upon him. He not only becomes weaker himself, but he deteriorates all those whom he takes into his service. All that still remains to him is torn to fragments by the rotation of the wheels he has madly introduced; his oxen and his horses are worn out by the heavy demands the factory makes upon them; his worthy farm-servants are transformed into a dirty, hungry proletariat. Where once the necessary work at least was obediently performed, contention, cheating, and opposition prevail. He himself is swept away in a vortex of complicated business, claims surge in upon him wave upon wave, and he, in his desperate struggle, drowning man that he is, has no choice but to cling to whatever comes within his grasp, and then, wearied by his fruitless efforts, to sink into the abyss.

Once the baron's lands had borne better crops than those of his neighbors, his herds were acknowledged to be thoroughly healthy, bad years, which crushed others, had passed comparatively lightly over him. Now, all this was reversed as by some evil spell. A contagious disease broke out among the cattle; the wheat grew tall indeed, but when it came to be threshed the grain was light. Every where the outgoings exceeded the incomings. Once upon a time he could have borne this calmly, now it made him positively ill. He began to hate the sight of his

farm, and left it entirely to the bailiff. All his hopes centred in the factory, and if he ever visited his fields, it was only to look after the beet-root.

The new buildings rose behind the trees of the park. The voices of many busy laborers sounded shrill around it. The first crop of beet was brought in and heaped up ready for the mill. On the following day the regular factory was to begin, and yet the coppersmith was still hammering there, mechanics were working away at the great engine, and busy women carrying off chips and fragments of mortar, and scouring the scenes of their future labor. The baron stood before the building, listening impatiently to the beating of the hammer which had been so dilatory in completing its task. The morrow was to be to him the beginning of a new era. He stood now at the door of his treasure-house. He might now cast all his old cares away. During the next year he should be able to pay off what he owed, and then he would begin to put by. But, while he thus speculated, his eye fell upon his over-worked horses, and the anxious face of his old bailiff, and a vague fear crept, like a loathly insect, over the fluttering leaves of his hopes; for he had staked all on this cast; he had so mortgaged his land that at this moment he hardly knew how much of it was his own; and all this to raise still higher the social dignity of his family tree!

The baron himself was much altered during the last few years. A wrinkled brow, two fretful lines around the mouth, and gray hair on the temples: these were the results of his eternal thought about capital, his family, and the future aggrandizement of the property. His voice, which once sounded strong and full, had become sharp and thin, and every gesture betrayed irritation and impatience.

The baron had, indeed, had heavy cares of late. He had thoroughly learned the misery of extensive building operations combined with a scarcity of money. Ehrenthal was now become a regular visitor at the castle. Every week his horses consumed the baron's good hay; every week he brought out his pocket-book, and reckoned up the account or paid off bills. His hand, which at first so readily and reverentially sought his purse, did so now tardily and reluctantly; his bent neck had become stiff, his submissive smile had changed into a dry greeting; he walked with a scrutinizing air through the farm, and, instead of fervent praises, found many a fault. The humble agent had grown into the creditor, and the baron had to bear, with still increasing aversion, the pretensions of a man with whom he could no longer dispense. And not Ehrenthal alone, but many a strange figure besides knocked at the baron's study, and had private dealings with him there. The broad shape of the uncouth Pinkus appeared every quarter, and each time that his heavy foot ascended the castle stairs discord and dissatisfaction followed.

Every week, as we said, Ehrenthal had visited the estate: now came the most anxious time of all, and no eye beheld him. They said in the town that he was gone off upon a journey, and the baron was listening restlessly to the noise of every carriage that passed, wondering whether it brought the tardy, the hated, yet the indispensable visitor.

Lenore now joined her father, a radiant beauty, full in form and tall in stature, but somewhat shadowed by life's cares, as her thoughtful eyes and the anxious glance she cast at the baron plainly proved. "The post is come in," said she, reaching him a packet of letters and newspapers; "I dare say there is no letter from Eugene again."

"He has many other things to do," replied her father; but he himself looked eagerly for the handwriting of his son. Then he saw a direction in a strange hand, and on the letter the postmark of the very town in which Eugene was quartered. It was Anton's letter. The baron tore it open. When he had seen from its respectful tenor how well it was meant, and had read the name of Itzig in it, he put it up in his pocket. The secret terror which had so often shot through his heart fell upon him again, and then followed the unwelcome thought that his embarrassments were the subject of conversation even in foreign towns. Ill-timed warnings were the last thing that he wanted; they only humbled. He stood long in gloomy silence by his daughter. But, as the letter contained tidings of Eugene, he forced himself at length to speak. "A Mr. Wohlfart has written to me. He is now traveling in his mercantile capacity on the other side of the frontier, and has made Eugene's acquaintance."

"He!" cried Lenore.

"He seems to be an estimable kind of man," said the baron, with an effort. "He speaks affectionately of Eugene."

"Yes," cried Lenore, in delight; "one learns to know what conscientiousness and stability mean when one associates with him. What a strange coincidence! The sister and the brother. What has he written to you about, father!"

"Matters of business, kindly meant, no doubt, but not of any present use to me. The foolish boys have heard some idle rumor, and have unnecessarily troubled themselves about my affairs." And, so saying, he gloomily walked toward his factory.

Much perturbed, Lenore followed him. At length he opened the newspaper, and carelessly turned it over till his eye fell upon a certain advertisement. His face flushed deeply, the paper fell out of his hand, and, catching hold of one of the wagons, he leaned his head upon it. Lenore, much shocked, took up the paper, and saw the name of the Polish estate on which she knew that her father had a large mortgage. A day was specified for the sale of that estate by auction on behalf of a concourse of creditors.

The intelligence fell like a thunderbolt upon the baron. Since he had burdened his own property,

the sum that he had invested in Poland was his last hope of well-doing. He had often doubted whether he was not foolish to leave his money in the hands of strangers abroad, and to pay so high an interest to strangers at home; but he had always had a horror of being led to invest this round sum in his undertakings, considering it in the light of his wife's jointure and his daughter's portion. Now it, too, was endangered, the last security had vanished. Every thing around him reeled. Ehrenthal had deceived him. It was he who had carried on the correspondence with the lawyer of the Polish count. He had punctually paid him the interest when it was last due. There was no doubt that he had known the precarious nature of this foreign investment, and had kept back the knowledge from his client.

"Father," cried Lenore, raising him as she spoke, "speak with Ehrenthal; go to your solicitor; he may be able to suggest some remedy."

"You are right, my child," said the baron, with a toneless voice; "it is possible that the danger may not yet be imminent. Tell them to put the horses to; I will go to town at once. Conceal what you have read from your mother, and you, dear Lenore, come with me."

When the carriage drove up, the baron was still in the very same place where he had first read the fatal tidings. During the journey he sat silently in a corner of the carriage. Arrived in town, he took his daughter to his lodgings, which he had not yet given up, for fear of leading his wife or his acquaintance to suspect that his means were impaired. He himself drove to Ehrenthal's. He entered the office in angry mood, and, after a dry salutation, held out the newspaper to the trader. Ehrenthal rose slowly, and said, nodding his head, "I know it; Löwenberg has written to me about it."

"You have deceived me, Mr. Ehrenthal," cried the baron, striving hard for composure.

"To what purpose?" replied Ehrenthal. "Why should I hide from you what the newspapers must needs reveal? This may happen in the case of any estate, any mortgage; what great misfortune is there in this?"

"The property is deeply involved, it seems: you must long have known this; you have deceived me."

"What are you saying there about deceit?" cried Ehrenthal, indignantly; "have a care that no stranger hear your words. I have left my money standing with you; what interest can I have in lowering you and increasing your difficulties? I myself am only too deeply involved in them," and he pointed to the place occupied in most men by a heart. "Had I known that your factory would devour my good money, one thousand after another, even as the lean kine of Egypt devoured the fat, I should have taken more time to consider, and would not have paid you a single dollar. A herd of elephants will I feed with my substance, but never more a factory. How then can you say that I have deceived you?" continued he, in increasing dudgeon.

"You have known the state of matters," cried the baron, "and have disguised the count's position from me."

"Was it I who sold you the mortgage?" inquired the offended Ehrenthal. "I have paid you the interest half-yearly—that is my offense; I have paid you much money besides—that is my deceit." He then continued more conciliatingly: "Look at the matter calmly, baron: another creditor has offered to purchase the estate; the lawyers have not apprised us of it, or they have sent the advertisement to a wrong address. What of that? You will now be paid your capital, and then you can pay off the mortgages on your own land. I hear that this estate in Poland is a very valuable one, so you have nothing to fear for your capital."

The baron had only to depart with this uncertain hope. As he dejectedly entered his carriage, he called out to the coachman, "To the Councilor Horn;" but on the way thither he gave counter orders, and returned to his lodgings. A coolness had sprung up between him and his former legal adviser; he shrunk from disclosing to him his never-ceasing embarrassments, and had been offended by Horn's well-meant warnings. He had often, therefore, applied for advice to other lawyers.

Itzig, in the tenderness of his heart, had rushed out of the office as soon as he beheld the baron's horses, but now he put in his head again.

"How was he?" he inquired from Ehrenthal.

"How should he be?" answered Ehrenthal, ungraciously; "he was in a great taking, and I had good cause to be angry. I have buried my gold in his property, and I have as many cares about that property as I have hairs on my head—all because I followed your advice."

"If you think that the ancestral inheritance of the baron is to come swimming toward you like a fish with the stream, and that you have only to reach out your hand and take it, I am sorry for you," replied Itzig, spitefully.

"What am I doing with the factory?" cried Ehrenthal. "The land would have been worth twice as much to me without the chimney."

"When once you have got the chimney you can sell the bricks," was Itzig's ironical rejoinder. "I wanted to tell you that I expect a visit to-morrow from an acquaintance out of my own district; I can not, therefore, come to the office."

"You have this last year gone after your own affairs so often," rudely replied Ehrenthal, "that I don't care how long you remain away."

"Do you know what you have just said?" Veitel broke out. "You have said, 'Itzig, I need you no longer; you may go;' but I shall go when it suits me, not when it suits you."

"You are a bold man," cried Ehrenthal. "I forbid you to speak thus to me. Who are you, young Itzig?"

"I am one who knows your whole business, who can ruin you if he will, and one who means kindly toward you, better than you do toward yourself; and, therefore, when I come to the office the day after to-morrow, you will say, 'Good morning, Itzig.' Do you understand me now, Mr. Ehrenthal?" and, seizing his cap, he hurried into the street, where his suppressed wrath broke out into a flame, and, gesticulating wildly, he muttered threatening words. And so did Ehrenthal alone in the office.

The baron returned to his daughter, threw himself heavily down on the sofa, and scarcely heard her loving words. There was nothing to detain him in town but the dread of communicating this intelligence to his wife. He alternately brooded over plans for getting over the possible loss, and painted its consequences in the blackest colors.

Meanwhile Lenore sat silent at the window, looking down upon the noisy streets, with their rolling carriages and the stream of passers-by; and while she wondered if any of these had ever felt the secret anxiety, fear, and dejection which the last few years had brought her young heart, one of the throng would now and then look up to the plate-glass windows of the stately dwelling, and, his eye resting admiringly on the beautiful girl, he perhaps envied the happy destiny of the nobly born, who could thus look calmly down on those whose lot it was to toil for daily bread.

The streets grew dim, the lamps threw their dull rays into the room, Lenore watched the play of light and shade on the wall, and her sadness increased as the darkness deepened. Meanwhile two men were standing in eager conversation at the house door; the bell sounded, a heavy step was heard in the ante-room, and the servants announced Mr. Pinkus. At that name the baron rose, called for candles, and went to the next room.

The innkeeper entered, bobbing his great head, but seemed in no hurry to speak.

"What brings you here so late?" asked the baron, leaning on the table like one prepared for every thing.

"Your honor knows that the bill of exchange for the ten thousand dollars falls due to me to-morrow."

"Could you not wait till I paid you your full ten per cent. for an extension of the loan?" asked the baron, contemptuously.

"I am come," said Pinkus, "to explain that I am suddenly in want of money, and must request you to let me have the principal."

The baron retreated a step. This was the second blow, and it was mortal. His face turned pale yellow, but he began with a hoarse voice to say, "How can you make such a demand, after all that has passed between us? how often have you assured me that this bill of exchange was a mere form!"

"It has been so hitherto," said Pinkus; "now it comes into force. I have ten thousand dollars to pay to-morrow to a creditor of mine."

"Make arrangements with him, then," returned the baron; "I am prepared for a higher rate of interest, but not to pay off the principal."

"Then, baron, I am sorry to tell you that you will be proceeded against."

The baron silently turned away.

"At what hour may I return to-morrow for my money?" inquired Pinkus.

"At about this hour," replied a voice, weak and hollow as that of an old man. Pinkus bobbed again and went away.

The baron tottered back to his sitting-room, where he sank down on the sofa as if paralyzed. Lenore knelt by him, calling him by every tender name, and imploring him to speak. But he neither saw nor heard, and his heart and head beat violently. The fair, many-colored bubble that he had blown had burst now; he knew the fearful truth—he was a ruined man.

They sat till late in the evening, when his daughter persuaded him to take a glass of wine and to return home. They drove away rapidly. As the trees along the road-side flew past him, and the fresh air blew in his face, the baron's spirit revived.

A night and day were still his, and during their course he must needs find help. This was not his first difficulty, and he hoped it would not be his last. He had incurred this debt of, originally, seven thousand dollars odd, because the fellow who now dunned him had brought him the money some years ago, and entreated, almost forced him to take it at first at a very low rate of interest. For a few weeks he had let it lie idle; then he had appropriated it, and step by step his creditor

had increased his demands up to a bill of exchange and a usurious rate of interest. And now the vagabond grew insolent. Was he like the rat who foresees the sinking of the ship, and tries to escape from it? The baron laughed so as to make Lenore shudder; why, he was not the man to fall resistless into the hands of his adversary; the next day would bring help. Ehrenthal could never leave him in the lurch.

It was night when they reached home, and the baron hurried to his own room and went to bed, knowing well, however, that sleep would not visit him that night. He heard every hour strike, and every hour his pulse beat more stormily and his anguish increased. He saw no hope of deliverance but in Ehrenthal; yet his horror of appearing before that man as a suppliant forced drops of sweat from his brow. It was morning before he lost the consciousness of his misery.

Shrill sounds awoke him. The factory laborers, with the village band, had prepared him a serenade.

At another time he would have been pleased with this mark of good feeling; now, he only heard the discord it produced, and it annoyed him.

He hastily dressed himself and hurried into the court. The house was hung with garlands, the laborers were all ranged in order before the door, and received him with loud acclamations. He had to tell them in return how much he rejoiced to see this day, and that he expected great results, and while he spoke he felt his words a lie, and his spirit broken. He drove off without seeing his wife or daughter, and knocked at the door of Ehrenthal's office before it was open. The usurer was summoned down from his breakfast.

Anxious to know the reason of so unusual an occurrence as this early visit, Ehrenthal did not give himself time to change his dressing-gown. The baron stated the case as coolly as he could.

Ehrenthal fell into the greatest passion. "This Pinkus," he went on repeating, "he has presumed to lend you money on a bill of exchange. How could he have so large a sum? The man has not got ten thousand dollars; he is an insignificant man, without capital."

The baron confessed that the sum was not so large originally, but this only increased Ehrenthal's excitement.

"From seven to ten," he cried, running wildly up and down till his dressing-gown flapped round him like the wings of an owl. "So he has made nearly three thousand dollars! I have always had a bad opinion of that man; now I know what he is. He is a rascal—a double dealer. He never advanced the seven thousand either; his whole shop is not worth so much."

This strong moral indignation on the part of Ehrenthal threw a ray of joy into the baron's soul. "I, too, have reason to consider Pinkus a dangerous man," said he.

But this agreement in opinion proved unlucky, diverting, as it did, Ehrenthal's anger against the baron instead. "Why do I speak of Pinkus?" he screamed; "he has acted as a man of his stamp will act. But you—you, who are a nobleman, how could you deal so with me? You have carried on money transactions with another man behind my back, and you have, in a short time, let him win three thousand dollars on a bill of exchange—a bill of exchange," continued he; "do you know what that means?"

"I wish that the debt had not been necessary," said the baron; "but as it falls due to-day, and the man will not wait, the question is how we are to pay him."

"What do you mean by *we*?" cried Ehrenthal, hastily. "You must contrive to pay; you must see where you can get money for the man you have helped to pocket three thousand dollars; you did not consult me when you gave the bill; you need not consult me as to how you are to pay it."

In the baron's soul a contest between wrath and wretchedness was going on. "Moderate your language, Mr. Ehrenthal," cried he.

"Why should I be moderate?" screamed he. "You have not been moderate, nor Pinkus either, and neither will I."

"I will call again," said the baron, "when you have regained that degree of decorum which, under all circumstances, I must beg you to observe toward me."

"If you want money from me, don't call again, baron," cried Ehrenthal. "I have no money for you; I would rather throw my dollars in the street than pay you one other."

The baron silently retired. His wretchedness was great; he had to bear the insults of the plebeian. Next, he went round to all his acquaintances, and endured the torment of asking on all sides for money, and on all sides having it refused. He returned to his lodgings, and was considering whether it were best to try Ehrenthal again, or to attempt to postpone the payment of the bill by offering usurious interest, when, to his surprise, a strange figure, that he had only seen once or twice before, entered his apartments, with a haggard face, surrounded by red hair, two sly eyes, and a grotesque expression about the mouth, such as one sees on laughing-masks at Carnival time.

Veitel bowed low, and began: "Most gracious baron, have the condescension to forgive my coming to you on matters of business. I have a commission from Mr. Pinkus, empowering me to receive the money for the bill of exchange. I would most humbly inquire whether you will be so

gracious as to pay it me?"

The sad seriousness of the hour was for a moment lost upon the baron when he saw the lank figure twisting and turning before him, making faces and attempting to be polite. "Who are you?" inquired he, with all the dignity of his race.

"Veitel Itzig is my name, gracious sir, if you will permit me to announce it to you."

The baron started on hearing the name of Itzig. That was the man of whom he had been warned—the invisible, the merciless.

"I was till now book-keeper at Ehrenthal's," modestly continued Itzig; "but Ehrenthal was too haughty for me. I have come into a small sum of money, and I have invested it in Mr. Pinkus's business. I am on the point of establishing myself."

"You can not have the money at present," said the baron, more composedly. This helpless creature could hardly be a dangerous enemy.

"It is an honor to me," said Veitel, "to be told by the gracious baron that he will pay me later in the afternoon; I have plenty of time." He drew out a silver watch. "I can wait till evening; and that I may not inconvenience the baron by coming at an hour that might not suit him, or when he chanced to be out, I will take the liberty to place myself on his steps. I will stand there," said he, as if deprecating the baron's refusal to let him sit. "I will wait till five o'clock. The baron need not inconvenience himself on my account." And Veitel bowed himself out, and retired from the room backward like a crab. The baron recalled him, and he stood still in that bent and ridiculous attitude. At that moment he looked the weakest and oddest of men. The warning letter must have confounded the poor book-keeper with his master. At all events, it was easier to deal with this man than with any other.

"Can you tell me of any way in which I may satisfy your claim without paying down the sum this day?"

Veitel's eyes flashed like those of a bird of prey, but he shook his head and shrugged his shoulders long in pretended reflection. "Gracious baron," said he, at length, "there is one way—only one way. You have a mortgage of twenty thousand on your property, which mortgage belongs to yourself, and is kept in Ehrenthal's office. I will persuade Pinkus to leave you the ten thousand, and will add another ten if you make over that mortgage to my friend."

The baron listened. "Perhaps you do not know," rejoined he, with much severity, "that I have already made over that deed of mortgage to Ehrenthal."

"Forgive me, gracious sir, you have not; there has been no legal surrender of it made."

"But my written promise has been given," said the baron.

Veitel shrugged again. "If you promised Ehrenthal a mortgage, why should it be this very one of all others? But what need of a mortgage to Ehrenthal at all? This year you will receive your capital from the Polish estate, and then you can pay him off in hard cash. Till then, just leave the mortgage quietly in his hands; no one need know that you have surrendered it to us. If you will have the kindness to come with me to a lawyer, and assign the deed to my friend, I will give you two thousand dollars for it at once, and on the day that you place the deed in our hands I will pay down the rest of the money."

The baron had forced himself to listen to this proposal with a smile. At last he replied briefly, "Devise some other plan; I can not consent to this."

"There is no other," said Itzig; "but it is only midday, and I can wait till five."

He again began a series of low bows, and moved to the door.

"Reflect, gracious sir," said he, earnestly, "that you do not merely want the ten thousand dollars. You will, in the course of the next few months, require as much more for your factory and the getting your money out of the Polish investment. If you surrender the mortgage to us, you will have the whole sum you need; but pray do not mention the matter to Ehrenthal: he is a hard man, and would injure me throughout life."

"Have no fear," said the baron, with a gesture of dismissal.

Veitel withdrew.

The baron paced up and down. The proposal just made revolted him. True, it would rescue him from this and other impending difficulties, but, of course, it was out of the question. The man who proposed it was so absurd a being, that it was of no use even to be angry with him. But the baron's word was pledged, and the matter could not be thought of further.

And yet how trifling the risk! The documents would remain at Ehrenthal's till the Polish count had paid him, then he would clear his own debts to Ehrenthal, and release his documents. No one need ever know of it; and if the worst should befall, he had but to give Ehrenthal another mortgage on his property, and the money-broker would be equally satisfied. The baron kept banishing the thought, and yet it ceaselessly returned. It struck one, it struck two: he rang for his servant, and ordered the carriage round, carelessly asking if the stranger were still there. The coachman drove up; the stranger was on the steps; the baron went down without looking at him,

got into the carriage, and when he was asked by the footman, hat off, whither the coachman was to drive, it first occurred to him that he did not know. At length he said, "To Ehrenthal's."

Meanwhile Ehrenthal had been spending a troubled morning. He began to suspect that some other, too, was speculating against the baron. He sent for Pinkus, overwhelmed him with reproaches, and tried in every sort of way to discover whence he had got his capital; but Pinkus had been well schooled: he was bold, rude, and silent. Then Ehrenthal sent for Itzig. Itzig was nowhere to be found.

Consequently, Ehrenthal was in a very bad temper when the baron returned, and he told him dryly that the day had come when his payments must cease. A painful scene ensued; the baron left the office in bitter mood, and determined to pay a last visit to an early comrade, who was known to be a rich man.

It was past four when he returned hopeless to his lodgings. A thin figure was leaning against the steps, and bowed low to the baron as he hurried past. His strength was exhausted; he sat on the sofa as he had done the day before, and blindly stared before him. He knew there was no rescue but that which waited on the steps below. Prostrate, powerless, he heard the clock strike the quarter to five; his pulses beat like hammers, and each throb brought the moment nearer that was to decide his fate. The last stroke of the hour was over. The ante-room bell rang; the baron rose. Itzig opened the door, holding the two papers in his hand.

"I can not pay," the baron cried, in a hoarse voice.

Itzig bowed again and offered him the other paper: "Here is the sketch of a contract."

The baron took up his hat, and said, without looking at him, "Come to an attorney."

It was evening when the baron returned to the castle of his forefathers. The pale moonlight shone on the turrets, the lake was black as ink, and colorless as they was the face of the man who leaned back in the carriage, with close compressed lips, like one who, after a long struggle, had come to an irrevocable decision. He looked apathetically on the water and on the cool moonshine on the roof, and yet he was glad that the sun did not shine, and that he did not see his father's house in its golden light. He tried to think of the future he had insured; he pondered over all the advantages to accrue from his factory; he looked forward to the time when his son would dwell here, rich, secure, free from the cares that had involved his father with vulgar traders, and prematurely blanched his hair. He thought of all this, but his favorite thoughts had become indifferent to him. He entered the house, felt for his full pocket-book before he gave his hand to his wife, and nodded significantly to Lenore. He spoke cheerfully to the ladies, and even contrived to joke about his busy day; but he felt that something had come between him and his dearest ones—even they seemed estranged. If they leaned over him or took his hand, his impulse was to withdraw from the caress. And when his wife looked lovingly at him, there was a something in her eyes, where once he was wont to turn for comfort in every extremity, that he could no longer bear to meet.

He went to his factory, where he was again received with huzza after huzza by the workmen, and with merry tunes by the village band. They played the very air to which he had often marched with his regiment by the side of his old general, whom he loved as a father. He thought of the scarred face of the old warrior, and thought too of a court of honor that he and his brother officers had once held upon an unhappy youth who had lightly given and broken his word of honor. He went into his bed-room, and rejoiced that it had become dark, and that he could no longer see his castle, his factory, or his wife's searching glance. And again he heard hour after hour strike, and at the stroke of each the thought was forced in upon him, "There is now another of that regiment who has, when gray-haired, done the very deed that led a youth to blow out his brains: here lies the man, and can not sleep because he has broken his word of honor."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The spring storms were sweeping over the plains when Anton was recalled. The winter had been a laborious and anxious season. He had often traveled in frost and snow through devastated districts far into the east and south. Every where he had seen mournful sights, burnt castles, disturbed trade, insecurity, famine, brutality, and burning party hate.

"When will he come?" asked Sabine.

"In a few hours, by the next train," replied her brother.

Sabine sprang up and seized her bunch of keys. "And the maids are not yet ready; I must look after things myself. Let him spend the evening with us, Traugott; we women must see something of him."

Her brother laughed. "Take care that you do not spoil him."

"No fear of that," said the cousin; "when he once gets back into the office, there he will remain, and we shall never see him except at dinner."

Meanwhile Sabine was searching among the treasures, loading the servants with packets of

every kind, and impatiently watching till the clerks left their apartments for the counting-house. At last she herself crept into Anton's room. She gave one more searching glance at the sofa-cushion she had worked, and arranged in an alabaster vase all the flowers that the gardener had succeeded in forcing. While so engaged, her eye fell upon the drawing that Anton had done on his first arrival, and on the rich carpet which Fink had had laid down. Where was Fink now? She felt on this day as if she had been parted from him many, many years, and the recollection of him resembled the sad, perplexed feeling that succeeds an unhappy dream. But she could openly tell the noble-hearted man to whom this room now belonged how much she had learned to value him, and she rejoiced that the hour was at hand when she could thank him for all that he had done for her brother.

"But Sabine!" cried the cousin, in amazement, for she too had found her way into the room.

"What is the matter?" said Sabine, looking up.

"Why, these are the embroidered curtains which you have had put up. They do not belong to this part of the house."

"Let them be," returned Sabine, with a smile.

"And the coverlet, and these towels—why, they are your best set. Good heavens! The coverlet with lace, and the rose-colored lining!"

"Never mind, cousin," said Sabine, blushing. "He whom we expect deserves the best that our old chests contain."

But the cousin went on shaking her head. "If I had not seen this, I should never have believed it. To give these for daily use! I can not make you out, Sabine. My only comfort is that he will never remark it. That I should live to see this day!" And, clasping her hands, she left the room in much excitement.

Sabine hurried after her. "She will go and tease Traugott about it," said she; "I must persuade her that things could not have been otherwise arranged."

Meanwhile the traveler felt like a son returning to his home after a long absence. At the nearest station to the capital his heart began to beat with delight; the old house, his colleagues, the business, his desk, his principal, and Sabine, all floated pleasantly before his mind's eye. At last the drosky stopped before the open door, and Father Sturm, calling out his name with a voice that sounded all over the street, ran and lifted him out of the carriage like a child. Then up came Mr. Pix, and shook his hand long, not remarking that his black brush, during the up-and-down movement, was making all sorts of hieroglyphics on his young friend's coat. Next Anton went into the counting-house, where the lights were already burning, and heartily cried out "Good-evening." His colleagues rose like one man, and with loud expressions of pleasure crowded about him. Mr. Schröter hurried out of his own room, and his grave face beamed with satisfaction. These were happy moments, indeed, and Anton was more moved than became such a traveled man. And on his way from the counting-house to his room, old Pluto sprang out impetuously, immoderately wagging his matted tail, so that Anton could hardly escape from his caresses. Arrived at his own door, a servant met him with a smile, and respectfully opened it. Anton gazed in wonder at the way in which it was decorated.

"Our young lady herself arranged it as you see," imparted the servant. Anton bent over the alabaster vase, and closely examined every flower as though he had never seen such before. Then he took up the cushion, felt it, stroked it, and, full of admiration, put it back in its place. He now returned to the office, to give Mr. Schröter the latest intelligence as to his proceedings. The merchant took him into his own little room, and they talked long and confidentially.

It was a serious conversation. Much was lost, much still endangered, and it would require years of industry to make good what was forfeited, and replace old connections by new. "To your judgment and energy," said Mr. Schröter, "I already owe much. I hope you will continue to assist me in regaining lost ground. And now there is still some one else who wants to thank you. I hope you will be my guest this evening."

Anton next went to his long-closed desk, and took out pens and paper. But much could not be made of writing to-day. One of his colleagues after the other left his own place and came to Anton's stool. Mr. Baumann often walked across, just to clap him on the back, and then cheerfully returned to his own corner; Mr. Specht kept knocking away at the railings which divided him from Anton, and showered down questions upon him. Mr. Liebold left the blotting-paper several moments on the last page of the great ledger, and came over for a chat. Even Mr. Purzel moved, with the sacred chalk in his hand, out of his partition; and, finally, Mr. Pix came into the room to confide to Anton that, for some months back, he had played no *solo partie*, and that Specht, meanwhile, had fallen into a state closely resembling insanity.

Later in the evening Anton entered the principal's apartments. Sabine stood before him. Her mouth smiled, but her eyes were moist as she bent down over the hand that had saved her brother's life.

"Lady!" cried Anton, shocked, and drew his hand away.

"I thank you, oh! I thank you, Wohlfart," cried Sabine, holding his hands in both hers. And so she stood silent, transfigured by an emotion she knew not how to repress. While Anton contemplated

the fair girl, who, with blushing cheeks, looked so gratefully at him, he realized the change that Polish sword-cut had made in his position. The partition wall had fallen which, till now, had divided the clerk from the principal's family. And he also felt his heart swelling with honest pride the while, that he was not all unworthy of a woman's trust.

He now told her, in reply to her questions, the particulars of their struggle for the wagons, and the other incidents of that adventurous time. Sabine hung upon his words; and when her eyes met the full, clear light of his, they involuntarily drooped beneath it. She had never before remarked how singularly handsome he was. Now it burst upon her. A manly, open face, curling chestnut hair, beautiful dark blue eyes, a mouth that told of energy and decision, and a color that went and came with every change of feeling. He seemed to be, at the same time, a stranger, and yet a dear and trusted friend.

The cousin entered next, the embroidered curtains having caused an excitement in her mind, which now displayed itself in a silk gown and new cap. Her greetings were loud and fluent; and when she remarked that Mr. Wohlfart's whiskers were very becoming to him, Sabine looked assent.

"There you have the hero of the counting-house," cried the merchant, joining them. "Now show that you know how to reward knightly valor better than with fair words. Let him have the best that cellar and kitchen afford. Come along, my faithful fellow-traveler. The Rhine wine expects that, after all your heavy Polish potations, you will do it honor."

The lamp-lighted room looked the picture of comfort as the four sat down to dinner. The merchant raised his glass. "Welcome to your country! Welcome home!" cried Sabine. Anton replied, in a low tone, "I have a country, I have a home in which I am happy; I owe both to your kindness. Many an evening, when sitting in some wretched inn, far away among savage strangers, whose language I imperfectly understood, I have thought of this table, and of the delight it would be to me to see this room and your face once more; for it is the bitterest thing on earth to be alone in hours of relaxation and repose without a friend, without any thing that one loves."

As he bade them good-night, the principal said, "Wohlfart, I wish to bind you still more closely to this firm. Jordan is leaving us next quarter to become a partner in his uncle's business; I can not appoint a better man than you to fill his place."

When Anton returned to his room, he felt what mortal man is seldom allowed to feel here below, unpunished by a reverse—that he was perfectly happy, without a regret and without a wish. He sat on the sofa, looked at the flowers and at the cushion, and again saw in fancy Sabine bending over his hand. He had sat there long enjoying this vision, when his eye fell upon a letter on the table, the postmark "New York," the direction in Fink's hand.

Fink, when he first left, had written more than once to Anton, but only a few lines at a time, telling nothing of his occupation, nor his plans for the future. Then a long interval passed away, during which Anton had had no tidings from his friend, and only knew that he spent a good deal of his time in traveling in the Western States of the Union as manager of the business of which his uncle had been the head, and in the interest of several other companies in which the deceased had had shares. But it was with horror that he now read the following letter:

"It must out at last, though I would gladly have kept it from you, poor boy! I have joined thieves and murderers. If you want any thing of the kind done, apply to me. I envy a fellow who becomes a villain by choice; he has at least the pleasure of driving a good bargain with Satan, and can select the particular sort of good-for-nothingness which suits his tastes; but my lot is less satisfactory. I have been, through the pressure of rascalities invented by others, driven into a way of life which is as much like highway robbery as one hair is to another.

"Like a rock in an avalanche, I, pressed on all sides, have got frozen into the midst of the most frightful speculations ever devised by a usurer's brain. My departed uncle was good enough to make me heir to his favorite branch of business—land speculations.

"I put off involving myself with its details as long as I could, and left the charge of that part of my inheritance to Westlock. As this was cowardly, I found an excuse for it in the quantity of work the money-matters of the deceased afforded me. At last there was no help for it; I had to undertake the responsibility. And if before I had had a pretty good guess at the elasticity of whatever it was that served my uncle instead of a conscience, it now became beyond a doubt that the purpose of his will and testament was to punish my juvenile offenses against him by making me a companion of old weather-beaten villains, whose cunning was such that Satan himself would have had to put his tail into his pocket, and become chimney-sweep in order to escape them.

"This letter is written from a new town in Tennessee, a cheerful place—no better, though, for being built on speculation with my money: a few wooden cottages, half of them taverns, filled to the roof with a dirty and outcast emigrant rabble, half of whom are lying ill with putrid fever.

"Those who are still moving about are a hollow-eyed, anxious-looking set, all candidates for death. Daily, when the poor wretches look at the rising sun, or are unreasonable enough to feel a want of something to eat and drink—daily, from morn to eve, their favorite occupation is to curse the land-shark who took their money from them for transport, land, and improvements, and brought them into this district, which is under water two months in the year, and for the ten others more like a tough kind of pap than any thing else. Now the men who have pointed out to

them this dirty way into heaven are no other than my agents and colleagues, so that I, Fritz Fink, am the lucky man upon whom every imprecation there is in German and Irish falls all the day long. I send off all who are able to walk about, and have to feed the inhabitants of my hospital with Indian corn and Peruvian bark. As I write this, three naked little Paddies are creeping about my floor, their mother having so far forgotten her duty as to leave them behind her, and I enjoy the privilege of washing and combing the frog-like little abominations. A pleasant occupation for my father's son! I don't know how long I shall have to stick here; probably till the very last of the set is dead.

"Meanwhile I have fallen out with my partners in New York. I have had the privilege of rousing universal dissatisfaction; the shareholders of the Great Western Landed Company Association have met, made speeches, and passed resolutions against me. I should not much care for that if I saw a way of getting clear of the whole affair. But the deceased has managed so cleverly that I am tied down like a nigger in a slave-ship. Immense sums have been embarked in this atrocious speculation. If I make known its nature, I am sure that they will find a way of making me pay the whole sum at which my late uncle put down his name; and how to do that without ruining not myself alone, but probably also the firm of Fink and Becker, I can't yet see.

"Meantime I don't want to hear your opinion as to what I ought to do. It can be of no use to me, for I know it already. Indeed, I wish for no letter at all from you, you simple old-fashioned Tony, who believe that to act uprightly is as easy a thing as to eat a slice of bread and butter; for, as soon as I have done all I can, buried some, fed others, and offended my colleagues as much as possible, I shall go for a few months to the far southwest, to some noble prairie, where one may find alligators, and horned owls, and something more aristocratic than there is here. If the prairie afford pen and ink, I shall write to you again. If this letter be the last you ever get from me, devote a tear to my memory, and say, in your benevolent way, 'I am sorry for him: he was not without his good points.'"

Then came a precise description of Fink's affairs, and of the statutes of the association.

Having read this unsatisfactory letter, Anton sat down at once and spent the night in writing to his friend.

Even in the common light of the next day our hero retained his feelings of the night before. Whether he worked at his desk or jested with his friends, he felt conscious how deeply his life was footed in the walls of the old house. The rest saw it too. Besides other marks of favor, Anton often spent the evenings with the principal and the ladies. These were happy hours to Sabine. She rejoiced to find, as they discussed the events of the day, a book read, or some matter of feeling and experience, how much agreement there was between her views and Anton's. His culture, his judgment surprised her; she suddenly saw him invested with glowing colors, just as the traveler gazes in amazement at some fair landscape, which heavy clouds have long hidden from his view.

His colleagues, too, took his peculiar position very pleasantly. They had heard from the principal's own lips that Anton had saved his life, and that enabled even Mr. Pix to look upon the frequent invitations he received without note or comment. Anton, too, did his part toward keeping up the good feeling of the counting-house. He often asked them all to his room, and Jordan complained, with a smile, that his parties were now quite forgotten. His favorite companion was Baumann, who had had an increase of missionary zeal during the last half year, and only been kept back by finding that an experienced calculator could ill be spared at the present crisis. Specht, too, was a special candidate for his favor, Anton's travels and adventures having invested him with a romantic halo in the former's fantastic mind.

Unfortunately, Specht's own position in the good-will of his colleagues had been materially shaken during Anton's absence. He had long been the butt of all their witticisms, but now Anton was very sorry to see that he was universally disliked. Even the quartette had given him up—at least there was decided enmity between him and both basses. Whenever Specht ventured upon an assertion that was not quite incontrovertible, Pix would shrug his shoulders and ejaculate "Pumpkins." Indeed, almost all that Specht said was met by a whisper of "pumpkins" from one or other; and whenever he caught the word, he fell into a towering passion, broke off the discourse, and withdrew.

One evening Anton visited the tabooed clerk in his own room. Before he reached the door, he heard Specht's shrill voice singing the celebrated song, "Here I sit on the green grass, with violets around;" and looking in, he saw the minstrel, in poetical attitude, so enjoying his own melody, that he stood without for a few moments, not to disturb the inspiration. Specht's room was by no means large, and his invention had been exercised for years in giving it a special and distinguished character. Indeed, he had succeeded by means of pictures, plaster of Paris casts, small ornaments of different kinds, useless pieces of furniture, and a great coat of arms over the bed, in making it unlike any other apartment ever seen. But the most remarkable thing about it was in the very centre of the room. There hung an immense ring suspended to a beam in the ceiling. On each side were large flower-pots filled with earth, and from these countless threads were fastened to the ring. Under the ring was a garden-table made of twisted boughs, and a few chairs of the same nature.

Anton stood still in amazement, and at last called out, "What the deuce have you such a network as this in your room for?"

Specht sprang up and said, "It is an arbor."

"An arbor! I see nothing green about it."

"That will come," said Specht, pointing out his great flower-pots.

On a closer inspection, Anton detected a few weak shoots of ivy, which looked dusty and faded, like the twilighted dream-visions which the waking man allows to cling round his spirit for a few moments before he sweeps them away forever.

"But, Specht, this ivy will never grow," said Anton.

"There are other things," importantly announced Specht, showing Anton a few wan-looking growths that just peered above the top of the pots, and resembled nothing so much as the unfortunate attempts to germinate which the potato will make in a cellar when spring-time comes.

"And what are these shoots?"

"Kidney-beans and pumpkins. The whole will form an arbor. In a few weeks the tendrils will run up the threads. Only think, Wohlfart, how well it will look—the green tendrils, the flowers, and the great leaves! I shall cut off most of the pumpkins, but a few of them shall remain. Just picture to yourself the fresh green and the yellow blossoms! What a place it will be to sit with friends over a glass of wine or to sing a quartette in!"

"But, Specht," inquired Anton, laughing, "can you really suppose that the plants will grow in your attic?"

"Why not?" cried Specht, much offended. "They will do as well here as elsewhere. They have sun; I take care that they have air too, and I water them with bullock's blood. They have all they want."

"But they look desperately sick."

"Just as at first they will, of course; the air is still cold, and we have had little sun as yet. They will soon shoot up. When we have no garden, we must do the best we can." He looked complacently around his room, "As to the decorations of a room, you see I can cope with any one—of course, in proportion to my means. However, I have spent a good deal upon it; and so, though not large, it is thoroughly comfortable."

"Yes," rejoined Anton, "except for a certain class of restless men who like freedom to move about. You can have no visitors here but those who are content to sit down the moment they enter."

"To sit quiet is one of the first rules of good society," rejoined Specht. "Unfortunately, men are often heartless and worthless. Do you not find, Wohlfart, that in our counting-house there are many very unfeeling?"

"Often a little blunt," replied Anton, "but kind-hearted at bottom."

"That is not my experience," sighed Specht. "I am now quite alone, and must seek my comfort out of doors. When I can, I go to the theatre, or to the circus, or to see a dwarf or a giant if they happen to come round, and of course I go to the concerts."

"But even there you are solitary."

"Yes; and then it is expensive, and I am not, as you know, very well off, nor shall I, I fear, ever be much better. I ought to have been rich," said he, importantly, "but a cousin and trustee of mine brought me to this, else I should have driven my carriage and four. I dare say I should not have been at all happier. If only Pix were not so rude! It is dreadful, Anton, to be daily liable to this. When you were away, I challenged him," said he, pointing to an old rapier on the wall; "but he behaved very ill. I told him I was sorry to be obliged to do it, and offered him a choice of arms and place. He rudely wrote back that he would fight on the ground floor where he was always stationed, and that as to arms I might use any I liked, but that his weapon would be his great brush, with which he was ready to sign his name on both my cheeks. You will allow that I could not consent to that." Anton allowed it.

"And now he sets all the others against me. My position is unbearable. I can not be with them without getting insulted. But I know how to revenge myself. When the pumpkins blow, I will invite all the rest and leave out Pix. I will serve him as he once did you, Wohlfart, and revenge the wrongs of each."

"Very good," said Anton. "But suppose that, as I owe some civility to our colleagues, we unite in giving a party in your room?"

"That is indeed kind of you, Wohlfart," cried Specht, joyously.

"And we will not wait till the pumpkins have grown up; we will bring in a little green in the mean while."

"Very good; fir-trees, perhaps."

"Leave it to me," continued Anton; "and, after all, we won't exclude Pix, but invite him with the rest. That is a much better revenge, and worthy of your good heart."

"You think so?" inquired Specht, doubtfully.

"I am sure of it. I propose next Sunday evening; and will send out the invitations in our joint names."

"In writing," cried Specht, in ecstasy, "on pink paper."

"The very thing."

The clerks were not a little amazed the following morning at receiving smart-looking notes, laid by Mr. Specht himself, early in the morning, upon the desk of each, inviting them to see the pumpkins flower in his apartment. However, as Anton's name was at the bottom of the page, there was nothing for it but to accept. Meanwhile Anton took Sabine into his confidence, and begged from her ivy and flowers. Specht himself worked hard the remainder of the week, and on the day of the festival, with the help of the servant, he contrived to entwine the threads with green leaves, to procure a number of colored lamps, and to intermix with the leaves some triangular inventions of yellow paper, which were marvelously like the flowers of the pumpkin.

Thus the room really did present the aspect Mr. Specht had long seen in his day-dreams. The colleagues were exceedingly amazed. Mr. Pix was the last to enter, and could not suppress an exclamation of surprise when he saw the unlucky arbor positively overgrown and covered with yellow flowers, shining in the colored lamp-light. The great flower-pots were filled with gay nosegays, a red lamp hung down from the centre, and on the rustic table was placed a large pumpkin. Anton would make the quartette sit in the arbor, and grouped the others around the room, the bed having been arranged with bolsters and cushions so as to look like a second sofa.

When they were all settled, Specht approached the great pumpkin, and solemnly exclaimed, "You have long plagued me about pumpkins; here is my revenge." He took hold of the short stalk, and lifted away the other half. It was hollow. A bowl of punch stood within. The clerks laughed, and cried "Bravo!" while Specht filled the glasses.

Nevertheless, at first, there was a certain degree of estrangement visible between the host and his guests. True, the obnoxious word was never mentioned, but his propositions seldom found favor. When Anton went round dispensing a bundle of Turkish pipes, which he had bought while abroad for his colleagues, Specht proposed that they should all sit cross-legged on the sofas and on the floors, in true Turkish fashion. This proposal fell through. Also, when he next asserted that, as our commerce with the East increased, the Circassian maidens sold by their parents to Turkish families would soon come over and play the part of waitresses in Bavarian beer-shops, he evidently failed to carry conviction to any of the party. But the gentle influences of the pumpkin-bowl gradually told upon the severe intellects of the counting-house.

First of all, the musical members of the firm were reconciled. Anton proposed the health of the quartette. The quartette returned thanks in some embarrassment, having been dissolved for about a month. It came out, however, from certain dark hints given by the first bass, that Specht had been unreasonable in his demands upon them. He had wished to make use of the quartette to serenade the charming Zillibi, the *prima donna* of the circus; and when the basses declined, Specht had flown into a violent passion, and sworn he would never sing with them till they consented.

"If he had been content to serenade her in the evening," said Balbus, "we might, perhaps, have given in for the sake of peace, but he maintained that it must be at four o'clock in the morning, as it was then that the riding-master rose to feed his horses. That was too much. Meanwhile the lady ran off with a Bajazzo."

"That is not true," cried Specht; "the Bajazzo carried her off by force."

"At all events, it has been a fortunate incident for us," said Anton, "as it releases these gentlemen from the observance of their vows. I see no reason, therefore, why they should any longer deprive us of the enjoyment their musical talents are so calculated to afford. From what I hear, my dear Specht, you were a little hasty; so make such an apology to these gentlemen as becomes a man of honor, and then I shall propose the instant re-establishment of the quartette."

Specht rose accordingly, and said, "Adopting the advice of my friend Wohlfart, I now beg to apologize to you all, and am, moreover, ready to give you satisfaction in any way that you prefer." Whereupon he tossed off his glass, and vehemently shook hands with the basses.

After that the music-books were brought out, and the four voices sounded remarkably well out of the arbor. A reconciliation with Pix still remained to be effected. Specht looked at him all evening mistrustfully, as he sat on the sofa-bed, stroking old Pluto, who had come with him to the party. Specht now poured out another glass for Pix, and laid it down beside him. Pix quaffed it in silence; Specht refilled it, and began in a free-and-easy tone—"Now, Pix, what do you think of the pumpkins?"

"It is a crazy idea," said Pix.

Specht turned away much hurt, but he soon returned to the charge. "You will grant, Pix, that men may hold different opinions on many subjects, and yet need not be enemies."

"I grant that."

"Why, then, are you my enemy? Why do you think meanly of me? It is hard to live on bad terms

with one's colleagues. I will not conceal that I esteem you, and that your conduct pains me. You have refused me satisfaction, and yet you are angry with me."

"Don't heat yourself," said Pix; "I have refused you no satisfaction, and I am not angry with you."

"Will you prove this to these gentlemen?" cried Specht, much pleased; "will you hob-nob with me?"

"Come, now," said Pix, good-humoredly, "I have no wish to quarrel; I only say this pumpkin notion was a crazy one."

"But it is my notion still," cried Specht, withdrawing his glass; "I water them with bullock's blood, and in a few weeks they will be green."

"No," said Pix; "that is over forever, as you will see yourself to-morrow morning. And now come here and hob-nob with me, and pumpkins shall never be spoken of between us any more."

Specht hob-nobbed with all his heart, and became exceedingly cheerful. The weight that had long oppressed him had fallen off. He sang, he shook all his colleagues by the hand, and dealt more largely than ever in bold assertions.

As Anton went down stairs with the others, he remarked that Pluto was carrying something yellow in his mouth, and gnawing it eagerly.

"It is Specht's pumpkin," said Pix; "the dog has taken it for a piece of beef, and bitten it to pieces."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Anton stood by the sick-bed of his friend Bernhard, and looked with sincere sympathy at his wasted form. The young student's face was more furrowed than ever, his complexion was transparent as wax, his long hair hung in disorder around his damp brow, and his eyes shone with feverish excitement.

"All the time you have been away," said he, sadly, "I have been longing for you; now that you are returned, I shall be better."

"I will often come if our conversation does not excite you too much," replied Anton.

"No," said Bernhard, "I will merely listen, and you shall tell me about your travels."

Anton began his recital: "I have seen of late what we have both of us often wished to see—foreign scenes and a life of adventures. I have found pleasant companionship in other countries, but the result of my experience is that there is no greater happiness than that of living quietly among one's own people. I have met with much that would have delighted you, because it was poetical and soul-stirring, but disappointment was largely mingled with it all."

"It is the same all over the earth," said Bernhard. "When a mighty feeling shakes the heart, and seeks to impel onward, the world stains and tarnishes it, and fair things die, and lofty aims become ridiculous. So it is no better with others than with us."

"That is our old bone of contention," said Anton, cheerily; "are you not converted, you skeptic?"

Bernhard looked down embarrassed. "Perhaps I am, Wohlfart."

"Oh ho!" cried Anton; "and what has brought this change about? Was it some experience of your own? It must have been, I am sure."

"Whatever it was," said Bernhard, with a smile that irradiated his face, "I believe that with us, too, beauty and loveliness are to be found; that with us, too, life can give birth to great passions, holy joys, and bitter griefs; and I believe," continued he, mournfully, "that even with us many sink under the burden of a terrible destiny."

Anton listened anxiously to these words, and remarked that the large eyes of the invalid shone with a sudden inspiration.

"No doubt," said he, "it is as you say, but the fairest and most ennobling thing this life can boast is the triumph of the mind over all external influences. I honor the man who lets neither his passions nor his destiny overpower him, but who, even if he have erred, can tear himself away and regain his liberty."

"But how if it be too late, and if the force of circumstances be stronger than he?"

"I am not willing to believe in such force of circumstances," replied Anton. "I imagine that, however sore pressed a man may be, if he sets himself to work in earnest, he may hew his way out. True, he will bear the scars of such an encounter, but, like a soldier's, there will be honor in them. Or, even if he does not overcome, he can at least fight valiantly, and if conquered at last, he deserves the sympathy of all; but he who yields himself up without resistance, the wind blows such away from the face of the earth."

"No spell will change down into stone, sings the poet," said Bernhard, taking a feather from his pillow and brushing it away. "I have a question to ask you, Wohlfart," said he, after a pause. "Fancy that I am a Christian, and that you are my father-confessor, from whom no secrets must be kept back." Then looking anxiously at the door of the next room, he whispered, "What do you think of my father's business?"

Anton started in amazement, while Bernhard watched him in painful suspense. "I understand little about these matters," continued he; "alas! too little, perhaps. I do not want to know whether he passes for poor or rich; but I ask you, as my friend, what do strangers think of the way in which he makes his money? It is dreadful, and perhaps sinful, that I, his son, should put such a question as this, but an irresistible impulse urges me on. Be honest with me, Wohlfart." He rose in his bed, and, putting his arm round Anton's neck, said in his ear, "Does my father rank with men of your class as an upright man?"

Anton was silent. He could not say what he really thought, and he could not tell a lie. Meanwhile the invalid sank back upon his pillows, and a low groan quivered through the room.

"My dear Bernhard," replied Anton, at length, "before I answer to a son such a question as this, I must know his motive for asking it."

"I ask," said Bernhard, solemnly, "because I am exceedingly uneasy about the good of others, and your answers may spare much misery to many."

"Then," said Anton, "I will answer you. I know of no particular dealing of your father's which is dishonorable in the mercantile sense of the word. I only know that he is numbered among that large class of business men who are not particular in inquiring whether their own profit is purchased at the price of another's loss. Mr. Ehrenthal passes for a clear, keen-sighted man, to whom the good opinion of solid merchants is more indifferent than to a hundred others. He would probably do much that men of higher principle would avoid, but I do not doubt that he would also shrink from what certain other speculators around venture upon."

Again there came a trembling sigh from the invalid, and a painful silence ensued. At last he lifted himself up again, and, placing his lips so near Anton's ear that his burning breath played upon his friend's cheek, he said, "I know that you are acquainted with the Baron Rothsattel. The young lady herself told me so."

"It is as she has said," replied Anton, with difficulty concealing his excitement.

"Do you know any thing of the connection between my father and the baron?"

"But little; only what you have yourself occasionally told me, that your father had money on the baron's estate. But when I was abroad, I heard that a great danger threatened the baron, and I was even authorized to warn him against an intriguer." Bernhard watched Anton's lips in agony. Anton shook his head. "And yet," said he, "it was one who is no stranger in your house. It was your book-keeper Itzig."

"He is a villain," cried Bernhard, eagerly, clenching his thin hand. "He is a man of low nature. From the first day that he entered our house, I felt a loathing of him as of an unclean beast."

"It appears to me," continued Anton, "that Itzig, of whom I knew something in earlier years, is plotting against the baron behind your father's back. The warning I received was so obscure, I hardly knew what to make of it; however, I could but inform the baron of what had been told me."

"That Itzig rules my father," whispered Bernhard. "He is a demon in our family. If my father acts selfishly toward the baron, that man is answerable for it."

Anton soothingly assented. "I must know how matters stand between the baron and my father," continued the invalid. "I must know what is to be done to help that family out of their difficulties. I can help," he went on to say, and again a ray of joy lit up his pale face. "My father loves me. He loves me much. In my present weak state, I have found out how his heart clings to me—when he comes in the evening to my bed, and strokes my forehead; when he sits where you do, Wohlfart, and mournfully looks at me for hours together! Wohlfart, after all, he is my father!" He clasped his hands, and hid his face in the pillows. "You must help me, my friend; you must tell me how to save the baron. I charge you to do this. I myself will speak to my father. I dreaded the hour before, but, after what you have told me, I fear now either that he does not know all, or," added he, in a low murmur, "that he will not tell me all. You yourself must go to the baron."

"You must not forget, Bernhard," replied Anton, "that, even with the best will in the world, it is not permitted us to force ourselves thus into the affairs of others. However good our intentions may be, still I am a stranger to the baron. My interference may seem, both to him and to your father, sheer presumption. I do not say that the step is a useless, but it is a most uncertain one. It would be better that you should first find out the nature of your father's proceedings."

"Go, though, to the baron," implored Bernhard, "and if he remain silent, ask the young lady. I have seen her," continued he; "I have kept it back from you as men will keep their dearest secret; now you shall hear it. I have been more than once on the Rothsattel estate. I know how fair she is, how proud her bearing, how noble her every gesture. When she walks over the grass, she seems the queen of nature; an azure glory shines around her head; wherever she looks, all things bow down before her; her teeth like pearls, her bosom a bed of lilies," whispered he, and sank down on his pillows with folded hands and flashing eyes.

"He too!" cried Anton to himself. "My poor Bernhard, you are delirious!"

Bernhard shook his head. "Since that day," said he, "I know that life is not commonplace, but it is terrible! Will you now consent to speak to the baron and his daughter?"

"I will," said Anton, rising to go. "But I repeat to you that, in doing this, I am taking an important step, which may easily lead to fresh involvements for us both."

"One in my state fears no involvements," said Bernhard; "and as for you," and he cast a searching glance at Anton, "you will be what you have spoken of to me this day, a man who can cut his way through difficulties, and whose business it is, even though wounded, to fight with fate. Me, Anton Wohlfart, me the whirlwind will sweep away."

"Faint-heart," cried Anton, tenderly, "it is your disease that speaks thus. Courage will return with health."

"You hope so?" inquired the invalid, doubtingly. "I do so too, at times; but often I grow faint-hearted, as you say. Yes, I will live, and I will live no longer as of yore. I will try hard to grow stronger. I will not dream so much as I do now, will not fret and excite myself in solitude. I will make trial of the life of a brave and wise man, who gives back every blow that he receives," cried he, with flushed cheeks, and holding out his hand to his friend. Anton bent over him, and left the room.

That evening Ehrenthal went to his son's bedside, as he always did, after having closed the office door and hidden the key in his own room.

"What did the doctor say to you to-day, my Bernhard?"

Bernhard had turned his face to the wall, but he now suddenly flung himself round, and said impetuously, "Father, I have something to speak to you about. Lock the door, that no one may disturb us."

Ehrenthal, in amazement, ran to both doors, locked and bolted them obediently, and then hurried back to his son's bedside.

"What is it that vexes you, my Bernhard?" inquired he, stretching out his hand to feel his son's brow.

Bernhard drew back his head, and his father's hand sank on the bedclothes.

"Sit down there," said the invalid, darkly, "and answer my questions as sincerely as if you were speaking to yourself."

The old man sat down. "Ask, my son, and I will answer you."

"You have told me that you have lent much money to Baron Rothsattel; that you will lend him no more, and that the nobleman will not be able to retain his estate."

"It is as I have said," replied his father, as cautiously as if undergoing a legal examination.

"And what is to become of the baron and of his family?"

Ehrenthal shrugged his shoulders. "He will forfeit his property; and when the day comes that the estate has to be sold, I shall, on account of my money invested therein, bid for it, and I hope I shall be the purchaser. I have a large mortgage on it, which is safe, and a small mortgage besides, which is not worth much."

"Father," cried Bernhard, with a piercing voice, which made Ehrenthal start, "you wish to turn this man's misfortunes to your own profit; you wish to seat yourself in his place. Yes, you drove to the baron's estate, and took me with you, and perhaps you were then planning how to turn his embarrassment to advantage. It is horrible! horrible!" He threw himself back on the pillows and wrung his hands.

Ehrenthal moved restlessly on his seat: "Speak not of matters that you do not understand. Business is for the day; when I come to you in the evenings, then you are not to trouble yourself about my occupations. I will not have you lift up your hands, and cry 'Horrible!'"

"Father!" exclaimed Bernhard, "if you would not see me die with shame and sorrow, you will give up your plan."

"Give up!" cried Ehrenthal, indignantly. "How can I give up my gold? How can I give up the estate about which I have taken thought night and day? How can I give up the greatest stroke of business I have yet carried on? You are a disobedient child, and do grieve me for nothing. What fault of mine was it that I gave the baron my money? He would have it so. What fault is it of mine that I buy the property? I but redeem my money."

"Cursed be every dollar that you have laid out thus! Cursed be the day that this unblessed purpose entered your mind!" continued Bernhard, and he raised his hand threateningly against his father.

"What is this!" cried Ehrenthal, springing up; "what evil thoughts have taken hold of my son's heart, that he should thus speak to his father? What I have done, have I not done it for thee, not for myself—not for my old days? I always thought of thee, and of how thou shouldst be a different

man to thy father. I should have the labor and the anxiety, and thou shouldst go from the castle to the garden, book in hand, and back to the castle again, and move to and fro as thou wouldst. The bailiff should take off his cap, and the servants their hats, and they should all say, 'That is our young master, he who walks yonder.'"

"Yes," cried Bernhard, "this is your love: you want to make me partaker in an unrighteous deed. You are mistaken, father. Never will I go out of the castle into the garden, book in hand; rather will I, a poor beggar, beg my bread on the public road, than set my foot on an estate that has been gained by sin."

"Bernhard," cried the old man, wringing his hands in his turn, "thou castest a stone on thy father's heart, and its weight sinks him to the earth."

"And you ruin your son," cried Bernhard, in uncontrolled passion. "See to it for whom you are lying and cheating; for, as sure as there is a heaven above us, it shall never be said that you have done it for your unhappy son."

"My son," wailed the father, "do not smite my heart with your curses. Ever since you were a little lad, carrying your satchel to school, you have been all my pride. I have always allowed you to do your own pleasure. I have bought you books. I have given you more money than you required. I have watched your eyes to read your wishes there. While I was toiling hard all day below, I used to think, 'Because of my pains, my son will rejoice.'" He took the corner of his dressing-gown to wipe his eyes, and tried to recover his composure. And so he sat, a broken-down man, face to face with his son.

Bernhard looked silently at his father's bent head. At last he reached out his hand. "My father!" he gently said.

Ehrenthal instantly seized the proffered hand between his, and holding it fast for fear it should be again withdrawn, he came nearer, kissed and stroked it. "Now thou art my own kind son once more," said he, with emotion; "now thou wilt not speak such wicked words again, or quarrel with me about this baron."

Bernhard snatched his hand away.

"I will not press him; I will have patience about the interest," said Ehrenthal, beseechingly, trying to recover his son's hand.

"Ah! it is useless to speak to him!" cried Bernhard, in deepest distress; "he does not even understand my words."

"I will understand every thing," gasped out Ehrenthal, "if you will only give me back your hand."

"Will you relinquish your plan about the estate?" asked Bernhard.

"Speak not of the estate," besought the old man.

"In vain!" murmured Bernhard, turning away and hiding his face in his hands.

Ehrenthal sat by him annihilated and sighing deeply. "Hear me, my son," said he, at length; "I will see if I can not get him another estate that he can buy with his remaining means. Do you hear me, my son Bernhard?"

"Go!" cried Bernhard, without anger, but with the energy of intense grief. "Go, and leave me alone!"

Ehrenthal rose and left the room, walking up and down vehemently in the next, wringing his hands, and talking to himself. Then he opened the door, approaching Bernhard's bed, and asked, in a piteous voice, "Wilt thou not give me thy hand, my son?" But Bernhard lay silent, with averted face.

It was with a beating heart that Anton, two days later, gave his name to the baron's servant.

"Wohlfart!" cried the baron, and the recollection of the letter returned disagreeably to him; "bring him in." He met Anton's low bow rather coolly. "I am obliged to you," said he, "for a letter lately received, and you must excuse my having, on account of much business on hand, left it unanswered."

"If," began Anton, "I now take the liberty of calling with reference to the same subject, I implore you not to look upon it as intrusive. I come here charged with a message from a friend of mine who feels the most devoted respect for you and your family. He is the son of Ehrenthal the merchant. He himself is prevented from waiting upon you by illness, and therefore implores you, through me, to make use of the influence he possesses with his father. In the event of your thinking it probable that he may be of use, may I request you to communicate your wishes to him?"

The baron listened eagerly. Now, when every thing forsook him upon which he had himself relied, strangers began to interfere with his fate—this Itzig, for instance, and Wohlfart, and now Ehrenthal's son. "I know but little of the young man," said he, with reserve; "I must request you, first of all, to explain to me how I happen to have the honor of exciting such an unusual amount of interest in his mind."

Anton replied with some warmth "Bernhard Ehrenthal has a noble heart, and his life is stainless. Having grown up among his books, he understands little or nothing of his father's business matters, but he is under the impression that the latter is led on by wicked advisers to act the part of an enemy toward you. He has influence over his father—his fine sense of rectitude is much disturbed—and he ardently wishes to hold back a parent from proceedings which he himself considers dishonorable."

Here was help. It was a breath of fresh air piercing through the choking atmosphere of a sick-room; but the fresh air made the patient uncomfortable. These honorable men, so ready to condemn all that did not approve itself to their own sense of honor, had become distressing to the baron. At all events, he would not expose himself to this Wohlfart—the very essence, no doubt, of scrupulous conscientiousness. And, accordingly, he replied with affected cordiality, "My relations to the father of your friend are precisely such as might be facilitated by the kindly intervention of one mutually interested in us both. Whether young Ehrenthal, however, be the proper person, I can not decide. Meanwhile, tell him that I am grateful for his sympathy, and that I purpose calling upon him at his own time to consult him on the subject." Upon which announcement Anton rose, the baron accompanying him to the door, and, wonderful to say, making him a low bow.

It was the result of no accident that, as Anton passed through the ante-chamber, Lenore should enter it. "Mr. Wohlfart!" she cried, with delight, and hurried to him. "Dear young lady!" cried he; and they met as old friends.

They forgot their interval of separation; they were as of old, partners in the dance. Both said how much they had altered since then, and while they said so, all the intervening years dropped off unperceived from each.

"You wear upright collars again," cried Lenore, with a slightly reproachful voice. Anton instantly turned them down.

"Have you got the hood you then wore? It was lined with red silk, and it became you exquisitely."

"My present hood is lined with blue," said Lenore, laughing. "And only think, the little Countess Lara is to be married next week! She and I were talking of you not long ago; and Eugene, too, has written to us about you. How enchanting, that you should have become acquainted with my brother! Come this way, Mr. Wohlfart; I must hear how the time has passed with you." She led him into the drawing-room, and made him sit by her on the sofa, looking at him with those smiling eyes, whose light used formerly to make him so happy. Much in him had changed since then; perhaps another maiden occupied his imagination now; but when he looked upon the mistress of his early youth, the wild, high-spirited girl matured into the noble and graceful woman, all the feelings of the past revived, and he breathed with rapture the perfumed air of the elegant saloon.

"Now that I see you," said Lenore, "it seems to me as if our dancing-lessons had only been yesterday. That was a pleasant time for me too. Since then I have had much sorrow," added she, drooping her head.

Anton lamented this with a fervor which made her look up brightly again.

"What has brought you to my father?" inquired she, at length, in an altered tone.

Anton spoke of Bernhard, of his long sickness, and deep regard for her family, not concealing that she herself was the chief cause of it, which made her look down, and fold the corners of her handkerchief together. "If you can find a way of recommending your father to use Bernhard's influence, do so. I can not get rid of a fear that there is a conspiracy carrying on against him in Ehrenthal's office. Perhaps you will find means of letting Bernhard or me know how we can best be useful."

Lenore looked mournfully in Anton's face, and moved nearer to him. "You are to me like an old friend, and I can trust my sorrows to you. My father conceals the cause of his anxiety from my mother and me, but he is sadly changed the last few years. This factory requires much money, and he is often without any, I am sure. My mother and I pray daily that peace may be restored to us—a happy time like that when I first became acquainted with you. As soon as I can discover any thing, I will write to you," said she, with firm resolve; "and when Eugene comes home on leave, he will seek you out."

Thus Anton left the baron's house, excited by his meeting with his fair friend, and full of anxiety to serve the whole family. At the house door he stumbled upon Ehrenthal, who, in return for his distant bow, called after him to come very soon again to see his son Bernhard.

Ehrenthal had spent a miserable day. He had never, in the whole course of his life, sighed or shaken his head so much before. It was in vain that his wife, Sidonia, asked her daughter, "What ails the man, that he sighs so deeply?" It was in vain that Itzig sought to cheer his master's spirits by drawing glowing pictures of the future. All the dissatisfaction in Ehrenthal's breast exploded against his book-keeper. "It was you who advised me to take these steps against the baron," he screamed at him on the morning after his scene with Bernhard. "Do you know what you are? You are a good for nothing fellow." Itzig shrugged his shoulders, and returned an ironical reply, which made Ehrenthal glad to bury his head in the newspaper. Longer than two days he could not endure the sight of the sorrow of his son, who got visibly worse, and only answered his father in

monosyllables. "I must make a sacrifice," said Ehrenthal to himself. "I must give back sleep to his eyes, and put an end to his groaning. I will remember my son; and I will get the baron the Rosmin property, or I will save the money that he has invested in it, without any profit for myself. I shall lose in that way, for I might have arranged with Löwenberg so as to gain more than a thousand dollars. I think this will please my Bernhard." And putting his hat firmly on his head, as if to crush down all rebellious thoughts, he entered the dwelling of his debtor.

The baron received his unexpected visitor with breathless terror. "The warner is scarcely gone when the enemy arrives," thought he. "He is come to require the legal surrender of the mortgage."

But what was his relief when Ehrenthal of his own accord politely requested that he might go to Rosmin on the baron's behalf, and take the necessary steps. "I will employ as my coadjutor a safe man—the Commissary Walter—so that you may see that all is done legally. You will give me authority to bid for the property, and to raise it thus to such a sum as shall insure your mortgage being covered by the purchase-money that some other will pay."

"I know that this will be necessary," said the baron; "but, for God's sake, Ehrenthal, what will be done if the property remains upon our hands!"

Ehrenthal shrugged his shoulders. "You know that I did not persuade you into the mortgage; indeed, I may say, if I remember aright, that I even dissuaded you from it. If you had taken my advice then, you would probably never have bought that mortgage."

"The thing is done, however," returned the baron, irascibly.

"First of all, baron, I must beg you to admit that I am innocent of this matter."

"That is immaterial now."

"It is immaterial to you," said Ehrenthal, "but not to me, and to my honor as a man of business."

"What do you mean by that?" cried the baron, in a tone that made Ehrenthal start. "Do you dare to insinuate that any thing can be immaterial to me about which even your honor is sensitive?"

"Why are you so irritable, baron? I say nothing against your honor God forbid that I should."

"You spoke of it, though," said the unhappy man.

"How can you thus misunderstand an old acquaintance? I only wish for your declaration that I am innocent of the purchase of this mortgage."

"Be it so," cried the baron, stamping.

"Then it is all right. And should a misfortune befall us, and you be obliged to purchase the property, we will see what can be done. It is a bad time to lend money; but still I will advance you a sum in return for a mortgage on the property."

He then proceeded to make arrangements for his departure as the baron's representative, and left him a prey to conflicting emotions.

Was he saved? was he lost? A fear came over him that this mortgage would decide his fate. He resolved to go to Rosmin himself, and not leave matters to Ehrenthal. But then came the painful thought that he must needs repose unlimited trust in this man, lest the man learn to mistrust him, and so he drifted here and there in a sea of dangers. The waves rose and threatened his very life.

That evening Ehrenthal entered his son's sick-room, and placed the newly-executed document on his bed. "Canst thou give me thy hand now?" said he to his son, who looked gloomily before him. "I am to travel for the baron. I am to buy him a new estate. We have settled it all together. Here is his signature authorizing me to act for him. I am to advance him capital; if he is wise, he may again become a man of substance."

Bernhard looked sorrowfully at his father, and shook his head. "That is not enough, my poor father," said he.

"But I am reconciled to the baron, and he has himself confessed that I am not to blame for his misfortunes. Is not that enough, my son?"

"No," said the invalid; "so long as you keep that wicked man Itzig in your office, no joy can shine in on my life."

"He shall go," said Ehrenthal, readily; "he shall go this next quarter, if my son Bernhard wishes it."

"And will you give up the idea of buying the baron's estate for yourself?"

"When it comes to be sold, I will think of what you have said," replied his father. "And now speak no more about the estate; when you are my strong, healthy son again, we will return to the subject."

So saying, he seized the hand which Bernhard delayed giving, held it fast in both his, and sat silently beside him.

If ever in the course of his life Ehrenthal had known satisfaction, it was now, in having brought about this reconciliation with his son.

CHAPTER XXV.

Wave after wave broke over the head of the drowning man.

The factory had now been in operation for some months. The beet-root crop on the estate itself had been deficient, and the cultivation of it in the country round had proved unsuccessful. Many of the small farmers had failed to fulfill their contracts, and others had brought in inferior produce. There was a scarcity of beet-root as well as a scarcity of capital; the works stopped, the workmen dispersed.

Ehrenthal was gone off to the Polish property, and the baron was consumed by the fever of suspense. At last came the dark day when Ehrenthal appeared before him, a letter from Commissary Walter in his hand. The baron's capital had only been saved by his buying the estate.

The owners of the first mortgage of a hundred thousand dollars had raised the property, by bidding, up to a hundred and four thousand; they had then left off, and no other purchaser had come forward.

"The estate is now yours, baron," said Ehrenthal. "In order that you may be able to maintain it, I have negotiated with the owners of the first mortgage, and they will leave the hundred thousand upon the estate. I have advanced for you four thousand dollars and the legal expenses."

The baron said not a word; his head fell heavily on his writing-table. As Ehrenthal left the room, he muttered, "It is all over with him. And the next quarter he will lose his old estate, and he has not energy to undertake the new. I shall have to buy the Polish property too, in the end."

And now term-time drew near, and the baron had the interest of all his borrowed money to pay. Once more he looked round for help. In vain! Last of all he came to his neighbor, George Werner, who had for some years paid homage to Lenore, and then prudently drawn back, the baron's embarrassments being no longer a secret. The young man showed all the sympathy conventional in such a case. He was very sorry, indeed, to hear that there was so large a mortgage upon the recently-purchased property. "Whom did you send to the auction?" asked he.

"Hirsch Ehrenthal," was the reply.

George Werner waxed eloquent. "I fear," cried he, "that that fellow has played you false. I know the usurer well: years ago we lost a large sum by his villainy. My father had cut down a wood in the next province, and sold it to a timber-merchant. Ehrenthal made a cheating bargain with this man, got the timber from him at a nominal price, while the other fellow ran off to America. The two rogues shared my father's money."

The baron's face grew livid; he rose, said not another word about his concerns, and slunk out of his neighbor's house like a felon.

From that day he brooded darkly in his arm-chair, was harsh to his wife, unapproachable by his daughter. The two poor women suffered inexpressibly.

One ray of hope still remained to him—Bernhard's influence with his father. But he would not take the hand unselfishly offered him. He did not send for Anton, but for another, of whom the idea was repulsive to him, yet whose grotesque presence seemed to cheer him whenever they met. Once more, at the last hour, a gracious destiny left his choice free. But alas! he was himself free no longer. It was the curse of an evil deed that now confused his judgment.

Again Itzig stood before him, and the baron, looking askance at the bent figure, said, "Young Ehrenthal has offered to make up my difference with his father."

Veitel leaped up suddenly as if he had been shot. "Bernhard!" said he.

"That is his name, I dare say; he is an invalid."

"He will die," replied Veitel.

"When?" asked the baron, occupied with his own thoughts; but, recovering himself, he added, "What is the matter with him?"

"It is here," said Itzig, laying his hand on his chest; "it labors like a pair of bellows: when a hole is once torn, the breath ceases."

The baron put on an expression of sympathy, but, in reality, his only thought was that he had no time to lose. "The invalid," said he, "has sufficient influence over his father to give me hopes of Ehrenthal's consent to my wishes."

"What does Bernhard know of business? He is a fool," cried Veitel, unable to conceal his annoyance. "If you were to put an old parchment covered with manuscript before him, he would give you any mortgage you liked for it; he is half-witted."

"I see that you do not approve this plan," said the baron, again drifting hopelessly.

Before Itzig replied, he stood for a long time reflecting, and restlessly looking away from the baron into every corner of the room. At last he said, in a more self-possessed tone, "The baron is right. It will be best, after all, that you and Ehrenthal should go together to Bernhard's sick-bed, and there finally settle your affairs." Again he was silent, and his face grew red with stormy thoughts. "Will the baron be graciously pleased to leave me to fix the day and the hour when he can best speak to Bernhard Ehrenthal? As soon as you enter the office, I will go up and tell him that you are there. Meanwhile you will have the goodness to wait in the office, even if I should be half an hour away. You will wait, whatever Ehrenthal may say. And when I take you up stairs, all will be right, for Bernhard can do what he likes with his father."

"I shall wait till I hear from you," decided the baron, distressed at the thought of the painful day.

Itzig then took his leave, and rushed in frantic excitement to his lair in the house of Pinkus. Arrived there, he ran wildly up and down, clenching his fist at the thought of Bernhard. He opened his old desk, and took out of a secret drawer two keys, which he laid on the table, and stood looking at them steadfastly and long. At length he pushed them into his pocket, and ran down to the caravanserai. There, cowering in a corner of the gallery, he found his sagacious friend Mr. Hippus, whose aspect had certainly not improved during the last few days. He was now sitting squeezed into a corner where the sunlight fell, and was reading a dirty romance. When Veitel hurriedly entered, he only buried his head deeper in his book, for which he appeared to care far more than for the young man of business before him.

"Shut up your book, and listen to me," cried Itzig, impatiently. "Rothsattel will get his notes of hand back from Ehrenthal; he will give in the mortgage, and I shall have to pay him the remaining eight thousand dollars."

"Only think—only think," replied the old man, wagging his ugly head, "what things one lives to see! If Ehrenthal gives his money away to a vagabond who has broken his word, it will be time for us all to mend our ways and turn honest. Before, however, we speak further, you may just bring me up something to eat and drink. I am thirsty, and have not another word to say at present."

Veitel hurried down stairs, and the old man, looking after him, muttered, "Now for it! now for it!"

When Veitel had placed his meal before him, Hippus briefly inquired, "How much?"

"Three hundred," said the old man; "and even then I must have time to consider. It is not in my line, most worthy Itzig. I am willing to labor in my vocation for less, as you have experienced ere now, but for a noble exploit in the style of Cartouche and others of your friends, I require better compensation. I am only a volunteer, and I can't say that my preferences lie in this direction."

"Do mine?" cried Itzig. "If there be any other means to take, tell me them. If you know how the baron and Ehrenthal can be kept asunder, say so. Ehrenthal's only son will make peace between them; he will stand between them like the winged cupid on a valentine between two lovers, and we shall be done."

"*We*?" chuckled the old man. "*You* will be done, you jackdaw. What are your affairs to me?"

"Two hundred," cried Veitel, drawing nearer.

"Three," replied the old man, tossing off his glass; "but even then I will not do it alone; you must be there."

"If I am to be there," said Veitel, "I can do it alone, and shall not require your help. Listen to me. I will contrive that the office shall be empty; that Ehrenthal and the baron shall leave the house at the same moment. I will give you a sign, to say whether the papers are on the table or in the press. It will be dark. You will have about half an hour's time. I will fasten the house door, and unbolt the back door, which is generally closed. It will all be so safe that a child of two years might do it easily."

"Safe enough for you," said the old man, dryly, "but not for me."

"We have tried what could be done with the law, and it has not answered," cried Veitel; "now we must defy it." He struck the balustrade with his clenched fist, and ground his teeth fiercely. "And if you don't choose to do it, still it shall be done, though I know that all the suspicion will fall upon me, unless I am in Bernhard's room at the time."

"Very fine indeed, gallant Itzig," said the man, adjusting his spectacles, so as to observe more closely the expression of the other's countenance. "Since you are so brave, I will not leave you in the lurch. But three hundred."

The bargaining then began. The pair squeezed themselves into the farthest corner of the gallery, and whispered together till dark.

A few days later, at twilight, Anton entered his friend's sick-room. "I am come to pay you a flying visit, just to see how you are."

"Weak," replied Bernhard; "still very weak, and breathing becomes very difficult. If I could only get out, only once out of this gloomy room."

"Does your doctor allow you to drive out? If the sun be bright and warm, I will bring a carriage

to-morrow and take you a drive."

"Yes," cried Bernhard, "you shall come. I shall have something to tell you then." He looked cautiously around. "I have this day received by the townpost a note without a signature." He drew it out from under his pillow, and gave it with a mysterious look to his friend. "Take it: perhaps you know the hand."

Anton went to the window and read, "The Baron Rothsattel wishes to speak to you this evening. Contrive, therefore, to be alone with your father."

When Anton gave back the note, Bernhard received it reverentially, and replaced it under his pillow. "Do you know the hand?" said he.

"No," replied Anton; "the hand seems a feigned one; it is not the young lady's."

"Whoever the writer may be," continued Bernhard, dejectedly, "I hope for a good result from this evening's interview. Wohlfart, this dispute lies like a hundred weight on my breast; it takes my breath away. This evening I shall be better; I shall be free."

Speaking had tired him. "Farewell, then, till morning," said Anton. As he rose he heard the rustle of ladies' dresses, and Bernhard's mother and sister approached the bed and greeted the visitor. "How are you, Bernhard?" asked his mother; "you will be all alone with your father this evening. There is a great musical meeting, and Rosalie is to play. We have moved the piano into the back room, Mr. Wohlfart, that Bernhard may not be disturbed by Rosalie's practicing."

"Sit down for a moment beside me, mother," said Bernhard; "it is long since I have seen you handsomely dressed. You look beautiful to-day; you had just such a gown as this when I, as a boy, took scarlet fever. When I dream of you I always see you in a scarlet dress. Give me your hand, mother; and while you listen to the music this evening, think, too, of your Bernhard, who will be making silent melody here."

His mother sat down beside him. "He is feverish again," said she to Anton, who silently assented.

"To-morrow I shall go out into the sunshine," cried Bernhard, in an excited tone; "that will be my enjoyment."

"The carriage waits," said Rosalie, remindingly; "and we have to go out the back way, which is dirty. Itzig has persuaded my father that the carriage must not drive round to the front for fear of disturbing Bernhard."

"Good-night, Bernhard," said his mother, once more reaching out her plump hand. The ladies hurried away. Anton followed them.

"What do you think of Bernhard?" asked the mother, as they went down stairs.

"I consider him very ill," Anton replied.

"I have already told my husband that, when summer comes, and I go with Rosalie to the Baths, we will take Bernhard with us."

Anton went home with a heavy heart.

The house grew silent; nothing was to be heard in the sick-room but the labored breathing of the sufferer. But there was a stir on the floor below him—doubtless a mouse gnawing the wainscot. Bernhard listened uneasily. "How long will it go on gnawing? till it makes a hole at last, and comes into the room." A shudder came over him—he tossed about on his bed—the darkness seemed to press him in—the air grew thick. He rang till the maid came and set down the lamp. Then he gazed languidly round. The room looked old and prison-like to-day; it appeared unfamiliar to him, like some room in a strange house, where he was only a visitor. He looked with indifference at his library, and the drawer where lay his beloved manuscripts. That spot upon the floor—that chink through which the light from the next room shone in every evening, to-morrow he would leave them all to drive with Anton. He wondered whether they would take the road the young lady took when going to and fro between town and her father's estate. Perhaps they might meet her. His eye beamed; he confidently believed that they should meet her. She would sit queen-like in her carriage, her veil flying round her blooming face; she would raise her white hand and wave it to him—nay, she would recognize him; she would know that he had rendered her father a service; she would stop and inquire how he was. He should speak to her—should hear the noble tones of her voice; she would bow once more; then the carriages would separate, one here, the other there. And whither would he go? "Into the sunshine," whispered he. And again he listened anxiously to the gnawing of the mouse.

A hurried step came through the room beyond. Bernhard sat up—the blood mounted to his face. It was the father of Lenore who was coming to him. The door opened softly; an ugly face peeped in, and glanced stealthily around the room. Bernhard cried in dismay, "What do you want here?"

Itzig went up to the bed in haste, and breathing hard, said, in a voice that sounded as choked as that of the invalid, "The baron has just gone into the office. He has told me to come to you, and to persuade you to support the proposal that he is about to make to your father."

"He has said that to you?" cried Bernhard. "How can the baron give a message to a man like you?"

"Hold your peace," rejoined Veitel, rudely; "there is no time for your speeches. Listen to what I have to say. The baron promised your father, on his word of honor, security for twenty thousand dollars, and now he can not give him that security, because he has sold the deed to another. He has broken his word, and now demands that your father should renounce his security. If you can advise your father to lose twenty thousand dollars, why, do so."

Bernhard trembled all over. "You are a liar!" cried he. "Every word that proceeds from your mouth is hypocrisy, double-dealing, and deceit."

"Hold your peace," replied Veitel, in feverish anxiety. "You are not to persuade your father to his harm. There is no helping this baron; he is a fly who has burned his wings in the candle; he can only crawl. And even if Ehrenthal be fool enough to follow your evil counsel, he can not maintain for the baron possession of his estate. If he does not eject him, another will. I have no interest in saying this to you," continued he, uneasily listening to a sound in front of the house; "I do so merely out of attachment to your family."

Bernhard struggled for breath. "Get out of my sight!" said he, at length; "there is nothing but deceit and falsehood on earth."

"I will bring up the baron and your father," said Veitel, and rushed out of the room.

Meanwhile Ehrenthal's angry voice sounded loudly on the ground floor. "I will go to the lawyer; I will expose you and your intrigues."

Veitel burst open the door. The baron sat on the stool, and hid his face with his hands. Ehrenthal stood before him trembling with rage. On the desk stood the baron's casket, containing the fatal notes of hand and the mortgage. Veitel cried out, "Have done, Ehrenthal; your Bernhard is very ill; he is all alone up stairs, and calls for you and for the baron; he wants you both beside him."

"What means this?" screamed Ehrenthal. "Are you intriguing with my son too, behind my back?"

"Have you shown him the new mortgage that you have had drawn up for him?" asked Veitel, hurriedly.

"He will not even look at it," returned the baron, gloomily.

"Give it to me," said Veitel; and he laid a new deed before Ehrenthal.

"You want me to take a bit of paper instead of my good money—mere trash, that is not worth my burning."

"Will you not give over?" cried Veitel, in greatest distress. "No one is up stairs with Bernhard, and he is calling out for you and the baron; he will do himself a mischief. Do go up stairs; he has groaned out that I am to bring you both to him immediately."

"Just God!" cried Ehrenthal, "what is to be done! I can not come to my son; I am in terror about my money."

"He will cry himself to death," said Veitel; "you can speak about the money long enough afterward. Do make haste."

The baron and Ehrenthal both left the office. Itzig followed. Ehrenthal locked the door, laid the iron bar across it, and fastened the bolts. As they went up stairs a piece of money rang upon the step. Ehrenthal looked round. "It dropped out of my pocket," said Veitel.

The baron and Ehrenthal entered the sick-chamber, and Itzig pushed himself in after them, creeping along the wall to the window behind Bernhard, so that the latter should not see him. The baron sat down at the head of the bed, the father at the foot, and the lamp threw a pale light on the parties who came to wrangle about capital and security in the presence of the dying. The nobleman began by a courteous speech, referring to Bernhard's visit to his estate, hoping soon to welcome him there again; but his eyes rested with terror on the sunken face, and an inner voice told him the last hour was near. Bernhard sat up in his bed, his head resting on his breast, and, raising his hand, he interrupted the baron, saying, "I pray you, baron, to tell me what you require from my father, and, while doing so, to recollect that I am no man of business."

The baron proceeded to state his case. Ehrenthal was often about to interrupt him, but each time Bernhard waved his hand, and then the old man stopped, and contented himself with vehemently shaking his head and mumbling to himself.

When the baron's statement was over, Bernhard beckoned to his father. "Come nearer me, and listen quietly to my words."

The father stooped down with his ear close to his son's mouth. "What I am about to say," continued Bernhard, in a low voice, "is my firm resolve, and it is not one taken this day. If you have made money, it was with the hope that I should outlive you and be your heir. Was it not so?"

Ehrenthal vehemently nodded assent. "If, then, you behold your heir in me, listen to my words. If you love me, act in accordance with them. I renounce my inheritance so long as we both live. What you have laid up for me has been laid up in vain. I require nothing for my future. If it be appointed me to recover, I will learn to support myself by my own labor. Beside your love and your blessing, father, I want nothing. Think upon this."

Ehrenthal raised his arms and cried, "What words are these, my Bernhard, my poor son! Thou art ill; thou art very ill."

"Hear me further," besought Bernhard. "Whatever your claims may be on this gentleman's estate, they must be given up. You have been connected with him in business for long years; you must not be the means of making his family unhappy. I do not ask you to give away the large sum in question. That would pain you too much, and would be humiliating to him; all I require is, that you should accept the security he offers you. If he ever promised you any other, forget it; if you have papers in your possession which compromise him, give them back."

"He is ill," groaned his father; "he is very ill."

"I know that this will pain you, my father. Ever since you left your grandfather's house, a poor barefooted Jew-boy, with one dollar in your pocket, you have thought of nothing but money-making. No one ever taught you any thing else, and your creed excluded you from the society of those who better understood what gave value to life. I know it goes to your heart to risk a large sum, but yet, father, you will do it—you will do it because you love me."

Ehrenthal wrung his hands, and said, with floods of tears, "You know not what you ask, my son. You plead for a robbery—a robbery from your father."

The son took his father's hand. "You have always loved me. You have wished that I should be different from yourself. You have always given heed to my words, and before I could express a wish you have fulfilled it. But this is the first great request that I have ever made. And this request I will whisper in your ear as long as I live; it is the first, father, and it will be my last."

"Thou art a foolish child," cried the father, beside himself; "thou askest my life—my whole substance."

"Fetch the papers," replied Bernhard. "I must, with my own eyes, see you give back to the baron what he wishes to retract, and receive from him what he can still give."

Ehrenthal took out his handkerchief and wept aloud: "He is ill. I shall lose him, and I shall lose my money too." Meanwhile the baron sat silent and looked down. As for Itzig, he was clenching his fist convulsively, and unconsciously tearing the curtain down from the pole.

Bernhard looked at his father's emotion unmoved, and repeated with an effort, "I will have it so; bring the papers, father," Then he sank back on his pillow. His father bent over him, but with a silent gesture of aversion Bernhard waved him off, saying, "Enough! you hurt me."

Then Ehrenthal rose, took up his office-candle, and tottered out of the room.

The baron sat still as before, but in the midst of his suspense he was conscious of flashes that resembled joy. He saw a spot of blue in his clouded sky. His promise given back to him, eight thousand dollars to receive from the man in the window, he might look up once more. He took Bernhard's hand, and, pressing it, said, "I thank you, sir—oh how I thank you! You are my deliverer; you save my family from despair, and me from disgrace."

Bernhard held the baron's hand firmly in his, and a blissful smile passed over his face. Meanwhile the one in the window was grinding his teeth in his phrensy of anxiety, and pressing himself against the wall to control the fever-fit which shook him.

Thus they remained a long while. No one spoke. Ehrenthal did not return. Suddenly the room door was burst open, and a man rushed in furious, with distorted face and streaming hair. It was Ehrenthal, holding in his hand the flaring candle, but nothing else.

"Gone!" said he, clasping his hands, and letting the candle fall; "all gone! all is stolen!" He fell on his son's bed, and stretched out his arms, as if to implore help from him.

The baron sprang up, not less horrified than Ehrenthal. "What is stolen?" cried he.

"Every thing!" groaned Ehrenthal, looking only at his son. "The notes of hand, are gone, the mortgages are gone. I am robbed!" screamed he, springing up. "Robbery! burglary! Send for the police!" And again he rushed out, the baron following him.

Half fainting and bewildered, Bernhard looked after them. Itzig now stepped out from the window and came to the bed. The sufferer threw his head on one side, and gazed at him as the bird does at the snake. It was the face of a devil into which he gazed; the red hair stood up bristling; hellish dread and hate were in every ugly feature. Bernhard closed his eyes, and covered them with his hand. But the face came nearer still, and a hoarse voice whispered in his ear.

Meanwhile two men stood in the office below, and looked at each other in stupid amazement. The casket and its contents were gone. The deeds that the baron had laid on the desk were gone too. Ehrenthal had unlocked the door as usual. There was nothing wrong with the bolts. Every thing stood in its right place. If any money had been taken out of the drawer, it could be but very little. There was not a sign of the well-secured shutters having been touched; it was inexplicable how the documents could have been taken away.

Then they searched the whole ground floor: nothing to be seen—even the house door was locked. They recollected that the cautious book-keeper had done that as they went up stairs. Again they went back to the office and searched every corner, but more rapidly and more hopelessly than

before. Then they sat over against each other, watching for some token of treachery; and again they sprang up, and mutually poured out such reproaches as only despair can invent.

The papers had vanished from Ehrenthal's office just as he had unwillingly yielded to his son's entreaties for a reconciliation with the baron. He had not, indeed, made up his mind to it—he had only gone to fetch the papers. Would any one believe that those papers were stolen? Would his own son believe him?

And as for the baron, his loss was greater still. He had just had a hope of rescue, now he fell again into an abyss beyond his fathoming. His notes of hand were in some stranger's possession. If the thief understood how to make use of them—nay, if the thief were only apprehended, he was lost; and if they were never found again, still he was equally lost. He was not in a condition to make any arrangement with Ehrenthal; he was not in a condition to pay any of his creditors; he was lost beyond possibility of deliverance. Before him lay poverty, failure, disgrace. Again there recurred to his mind that court of honor, his fellow-officers, and the unfortunate young man who had destroyed himself. He had been obliged to view the body; he knew how one looks who has died thus; he knew too, now, how a man comes to die. Once he had shuddered at the image of the corpse, now he shuddered at it no longer. His lips moved, and as in a dream he said to himself, "That is the last resource." The door was now torn open, a hideous head appeared, and a wild cry was heard, "Come up, Hirsch Ehrenthal; your son is dying." Then the apparition vanished, Ehrenthal rushed off with a shriek, and the baron tottered out of the house.

When the father fell down beside his son's bed, a white hand was lifted up once more, then a corpse fell back. Bernhard was gone out into the sunshine.

The evening was warm. A light mist hid the stars, but there was still a pleasant twilight. The balmy breath of the flowering shrubs in the public gardens was wafted into the streets. The passers-by returned slowly home, sorry to leave the sweet south breeze, and shut themselves up in-doors. The beggar stretched himself comfortably out on the threshold of the stately house; every young fellow who had a sweetheart led her out with him through the streets. He who was weary forgot his past day's work; he who was sad felt his sadness less on such an evening as this; he who was alone the whole year felt impelled to seek companionship to-day. Groups stood laughing and chattering at the doors; children were playing; the caged nightingale sang her sweetest song—sang of the early summer—that happy time when life is sweet and fond hopes blossom.

Through these swarms of people a tall man walked slowly; his head had sunk on his breast. He did not hear the nightingale's note, and passed through the circle of dancing children without one sound of their happy voices falling upon his ear. He passed into the suburbs, slowly ascended a flower-crowned hill, and sat down on a bench. Beneath him the dark river rolled onward to the sea, and opposite him rose the mighty mass of the old cathedral. The river was covered with timber-rafts brought down from the mountains. On these rafts stood the little huts of their rowers, with small fires in them, at which the men were now preparing their suppers. He too had had to do with timber-rafts like these, and the money he had thus won had been spoken of as a theft. He got up hastily and hurried down the hill.

His way lay through an alley of tall sycamores, and again he stopped, and wearily leaned against the trunk of a tree. Before him rose the chimneys of the manufacturing part of the town. He too knew what it was to build a tall pile like that. He had laid all he had at its base—his strength, his money, his honor. He had paid for it with sleepless nights and whitened hair; it was the tomb-stone of his race which he had raised on his estate, and what he now saw before him in the uncertain light was a monster church-yard, full of shadowy monuments, beneath which lay coffined the peace of mind of many wretched men; and nodding, he said, and started to hear his own words, "It is the last." He rose and went to his house.

On his way thither he felt how comforting it was to think of that which would free him from such hideous pictures. He went in and smiled when the lamp shone on his face. As he stood in the hall he could hear voices in his wife's room. Lenore was reading aloud. He listened and heard that she was reading a novel. He would not frighten those poor women; but there was a back room apart from all the rest—he would go there. While he was still standing in the hall, the room door opened, and the baroness looked out. She gave an involuntary start when she saw him. He smiled and cheerfully entered the room, gave his hand to his wife, stroked Lenore's head, and bent down to see what she was reading. The baroness regretted that she had had her tea without him, and he joked her about her impatience for her favorite beverage. He went to the cage in which two foreign birds were sitting on the same perch, their small heads resting against each other, and putting his fingers to the wires as if to stroke them, he said absently, "They are gone to rest." Then taking the waxlight from the servant's hand, he moved toward his own room. As he took hold of the door-handle, he remarked that his wife's eyes followed him anxiously, and, turning toward her, he nodded cheerfully. Then he closed the door, took a polished case out of his writing-table, and carried it and the candle to the small back room. Here he was sure he should disturb no one.

Slowly he loaded. In loading he looked at the inlaid work on the barrels. It had been the toilsome task of some poor devil of a gunmaker—it had often been admired by his acquaintance. The pistols themselves had been a wedding-present from the general, who had on one occasion acted the part of father to his orphan bride. He hurriedly rammed down the charge, then looked behind him. When he fell it should not be on the floor; he would not make on those who should come in the same painful impression that his outstretched comrade had made on him.

He placed the barrel to his temple. At that moment a woman's shriek was heard, his wife rushed in, his arm was seized with the strength of despair; he started, and his finger touched the trigger —a flash, a report, and he sank back on the sofa, and groaning, raised both his hands to his eyes.

In the merchant's house the bereaved father came, candle in hand, out of the room of the dead to the office below. He looked anxiously about on the desk, in the cupboard, in every corner of the room; then sat down, shook his head, and marveled. Then he locked up the office, went up stairs again, and fell groaning and crying on the bed. So he spent the whole night, seeking and wailing, wailing and seeking—a distracted, desolate, broken-down man.

CHAPTER XXVI.

In the merchant's house domestic life flowed smoothly on again. The small disturbance made by the return of Anton had gradually settled down. Those first-class treasures of Sabine's had made way for other specimens of damask, still of a superior kind, it is true, but which came within the compass of the elderly cousin's comprehension. She had been quite right in prophesying that Anton would never remark those signs of exuberant gratitude or their withdrawal. However, one change had been permanently made—the greatest, the best of all changes—the clerk retained a privileged place in the heart of the young mistress of the firm, and his tall figure often appeared as one of the circle that Sabine's fancy loved to gather round her when at her work-table or in her treasure-chamber.

To-day she was walking restlessly up and down before dinner. The cousin, who heard every thing, had just told her that a maid from Ehrenthal's had run into the office to announce Bernhard's death to his friend. "How will he bear it?" thought she. And the name of Ehrenthal forced her thoughts back to the past, to one now far away, and to that painful hour when the struggle going on in her own mind had been suddenly brought to a close by a letter from the house of the departed. And Anton had known of that conquered feeling of hers. How considerate he had always been, how chivalrous, how helpful! She wondered if he had any idea of the completeness of her triumph over a girlish illusion. She shook her head. "No, he has not. It was here, at this very table, that an accident first betrayed me to him. That past time still rises like a cloud between us. Whenever I sit near Wohlfart of an evening, I am conscious of another's shadow at my side; and when he speaks to me, his tone, his manner always seem to say, 'You are not alone; he is with you.'" Sabine started, and lovingly passed her hand over the beautiful flowers on the table before her, as if to dispel a painful thought. She could not tell him that she was free from that long-felt sorrow. Now, however, when he had lost a friend whom he so much loved, she must show him that there were other hearts that clung to him still. And again she walked up and down, trying to devise a way of speaking to him alone.

Dinner was announced. Anton came with the rest, and took his place at once. There was no opportunity of exchanging a word during the meal, but he often met her sad and sympathizing eye. "He eats nothing at all to-day," whispered her cousin; "not even any of the roast," she added, reproachfully. Sabine was much perturbed. Mr. Jordan had already risen; Anton would leave the room with the rest, and she should not see him again the whole day through. So she called out, "The great Calla is fully blown now. You were admiring the buds the other day; will you remain a moment; I should like to show it you?" Anton bowed and staid behind. A few more awkward moments, then her brother rose too; and, hurrying to Anton, she took him to the room where the flowers were.

"You have had sorrowful tidings to-day," she began.

"The tidings themselves did not surprise me," replied Anton. "The doctor gave no hope. But I lose much in him."

"I never saw him," said Sabine; "but I know from you that his life was lonely—poor in affection and in enjoyment."

She moved an arm-chair toward Anton, and led him on to talk about his friend. She listened to every word with warm sympathy, and well knew what to ask and how to comfort. It was a relief to Anton to speak of the departed one, to describe his quiet way of life, his erudition, his poetical enthusiasm. After a pause, Sabine looked up frankly into his face, and asked, "Have you any tidings of Herr von Fink?"

It was the first time since his departure that she had ever breathed his name. Anton felt how touching her confidence was, given in this hour of his sadness. In his emotion, he seized her hand, which she was slow in withdrawing.

"He is not happy in his new life," he gravely replied. "There was a savage humor in his last letter, from which I gather, even more than from his actual words, that the business into which his uncle's death has thrown him does not suit him."

"It is unworthy," cried Sabine.

"At all events, it is not what would be recognized as honorable in this house," replied Anton. "Fink is upright, and has lived too long with your brother to take pleasure in the wild

speculations so common on the other side the Atlantic. His partners and colleagues are for the most part men without a conscience, and his feelings revolt against their companionship."

"And can Herr von Fink tolerate such relations as these for a day?"

"It is a remarkable thing that he whose own will was ever so arbitrarily exercised, should now be obliged against that will to obey a pressure from without, and every where to work with his hands tied. The organization of such speculations in America is so complicated that one shareholder can do little to alter it; and, now that Fink has attained what used to be the goal of his wishes—a large capital, and the management of immense districts—his condition appears more uncertain than it ever was before. He was always in danger of thinking slightingly of others, now I am distressed at the bitter contempt he expresses for his own life. His last letter paints an intolerable state of things, and seems to point to some decisive resolve."

"There is only one resolve for him," cried Sabine. "May I ask what you said to him in reply?"

"I entreated him instantly, come what would, to free himself from the business in which he was entangled. I said that his own strong will might find a way of extrication, even if that which I pointed out proved impracticable. Then I begged of him either to carry out his old plan of becoming a landed proprietor in America, or to return to us."

"I knew that you would write thus," said Sabine, drawing a long breath. "Yes, Wohlfart, he shall return," said she, gently, "but he shall not return to us."

Anton was silent.

"And do you think that Herr von Fink will follow your advice?"

"I do not know. My advice was not very American."

"But it was worthy of you," cried Sabine, with proud delight.

"An officer wishes to speak to Mr. Wohlfart," said a servant at the door.

Anton sprang up. Sabine went to her flowers and bent mournfully over them. The shadows of others hovered still between her friend and her.

The few words spoken by the servant filled Anton with a vague terror. He hurried into the ante-room: there stood Eugene von Rothsattel. Anton was gladly rushing forward to greet him, but the young soldier's face of agony made him start back. He whispered, "My mother wishes to speak to you; something dreadful has occurred." Anton caught up his hat, ran into the office, hurriedly asked Baumann to excuse him to the principal, and then accompanied the lieutenant to the baron's house.

On the way, Eugene, who had lost all self-command, said unconnectedly to Anton, "My father last night accidentally wounded himself by a pistol-shot—a messenger was sent to summon me—when I came, I found my mother in a swoon—my sister and I do not know what to do—Lenore implored my mother on her knees to send for you—you are the only one in whom we have any confidence in our distress—I understand nothing about business, but my father's affairs must be in a dreadful state—my mother is beside herself—the whole house is in the greatest disorder."

From what Eugene said and what he did not say; from his broken sentences and his look of agony, Anton guessed at the horrors of the previous evening. In the boudoir of the baroness he found Lenore, weeping and exhausted.

"Dear Wohlfart!" cried she, taking his hand and beginning again to sob, while her head sank powerless on his shoulder.

Meanwhile Eugene walked up and down, wringing his hands, and at length throwing himself on the sofa, he gave himself up to silent tears.

"It is horrible, Mr. Wohlfart," said Lenore, lifting up her head. "No one may approach my father—Eugene may not, nor I—only my mother and old John are with him; and early this morning the merchant Ehrenthal was here, insisting that he must see my father. He screamed at my mother, and called my father a deceiver, till she fainted away. When I rushed into the room, the dreadful man went off threatening her with his clenched fist."

Anton led Lenore to a chair and waited till she had told him all. There was no possibility of comforting in this case, and his own heart was wrung to the utmost by the misery he witnessed.

"Call my mother, Eugene," said Lenore, at length.

Her brother left the room.

"Do not forsake us," implored Lenore, clasping her hands; "we are at the last gasp; even your help can not save us."

"He is dead who might perhaps have done so," mournfully replied Anton. "Whether I can be of any use I know not, but you can not doubt my willingness to be so."

"No," cried Lenore. "And Eugene, too, thought of you at once."

The baroness now entered. She walked wearily; but, steadying herself by a chair, she saluted

Anton with dignity. "In our position," said she, "we need a friend who knows more of business than we three do. An unfortunate accident prevents the baron—possibly for a long time to come—from managing his own affairs, and, little as I understand them, I can see that our interests require prompt measures. My children have mentioned you to me, but I fear I am unreasonable in asking you to devote your time to our service."

She sat down, beckoned Anton to take a chair, and said to her children, "Leave us; I shall be better able to tell Mr. Wohlfart the little that I know when I do not see your grief."

When they were alone, she motioned him nearer and tried to speak, but her lips quivered, and she hid her face in her handkerchief.

"Before I can consent, gracious lady," said he, "to your reposing in me such confidence as this, I must first inquire whether the baron has no relative or intimate friend to whom you could with less pain make such a communication. I pray you to remember that my own knowledge of business is but small, and my position not one to constitute me a proper counselor to the baron."

"I know no one," said the baroness, hopelessly. "It is less painful to me to tell you what I can not conceal, than to one of our own circle. Consider yourself a physician sent for to visit a patient. The baron has this morning told me some particulars of his present circumstances." And then she proceeded to relate what she had gathered as to the nature of his embarrassments, the danger in which the family property was placed, and the capital needed to take possession of the Polish estate.

"My husband," continued she, "has given me the key of his desk, and he wishes Eugene, with the help of a man of business, to go over his papers. I now request of you to make this examination together with my son. When you need explanations, I will try to obtain them from the baron. The question is now, whether you are inclined to undertake this trouble for us, who are only strangers."

"I am most willing to do so," earnestly replied Anton; "and I hope that the kindness of my principal will allow me the time needful for the purpose, if you do not consider it more advisable to depute the baron's experienced legal adviser to the task."

"There will be an opportunity of asking that gentleman's advice later," said the baroness.

Anton rose. "When do you wish to begin?"

"Immediately. I fear there is not a day to lose. I shall do all I can to help you look the papers over." She led Anton into the next room, called in Eugene, and unlocked the baron's desk. As she opened it she lost her self-command for a moment, and moving to the window, the quivering of the curtains betrayed the anguish that shook her fragile frame.

The mournful task began. Hour after hour passed. Eugene was in no condition to peruse any thing, but his mother reached letters and documents to Anton, and, though often obliged to desist a while, she bravely returned to the task. Anton placed the papers in order, and sought, by glancing over each, to arrive at least at a superficial view of the facts of the case.

It was evening, when the old servant opened the door in dismay, and called out, "He is there again." The baroness could not repress a slight scream, and made a gesture of aversion.

"I have told him that no one is at home, but he will not be dismissed; he makes such a noise on the steps. I can not get rid of him."

"It will kill me if I hear his voice again," murmured the baroness.

"If the man be Ehrenthal," said Anton, rising, "I will try to get him away. We have now done what was most necessary; have the goodness to lock up these papers, and to allow me to return to-morrow." The baroness silently assented, and sank back in her chair. Anton hurried off to the ante-room, whence he could hear Ehrenthal's loudly-raised voice.

The appearance of the usurer shocked him. His hat pushed half off his head, his pale face swelled as if by drinking, his glazed eyes red with tears, Ehrenthal stood before him, calling in broken sentences for the baron, wailing and cursing alternately. "He must come! he must come at once!" cried he; "the wicked man! A nobleman, indeed! he is a vagabond, after whom I will send the police. Where is my money? Where is my security? I want my mortgage from this man who is not at home."

Anton went straight up to him, and asked, "Do you know me, Mr. Ehrenthal?" Ehrenthal turned his glazed eyes upon him, and gradually recognized the friend of his dead son.

"He loved you!" he cried, in a lamentable voice. "He spoke to you more than to his father. You were the only friend that he had on earth. Have you heard what has happened in the house of Ehrenthal?" continued he, in a whisper. "Just as they stole the papers he died. He died with a hand like this," and clenching his fist he struck his forehead. "Oh my son! my son! why didst not thou forgive thy father!"

"We will go to your son," said Anton, taking the arm of the old man, who unresistingly allowed himself to be led back to his own house.

From thence Anton hurried to Councilor Horn, with whom he had a long conversation.

It was late before he returned home. In the midst of his anxiety about those whose prosperity had filled his imagination years before, the confidence that they, in their adversity, reposed in him, dilated his breast with a feeling of pride. He burned with desire to help them, and hoped that his zealous devotion might yet find some way of rescue. As yet he saw none. Looking up at the great building before him, so firm and secure, in the moonlight, a thought flashed into his mind. If any man could help them, it was his principal. His keen eye would be able to unravel all the dark secrets in which the baron was entangled, and his iron strength of will would crush the villains who held the unfortunate nobleman in their power. And then he had a noble nature; he always decided on the right, without an effort or a struggle. Anton looked at the first floor. The whole house-front was dark, but in a corner room a light still burned. It was the private office of his chief.

With sudden resolve, Anton begged the servant to take him to Mr. Schröter, who looked with amazement at the unexpected visitor, and asked what brought him, and whether any thing had happened.

"I implore your counsel—I implore your help," cried Anton.

"For yourself or for others?" inquired the merchant.

"For a family with whom I have accidentally become connected. They are lost if a strong hand does not ward off the impending catastrophe." Anton then rapidly related the occurrences of the afternoon, and, seizing his principal's hand in his emotion, cried, "Have pity upon the unhappy ladies, and help them."

"Help them!" replied the merchant; "how can I? Have you been commissioned to apply to me, or are you only following the impulse of your own feelings?"

"I am not commissioned; it is only the interest that I take in the baron's fate which leads me to you."

"And what right have you to inform me of facts communicated in strict confidence to yourself by the baron's lady?" asked the merchant, dryly.

"I am committing no indiscretion in telling you what will, in a few days, be no secret, even to strangers."

"You are unusually excited, otherwise you would not forget that, under no circumstances whatever, does a man of business venture to make such a communication without the special permission of the parties concerned. Of course, I shall make no wrong use of what you have said, but it was by no means business-like, Wohlfart, to be so open toward me."

Anton was silent, feeling, indeed, that his principal was right, but yet it seemed hard to be blamed for reposing confidence at such a time as this. The merchant walked silently up and down; at length, stopping before Anton, he said, "I do not now inquire how you come to take so warm an interest in this family. I fear it is an acquaintance you owe to Fink."

"You shall hear all," said Anton.

"Not at present. I will now content myself with repeating that it is impossible for me to interfere in these affairs without being specially applied to by the parties themselves. I may add that I by no means wish for such an application, and do not disguise from you that, were it made, I should probably decline to do any thing for the Baron Rothsattel."

Anton's feelings were roused to the utmost. "The question is the rescue of an honorable man, and of lovely and amiable women from the toils of rogues and impostors. To me, this seems the duty of every one; I, at least, consider it a sacred obligation which I dare not shrink from. But without your support I can do nothing."

"And how do you think this embarrassed man can be helped?" inquired the merchant, seating himself.

With somewhat more composure, Anton replied: "In the first instance, by an experienced man of business making himself master of the case. There must be some way of circumventing these villains. Your penetration would discover it."

"Any attorney would be far more likely to do so, and the baron might readily engage the services of experienced and upright legal advisers. If his enemies have done any thing illegal, the quick eye of a lawyer is the most likely to detect it."

"Alas! the baron's own lawyer gives but little hope," replied Anton.

"Then, my dear Wohlfart, no other is likely to do much good. Show me an embarrassed man who has strength to grasp an offered hand, and bid me help him, and for the sake of all I owe you, I will not refuse to do so. I think you are convinced of this."

"I am," said Anton, dejectedly.

"From all I hear, however," the merchant went on, "this is not the case with the baron. From what I gather from general report, as well as from you, his embarrassments arise from his having fallen into the hands of usurers, which proves him deficient in what alone ennobles the life of any man—good sense, and the power of steady exertion."

Anton could only sigh his assent.

"To help such a man," inexorably continued the merchant, "is a futile attempt, against which reason may well protest. We are not to despair of any, but want of strength is the most hopeless case of all. Our power of laboring for others being limited, it becomes our duty to inquire, before we devote our time to the weak, whether we are not thus diminishing our chances of helping better men."

Anton interrupted him. "Does he not deserve every allowance to be made for him? He was brought up to exact much; he has not learned, as we have, to make his way by his own labor."

The merchant laid his hand on the young man's shoulder. "The very reason. Believe me, a large number of these landed gentry, who pay the penalty of their old family memories, are beyond help. I am the last to deny that many worthy and admirable men belong to this class. Indeed, wherever remarkable talent or nobility of character shoots up among them, no doubt their position offers peculiar scope for its development, but for average men it is not a favorable one. He who considers it his hereditary privilege to enjoy life, and who assumes a distinguished position in virtue of his family, will very often fail to put forth his whole strength in order to deserve that position. Accordingly, numbers of our oldest families are declining, and their fall will be no loss to the state. Their family associations make them haughty without any right to be so—limit their perceptions and confuse their judgment."

"Even if all this be true," cried Anton, "it does not absolve us from helping individuals of the class who have excited our sympathy."

"No," said the principal, "if it be excited. But it does not glow so rapidly in advancing years as in youth. The baron has endeavored to isolate his property from the current of circumstances, in order to leave it forever to his family. Forever! You, as a merchant, know how to estimate the attempt. True, every rational man must allow it to be desirable that the culture of the same soil should be handed down from father to son. We all prize what our forefathers have possessed before us, and Sabine would unlock every room in this house with pride, because her great-great-grandmother turned the same keys before her. It is therefore natural that the landed proprietor should desire to preserve those familiar scenes, which are the source of his own prosperity, to those nearest and dearest to him. But there must be means to this end, and these means are the making his own existence available for the maintenance and increase of his patrimony. Where energy dies in families or individuals, then it is well that their means die too, that their money should circulate through other hands, and their plowshare pass to those who can guide it better. A family that has become effete through luxury ought to sink down into common life, to make room for the uprising of fresh energies and faculties. Every one who seeks, at the cost of free activity for others, to preserve permanent possessions and privileges for himself or his family, I must look upon as an enemy to the healthy development of our social state. And if such a man ruin himself in his endeavors, I should feel no malicious pleasure in his downfall, but I should say that he is rightly served, because he has sinned against a fundamental law of our social being; consequently, I should consider it doubly wrong to support this man, because I could but fear that I should thus be supporting an unsound condition of the body politic."

Anton looked down mournfully. He had expected sympathy and warm concurrence, and he met with disaffection and coldness that he despaired of conquering. "I can not gainsay you," he at length replied; "but in this case I can not feel as you do. I have been witness to the unspeakable distress in the baron's family, and my whole soul is full of sadness and sympathy, and of the wish to do something for those who have opened their heart to me. After what you have said, I dare no longer ask you to trouble yourself with their affairs, but I have promised the baroness to assist her as far as my small powers permit, and your kindness allows. I implore you to grant me permission to do this. I shall endeavor to be regular in my attendance at the office, but if during the next few weeks I am occasionally absent, I must ask you to excuse me."

Once more the merchant walked up and down the room, and then, looking at Anton's excited face, with deep seriousness and something of regret, he replied, "Remember, Wohlfart, that every occupation which excites the mind soon obtains a hold over a man, which may retard as well as advance his success in life. It is this which makes it difficult to me to agree to your wishes."

"I know it," said Anton, in a low voice; "but I have now no choice left."

"Well, then, do what you must," said the merchant, gloomily; "I will lay no hinderance in your way; and I hope that after a few weeks you will be able to consider the whole circumstances more calmly." Anton left the room, and the merchant stood looking long with frowning brow at the place his clerk had occupied.

Nor was Anton in a more congenial mood. "So cold, so inexorable!" exclaimed he, as he reached his own room. He began to suspect that his principal was more selfish and less kindly than he had hitherto supposed. Many an expression of Fink's recurred to his mind, as well as that evening when young Rothsattel, in his boyish conceit, had spoken impertinently to the merchant. "Is it possible," thought he, "that that rude speech should be unforgotten?" And his chief's keen, deep-furrowed face lost inexpressibly by contrast with the fair forms of the noble ladies. "I am not wrong," he cried to himself; "let him say what he will, my views are more just than his, and henceforth my destiny shall be to choose for myself the way in which I shall walk." He sat long in the darkness, and his thoughts were gloomy as it; then he went to the window to look down into the dark court below. A great white blossom rose before him like a phantom. Striking a light, he

saw that it was the beautiful Calla out of Sabine's room. It hung down mournfully on its broken stem. Sabine had had it placed there. This little circumstance struck him as a mournful omen.

Meanwhile Sabine, taper in hand, entered her brother's room. "Good-night, Traugott," nodded she. "Wohlfart has been with you this evening; how long he staid!"

"He will leave us," replied the merchant, gloomily.

Sabine started and dropped her taper on the table. "For God's sake, what has happened? Has Wohlfart said that he was going away?"

"I do not yet know it, but I see it coming step by step; and I can not, and still less can you, do any thing to retain him. When he stood before me here with glowing cheeks and trembling voice, pleading for a ruined man, I found out what it was that lured him away."

"I do not understand you," said Sabine, looking full at her brother.

"He chooses to become the confidential friend of a decayed noble. A pair of bright eyes draws him away from us: it seems to him a worthy object of ambition to become Rothsattel's man of business. This intimacy with nobility is the legacy bequeathed to him by Fink."

"And you have refused to help him?" inquired Sabine, in a low voice.

"Let the dead bury their dead," said the merchant, harshly; and he turned to his writing-table.

Sabine slowly withdrew. The taper trembled in her hand as she passed through the long suite of rooms listening to her own footfall, and shuddering as the feeling came over her that an invisible companion glided by her side. This was the revenge of that other. The shadow that once fell on her innocent life now drove her friend away from their circle. Anton's affections clung to another. She had but been in his eyes a mere stranger, who had once loved and languished for one now far away, and who now, in widow's weeds, looked back regretfully to the feelings of her youth.

The few next weeks were spent by Anton in over-hard work. He had great difficulty in keeping up his counting-house duties, while he spent every spare hour in conference with the baroness and the lawyer.

In the mean time, the misfortunes of the baron ran their course. He had not been able to pay the interest of the sums with which his estate was burdened. When last they were due, a whole series of claims was brought against him, and the estate fell under the administration of the district authorities. Complicated lawsuits arose. Ehrenthal complained loudly, claiming the first mortgage of twenty thousand dollars—nay, he was inclined to advance claims on the last mortgage offered by the baron in the recent fatal hour. Löbel Pinkus also appeared as claimant of the first mortgage, and asserted that he had paid the whole sum of twenty thousand dollars. Ehrenthal had no proof to bring forward, and had been for some weeks past quite unable to manage his own affairs, while Pinkus, on the contrary, fought with every weapon a hardened sinner can devise or employ, and the deeds which the baron had executed at Veitel's suggestion proved to be so capital a master-stroke of the cunning advocate, that the baron's man of business had, from the first, little hope of the case. We may here observe that Pinkus did eventually win it, and that the mortgage was made over to him.

Anton was now gradually gaining some insight into the baron's circumstances. But the double sale of the first mortgage was still kept a secret by the latter, even from his wife. He declared Ehrenthal's claim unfounded, and even expressed a suspicion that he had himself had something to do with the robbery in his office. Indeed, he really believed this. Then the name of Itzig was never broached, and the suspicion against Ehrenthal, which the baron's lawyer shared, prevented Anton seeking any explanation from him.

Meanwhile, an estrangement had sprung up between our hero and his principal, which the whole counting-house remarked with surprise. The merchant scowled at Anton's vacant seat when the latter chanced to be absent during office-hours, or looked coldly at his clerk's face, made pale as it was with excitement of mind and night-work. He took no notice of his new occupation, and never seemed to remark him. Even to his sister he maintained a stiff-necked silence; nor could all her attempts lead him to speak of Anton, who, on his side, felt his heart revolt against this coldness. After his return, to be treated like a child of the house, praised, promoted, petted, and now to be treated like a mere hireling, who is not worth the bread thrown to him; to be a toy of an incomprehensible caprice—this, at least, he had not deserved; so he became reserved toward the whole family, and sat silent at his desk; but he felt the contrast between the now and the then so keenly, that often, when alone, he would spring up and stamp on the ground in the bitter indignation of his heart.

One comfort remained. Sabine was not estranged. True, he saw little of her, and at dinner she seemed to avoid speaking to him, but he knew that she was on his side.

A few days after his first conversation with the merchant, she came down stairs as he stood in the hall, and had to pass him by so closely that her dress touched him. He had retreated, and made a formal bow, but she looked at him imploringly, and whispered, "You must not be estranged from me." It was an affair of a moment, but the faces of both were radiant with a happy understanding.

The time had now arrived when Mr. Jordan was to quit the firm. The principal again called Anton into his little office, and without any severity, but also without a trace of his former cordiality,

began: "I have already mentioned to you my intention of appointing you Jordan's successor; but, during the last few weeks, your time has been more taken up with other business than would be compatible with such a post, I therefore ask you whether you are now at liberty to undertake Jordan's duties?"

"I am not," replied Anton.

"Can you name any—not very distant—time when you will be free from your present occupation? In that case I will endeavor to find a substitute until then."

Anton sorrowfully replied, "I can not at present say when I shall again be master of my whole time; and, besides, I feel that, even as it is, I tax your indulgence by many irregularities. Therefore, Mr. Schröter, I beg that you will fill up this post without any reference to me."

The merchant's brow grew furrowed and dark, and he silently bowed assent. Anton felt as he closed the door that the estrangement between them was now complete, and, resuming his place, he leaned his throbbing head on his hand. A moment later Baumann was summoned to the principal, and Jordan's situation conferred upon him. On returning to the office, he went up to Anton and whispered, "I refused at first, but Mr. Schröter insisted. I am doing you an injustice." And that evening Mr. Baumann, in his own room, read in the first book of Samuel the chapters treating of the unjust Saul (the principal), and of the friendship between Jonathan and the persecuted David, and strengthened his heart thereby.

The next day Anton was summoned to the baroness. Lenore and her mother sat before a large table covered with jewel-boxes and toilette elegances of every description, while a heavy iron chest stood at their feet. The curtains were drawn, and the subdued light shone softly into the richly furnished room. On the carpet glowed wreaths of unfading flowers, and the clock ticked cheerfully in its alabaster case. Under the shade of flowering plants sat the two love-birds in their silvered cage, hopping from perch to perch, screaming ceaselessly, or sitting up quietly close to each other. The whole room was beauty and perfume. "For how long?" thought Anton. The baroness rose. "We are already obliged to trouble you again," said she; "we are engaged in a very painful occupation." On the table were all manner of ornaments, gold chains, brilliants, rings, necklaces, gathered into a heap.

"We have been looking out all that we can dispense with," said the baroness, "and now pray you to undertake to sell these things for us. I have been told that some of them are of value, and as we are now in much need of money, we turn here for help."

Anton looked in perplexity at the glittering heap.

"Tell us, Wohlfart," cried Lenore, anxiously, "is this necessary? can it be of any use? Mamma has insisted upon setting apart for sale all our ornaments, and whatever plate is not in daily use. What I can give is not worth talking of, but my mother's jewels are costly; many of them were presents made to her in youth, which she shall not part with unless you say that it is necessary."

"I fear," said Anton, gravely, "that it will prove so."

"Take them," said the baroness to Anton; "I shall be calmer when I know that we have at least done what we could."

"But do you wish to part with all?" inquired Anton, anxiously. "Much that is dear to you may have but little value in a jeweler's eyes."

"I shall never wear an ornament again," quietly replied the baroness. "Take them all;" and, holding her hands before her eyes, she turned away.

"We are torturing my mother," cried Lenore, hastily; "will you lock up all that is on the table, and get them out of the house as soon as you can?"

"I can not undertake the charge of these valuables," said Anton, "without taking some measures to decrease my own responsibility. First of all, I will in your presence make a short note of all you intrust to me."

"What useless cruelty!" exclaimed Lenore.

"It will not take long."

Anton took out a few sheets from his pocket-book, and began to note down the different articles.

"You shall not see it done, mother," said Lenore, drawing her mother away, and then returning to watch Anton at his task.

"These preparations for the market are horrible," said she. "My mother's whole life will be sold; some memory of hers is linked with every single thing. Look, Wohlfart, the princess gave her this diamond ornament when she married my father."

"They are magnificent brilliants," cried Anton, admiringly.

"This ring was my grandfather's, and these are presents of poor papa's. Alas! no man can know how we love all these things. It was always a festival to me when mamma put on her diamonds. Now we come to my possessions. They are not worth much. Do you think this bracelet good gold?" She held out her hand as she spoke.

"I do not know."

"It shall go with the rest," said Lenore, taking it off. "Yes, you are a kind, good man, Wohlfart," continued she, looking trustfully into his tearful eyes; "do not forsake us. My brother has no experience, and is more helpless than we are. It is a frightful position for me. Before mamma I do all I can to be composed, else I could scream and weep the whole day through." She sank in a chair, still holding his hand. "Dear Wohlfart, do not forsake us."

Anton bent over her, and looked with passionate emotion at the lovely face that turned so trustfully to him in the midst of its tears.

"I will be helpful to you when I can," said he, in the fullness of his heart. "I will be at hand whenever you need me. You have too good an opinion of my information and my faculties; I can be of less assistance to you than you suppose, but what I can, that I will do in any and every possible way."

Their hands parted with a warm pressure; the affair was settled.

The baroness now returned. "Our lawyer was with me this morning," said she; "and now I must ask for your opinion on another subject. He tells me that there is no prospect of preserving the baron's family estate."

"At this time, when interest is high, and money difficult to get, none," replied Anton.

"And you, too, think that we must turn all our efforts toward preserving the Polish property?"

"I do," was the answer.

"For that, also, money will be necessary. Perhaps I may be able through my relatives to intrust you with a small sum, which, with the help of that"—she pointed to the iron chest—"may suffice to cover the first necessary expenses. I do not, however, wish to sell the jewels here, and a journey to the residence would be necessary in order to procure the sum to which I have just alluded. The baron's lawyer has spoken most highly of your capacity for business. It is his wish which now decides me to make a proposal to you. Will you for the next few years, or, at all events, until our greatest difficulties are over, devote your whole time to our affairs? I have consulted my children, and they agree with me in believing that in your assistance lies our only hope of rescue. The baron, too, has come in to the plan. The question now is whether your circumstances allow you to give your support to our unfortunate family. We shall be grateful to you, whatever conditions you affix; and if you can find any way of making our great obligations to you apparent in the position you hold, pray impart it to me."

Anton stood petrified. What the baroness required of him was separation from the firm, separation from his principal, and from Sabine! Had this thought occurred to him before, when standing in Lenore's presence or bending over the baron's papers? At all events, now that the words were spoken, they shocked him. He looked at Lenore, who stood behind her mother with hands clasped in supplication. At length he replied, "I stand in a position which I can not leave without the consent of others. I was not prepared for this proposal, and beg to have time allowed me for consideration. It is a step which will decide my whole future life."

"I do not press you," said the baroness; "I only request your consideration. Whatever your decision be, our warmest gratitude will still be yours; if you are unable to uphold our feeble strength, I fear that we shall find no one to do so. You will think of that," she added, beseechingly.

Anton hurried through the street with throbbing pulse. The noble lady's glance of entreaty, Lenore's folded hands, beckoned him out of the gloomy counting-house into a sphere of greater liberty, into a new future, from whose depths bright images flashed out upon his fancy. A request had been frankly made, and he was strongly inclined to justify the confidence that prompted it. Those ladies required an unwearied, self-sacrificing helper to save them from utter ruin, and if he followed his impulse he should be doing a good work—fulfilling a duty.

In this mood he entered the merchant's dwelling. Alas! all that he saw around him seemed to stretch out a hand to detain him. As he looked at the warehouse, the good-humored faces of the porters, the chains of the great scales, the hieroglyphics of the worthy Pix, again he felt that this was the place that he belonged to. Sabine's dog kissed his hand, and ran before him to his room—his and Fink's room. Here the childish heart of the orphan boy had found a friend, kind companions, a home, a definite and honorable life-purpose. Looking down through his window on all the long-familiar objects, he saw a light in Sabine's store-chamber. How often he had sought for that light, which brightened the whole great building, and brought a sense of comfort and cheerfulness even into his room. He now sprang up suddenly, and said to himself, "She shall decide."

Sabine started in amazement when Anton appeared before her. "I am irresistibly impelled to seek you," cried he. "I have to decide upon my future life, and I feel undetermined, and unable to trust to my own judgment. You have always been a kind friend to me since the day of my arrival. I am accustomed to look up to you, and to think of you in connection with all that interests me here. Let me hear your opinion from your own lips. The Baroness Rothsattel has to-day proposed to me permanently to undertake the situation of confidential adviser and manager of the baron's affairs. Shall I accept; or shall I remain here? I know not—tell me what is right both for myself and others."

"Not I," said Sabine, drawing back and growing very pale. "I can not venture to decide in the matter. Nor do you wish me to do so, Wohlfart, for you have already decided."

Anton looked straight before him and was silent.

"You have thought of leaving this house, and a wish to do so has sprung out of the thought. And I am to justify you, and approve your resolve! This is what you require of me," continued she, bitterly. "But this, Wohlfart, I can not do, for I am sorry that you go away from us."

She turned away from him and leaned on the back of a chair.

"Oh, be not angry with me too!" said Anton; "that I can not bear. I have suffered much of late. Mr. Schröter has suddenly withdrawn from me the friendly regard that I long held my life's greatest treasure. I have not deserved his coldness. What I have been doing has not been wrong, and it was done with his knowledge. I had been spoiled by his kindness; I have the more deeply felt his displeasure. My only comfort has been that you did not condemn me. And now, do not you be cold toward me, else I shall be wretched forever. There is not a soul on earth to whom I can turn for affectionate comprehension of my difficulties. Had I a sister, I should seek her heart to-day. You do not know what to me, lonely as I am, your smile, your kindly shake of the hand has been till now. Do not turn coldly from me, I beseech you."

Sabine was silent. At length she inquired, still with averted face, "What draws you to those strangers; is it a joyful hope, is it sympathy alone? Give this question close consideration before you answer it to yourself at least."

"What it is that makes it possible for me to leave this house," said Anton, "I do not myself know. If I can give a name to my motives, it is gratitude felt toward one. She was the first to speak kindly to the wandering boy on his way out into the world. I have admired her in the peaceful brightness of her former life. I have often dreamed childish dreams about her. There was a time when a tender feeling for her filled my whole heart, and I then believed myself forever the slave of her image. But years bring changes, and I learned to look on men and on life with other eyes. Then I met her again, distressed, unhappy, despairing, and my compassion became overmastering. When I am away from her, I know that she is nothing to me; when I am with her, I feel only the spell of her sorrow. Once, when I had to depart out of her circle like a culprit, she came to me, and before the whole scornful assembly she gave me her hand and acknowledged me her friend; and now she comes and asks for my hand to help her father. Can I refuse it? Is it wrong to feel as I do? I know not, and no one can tell me—no one but you alone."

Sabine's head had sunk down to the back of the chair on which she bent. She now suddenly raised it, and with tearful eyes, and a voice full of love and sorrow, cried, "Follow the voice that calls you. Go, Wohlfart, go."

CHAPTER XXVII.

On a cold October day, two men were seen driving through the latticed gate of the town of Rosmin on toward the plain, which stretched out before them monotonous and boundless. Anton sat wrapped in his fur coat, his hat low on his forehead, and at his side was young Sturm, in an old cavalry cloak, with his soldier's cap cocked cheerily on one side. In front of them a farm-servant, squatted on a heap of straw, flogged on the small horses. The wind swept the sand and straw from the stubble-fields, the road was a broad causeway without ditches or hedges, the horses had to wade alternately through puddles and deep sand. Yellow sand gleamed through the scanty herbage in all directions wherever a field-mouse had made her way to her nest or an active mole had done what he could to diversify the unbroken plain. Wherever the ground sank, stagnant water lodged, and there hollow willow-trees stretched their crippled arms in the air, their boughs flapping in the wind, and their faded leaves fluttering down into the muddy pool below. Here and there stood a small dwarf pine, a resting-place for the crows, who, scared by the passing carriage, flew loudly croaking over the travelers' heads. There was no house to be seen on the road, no pedestrian, and no conveyance of any kind.

Karl looked every now and then at his silent companion, and said at last, pointing to the horses, "How rough their coats are, and how pretty their gray mouse skins! I wonder how many of these beasties would go to make up my sergeant's horse! When I took leave of my father, the old man said, 'Perhaps I shall pay you a visit, little one, when they light the Christmas-tree.' 'You'll never be able,' said I. 'Why not?' asked he. 'You'll never trust yourself in any post-chaise.' Then the old boy cried, 'Oho! post-chaises are always of a stout build; I shall be sure to trust myself in one.' But now, Mr. Anton, I see that my father never can pay us a visit."

"Why not?"

"It is possible that he may reach Rosmin; but, as soon as he sees these horses and this road, he will instantly turn back. 'Shall I trust myself,' he'll say, 'in a district where sand runs between one's legs like water, and where mice are put into harness? The ground is not firm enough for me.'"

"The horses are not the worst things here," said Anton, absently. "Look! these go fast enough."

"Yes," replied Karl, "but they don't go like regular horses; they entangle their legs like two cats playing in a parsley-bed. And what things they have for shoes—regular webbed hoofs, I declare, which no blacksmith can ever fit."

"If we could only get on!" returned Anton; "the wind blows cold, and I am shivering in spite of my fur."

"You have slept but little the last few nights, sir," said Karl. "The wind blows here as if over a threshing-floor. The earth is not round hereabouts as elsewhere, but flat as a cake. This is a complete desert; we have been driving for more than an hour, and there is not a village to be seen."

"A desert indeed," sighed Anton; "let us hope it may improve." They relapsed into profound silence. At length the driver stopped near a pool, unharnessed the horses, and led them to the water's edge, without noticing the travelers.

"What the deuce does this mean?" cried Karl, jumping down from the carriage.

"I am going to feed," replied the servant, sulkily, in a foreign accent.

"I am anxious to know how that will be done," said Karl. "There is not the shadow of a bag of provender."

The horses, however, soon proved that they could live without corn; they stretched down their shaggy heads, and began to pull the grass and weeds at the edge of the pool, sometimes taking a draught of the dirty water. Meanwhile the servant drew a bundle from under his seat, settled himself under the lee of an alder-bush, and, taking his knife, cut his bread and cheese without even glancing at the travelers.

"I say, Ignatius or Jacob," cried Karl, sharply, "how long will this breakfast of yours last?"

"An hour," replied the man, munching away.

"And how far is it from here to the estate?"

"Six miles, or maybe more."

"You can make nothing of him," said Anton; "we must put up with the customs of the country;" and, leaving the carriage, they went to look on at the horses feeding.

Anton is on his way to the Polish property. He is now the baron's agent. Anxious months have the last proved to him. The parting from his principal and the firm had been painful in the extreme. For some time before it, indeed, Anton had found himself alone in the midst of his colleagues. The quiet Baumann still remained his friend, but the others considered him a castaway. The merchant received his resignation with icy coldness; and even in the hour of parting, his hand lay impassive as metal in Anton's grasp. Since then, our hero had undertaken several journeys to the capital and to creditors in the family's behalf, and now he was on his way to set the new estate in order, accompanied by Karl, whom he had induced to become the baron's bailiff.

Ehrenthal had, by the authority conferred on him, taken possession of the property from the time of the sale by auction, and hired the Polish bailiff for the baron. There had been unfair dealings between them at the time, and it was well known in Rosmin that the bailiff had sold off a good deal, and been guilty of all sorts of frauds since, so that Anton had even now no prospect of a quiet life.

"The hour is come when I may execute my commission," cried Karl, groping in the straw under the seat. He drew out a large japanned tin case, and carried it to Anton. "Miss Sabine gave me this in charge for you." He then joyously opened the lid, produced the materials for an excellent breakfast, a bottle of wine, and a silver goblet. Anton took hold of the case.

"It has a very knowing look," said Karl. "Miss Sabine planned it herself."

Anton examined it on all sides, and placed it carefully on a tuft of grass; then he took up the goblet, and saw his initials engraved on it, and underneath the words, "To thy welfare." Whereupon he forgot the breakfast and all around him, and stood gazing at the goblet, lost in thought.

"Do not forget the breakfast, sir," suggested Karl, respectfully.

"Sit down by me, my faithful friend; eat and drink with me. Leave off your absurd politeness. We shall have but little, either of us, but what we have we will share like brothers. Take the bottle if you have no glass."

"There's nothing like leather," said Karl, taking a small leathern drinking-cup out of his pocket. "As for what you have just said, it was kindly meant, and I thank you; but there must be subordination, if it were but for the sake of the others; and so, sir, be kind enough to let me shake hands with you now, and then let things be as they were before. Only look at the horses, Mr. Anton. My faith! the creatures devour thistles."

Again the horses were harnessed, again they threw out their short legs in the sand, and again the carriage rolled through the barren district—first through an empty plain, next through a wretched fir-wood, then past a row of low sand-hills, then over a tumble-down bridge crossing a

small stream.

"This is the property," said the driver, turning round, and pointing with his whip to a row of dirty thatched roofs that had just come into sight.

Anton stood up to look for the group of trees in which the Hall might be supposed to stand. Nothing of the sort to be seen. The village was deficient in all that adorns the home of the poorest German peasant—no orchard, no hedged-in gardens, no lime-trees in the market-place.

"This is wretched," said he, sitting down again; "much worse than they told us in Rosmin."

"The village looks as if under a curse," cried Karl; "no teams working in the fields—not a cow or a sheep to be seen."

The farm-servant flogged his horses into an irregular gallop, and so they passed through the rows of mud huts which constituted the village, and arrived at the public house. Karl sprang from the carriage, opened the tavern door, and called for the landlord. A Jew slowly rose from his seat by the stove and came to the threshold. "Is the gendarme from Rosmin come?" He is gone into the village. "Which is the way to the farm-yard?"

The landlord, an elderly man with an intelligent countenance, described the way in German and Polish, and remained standing at the door—bewildered, Karl declared, by the sight of two human beings. The carriage turned into a cross-road, planted on both sides with thick bushes, the remains of a fallen avenue. Over holes, stones, and puddles, it rattled on to a group of mud huts, which still had a remnant of whitewash upon them. "The barns and stables are empty," cried Karl, "for I see gaps in the roofs large enough to drive our carriage through."

Anton said no more; he was prepared for every thing. They drove through a break between the stables into the farm-yard, a large irregular space, surrounded on three sides by tumble-down buildings, and open to the fields on the fourth. A heap of *débris* lay there—lime and rotten timber, the remains of a ruined barn. The yard was empty; no trace of farm implements or human labor to be seen. "Which is the inspector's house," inquired Anton, in dismay. The driver looked round, and at last made up his mind that it was a small one-storied building, with straw thatch and dirty windows.

At the noise of the wheels a man appeared on the threshold, and waited phlegmatically till the travelers had dismounted, and were standing close before him. He was a broad-shouldered fellow, with a bloated, brandy-drinking face, dressed in a jacket of shaggy cloth, while behind him peered the muzzle of an equally shaggy dog, who snarled at the strangers. "Are you the steward of this property?"

"I am," replied the man, in broken German, without stirring from where he was.

"And I am the agent of the new proprietor," said Anton.

"That does not concern me," growled the shaggy man, turning sharp round, entering the house, and bolting the door within.

Anton was thoroughly roused. "Break the window in, and help me to catch the rascal," cried he to Karl, who coolly seized a piece of wood, struck the panes so as to make the rotten framework give way, and cleared the opening at one leap. Anton followed him. The room was empty, so was the next, and in it an open window—the man was gone.

"After him!" cried Karl, and dashed on in pursuit, while Anton looked about the house and out-buildings. He soon heard the barking of a dog, and saw Karl capture the fugitive. Hurrying to his help, he held the man fast, while, with a kick, Karl sent the dog flying. They then contrived to force the steward back to the house, though he kept striking out violently all the way.

"Go to the tavern, and bring the gendarme and the landlord," cried Anton to the driver, who, undisturbed by all that had been going on, had meanwhile unpacked the carriage. The man accordingly drove leisurely off, and the fugitive being got into the room, Karl found an old cloth, and with it bound his hands behind his back. "I beg your pardon, sir," said he; "it is only for an hour or so, till the arrival of the Rosmin gendarme, whom we have appointed to meet us."

Anton then proceeded to examine the house, but there was nothing to be found but the merest necessaries; no books nor papers of any kind. It had doubtless been emptied already. A bundle projected from the coat-pocket of the prisoner, which turned out to be receipts and legal documents in Polish. In time, the driver returned with the landlord and the armed policeman. The landlord stood at the door in some perplexity, and the policeman explained in a few moments what remained to be done. "You must make a statement to the local judge, and give the man up to me. He shall go back in your carriage to Rosmin. You will do well to get rid of him, for this is a wild country, and it will be safer for you to have him at Rosmin than here, where he has friends and accomplices."

After a long search, a sheet of paper was found in a cupboard, the statement made and submitted to the policeman, who shook his head a little over the Polish composition, and the prisoner lifted into the carriage, the gendarme taking his seat beside him, and saying to Anton, "I have long expected something of the kind. You may have often occasion to want me again." The carriage then drove away, and thus the property came under Anton's administration. He felt as if cast on a desert island.

His portmanteau and traveling effects were leaning against a mud wall, and the Polish landlord was the only man who could give him and Karl any information or advice in their forlorn condition.

Now that the steward was fairly gone, the landlord grew more communicative, and showed himself serviceable and obliging. A long conversation ensued, and its purport was what Anton had apprehended from the warning given by the Commissary Walter and other Rosmin officials. The inspector had, during the last few weeks, done all he could in the way of spoliation, rendered daring by a report which had found its way from the town to the village, that the present proprietor would never be able to take possession of the estate. At last Anton said, "What that wretched man has done away with he will have to account for; our first care must be to preserve what is still to be found on the property. You must be our guide to-day."

They then examined the empty buildings. Four horses and two servants—they were gone into the wood—a few old plows, a pair of harrows, two wagons, a britzska, a cellar full of potatoes, a few bundles of hay, a little straw—the inventory did not take much time in drawing up. The buildings were all out of repair, not through age, but neglect.

"Where is the dwelling-house?" inquired Anton. The landlord led the way out of the yard to the meadow—a broad plain, gradually sloping down to the level of the brook. It had been a great pasture. The cattle had trodden it down into holes; the snouts of greedy swine had rooted it up; gray molehills and rank tufts of grass rose on all sides.

The landlord stretched out his hand. "There is the castle. This castle is famous throughout the whole country," he added, reverentially; "no nobleman in the district has a stone house like that. All the gentry here live in wood and mud buildings. Herr von Tarow, the richest of them, has but a poor dwelling."

About three hundred yards from the last out-building rose a great brick edifice, with a black slate roof and a thick round tower. Its gloomy walls on this treeless pasture-land, without one trace of life around, rose beneath the cloudy sky like a phantom fortress which some evil spirit had evoked from the abyss—a station from which to blight all the surrounding landscape.

The strangers approached it. The castle had fallen into ruins before the builders had finished their task. The tower had stood there for ages. It was built of unhewn stone, and had small windows and loop-holes. The former lords of the land had looked down from its summit on the tops of the trees, which then stretched far into the plain. They had then ruled with a rod of iron the serfs who cultivated their land, and toiled and died for them. Many an arrow had sped through those loop-holes at the enemy storming below, and many a Tartar horse had been overthrown before those massive walls. Years ago, a despot of the district had, in expiation of former sins, begun to add to the gray tower the walls of a holy monastery; but the monastery never got finished, and the useless walls had already stood there long, when the late count took it into his head to convert them into a lordly dwelling for his race, and to raise a house unparalleled for magnificence in the whole country.

The front of the house was added on to both sides of the tower, which projected in the middle. The intention had been to have a high terrace-road up to the castle, and the principal entrance had been made in the tower, and arched over; but the terrace never having been formed, the stone threshold of the main door was quite inaccessible without the help of ladders, and the wide opening was left. The window-spaces of the lower floor were merely closed up with boards, while on the second story were some window-frames of beautifully carved wood, in which large panes had once been placed, but they had got broken. In other windows were temporary frames of rough deal, with small panes of muddy glass let into them. A company of jackdaws sat on the top of the tower, looking down in amazement on the strangers, and every now and then one flew off, screaming loudly, to contemplate the intruders from a new point of view.

"A house for crows and bats, not for human beings," said Anton. "At least, I see no way of getting into it."

The landlord now took them round the building. Behind, where the two wings made a sort of horse-shoe, there were low entrances to the cellars and offices; beneath which, again, were stables, great arched kitchens, and small cells for the serfs. A wooden staircase led to the upper story. The door turned creaking on its hinges, and a narrow passage took them through a side wing to the front part of the house. There all was at least magnificently planned. The circular entrance-hall—an arched room of the old tower—was painted in mosaic, and through the great doorway-opening was seen a wide expanse of country. A broad staircase, worthy of a palace, led up to another round hall, with narrow windows, the second story of the tower. On each side lay suites of apartments: large, lofty, desolate rooms, with heavy oak folding-doors, and dirty plastered walls, the ceiling made of fir branches arranged in squares; in some rooms colossal green tile stoves, in other rooms no stoves at all; in some, beautiful inlaid floors, in others rude deal boards. An immense saloon, with two gigantic chimney-pieces, had merely a provisional ceiling of old laths. The castle was fitted for a wild Asiatic household, for hangings of leather and of silk from France, for costly woodwork from England, for massive silver services from German mines, for a proud master, numerous guests, and a troop of retainers to fill the halls and ante-rooms. The builder of the castle had looked back to the wealth of his wild ancestors when he devised the plan; he had had hundreds of trees cut down in the woods, and his hereditary bondsmen had kneaded many thousand bricks with their own hands and feet; but Time, the inexorable, had raised his finger against him, and none of his hopes had been realized. His ruin

first, and then his death, occurred during the progress of the building; and his son, brought up among strangers, had, as fast as one fool could, hurried on the ruin of his house. Now the walls of the Slavonic castle stood with doors and windows gaping wide, but no guest spoke his good wishes as he entered; only wild birds flew in and out, and the marten crept over the floors. Useless and unsightly the walls stood there, threatening to crumble and fall, like the race that had raised them up.

Anton passed with rapid step from room to room, vainly hoping to find one in which he could even imagine the two ladies, who were looking forward to this house as their asylum. He opened door after door, went up and down creaking steps, disturbed the birds who had flown in through the open archway, and still clung to their last summer's nest; but he found nothing save uninhabitable rooms, with dirty plastered walls, or without any plaster at all. Every where draughts, gaping doors, and windows boarded up. Some oats had been shaken out in the large saloon; and a few rooms looked as if they might have been temporarily made use of, but a few old chairs and a rude table were all the furniture they contained.

At length Anton ascended the decayed staircase in the tower, and found himself on its summit. Thence he saw the whole pile of building below him, and looked far into the plain. To his left the sun sank down behind gray masses of cloud into the depths of the forest; to his right lay the irregular square of the farm-yard, and beyond it the untidy village; behind him ran the brook, with a strip of meadow-land on either side. Wild pear-trees, the delight of the Polish farmer, rose here and there in the fields, with their thick and branching crowns; and under each was an oasis of grass and bushes, gayly colored by the fallen leaves. These trees, the dwelling-places of countless birds, alone broke the monotonous surface of the plain—these, and at the verge of the horizon, on all sides, the dark forest mentioned above. The sky was gray, the ground colorless, the trees and bushes that bordered the brook were bare, and the forest, with its promontories and bays, looked like a wall that separated this spot of earth from the rest of humanity, from civilization, from every joy and charm of life.

Anton's heart sank. "Poor Lenore! poor family!" he groaned aloud; "things look terrible, but they could be improved. With money and taste every thing is possible. This house might, without prodigious expense, be metamorphosed by the upholsterer into a gorgeous residence. It would be easy to level the pasture-land around—to sow it with fine grass—to intersperse it with a few gayly-colored flower-beds—and to plant out the village. Nothing is wanting to change the whole face of the district but capital, industry, and judgment. But how is the baron to procure these? To make any thing of this place should be the task of some fresh and active life, and the baron is broken down; and thousands of dollars would be needed, and years would pass away before the soil would do more than pay the expenses of its culture, or yield any interest whatever on the capital sunk in it."

Meanwhile Karl was contemplating two particular rooms in the upper story with a knowing eye. "These take my fancy more than any of the others," said he to the landlord; "they have plastered walls, floors, stoves—nay, even windows. To be sure, the panes are a good deal broken, but, till we can get better glass, paper is not to be despised. We will settle ourselves here. Could you get me somebody who knows how to handle a broom and scrubbing-cloth? Good, you can; and now listen: try to bring me a few sheets of paper; I have got glue with me; we will first get some wood, then I will heat the stove, melt my glue, and paper up broken panes. But, above all, help me to carry up our luggage from the yard—and let us be quick about it."

His zeal communicated itself to the landlord; the luggage was got up stairs; Karl unpacked a case full of tools of every kind, and the host ran to call his maid from the public house.

Meanwhile horses' hoofs rang on the court-yard, and some well-dressed men stopped before the late steward's dwelling, and knocked loudly at the closed door. At a call from Anton, Karl hurried up to them.

"Good-morning," said one, in rather labored German; "is the steward at home?"

"Where is the steward? where is Bratzky?" cried the others, impatient as their prancing horses.

"If you mean the former steward," replied Karl, dryly, "he will not run away from you though you do not find him here."

"What do you mean?" inquired the nearest horseman; "I beg that you will explain yourself."

"If you wish to speak to Mr. Bratzky, you must take the trouble of riding to the town. He is in custody."

The horses reared, and their riders closed round Karl, while Polish ejaculations were heard on all sides. "In custody! On what account?"

"Ask my master," replied Karl, pointing to the doorway in the tower, where Anton stood.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to the new proprietor?" inquired one of the party, taking off his hat. Anton looked down in amazement. The voice and face reminded him of a white-gloved gentleman whom he had met once before in a critical hour.

"I am the Baron Rothsattel's agent," replied he. The horse was pulled back, and the rider spoke a few words to his companions, upon which an older man with a fox-like face cried, "We are anxious to speak on private business with the late steward. We hear that he is in custody, and

beg you will tell us why."

"He tried to evade by flight the surrender of the property to me, and he is suspected of dishonest dealings."

"Are his effects confiscated?" inquired one of the riders.

"Why do you inquire?" returned Anton.

"I beg your pardon," said the other, "but the man happens accidentally to have some papers that belong to me in his house, and it might embarrass me if I could not get possession of them."

"His effects are gone with him to town," replied Anton. Once more there was a consultation, and then the riders, bowing slightly, galloped off to the village, halted a few minutes at the public house, and disappeared where the high road turned into the wood.

"What can they want, Mr. Wohlfart?" inquired Karl. "That was a strange flying visit."

"Yes, indeed," replied Anton; "I have reason to think it remarkable. If I am not much mistaken, I have met one of the gentlemen before in very different circumstances. Perhaps that fellow Bratzky knew how to make himself friends through the mammon of unrighteousness."

The evening now wrapped castle and forest in its dark mantle. The servants returned with the horses from the wood. Karl led them into Anton's presence, made them a short Polish oration, and received them into the service of the new proprietor. Next came the landlord to look after them, bringing oats and a bundle of wood, and saying to Anton, "I recommend you, sir, to be watchful during the night; the peasants sit yonder in the bar, and discuss your arrival; there are bad men about, and I would not be sure that one of them might not stick a match into the straw yonder, and burn down the farm-buildings for you."

"I am sure enough that they will do nothing of the kind," said Karl, throwing another log into the stove. "A fresh breeze is blowing right on to the village. No one would be such a fool as to set his own barns on fire. We shall take care to keep the wind in this point as long as we are here. Tell your people that. Have you brought me the potatoes I asked for?"

Anton appointed the landlord to return the next morning, and the travelers were left alone in the desolate house.

"You need not heed that hint, Mr. Anton," continued Karl. "All over the world drunken rascals have a trick of threatening fire; and, after all, with reverence be it said, it would be no great harm. And now, Mr. Anton, that we are by ourselves, let us think as little as possible about this Polish affair—let us set to and be comfortable."

"I'm all right," said Anton, drawing a chair to the stove. The wood crackled in the green tiles, and the red glare threw a warm light over the floor, and flickered pleasantly on the walls.

"The warmth does one good," said Anton; "but do you not perceive smoke?"

"Of course," replied Karl, who was boring round holes in the potatoes by the firelight. "Even the best stoves will smoke at the beginning of winter, till they get accustomed to their work, and this great green fellow has probably not seen fire for a generation, so it is not to be expected that he should draw kindly at once. Be so good as to cut a bit of bread and hold it to the fire. I am getting our candles ready." He took out a great packet of candles, stuck one into each potato, cut off the lower half, and placed them on the table, and then produced the japanned case. "This is inexhaustible," said he; "it will last till the day after to-morrow."

"That it will," said Anton, cheerily. "I am wonderfully hungry. And now let us consider how we shall manage our housekeeping. What we absolutely want we must get from the town; I will make a list at once. We will put out one candle, though—we must be economical."

The evening was spent in plans. Karl discovered that he could make part of the necessary furniture out of the boxes and boards about, and the laughter of the two companions sounded cheerfully through the rooms of the starost's dwelling. At last Anton proposed that they should go to bed. They shook down straw and hay, unbuckled their portmanteaus, and produced some blankets and coverlets. Karl fastened a lock that he had brought with him into the room door, examined the loading of his carbine, took up his potato, and said, with a military salute, "At what time does major general the agent wish to be called to-morrow?"

"You good fellow!" cried Anton, reaching out his hand from his straw bed.

Karl went into the next room, which he had chosen for himself. Soon both candles were extinguished—the first signs of life which had shone for years in the forsaken dwelling. But in the stove the little Kobolds of the castle lingered long over the newly-kindled fire; they hovered in the smoke wreaths, they knocked at doors and windows in amazement at the proceedings of the strangers. At length they assembled in a corner of the old tower, and began to dispute as to whether or not the flames lighted this evening would continue to burn, and to cast henceforth their cheerful glow on meadow, fields, and woods; and as they doubted whether the new order of things had strength enough to endure, the smoke drove the bats from their home in the chimney, and they came flapping down stupefied on the summit of the tower, while the owls in its crevices shook their round heads and hooted in the new era.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

He who has always trodden life's macadamized ways, hedged in by law, moulded by order, custom, form, handed down from generation to generation habits a thousand years old, and who finds himself suddenly thrown among strangers, where law can but imperfectly protect him, and where he must assert by daily struggles his right to exist—such a one realizes for the first time the full blessing of the holy circle woven round each individual by his fellow-men, his family, his companions in labor, his race, his country. Whether he lose or gain in foreign parts, he must needs change. If he is a weakling, he will sacrifice his own *manière d'être* to the external influences around him; if he has the making of a man in him, he will become one now. The possessions, perhaps the prejudices, that he has grown up with, will wax dearer to him than ever; and much that once he looked upon as things of course, like air and sunshine, will become his most prized treasures. It is in foreign countries that we first enjoy the dialect of home, and in absence that we learn how dear to us is our fatherland.

Our Anton had now to find out what he possessed and what he wanted.

The following morning they proceeded to view the entire property. It consisted of the mansion-house, with the lands and buildings adjacent, and of three farms. About half the land was arable, a small part laid down in meadow; about half was wood, bordered with barren sand. The castle and the village lay about the middle of the great clearing; two of the farms were at opposite points of the compass, east and west, and both were hid by projections of the forest. The third farm lay toward the south, and was entirely divided by a wood from the rest of the estate. It joined on to another Polish village, had its own farm-buildings, and had always been separately cultivated. It occupied about a quarter of the plain, had a distillery on it, and had been rented for many years by a brandy-merchant, well to do. His lease had been extended by Ehrenthal, but the sum he paid was low. However, his occupancy was at present a good thing for the property, as it insured some return for one portion of it, at least. The devastated wood was under the care of a forester.

The first walk through the portion adjacent to the castle was as little cheering as possible: the fields were, generally speaking, not prepared for winter-sowing; and wherever the marks of the plow appeared, the land had been taken possession of by the villagers, who regarded the neglected property as their perquisite, and looked morosely at the foreign settlers.

For years they had done none of the work that their feudal tenure required of them, and the village bailiff plainly told Anton that the community would resent any return to old customs. He pretended he did not understand a word of German, and even Karl's eloquence failed to conciliate him. The soil itself, neglected and weedy as it was, turned out generally better than Anton had expected, and the landlord boasted of his crops; but in the vicinity of the wood it was very poor, and in many places quite unfit for culture.

"This is a serious sort of day," said Anton, putting up his pocket-book. "Harness the britzska; we will drive to see the cattle."

The farm where the cattle were quartered lay to the west, about a mile and a half from the castle. A miserable stable and the cottage of a farm-servant was all they found there. The cows and a pair of draught oxen were under his charge, and he lived there with his wife and a half-witted herdsman. None of these people understood much German, or inspired any confidence: the wife was a dirty woman, without shoes and stockings, whose milk-pails looked as if long unwashed. The farm-servant, and sometimes the herdsman, plowed with the yoke of oxen wherever they chose; the cattle fed on the meadow land.

"Here is work for you," said Anton; "examine the cattle, and see what you can find of winter provender. I will make an inventory of the building and implements."

Karl soon came to report. "Four-and-twenty milch cows, twelve heifers, and an old bull; about a dozen cows, at most, are in profit, the rest mere grass-devourers: the whole of them are a poor set. Some foreign cows, probably Swiss ones, have been brought over and crossed with a much larger breed, and the result is ugly enough. The best cows have evidently been exchanged; for some wretched creatures are running about, the rest keeping aloof from them: they can't have been here long. As to fodder, there is hay enough for winter, and a few bundles of oat straw; no wheat straw at all."

"The buildings are out of order too," cried Anton, in return. "Drive now to the distillery. I have carefully examined the conditions of the lease, and am better up in it than in most things."

The carriage rolled over a shaky bridge that spanned the brook, then through fields and an expanse of sand scantily covered with arenaceous plants, in whose roots a pine-seed had nestled here and there, stretching dwarf branches over the waste; then came the woods, with many a gap, where lay nothing but yellow sand, and on all sides stumps overgrown with heath and brambles. Slowly the horses waded on. Neither of the strangers spoke, as both were engaged in observing every tree that a fortunate chance had allowed to grow and spread better than the rest.

At length the prospect widened, and another plain lay before them, monotonous and forest-bounded like the rest. Before them rose a church. They drove past a wooden crucifix, and

stopped at the court-yard of the farm. The tenant had already heard of their arrival; and perhaps he was better acquainted with the baron's circumstances than Anton could have wished, for he received them in a patronizing and self-sufficient manner, hardly taking the trouble to lead them into an unoccupied room. His first question, was, "Do you really believe that Rothsattel will be able to take possession of the estate? There is much to be done on it, and, from all I hear, the poor man has not got the capital required."

This cool demeanor exasperated Anton not a little; but he answered, with the composure that habits of business give, "If you wish to ask me whether the Baron Rothsattel will undertake the management of the estate, I have to say in reply that he will be all the better able to do so the more conscientiously his tenants and dependents perform their duties. I am here at present to ascertain how far you have done this. I have authority given me, by the terms of your lease, to examine your inventory. And if you value the baron's good-will, I recommend you to treat his representative more civilly."

"The baron's good-will is perfectly immaterial to me," said the inflated tenant. "But, since you speak of authority, perhaps you will show me your credentials."

"Here they are," said Anton, quietly drawing the document in question from his pocket.

The tenant read it carefully through, or at least pretended to do so, and rudely replied, "I am not very sure, after all, whether you have a right to look over my premises, but I have no objection to it; so go and inspect as much as you like." And, putting on his cap, he turned to leave the room, but Anton at once barred the way, and said, in his quiet, business voice, "I give you the choice of conducting me over your premises at once, or having an inventory drawn out by a lawyer. This last measure will occasion you unnecessary expense. I would besides remind you that the good-will of the proprietor is necessary to every tenant who wishes for an extension of his lease, and that yours will be out in two years' time. It is no pleasure to me to spend two hours in your society; but if you do not fulfill your contract, the baron will of course take advantage of it to break your lease. I give you your choice."

The tenant looked for a few minutes with a stupefied expression at Anton's resolute countenance, and at last said, "If you insist upon it, of course. I did not mean to offend." He then reluctantly touched his hat, and led the way into the court-yard.

Anton took out his tablets once more, and the survey began. 1. Dwelling-house: the roof out of order. 2. Cow-house: one side of the lower wall fallen; and so on. The survey was, on the whole, unsatisfactory; but Anton's business-like demeanor and Karl's martial aspect were not without their influence over the tenant, who gradually relaxed, and muttered out a few excuses.

When Anton got into the carriage again, he said to him, "I give you four weeks to rectify what we have found amiss, and at the end of that time I shall call again."

To which Karl added, "Will you have the kindness to raise your hat as you now see me do? This is the right moment for the ceremony. That's it! You will learn the proper thing in time. Drive on, coachman."

"When you return," continued Karl to Anton, "this man will be as obsequious as possible. He has grown bumptious on the farm."

"And the estate has grown the poorer because of him," said Anton. "Now, then, for the new farm!"

A poor dwelling-house on one side, a long row of sheep-pens on the other, a stable, and a barn.

"It is remarkable," said Karl, looking at the buildings from a distance, "the thatch has no holes, and in the corner there is a stack of new straw. By Jove! they have mended the roof."

"Here is our last hope," replied Anton.

As the carriage drew up, the heads of a young woman and a flaxen-haired child appeared for a moment at the window, then rapidly retreated.

"This farm is the jewel of the estate," cried Karl, jumping over the side of the carriage. "There are actually signs of a dunghill here; and there go a cock and hens—something like a cock too, with a tail like a sickle! And there is a myrtle in the window. Hurra! here is a housewife! here is the fatherland! here are Germans!"

The woman came out—a neat figure—followed by the curly pate, who, at the sight of strangers, put his fingers in his mouth, and crept behind his mother's apron.

Anton inquired for her husband.

"He can see your carriage from the field; he will be here immediately," said the wife, blushing. She invited them in, and hastily rubbed two chairs bright with her apron.

The room was small, but whitewashed; the furniture painted red, but kept very clean; the coffee-pot was simmering on the stove; a Black-forest clock ticked in the corner; on some hanging shelves stood two painted China figures, a few cups, and about a dozen books; and behind the little looking-glass on the wall there was a fly-flap, and a birch rod carefully bound round with red ribbon. It was the first comfortable room that they had seen on the estate.

"A song-book and a rod," said Anton, good-naturedly. "I do believe you are a good woman. Come here, flaxen-hair." He took the scared, stolid child on his knee, and made him ride there—walk—trot—gallop—till the little fellow at last got courage to take his fingers out of his mouth.

"He is used to that," said his mother, much pleased. "It is just what his father does when he is a good boy."

"You have had a hard time of it here," suggested Anton.

"Ah! sir," cried she, "when we heard that a German family had bought the estate, and that we had to keep things together for them, and thought they would soon come and perhaps drive over here, we were as glad as children. My husband was all day just like one who has been in the public house, and I wept for joy. We thought that at last there would be some order, and we should know what we were working for. My husband spoke seriously to the shepherd—he is from our part of the country—and they both resolved that they would not allow the steward to sell any more away. And so my husband told him. But weeks passed, and no one came. We sent every day to the village to inquire, and my husband went to Rosmin and saw the lawyer. But it seemed they were not coming after all, and that the estate would be sold again. Then, a fortnight ago, the steward came over with a strange butcher, and wanted my husband to give him the wethers; but he refused. At that they threatened him, and wanted to force their way into the sheep-pens; but the shepherd and my husband were too much for them; so off they went cursing, and declaring they would have the sheep yet. Since then a man has watched every night; there hangs a loaded gun which we have borrowed; and when the shepherd's dog barks, I get up, and am dreadfully frightened about my husband and child. There are dangerous men about here, sir, and that you will find."

"I hope things will improve," said Anton; "you lead a solitary life here."

"It is solitary indeed," said the woman, "for we hardly ever go to the village, and only sometimes on Sunday to the German village, where we go to church. But there is always something to be done about the house; and," continued she, somewhat embarrassed, "I will just tell you all, and if you don't approve, we can give it up. I have dug a little space behind the barn, we have hedged it in, and made a garden of it, where I grow what I want for cooking; and then," with increased embarrassment, "there are the poultry and a dozen ducks; and if you won't be angry, the geese on the stubble-fields, and," wiping her eyes with her apron, "there is the cow and the calf."

"Our calf!" cried the child, in ecstasy, slapping Anton's knees with his fat hands.

"If you do not approve of my having kept the cow for myself," continued the weeping woman, "we will give it up. My husband and the shepherd have had no wages since the last wool-shearing, and we have been obliged to buy necessaries; but my husband has kept an account of every thing, and he will show it you, that you may see that we are not dishonest people."

"I hope it will so appear," replied Anton, soothingly; "and now let us have a look at your garden; you shall keep it, if possible."

"There is not much in it," said the woman, leading them to the inclosed space where the beds were all prepared for their winter's rest. She stooped down, and gathered the few flowers remaining, some asters, and her especial pride, some autumn violets. Tying them together, she gave the nosegay to Anton, "because," said she with a pleasant smile, "you are a German."

A quick step was now heard in the yard, and in came the tenant with reddened cheeks, and made his bow to them.

He was a fine young man, with a sensible countenance and a trustworthy manner. Anton spoke encouragingly, and he readily produced his accounts.

"We will look over the stock now," replied Anton; "the books I will take with me. Come to me to-morrow at the castle, and we can arrange the rest."

"The horses are in the fields," said the tenant; "I drive one plow myself, and the shepherd's lad helps with the other. We have only four horses here; once there were twelve in the stable. We have of late cultivated little more than was necessary for ourselves and the cattle. There is a want of every thing."

However, the survey turned out cheering on the whole; the buildings were in tolerable repair, and the crops lately got in promised to keep the flocks through the winter. Last of all, the farmer, with a pleased smile, opened a door in his dwelling-house, and pointed out a heap of pease. "You have seen the straw and hay already," he said, "but here are the pease which I hid from the steward, thinking they belonged to you. Indeed, there was some selfishness in it," continued he, candidly, "for we were so placed that we got nothing, and I was obliged to think of some way of keeping the farm going in case the winter brought no help."

"Very good," said Anton, smiling; "I hope we shall understand each other well. And now to the sheep. Come with us, farmer."

The carriage rolled slowly along the fields, the tenant eagerly pointing out their condition. Not the fourth part of the land belonging to the farm was plowed; the rest had been in pasture for many years past.

As they approached the flocks, the only living creatures of any worth on the estate, Karl

impatiently jumped out.

The shepherd slowly came to meet the strangers, accompanied by his two dogs, one an old experienced character, who walked at the same pace as his master, and looked with as much intelligence and discrimination at the new authorities; the other a young fellow, a pupil, who vainly attempted to maintain the aspect of calm dignity becoming his responsible calling, but kept running with youthful eagerness ahead of his master, and barking at the strangers, till a growl of rebuke from his wiser companion brought him back to propriety. The shepherd took off his broad-brimmed hat with all civility, and waited to be addressed. As a man of intuition and reflection, he perfectly knew who he saw before him, but it would have ill become one whose whole life had been spent in restraining precipitation on the part of sheep and dogs to have evinced undue curiosity.

The farmer introduced the strangers to him with a circular movement of his hand, and the shepherd made several bows in succession, to show that he perfectly understood who they were. "A fine flock, shepherd," said Anton.

"Five hundred and five-and-twenty head," replied the shepherd. "Eighty-six of them lambs, forty fat wethers." He looked round the flock for a sheep, who deserved to be presented as a specimen, and suddenly stooping, caught up one by the hind legs, and exhibited the wool. Karl was intent in the examination. They were great strong sheep, well fitted for the country, and far exceeded, both in condition and wool, what might have been looked for. "If they get plenty of food, they give wool," said the shepherd, proudly. "It is first-rate wool."

A yearling was at that moment thoughtless enough to cough. The shepherd looked disapprovingly at it, and said, "The whole flock is perfectly healthy."

"How long have you been in service here?" inquired Anton.

"Nine years," was the reply. "When I came, the creatures were like the poodles in town, all bare behind. It has taken trouble to bring them round. No one else has ever seen after them, but they have not fared the worse for that. If I could only always have had pea-straw for them, and this winter, common pease for the mothers."

"We must see what can be done," said Anton; "but we shall have to be sparing in our management this winter."

"True," said the shepherd; "but, however, this is good pasture."

"I can well believe," said Anton, smiling, "that your sheep have nothing to complain of. There are few fields here which your dog has not barked over for years. I have been delighted to hear how bravely you have defended the property of your new master. Have the people about often behaved ill to you?"

"I can hardly say, sir," replied the shepherd; "men are every where alike—they are not to be depended on. I would rather bring up a colly than a man." He leaned upon his staff, and looked with satisfaction upon his dog, who, true to his post, had been barking round the flock, and now came back to give his master's legs a confidential flap with his tail. "Look at this dog! When I have had a dog in training for two years, he is either good or not. If not, I send him away, and have done with him; if good, I can trust him as I do myself, so long as he lives. That boy yonder with the wethers I have had three years with me, and I can never tell the hour that some confounded freak or other may not come into his head, or that, instead of driving my sheep to the right, he may not run off to the left. That's why I say there's not much reliance to be placed upon men."

"And on whom do you rely in this world?" asked Anton.

"First of all on myself, for I know myself; then on my dog Crambo, for I know him too, and, besides, I trust as I ought." He looked up for a moment, then gave a low whistle, and Crambo again set out on his rounds. "And you, sir," continued the shepherd, "shall you remain with the baron?"

"I think so."

"May I ask as what? You are neither steward nor bailiff, for you have not yet looked at the wethers. The wethers should be sold; it's high time for it. So may I ask what you are to the new landlord?"

"If you want a name, you may call me his accountant."

"Accountant," said the shepherd, thoughtfully; "then I am to discuss my allowance with you."

"You shall do so the next time we meet."

"There is no hurry," said the shepherd; "but one likes to know how one stands. There is a pane broken in my room; the glazier will be coming to the castle, and I hope, Mr. Accountant, you will remember me."

Karl and the farmer now joined them. "To the forester's!" cried Anton to the driver.

"You mean to go to the forester's?" inquired the farmer.

"To the forester's!" repeated the shepherd, drawing nearer.

"Why does that surprise you?" inquired Anton from the carriage.

"Only," stammered out the farmer, "because the forester is a strange man. If the baron himself were to come, he would not surrender."

"Does he live in a fortress, then?" inquired Anton, laughing.

"He locks himself up," said the tenant, "and lets no one enter; he has a way of his own."

"He is a wild man of the woods," said the shepherd, shaking his head.

"The Poles say that he is a magician," continued the farmer.

"He can make himself invisible," cried the shepherd.

"Do you believe that?" asked Karl, much amazed.

"Not I, but there are plenty in the village who do."

"He is a good sort of man at the bottom, but he has his oddities," affirmed the farmer.

"I hope he will respect my position," rejoined Anton; "it will be worse for him if he does not."

"It would be better that I should speak to the forester first," suggested the tenant. "Will you allow me to drive thither with you? He is on friendly terms with me."

"With all my heart; take the reins, and we will leave the servant to manage the plow till we set you down again on our way-back. And now then for this dangerous character."

The carriage turned into a road bordered with young firs, and leading into the wood. The ground was again sandy, and the trees poor. They went on over stories and stumps till at length the wood stopped altogether at a plantation apparently about fifteen years old: here the tenant fastened the reins round the trunk of a tree, and begged the gentlemen to dismount. They walked on through a thicket of young trees, whose long spikes brushed their clothes as they passed, and filled the air with a strong resinous perfume. Beyond this the ground sank, green moss spread a soft carpet round, and a group of giant pines reared their dark crowns high in the air: there stood the forester's house, a low wooden building surrounded by a strong wooden fence, and further guarded by a triple hedge of young fir-trees. A little spring trickled under the fence, and gurgled among a few large stones, overshadowed by giant ferns.

Altogether it was a picture that could not fail to please in this district of sand and heath. No one was to be seen about, and there was not a trace of a footstep on the moss: it was only the barking of a dog from within that announced the dwelling to be inhabited. They went round the hedge till they came to a narrow door, which was firmly bolted.

"His bull-finch sits above the window," said the tenant; "he is at home."

"Call him, then," desired Anton.

"He knows already that we are here," replied the man, pointing to a row of small openings in the hedge; "look at his peep-holes. He is watching us; but this is always his way. I must give him a signal, or he will never open." Accordingly, he put two fingers in his mouth, and whistled three times, but there was no reply. "He is a cunning fellow," said the tenant, perplexed, whistling again so shrilly that the dog's bark changed into a howl, and the bull-finch began to flap his wings.

At last a rough voice sounded on the other side of the fence. "Who the deuce are you bringing with you?"

"Open, forester," cried the tenant; "the new gentry are come."

"Go to the devil with your gentry; I am sick of the whole race."

The tenant looked in perplexity toward Anton. "Open the door," said the latter, authoritatively; "it will be better for you to do of your own accord what I can force you to do."

"Force!" said the voice. "How will you manage that, pray?" The double barrel of a gun now made its appearance through a hole in the door, turning conveniently to one side, then the other.

"Your gun will not help you," was the reply; "we have that on our side which will henceforth be stronger in this forest than brute force, and that is law and our right."

"Indeed!" asked the voice. "And who, then, are you?"

"I am the agent of the new proprietor, and command you to open the door."

"Is your name Moses or Levi?" inquired the voice. "I will have nothing to do with an agent. Whoever comes to me as an agent, I set down for a rogue."

"A plague upon your hard head," cried Karl, in a towering passion. "How dare you speak so disrespectfully of my master, you crazy Jackboots you!"

"Jackboots!" said the voice. "I like that; that sounds more like fair dealing than any thing I have

heard for a long time." The bolts were shot back, and the forester appeared at the door, which he shut behind him. He was a short, broad-set man, with grizzled hair, and a long gray beard, which hung down on his breast; a pair of keen eyes shone out of his furrowed face; he wore a thick shaggy coat, out of which sun and rain had expelled every trace of color, carried his double-barreled gun in his hand, and looked defiance at the strangers. "Who is bullying here?" said he.

"I am," answered Karl, stepping forward; "and you shall get something besides hard words if you continue in your insubordination."

"What sort of a cap is that you wear?" asked the old man, looking hard at him.

"Have you grown into a mere fungus here in your wood that you do not know it?" replied Karl, settling his soldier's cap more firmly on his head.

"Hussar?" asked the forester.

"Invalid," was the reply.

The old man pointed to a small strip of ribbon on his coat. "Militia," said he; "1813 and 1814."

Karl made a military salute. "All honor to you, old boy; but you are a rough one, notwithstanding."

"Well, you are not much like an invalid," said the forester; "you look wild enough, and know how to rap out an oath. So you are neither tradesman nor steward?" said he, turning to Anton.

"Now do behave like a sensible man," said the farmer. "This gentleman has been empowered to take possession of the estate, and to manage every thing till the family come. You will get yourself into sad trouble with your obstinate ways."

"Indeed!" said the forester. "Don't be anxious about me; I shall manage well enough. So you are an agent, are you?" said he, turning to Anton. "Of late years I have had enough of agents; and I'll tell you what," he went on, coming a few steps nearer, "you'll find neither books nor accounts with me. This is the state of things: For five years I, as the forester in charge of this wood, have been quarreling with agents. Each agent has put ever so much timber into his pocket, and at last the villagers have come from all the country round and carried off whatever they liked, and when I held my gun under their nose, they thrust a rascally bit of paper under mine, in which, forsooth, they had got leave from the agent. I had nothing more to say, and so I have just taken care of myself. There is but little game, but what I have shot I have eaten, and have sold the skins—for one must live. It's five years since I have touched a farthing of salary—I have paid myself. Every year I have taken fifteen of these trees. As far as to the clearing yonder, the wood is ninety years old. I reckon that they will last me about three winters longer. When the last is felled, I will shoot my dog, and choose out a quiet spot in the forest for myself." He looked down darkly at his gun. "I have lived here thirty years; I have buried my wife and my children in the German church-yard, and I don't trouble myself about what is to befall me now. So far as my dog's bark can be heard and my gun reach, the wood is in order; the rest belonged to the agent. That is my reckoning, and now you may do what you like with me;" and, much excited, he stamped the butt-end of his gun on the ground.

"I shall reply to what I have just heard," said Anton, "in the house and room which henceforth belongs to your master, the Baron Rothsattel." He stepped up to the door and laid his hands on its wooden bolt. "I take possession of this in the name of the new proprietor." Then opening it, he beckoned to the forester: "Keep back your dogs, and lead us in as you ought."

The old man made no opposition, but slowly preceded them, called down his dogs, and opened the house door.

Anton entered with his companions. "And now, forester, that you have opened the house," said he, "we will proceed to an arrangement at once. What has hitherto been done here by you can not be altered, and shall not be discussed; but from this day forth you will receive your regular allowance, and matters must be put on a different footing. I now place the forest, and all that belongs to the forest department, under your charge. Your duty now is to stand up for your master's rights, and from this time forward I make you responsible for them. I shall protect you as far as I can, and shall claim for you the protection of the law. We shall be severe in prosecuting all who damage this wood any further. This estate shall be better managed henceforth, and your new master expects that you will help him to do so, as a faithful and obedient man should. And there must be an end of this wild life of yours in the bush; we are fellow-countrymen, you know. You will come regularly to the castle and report the state of things, and we will take care that you shall not feel desolate in your old days. If you purpose honestly to fulfill the requirements I have just been making, give me your hand on it."

The forester had stood abashed, listening, cap off, to Anton's address, and he now took the hand offered to him, and said, "I do."

"With this shake of the hand, then," continued Anton, "I take you into the service of the present proprietor."

The forester held Anton's hand in both his, and at length exclaimed, "If I live to see things improve on the estate, I shall rejoice. I will do all I can, but I tell you beforehand we shall have a hard fight for it. Owing to the agents and the rascally management, the people on the estate are become a pack of robbers, and I am afraid that my old gun will often be obliged to have the last

word of the argument."

"We will neither do wrong nor suffer wrong, and we must take the consequences," was the earnest reply. "And now, forester, show us your house, and then accompany us into the wood."

Anton then went over the little building: it was entirely of rough wood. The light fell dimly through the small windows, and the brown walls and blackened beams increased the darkness, and gave the room a mysterious aspect. It was difficult at first to distinguish the objects on the walls: antlers, dogs' collars, huntsmen's horns, whips, and stuffed birds. On the stove stood a small press with cooking apparatus.

"I cook for myself," said the forester, "and get what I want from the public house."

There were several birdcages in the windows, and a constant trilling and chirping going on within them. Near the stove sat a raven, whose rough plumage, and the white feathers about his beak and wings, proved his great age. He had drawn his head in between his shoulders, and seemed self-absorbed, but in reality his bright eye was observing every movement of the strangers.

Next came the bed-room, where several guns were hanging. A grating before the window proved that this was the citadel of the house.

"Where does that door lead to?" asked Anton, pointing to a trap-door in the floor.

"To a cellar," replied the forester, with some embarrassment.

"Is it arched?"

"I will take you down, if you will come alone."

"Wait for us," cried Anton to his companions in the room.

The forester lit a lantern, carefully bolted the door, and went first with the light.

"I had not thought," said he, "that any eyes but mine would see my secret in my lifetime."

A few steps led them into a narrow vault, one side of which had been broken through, and a low subterranean passage made, supported by stems of trees triangularly placed.

"That is my run," said the forester, holding the candle down, "and it leads into the young wood. It is more than forty yards long, and I was a great while excavating it. This is the way I creep in and out unobserved; and I may thank it that I am here still, for this is why the stupid villagers believe me a sorcerer. When they have watched me go into the house, and think they may steal in safely, I suddenly appear among them. Two years ago a band of them broke into my house, and it would have been all up with me but that I slunk out here like a badger. Do not betray to any one what I have just shown you."

Anton promised that he would not, and they went back into the little inclosure, where they found Karl occupied in fastening, between four blocks that he had driven into the ground, the wooden trough of a young fox. The fox, insensible to this delicate attention on the part of the hussar, snarled at him, rattled his chain, and tried all it could, under the board that Karl had placed across its kennel, to get at his hands.

"Do you want to kiss my hands, little red-head?" cried Karl, hammering away. "You are a pretty fellow! What a pair of soft truthful eyes you have, to be sure! Now, there, it's done; jump backward and forward as much as you like. He does what's told him, forester; a good-natured beast—something of your own character, comrade."

The forester laughed. "Do you know how to set about trapping a fox?"

"I should think so," said Karl.

"There are plenty more such fellows here," continued the old man; "if you like, we will go after them next Sunday."

And so they went together through the wood, all on the best terms possible. Anton called the forester to his side, and got much information from him. Certainly, he had nothing very cheering to tell. Of wood fit for cutting there was hardly enough for the use of the family and tenants. The old system of plunder had done its worst here. As they reached the carriage, the forester respectfully touched his hat, and asked at what hour in the morning he should come to the castle.

Anton rejoiced to have succeeded so well in concealing the feeling of insecurity which made his present position an irksome one to him.

"You see," said he to his faithful ally, as they both sat over the green tile stove at evening, "what disturbs me most is that I feel more ignorant and helpless than any of the servants about, and yet I have got to maintain their respect. These two last days have taught me how little mere good-will can do. Now, then, give me some sensible advice. What shall be our next step?"

"First sell off all the cattle that are out of profit, and instantly dismiss the good for nothing people who have them in charge. Bring cattle and horses to the farm-yard, that we may have them under our own eyes. What can be done in farming with our small means shall be done regularly, not hurried over. We must buy straw and oats for the present. Till next year, when a regular bailiff

will be wanted, give me the charge of things; I shall not do much, to be sure, but more than any of your other people."

It was already late, when a quick step was heard on the stairs. With a great stable-lantern in his hand, and a face full of bad news, the landlord made his appearance in Anton's room. "I wished to tell you, sir, what I have heard. A German from Kunau, who has just passed through, has brought word that Bratzky never got to Rosmin yesterday."

"Never got there!" cried Anton, springing up.

"About two miles from Rosmin, in the wood, four riders fell upon the carriage. It was dark; the riders overpowered the gendarme and bound him, took off Bratzky and all his things, mounted him on one of the horses, and off with him into the bush. Two of them remained with the carriage, and obliged the driver to turn out of the road into a thicket, and there they staid two whole hours, holding their loaded pistols at the gendarme and the driver all the time. The driver said the horses were gentlemen's horses, and that the riders spoke like gentry. The gendarme was bruised, but otherwise unhurt, and they took your paper away from him."

Anton and Karl looked at each other significantly, and thought of the party of the day before.

"Where is the man who has brought the news?" asked Anton, snatching up his hat.

"He was in a hurry to get on before dark. To-morrow we shall hear more. Such a thing has not happened for years as mounted men falling upon a carriage with a gendarme in it. When a robbery has been committed, it has always been on foot."

"Did you know the riders who were in the village yesterday afternoon, and who were calling for the steward?" inquired Anton.

The host cast a sly glance at him, and seemed reluctant to answer.

"Nay," continued Anton, "you must have known them all; they belonged to this part of the country."

"Why should not I know them?" replied the landlord, in some perturbation. "It was the rich Herr von Tarow himself with his guests. A powerful man, Mr. Wohlfart, who has the command of the police on your property too. And as to what he wanted with Bratzky? Bratzky, as inspector, has had to do with the police, and has often been employed by the gentry in buying and selling horses, and in other ways too. If the head of the police wanted to speak to the inspector, why should not he? The Von Tarows are a clever set, who know what they are about in speaking and acting." So far the landlord, with much fluency, but his eyes and the expression of his countenance told a very different tale.

"You have a suspicion," cried Anton, looking fixedly at him.

"God preserve me from all suspicion!" continued the landlord, horrified at the idea. "And Mr. Wohlfart, if you will allow me to tell you my opinion, why should you go and suspect any one either? You will have enough to do on the property here, and will need the gentry round in many ways. Why should you make enemies for no purpose? This is a country where the gentlemen ride in parties, and then divide, put their heads together, and then start off in different directions. He is wisest who does not trouble himself about them."

When the landlord was gone, Anton said gloomily to Karl, "I am afraid that, besides our trouble with the property, much of a different nature is going on around us, which all our skill will not be able to set right."

This singular circumstance set the whole country in a ferment. Anton was often summoned to Rosmin in the course of the next few weeks, but his depositions led to no result, the authorities not succeeding in discovering the offenders, or in getting hold of the abducted steward.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Our two colonists spent the next few weeks in such active pursuits, that every night, when they threw themselves upon their beds, they were quite exhausted.

Karl had been duly installed as bailiff, and held the reins of management with a firm hand, and Anton had committed the care of the house and kitchen to a hard-working woman, whom he found in one of the German settlements around. The most difficult matter had been to establish tolerably satisfactory relations with the adjacent village; but Anton's calm decision had at all events prevented any outbreak of opposition. One of his first measures had been to appeal, in all cases of breach of trust or dereliction of duty, to the proper authorities. Karl's cavalry cloak attracted a few men who had served; and through these, the most civilized part of the community, the settlers gained some influence over others. At length, several voluntarily offered to become servants at the castle, or day-laborers on the estate.

Anton had written to the baroness, not disguising from her the state of the property, nor the unfriendly feeling of the district, and his own anxiety about the family moving thither in the course of the next winter. He had asked whether she would not prefer to remain till spring in the

capital. In reply, he received a letter from Lenore, in which she told him, on the part of her parents, that they abode by their former resolve to leave the town, which had now become a painful residence to them all. She therefore begged him to have the castle put into a habitable condition as soon as possible.

Anton called out to his ally, "They are actually coming."

"They are, are they?" said Karl. "It is fortunate that we have heard of workmen—masons, joiners, locksmiths, glaziers, potters, and so on. If you will allow me, I will at once send a messenger off to Rosmin. If I could only get off this ugly brown paint from the door—it hides the beautiful oak carving. But lye won't stir it. And then how many stoves shall we want?"

An important conversation now began. "We must leave the whole lower floor unoccupied," Anton said, "closing up the windows with thick boards; but we shall have to put up a strong door in the hall, because one is constantly passing through it. These walls, too, can not remain as they are, and we have no one to trust to but the Rosmin mason."

"Since that is the case," said Karl, "I propose that we paint the walls ourselves. I am a dab-hand at marbling."

"You are?" replied Anton, looking at him with some anxiety. "No; I think we had better make all the rooms one color. What do you think of brown?"

"Hum—not bad," said Karl.

"I know it is a favorite color of Fräulein Lenore's. It must not be too dark, though, but a bright mixture of yellow, gray, red, and green, with, perhaps, a little black in it."

"Aha!" said Karl, disconcerted; "a peculiar sort of brown, I suppose."

"Of course," continued Anton, eagerly drawing his chair nearer; "we will mix it ourselves."

"That's my way," said Karl; "but I tell you beforehand, these chalk colors are the very deuce! You paint a blue, the next day you have white; you have the most beautiful orange in your brush, and when it has dried on the wall it is a dirty yellow."

"Between ourselves," replied Anton, "we shall not succeed very perfectly, but I think we shall manage to make things look tolerably comfortable."

The following day the hammering and painting began. The joiner and his men set up a workshop on the lower floor; above, the great brush of the painter kept unwearyingly passing and repassing over the walls, and white figures, with great aprons, carried buckets now up, now down. As for Karl, he seemed to have a dozen hands. Whenever he could get away from the farm, he painted woodwork and walls with all sorts of brushes. He ran round with a foot-measure, drove in nails and hooks for curtains, and the very next moment there he was again in the field or the stable, but every where whistling his soldier's songs and urging on the laborers. As the arrangements of the house progressed, his love of beautifying became more and more developed. He bought a quantity of oil-paint, which he found excellent, and displayed a decided talent for the art. He now ventured to give to several objects, which seemed to him qualified to receive it, the appearance of finely-polished wood, and, with the aid of a soft brush and a bunch of feathers, succeeded in producing wonderful effects. He even carried his brush and his beautifying into the farm-yard, and teased Anton into consenting to a general whitewashing of the mud walls. "They will dry in this weather just as well as in summer," said he. "My only regret is, that I can't wash the straw thatch." To make up for that, however, he was determined to give the two new potato-carts and the best plow a coating of beautiful blue oil-paint. "One must have something pleasant for the eye to rest on here," said he, by way of apology. "And it will pay for itself, for these Poles get on better with gayly-colored things."

The castle was temporarily arranged, and the arrival of the family expected on a cold December day. The sky had carried out Karl's wishes, most effectually covering the earth with a pure white mantle, and hiding many an eyesore from the expected party. The snow lay thick on pasture and sands, the summits of the pines wore white crowns, and the leafless shrubs glittered with frost-crystals. The ugly straw thatches were whitewashed to some purpose, the broken parapets of the bridge filled up. Each projection of the castle walls, the top of the tower, the whole roof, was capped with dazzling white, while the red-brown walls stood out in bold relief below. Within, it was a busy and exciting day. Wagons of furniture and stores were unpacked, and all arranged as well as the haste allowed. The farmer's wife and the housekeeper wove great garlands of fir-branches, and decorated the hall and the room doors. The sun set, and the silver landscape turned to gold, till the rising moon suffused it with a mysterious blue light. Several lamps were lit in the house, as many candles as possible placed in the apartments, the stoves all burned cheerily, and the fir-twigs filled the air with their fragrance. The gay curtains were drawn, and the open suite of rooms looked so habitable, that Anton asked himself in amazement how the labors of a few weeks could have wrought such a change as this. Karl had placed pitch-pans on both sides of the castle, and they shed a cheerful glow around.

Meanwhile all the dependents assembled in the hall—the forester in a new green coat, the memorial of his battles on his breast, a deer-hound at his side, stood in military attitude next to the German farmer and the shepherd. The housekeeper and the farmer's wife had put their best ribbons on their caps, and tripped to and fro in restless expectation. Karl, too, appeared in his hussar's frock.

Meanwhile Anton went once more through the rooms, and listened for the crack of the whip that should announce the baron's arrival. His own heart beat: for him, too, a new era was about to begin. After all, his life here had been a pleasant one enough hitherto: he and his trusty ally had felt themselves the masters of the castle, and had got through their anxieties cheerfully together. Now, however, Karl must take up his quarters in the farm-yard, while Anton, according to the wish of the baroness, was to occupy a room in the castle, so that he must come into daily relations with the family, and he now asked himself of what nature these would be. The baron was almost a stranger to him: how would he suit this baron? And he was blind too—yes, blind. Lenore had written him word that the surgeon gave no hope of the injured optic nerve ever recovering. This had been kept back from the sufferer, who comforted himself with the hope that time and skill might yet remove the dark cloud from his eyes. But Anton confided the truth to Karl, and was obliged to tell all the dependents that the baron was at present suffering from his eyes, and obliged to wear a bandage over them; and he read upon the faces of all that they felt this was a misfortune for the property. And his heart beat unquietly, too, when he thought of Lenore, with whom he should now be brought into constant contact. How would she and her mother treat him? He determined carefully to suppress what he now felt to have been idle claims, and so to behave from the first as to afford them no cause for mortifying his self-respect. And yet he could not help wondering whether they would treat him as a friend and an equal, or make him feel that he was a hired dependent. It was in vain that he said to himself that his own feelings made the latter arrangement desirable; he could not check the delightful visions that would arise of life led with Lenore on equal terms.

The crack of the whip was now heard in the village, and soon the family and establishment arrived. The farm-servants, the landlord, and a few of the villagers were grouped around the pitch-pans. The farmers rushed forward to open the carriage-door, and as Lenore jumped out, and her face was seen, the women pressed nearer, and the men broke out into loud acclamations. All looked in eager expectation at the carriage. But the welcome met with no return. The baron was got out with some difficulty, and with sunken head, supported by his wife and daughter, he toiled up the steps. The pale face of the baroness from behind him had only a mute glance for the tenants and servants—only a short nod of recognition for Anton, who proceeded to lead them to their suite of rooms.

"All very nice, Mr. Wohlfart," said she, with quivering lips; and as he remained standing and waiting for his first orders, she dismissed him with a wave of the hand, and the words, "I thank you." When the door had closed upon Anton, the baron stood helpless in the strange room, and the baroness broke out into loud weeping. Lenore leaned against the window, looking out into the snow-covered plain, with its black wall at the horizon, and great tears rolled silently down her cheeks. It was with a heavy heart that Anton returned to tell the people assembled that the family were fatigued and overcome, and would not be seen by them till the morning. Karl had the carriage unpacked, and led the old cook, who wept like her mistress, into the underground kitchen. None of the family reappeared that evening, and the light was soon put out in their rooms; but the pitch still glowed and flickered in the wind, and a black cloud rose above the window where the baron sat hiding his face in his hands.

Such was the entrance of this family upon their new estate.

"How beautifully Wohlfart has arranged every thing!" said Lenore to her mother the following day.

"These high rooms are dreadful," replied the baroness, wrapping her shawl around her; "and the monotonous brown of the walls makes them still more desolate!"

"It is surely time to send and ask him to come here and speak to us?" suggested Lenore, timidly.

"Your father is not yet in a mood to speak to him."

"Do not leave my father alone with Wohlfart," implored Lenore. "It would be horrible if he were to treat him rudely."

The baroness sighed. "We must accustom ourselves to pay to a stranger in our house a degree of attention and observance which will be irksome both to your father and to us."

"How will you arrange about the housekeeping?" asked Lenore, again. "Wohlfart will, of course, have his meals with us?"

"Impossible!" said the baroness, firmly. "You know what a melancholy thing our dinner is. Your father is not yet calm enough to be able to bear the daily presence of a stranger."

"Is he to eat with the servants, then?" asked Lenore, bitterly.

"He will have his table laid in his own room, and on Sundays we shall always invite him, and, if he is not disagreeable to your father, often in the evenings also. More would be troublesome to all parties. It is desirable to reserve at first a comfortable amount of freedom. Your father's state will be sufficient excuse."

She rang, and Anton was summoned. Lenore went to meet him, and with tearful eyes silently held out her hand. Anton was moved when he saw the traces of suffering in her mother's face. The baroness prayed him to be seated, and in well-chosen words expressed her gratitude for all he had done, and asked him both for information and advice. Then she went on to say, "My husband wishes to speak to you. I earnestly beg you to remember that the baron is an invalid. He has

suffered fearfully in mind and body. He is never free from pain, and his helplessness distresses him inexpressibly. We are careful to avoid whatever may excite him, and yet we can not avert dark hours, nay, days. You, sir, will be considerate if his gloomy mood should affect you disagreeably. Time, they say, heals all. I hope it will restore him to peace."

Anton promised all possible consideration.

"My husband will naturally wish to be placed in possession of all the facts connected with this property, and yet I dread any painful impressions for him. Therefore, whenever you have any thing important to communicate, try to make the matter intelligible to me in the first instance. I may thus spare you much that is disagreeable. I shall have my writing-table carried into one of the rooms near yours, and I shall daily spend part of my mornings there. Lenore is her father's private secretary. And now, be kind enough to wait till I have announced your visit to the baron."

The baroness left the room. Anton looked down gravely. Lenore went up to him and said, as cheerfully as she could, "Brown walls, Wohlfart! my favorite color. You are not glad we are come, you ungallant man!"

"Only on your own account," replied Anton, pointing to the snowy plain. "Whenever I walked through the fields, I have always thought how lonely you would be here, and when I paced these great rooms of an evening, I have feared that your time would hang very heavily. The town is more than six miles distant, and even there you will find but little; the wretched lending-library will hardly satisfy you."

"I will draw," said Lenore; "I will do fancy work. Alas! I shall find it difficult, Mr. Wohlfart, for I am not skillful. I do not care for lace on either cuff or collar; but mamma, who is accustomed to have every thing so beautiful, and in such order—oh, how sorry I am for mamma!"

Anton tried to comfort her.

"We were obliged to leave the capital," cried Lenore; "we should all have perished if we had remained in that dreadful *entourage*. Our own property in other hands, cold, distant faces on all sides, every where false friends, smooth words, and a pity which maddened. I am delighted that we are alone here. And even were we to suffer cold and hunger, I could bear it better far than the shrugging of Madame Werner's shoulders. I have learned to hate my fellow-creatures," said she, vehemently. "When you have been with papa, I will come down, and then you must show me the house, the farm, and the village. I want to see where my poor pony is, and what the people about look like."

The baroness now returned, and led Anton into her husband's room. Helpless and confused, the baron rose from his chair. Anton felt the deepest compassion for him. He looked at his sunken face, bent figure, and the black bandage over his eyes. He warmly declared his ardent wish to be of use to him, and begged his indulgence if he had in any way erred in judgment hitherto. Then he proceeded to tell him how he found the estate, and what had been done up to the present time.

The baron heard the report almost in silence, only making a few short observations in return. But when Anton proceeded, with the utmost delicacy indeed, but still with the precision of a man of business, to state the obligations under which the baron at present lay, and his inadequate means of fulfilling them, the nobleman writhed in his chair like a victim on the rack. And Anton keenly felt how painful it must needs be to him to have a stranger thus introduced into his most secret affairs—a stranger anxious to spare his feelings, it is true, but at every moment betraying that anxiety, and so giving fresh offense. The baroness, who stood behind her husband, looked on nervously at the attempts he made to control his irritation, but at length she waved her hand so significantly that Anton had abruptly to break off his report.

When he had left the room, the baron flung himself back in the utmost excitement, and exclaimed, "You have set a trustee over me." He was perfectly beside himself, and the baroness vainly attempted to compose him.

Such was Anton's entrance into the family.

He too returned sadly to his room. From that moment he felt convinced that it would hardly be possible to establish a good understanding between himself and the baron. He was accustomed, in matters of business, to express himself curtly, and to be promptly understood, and he now foresaw long disquisitions on the part of the ladies, succeeded probably by no decision at all. Even his position with regard to them appeared uncertain. True, the baroness had treated him with the utmost graciousness, but still as a stranger. He feared that she would continue the great lady, giving just as much of her confidence as might be useful to herself, but warding off all intimacy by a cold politeness. Even Lenore's friendly voice could not restore his equanimity. They went over the premises silently and thoughtfully, like two men of business engaged in making an estimate.

Such as these first days promised was Anton's life for the next few months, anxious, monotonous, formal. He wrote, kept accounts, and ate alone in his room, and when invited to join the family circle the party was far from a cheerful one. The baron sat there like a lump of ice, a check upon all free and animated conversation.

Formerly Anton used to admire all the accessories of the family, the arrangement of their *salons*, and the elegant trifles around. Now, the self-same furniture stood in the drawing-room suite—

even the little foreign birds had survived their winter journey—the same carpets, the same worsted-work, even the same perfume was there; but now the very birds seemed to him rather bores than otherwise, and soon nothing about the room interested him but the share he had himself had in putting it in order.

Anton had brought with him a profound respect for the polished tone, the easy conversation, and the graceful forms of social intercourse that prevailed in the family circle.

But, crushed and downcast as the Von Rothsattels now were, he could not expect the same light-hearted grace that had captivated him at Frau von Baldereck's parties. They had been torn away from their accustomed circle; all the external influences, and the excitement which keep the spirits elastic, and help us to vanquish sorrow, were wanting now, and he modestly confessed that he could afford no substitute for them. But there was more than this to disenchant him. When, after a silent evening, he returned to his own room, he often regretted that they took no part in much that interested him; that their culture, in short, was of a perfectly different order; and, before long, he took the liberty of doubting whether their culture was the better of the two. Almost all his reading was new to them, and when they discussed the newspapers, he marveled at their ignorance of foreign politics. History was by no means a favorite study with the baron, and if, for example, he condemned the English Constitution, he showed himself, at the same time, very little acquainted with it. On another evening, it came out, to Anton's distress, that the family's views of the position of the island of Ceylon widely differed from those established by geographers. The baroness, who was fond of reading aloud, revered Chateaubriand, and read fashionable novels by lady writers. Anton found Atala unnatural, and the novels insipid. In short, he soon discovered that those with whom he lived contemplated the universe from a very different point of view to his own. Unconsciously they measured all things by the scale of their own class-interests. Whatever ministered to these found favor, however unbearable to mankind at large; whatever militated against them was rejected, or at least pushed out of sight. Their opinions were often mild, sometimes even liberal, but they always seemed to wear an invisible helmet, visor up, and to look through the narrow space on the doings of common mortals; and whenever they saw any thing in these that was displeasing, but unalterable, they silently shut down the visor, and isolated themselves. The baron sometimes did this awkwardly, but his wife understood to perfection how, by a bewitching turn of the hand, to shut out whatever was unwelcome.

The family belonged to the German church in Neudorf; but there was no choir there, and no pew near the altar. They would have had to sit in the body of the church among the rustics: that was out of the question. So the baron set up a chapel in the castle, and sent every now and then for a minister. Anton seldom made his appearance at this domestic worship, preferring to ride to Neudorf, where he sat by the side of the bailiff among the country people.

He had other vexations too. A wine-merchant's traveler forced his way on one occasion through sand and forest into the very study of the baron. He was an audacious fellow, with a great gift of the gab, and a devoted lover of races and steeple-chases. He brought with him a whole budget of the latest sporting intelligence, and bamboozled the baron into ordering a pipe of port wine. Anton looked at the empty purse, cursed the pipe, and hurried into the audience-chamber of the baroness. It required a long feminine intrigue to effect the retraction of the order given.

The baron was displeased with his carriage-horses, which were no longer young, and, besides, of a chestnut color. This last peculiarity might, indeed, have been supposed immaterial to him now, but it had been an annoyance for years, his family having always had a preference for roans; nay, was there not an old distich to the following effect:

"Who rides thus through the fray alone?
  I ween a noble knight,
The red drops fall from his gallant roan,
  With red is the saddle dight."

This was supposed to allude to some remote ancestor, and on this account the Rothsattels (red-saddles) prized roans above all other horseflesh; but, as the color is rare in handsome horses, the baron had never had the good luck to meet with them. Now, however, Fate willed that a horse-dealer in the district should just bring round a pair. The blind man evinced a delight which much affected the ladies. He had them ridden, and driven backward and forward, carefully felt them all over, took Karl's opinion as to their merits, and revolved a plan of pleasantly surprising the baroness by their purchase. Karl ran to advertise Anton of the impending danger, and he again entered the audience-chamber, but on this occasion he met with no favorable hearing. The baroness, indeed, allowed that he was not wrong in theory, but still she implored him to let the baron have his own way. At length the new horses were in all secrecy led to their stalls, and the purchaser gave, besides the chestnuts and all the money he had in his private purse, a promise of letting the horse-dealer have, after the next harvest, two hundred bushels of oats at an unreasonably low price. Anton and Karl, in their zeal for the estate, were highly indignant at this when it first came to their knowledge months later.

The forester had the misfortune not to be an especial favorite. The baroness disliked the abrupt manner of the old man, who, in his solitude, had entirely lost the obsequiousness to which she was accustomed. One evening a plan was disclosed of giving him notice, and replacing him by a younger man, who might be dressed in livery, and serve as a representative huntsman, the family having been used to a functionary of this kind on their late estate. Anton had some difficulty in concealing his annoyance while stating that, in the disturbed state of the district, the experienced

man, who was feared by every scapegrace around, was of more use than a stranger. Lenore was on his side, and the plan was given up, with a look of resignation on the part of the baroness, and an icy silence on that of her husband. Both henceforth endured the uncouth old man with outward composure, but with visors down.

These were slight discords, indeed, such as must necessarily occur when we live with people whose habits of thought and action differ from our own; but it was no sign of contentment that Anton kept constantly repeating this to himself. Not only did Karl suit him in many ways better than the family, but so did the forester, and the shepherd too; and he sometimes felt with pride that he was other than they were—that he was one of the people. Lenore, too, was not what he had imagined her. He had always honored in her the lady of rank, and felt her cordial friendship a favor; but now she ceased to impress him as a distinguished person. He intimately knew the pattern of all her cuffs and collars, and very plainly saw a small rent in her dress which the careless girl herself was long in observing. He had read through the few books that she had brought with her, and had often, in conversation, overstepped the limits of her information. Her way of expressing herself no longer excited his admiration, and he would have been less indignant than of yore if his friend Fink had made inquiry as to her sense. She had less information than another girl of his acquaintance, and her tastes were not half so cultivated; but hers was a healthy, upright nature; she had quick feelings and noble instincts, and oh! she was beautiful. That he had always thought her, but his tender reverence long wrapped her image round with a sacred halo. It was now, however, when he saw her daily in her simple morning dress, in the every-day moods of this working world, that he first felt the full spell of her blooming youth. Yet he was often dissatisfied with her too. One of the first days after her arrival she had anxiously inquired how she could make herself useful in the house, and he told her that her superintendence in the kitchen, and exact keeping of accounts, might be of very great use indeed. He had ruled an account-book for her, and had had the pleasure of teaching her how to make entries in it. She threw herself warmly into the new pursuit, and ran into the kitchen ten times a day to see how Balbette was getting on; but her calculations were not much to be depended upon, and after having for a week conscientiously labored at the task, some days of sunshine came, and then she could not resist accompanying the forester on his rounds after game, or riding far beyond the boundary of the estate on her little pony, forgetting alike the cook and her book-keeping.

Again she purposed studying history and learning a little English under Anton's superintendence. Anton was delighted. But she could not recollect dates, found the pronunciation of English impossible, and sauntered off into the stable, or went into the room of the bailiff, whose mechanical achievements she could watch with the utmost interest for hours at a time. One day, when Anton came to call her to her English lesson, he found her in Karl's room, a plane in her hand, working hard at the seat of a new sledge, and good-naturedly saying, "Don't take so much trouble with me, Wohlfart; I can learn nothing: I have always been a dunce."

The snow again lay thick on the ground, and millions of ice-crystals glittered in the sunshine on bush and tree. Karl had two sledges in order, one a double-seated one, the other a running sledge for the young lady, which, with her assistance, he had painted beautifully.

At the next morning conference Anton had to announce to the baroness that he must go in the afternoon to Tarow on some police business.

"We know the Tarowskis from having met them at the Baths," said the baroness. "We were quite intimate while there with Frau von Tarowska and her daughter. I earnestly wish that the baron should have some acquaintance in the neighborhood. Perhaps I may be able to prevail upon him to pay a visit with us to-day. At all events, we ladies will avail ourselves of your escort, and make an excursion thither."

Anton gently reminded her of the vanished Bratzky and his own suspicions.

"They are only suspicions," said the baron, soothingly, "and there can be no doubt that it is our duty to call. Indeed, I can not believe that Herr von Tarowski had any thing to do with the man's disappearance."

In the afternoon the two sledges were brought round. The baroness seated herself with her husband in the larger one, and Lenore insisted upon driving her own. "Wohlfart shall sit behind me on the seat," decided she.

The baron whispered to his wife, "Wohlfart!"

"I can not allow you to drive alone," calmly replied she. "Have no anxiety. He is in your service, besides; there is no great impropriety; and you and I shall be together."

The little bells sounded merrily across the plain. Lenore sat in the highest spirits in her little nutshell of a seat, and loudly urged on her horse. She often turned round, and her laughing face looked so lovely under her dark cap that Anton's whole heart went out toward her. Her green veil fluttered in the wind, and brushed across his cheeks, hung over his face, and concealed the view. The next moment his breath moved the ribbon round her neck, and he saw that only that slight silken covering lay between his hand and her white throat and golden hair. Absorbed in this contemplation, he could hardly resist the delight of gently passing his fur glove over her hood, when a hare jumped from its form close to him, shaking its ears threateningly, and significantly flinging its legs in the air. Anton understood the friendly hint, and drew back the fur glove; and the hare, pleased to have done a good turn, galloped off over the plain.

Our hero turned his thoughts into another direction. "This white road bears no trace of man's presence, no slides, no footprints; there is no life around to disturb the silent sleep of nature. We are travelers penetrating into regions hitherto untrodden. One tree is like another, the snow expanse is boundless, the silence of the grave around, and the laughing sunshine above. I wish we were going on thus the whole day through."

"I am so glad to drive you for once," said Lenore, bending back, and giving him her hand.

Anton so far forgot the hare as to imprint a kiss upon her glove.

"It is Danish leather," laughed Lenore; "do not give yourself the trouble."

"Here is a hole," said Anton, prepared to renew the attempt.

"You are very attentive to-day," cried Lenore, slowly withdrawing her hand. "The mood suits you charmingly, Wohlfart."

The fur glove was again stretched out to detain the hand withdrawn. At that moment two crows on the nearest tree began a violent dispute, screamed, croaked, and flew about Anton's head.

"Begone, you wretched creatures!" thought Anton, in his excitement; "you shall not disturb me any more."

But Lenore looked full and frankly at him. "I am not sure, either, that you ought to be so attentive," said she, gravely. "You should not kiss my hand, for I have no wish to return the compliment, and what is right for the one must be right for the other. Huzza! my horse, forward!"

"I am curious to know how these Poles will receive us," said Anton, resuming their former conversation.

"They can not be otherwise than friendly," returned Lenore. "We lived for weeks with Frau von Tarowska, and took every excursion together. She was the most elegant of all the ladies at the Baths, and her daughters, too, made a great impression by their distinguished bearing. They are very lovely and refined."

"He has eyes, though, exactly like those of the forester's fox. I would not trust him a yard out of my sight."

"I have made myself very smart to-day," laughed Lenore, again turning round; "for the girls are, as I said, lovely, and the Poles shall not say that we Germans look ill beside them. How do you like my dress, Wohlfart?" She turned back the flap of her pelisse.

"I shall admire no other half so much," Anton replied.

"You true-hearted Mr. Wohlfart!" cried Lenore, again reaching out her hand. Alas! the warning hare, the crows, would have been powerless to break the spell which attracted the fur glove to the Danish leather; something stronger must interfere.

When Anton stretched out his hand for the third time, he marveled to see it rise against his will, and describe a circle in the air, while he found himself outstretched in the snow. Looking round in amazement, he saw Lenore sitting by the overturned sledge, while the horse stood still, and laughed after his fashion. The lady had looked too much at her companion and too little at the way, and so they had been upset. Both jumped up lightly. Anton raised the sledge, and they were soon galloping onward once more. But the sledge-idyl was ended. Lenore looked steadily before her, and Anton occupied himself in shaking the snow out of his sleeves.

The sledges turned into a spacious court. A long, one-storied farm-house, whitewashed, and roofed with shingles, looked upon the wooden stables. Anton sprang out, and asked a servant in livery for the dwelling of Herr von Tarowski.

"This is the palace," replied the Pole, with a low obeisance, and proceeded to help the ladies out of the sledges. Lenore and the baroness exchanged looks of amazement. They entered a dirty hall; several bearded domestics rushed up to them, eagerly tore off their wraps, and threw a low door open. A numerous party was assembled in the large sitting-room. A tall figure in black silk came forward to meet them, and received them with the best grace in the world. So did the daughters—slender girls, with their mother's eyes and manners. Several of the gentlemen were introduced—Herr von this, Herr von that, all elegant-looking men in evening dress. At last the master of the house came in, his cunning face beaming with cordial hospitality, and his pair of fox's eyes looking perfectly harmless. The reception was faultless—on all sides the pleasant ease of perfect self-possession. The baron and the ladies were treated as welcome additions, and Anton too had his share of attention. His business was soon transacted, and Herr von Tarow smilingly reminded him that they had met before.

"That rogue of an inspector got off, after all," said he; "but do not be uneasy, he will not escape his fate."

"I hope not," replied Anton; "nor yet his abettors."

Herr von Tarow's eyes tried hard to look dove-like as he went on to say, "The fellow must be concealed somewhere about."

"Possibly somewhere very near," said Anton, casting a significant glance at the mean-looking

buildings around.

Our hero looked in vain among the gentlemen present for the stranger he had previously seen, and charitably attributed to him good reasons for wishing to remain unseen by German eyes. However, to make up for him, there was another gentleman of a striking aspect, who seemed to be treated with especial respect. "They come and go, assemble and disperse," thought Anton, "just as the landlord said; there is a whole band of them to feel anxious about, not merely a few individuals." At that moment the stranger came up and began a courteous conversation. However unstudied the speaker's manner might appear, yet Anton remarked that he led the conversation, with the view of extracting his opinions and feelings as a German. This made him reserved; and the Pole, finding him so, soon lost his interest in him, and turned to the ladies.

Anton had now time to look about him. A Vienna piano-forte stood amid furniture evidently made by the village carpenter, and near the sofa a tattered carpet was spread over the black boards. The ladies sat on velvet seats around a worn-out table. The mistress of the house and her grown-up daughters had elegant Parisian toilettes; but a side door being casually opened, Anton caught a sight of some children running about in the next room so scantily clothed that he heartily pitied them. They, however, did not seem to feel the cold, and were screaming and fighting like little demons.

A fine damask table-cloth was now laid on the unsteady table, and a silver tea-kettle put down. The conversation went on most pleasantly. Graceful French *bon mots* and animated exclamations in melodious Polish blended occasionally with an admixture of quiet German. The sudden bursts of laughter, the gestures and the eagerness, all showed Anton that he was among foreigners. They spoke rapidly, and excitement shone in their eyes and reddened their cheeks.

They were a more excitable people, more elastic, and more impressionable than his countrymen. Anton remarked with amazement how perfectly Lenore seemed in her element among them. Her face, too, grew flushed; she laughed and gesticulated like the rest; and her eyes looked, he thought, boldly into the courteous faces of the gentlemen present. The same smile, the same hearty, natural manner that she had enchanted him with, when alone, she now lavished upon strangers, who had acted as highwaymen against her father's interests. This displeased him to the utmost. Then the saloon, so incongruous in its arrangements, the carpet dirty and torn, the children in the next room barefooted, and the master of the house the secret patron of a dishonest rogue, and perhaps worse still! Anton contented himself with coldly looking on, and said as little as he possibly could.

At last a young gentleman struck a few chords on the piano, and all sprang up and voted for a dance. The lady of the house rang, four wild-looking men rushed into the room, snatched up the grand piano, and carried it off. The whole party swept through the hall to an apartment opposite. Anton was tempted to rub his eyes as he entered it. It was an empty room, with rough-cast walls, benches around them, and a frightful old stove in a corner. In the middle, linen was hung on lines to dry. Anton could hardly suppose they meant to dance here; but the linen was torn down by one servant in the twinkling of an eye, while another ran to the stove, and was equally expeditious in blowing up the fire, and in a very few moments six couples stood up for a quadrille. As there was a lady wanting, a young count, with a black beard like velvet, and a wondrously beautiful pair of blue eyes, bound his cambric handkerchief round his arm, and with a graceful courtesy announced himself a lady. He was immediately led out by another gentleman. Their dancing, in spite of its fashionable character, betrayed at times the fire and impetuosity of their race. Lenore threw herself into it heart and soul.

Meanwhile the baroness was conversing with great animation with her host, and Frau von Tarow made it her occupation to amuse the baron. Here, then, were all the social forms, the keen enjoyment of the present, which Anton had so often admired, but now they only excited a cold smile. It did not seem to him creditable that a German family should be on terms of such intimacy with recent enemies—people who were probably at this very time plotting against them and their country. Accordingly, when the first dance was over, and Lenore, passing him, asked why he did not dance with her, he replied, "I am every moment expecting to see Bratzky's face appear in some corner of the room."

"We will not think of him at present," returned Lenore, turning away offended.

Dance followed dance, the heads of the young people swam, their curls hung down damp, and relaxed with their exertions. Another rush of bearded domestics, and iced Champagne was brought in. The dancers tossed it off standing, and immediately a cry rose on all sides for a Polish mazurka—the national dance. Now, then, the dresses fluttered wide and high; the dancers positively flew along; the ladies were tossed like balls from one partner's arm to another; and Lenore, alas! in the midst of it all.

Anton stood near the distinguished Pole, carrying on a spiritless conversation, and coldly listened to the praises the former liberally bestowed on the German dancer. The rapid movements and strong excitement that were natural to the Polish girls made Lenore wild, and, Anton regretted to see, unfeminine; and his glance wandered away from her to the rough walls, the dusty stove, in which an immense fagot was burning, and the ceiling, from which long gray cobwebs hung down.

It was late before the baroness broke up the party. The furs were brought in, the guests were wrapped therein, and the little bells sounded again cheerily over the snowy scene. But Anton was glad that Lenore now drove her father, and that he had to take care of the baroness. Silently he

guided the sledge, thinking all the while that another whom he knew would never have swung to and fro in the mazes of the mazurka beneath the fluttering cobwebs, and in the house of her country's foes.

CHAPTER XXX.

Mr. Itzig was now regularly established in business. Whoever visited him passed through a much-frequented hall, and went up a not entirely clean staircase, at the head of which was a white door, on which a great plate revealed the name of "V. Itzig." This door was closed. It had a very massive China handle, and was altogether much more suggestive and imposing than Ehrenthal's had been. Passing through this door, the visitor entered an empty lobby, in which a shrewd youth spent the day as half porter, half errand-boy, and a spy besides. This youth differed from the original Itzig only by a species of shabby gentility in his appearance. He wore his master's old clothes—shining silk waistcoats, and a coat a little too large for him. He showed, in short, that the new firm was more advanced in matters of taste and toilette than the in many respects commonplace establishment of Ehrenthal. The visitor, advancing through the lobby, was received by Mr. Itzig in one of two small rooms, of which the first contained little furniture, but two strikingly handsome lamps—a temporary security for the unpaid interest of a note of hand. The second was his sleeping apartment; in it were a simple bed, a long sofa, and a large round mirror, with a broad gilt frame, an acquisition from the secret stores of the worthy Pinkus. Itzig himself was marvelously changed, and on dark days, in his dimly-lighted office, he might really—looked at from a little distance—have almost passed for a gentleman. His haggard face had filled out, his great freckles had faded away, and his red hair, through much pomade and skillful brushing, had grown darker and more manageable. He had still a preference for black; but his clothes were new now, and fitted him better; for Mr. Itzig had acquired a taste for externals. He no longer grudged himself good food—nay, he even allowed himself wine. Yet, insignificant as his new establishment was, Itzig only used it at night and during office-hours. His inclinations still led him to his old haunts at Löbel Pinkus's. Thus he led a double life—that of a respectable man of business in his newly-painted office, beneath the glare of his solar lamps; and when in the caravanserai, which fitted his taste far better, a modest sort of life, with red woolen curtains, and a four-cornered chest for a sofa. Perhaps this shelter suited him so exactly, because of his uncontested influence over the master of the house. Pinkus, to his shame be it spoken, had sunk into a mere tool of Veitel's, and his wife, too, was devoted in her allegiance to the rising man.

On the present occasion Itzig sat carelessly on his sofa, and smoked a pipe with an amber mouth-piece. He was completely the gentleman, and expected a visitor of distinction. The bell rang, the servant flew to the door, and a sharp voice was heard. Next there arose a dispute in the lobby, which moved Veitel to shut up his writing-table in all haste, and to put the key into his pocket.

"Not at home, indeed! He is at home, you wretched greenhorn you!" cried the sharp voice to the guardian of the door. Next some resisting body was heard to be thrust on one side. Veitel buried himself in an old mortgage. The door opened, and Hippus appeared, red-faced and much ruffled. He had never looked more like an old raven.

"So you deny yourself, do you? You tell that grub yonder to send away old friends! Of course, you are become quite genteel, you fool! Did one ever meet with such barefaced ingratitude? Because the fellow has swindled himself into two fine rooms, his former associates are no longer good enough for him! But you have reckoned without your host, my boy, as far as I am concerned; I am not to be got rid of so easily."

Veitel looked at the angry little man before him with an expression of countenance by no means friendly.

"Why did you make a scene with the young man?" he said, coldly; "he has done nothing wrong. I was expecting a visitor on business, and I gave orders to exclude all strangers. How could I know that you would be coming? Have we not settled that you should only visit me in the evening? Why do you disturb me during my business hours?"

"Your business hours, you young gosling, with your shell still hanging about you!" cried Hippus, still more irate, and threw himself on the sofa. "Your business hours!" he continued, with infinite contempt; "any hours are good enough for *your* business."

"You are drunk again, Hippus," answered Veitel, thoroughly roused. "How often have I told you that I will have nothing to do with you when you come out of the spirit-shop?"

"Indeed!" cried Hippus; "you son of a witch, my visit is at all times an honor to you. I drunk!" he hiccoughed out; "and with what, you jack-pudding you? How is a man to get drunk," he screamed out, "when he has not wherewithal to pay for a glass?"

"I knew that he was without money again," said Veitel, in exasperation. "I gave you a dollar quite lately, but you are a perfect sponge. It is a pity to waste a farthing upon you."

"You will prove, though, that it is not at all a pity," answered the old man, tauntingly; "you will give me ten dollars here on the spot."

"That I will not," cried Veitel. "I am sick of supplying you. You know our agreement; you are only

to have money given you when you do something for me in return. And now you are not in a condition either to read or write."

"I am always good enough for you and such as you, even if I had had a ten times better breakfast," said the old man, more calmly. "Give me what you have got for me to do. You are become a covetous rascal, but I'll put up with you. I will forgive your having denied yourself; I will forgive your having become a presumptuous ass—making a show with lamps that were meant for your betters; and I will not deprive you of my advice, provided, be it understood, I duly get my honorarium. And so we will make peace, my son. Now tell me what deviltry you have in hand."

Veitel pushed a thick parchment toward him, and said, "First of all, you must look over that, write me out an abstract of it, and tell me what you think of it. It has been offered me for sale. Now, however, I am expecting some one, so you must go into the other room, sit down at the table, and get through your task. When it is done we will talk about the money."

Mr. Hippus took the heavy deed under his arm and steered toward the door.

"To-day I am going to oblige you again, because you are a good boy," said he, affectionately, lifting his hand to pat Veitel on the cheek.

Veitel tolerated the caress, and was going to shut the door, when the drunken old man turned round once more, and inquired with a cunning leer, "So you expect some one, my child? Whom do you expect, little Itzig? Is it a lad or a lady?"

"It is a money-matter," said Veitel, shrugging his shoulders.

"A money-matter!" repeated Hippus, with tender approbation of his associate. "Ay, you are great in them—an accomplished swindler. Truly he who gets money from you is lost; it were better for him to jump into the water at once, though water is a despicable element, you confounded little swindler you!" And, raising his head, he fixed his swimming eyes affectionately on Veitel.

"And yet you yourself are come to get money from me," replied Veitel, with a forced smile.

"Yes, I am determined," said Hippus, stammering. "I am not flesh and blood! I am Hippus! I am Death!" and he tried to laugh intelligently.

The door-bell rang. Veitel desired him to keep quiet, shut the door upon him, took up his amber pipe, and awaited his visitor.

A sword was heard to clatter in the lobby—a hussar officer came in. Eugene Rothsattel had become a little older since the last winter, his fine face was more haggard, and he had a blue ring round his eyes. He put on an appearance of indifference, which did not deceive Mr. Itzig for a single second, for behind that mask his experienced glance detected the fever peculiar to hard-pressed debtors.

"Mr. Itzig?" inquired the officer *de haut en bas*.

"Such is my name," said Veitel, rising carelessly from the sofa. Eugene looked at him uneasily. This was the very man against whom his father had been warned, and now fate had driven him into the same snare. "I have to pay a debt in the course of the next few days to certain agents," began the lieutenant, "gentlemen of your acquaintance. When I proposed to hold a consultation with them, I was informed by both that they had sold their claims to you."

"I bought them unwillingly," replied Itzig. "I am not fond of having any thing to do with military men. Here are two notes of hand, one for eleven hundred, and the other for eight hundred, making a total of nineteen hundred dollars. Do you recognize these signatures as yours?" he coldly inquired, producing the documents; "and do you acknowledge nineteen hundred to be the sum borrowed by you?"

"I suppose it must be about that," said the lieutenant, reluctantly.

"I ask whether you acknowledge that to be the sum that you have to pay me on these notes of hand?"

"In the devil's name, yes," cried the lieutenant. "I own the debt, though I did not receive the half of it in cash."

Veitel locked up the papers in his desk, and, with a shrug of his shoulders, said ironically, "At all events, I have paid the whole sum to the parties herein named. Accordingly, I shall summon you to pay me to-morrow and the next day."

The officer was silent for a while, and a flush slowly overspread his sunken cheeks. At last, after a hard struggle, he began: "I beg of you, Mr. Itzig, to give me a little more time."

Veitel took up his amber pipe and leisurely turned it round. "I can give you no further credit," said he.

"Come, Itzig, be reasonable," said the officer, with forced familiarity. "I shall very probably soon be able to pay you."

"You will have as little money in a few weeks' time as you have now," replied Veitel, rudely.

"I am ready to write an I.O.U. for a larger sum, if you will have patience."

"I never enter into any transactions of the kind," lied Veitel.

"I will procure you an acknowledgment of the debt from my father."

"The Baron Rothsattel would obtain as little credit with me as yourself."

The lieutenant angrily struck the floor with his sword: "And supposing I do not pay?" he broke out; "you know that I am not legally compelled to do so."

"I know," quietly replied Veitel. "Will you pay to-morrow and the next day?"

"I can not!" exclaimed Eugene, in despair.

"Then take care of the coat on your back," said Veitel, turning away.

"Wohlfart was right to warn me against you," cried Eugene, beside himself. "You are an obdurate —" he suppressed the last word.

"Speak your mind freely," said Itzig; "no one hears you. Your words are like the fire in my stove; it crackles now, in an hour it will be burned to ashes. What you say to me in private, the people in the street will say to you in three days' time if you do not pay."

Eugene turned away with a curse. On reaching the door he stood still for a moment, then rushed down stairs.

Veitel looked round triumphantly. "The son as well as the father! He, too, is safely noosed," said he to himself; "he can never procure the money. There is an end of the Rothsattels, and their Wohlfart will not be able to sustain them. When I am married to Rosalie, Ehrenthal's mortgages will be mine. That will be the time, too, for finding the vanished notes of hand among my father-in-law's papers. Then I shall have the baron completely in my power, and the estate will be mine."

After this soliloquy he opened the door that had shut out Mr. Hippus from the distinguished visitor—the sunken from the sinking—and he found the little advocate fast asleep over the deed. Itzig looked at him with hearty contempt, and said, "He grows burdensome. He said he was death; I wish he were dead, and I freed from him." Then roughly shaking up the old man, he screamed out to him, "You are fit for nothing but to sleep; why must you come here to snore? Go home; I will give you the deed when you are sober."

The advocate accordingly reeled away, promising to return the following afternoon. Itzig proceeded to brush his silk hat with enviable dexterity; he then put on his best coat, gave his hair its most graceful curve, and went to the house of his antagonist Ehrenthal. As he entered the hall he cast a shy glance at the office door, and hurried on to the staircase. But he stopped on the lowest step. "There he is, sitting again in the office," said he, listening. "I hear him mutter; he often mutters so when he is alone. I will venture in; perhaps I can make something of him." So he stepped slowly to the door and listened again; then taking heart, he opened it suddenly. In the dimly-lighted room sat a stooping figure in a leathern chair, a shapeless hat on its head. The figure kept constantly nodding, and muttering unintelligible words. How changed was Hirsch Ehrenthal in the course of the past year! When he last drove over the baron's estate, he was a stout, respectable-looking man, a fresh, well-preserved man, who knew how to stick in his breast-pin to the best advantage, and cut a figure in ladies' eyes. Now the head that was constantly nodding in nervous debility was that of an old man, and the beard that hung down from his furrowed face had been untrimmed for weeks. He was a picture of that most lamentable decay, when the mind precedes the body on the way to second childhood.

The agent stood at the door and looked in dismay at his former master. Then, advancing nearer, he said, "I wish to speak to you, Mr. Ehrenthal."

The old man continued to nod his head, and answered in a trembling voice, "Hirsch Ehrenthal is my name; what have you to say to me?"

"I wish to speak to you on important business," continued Itzig.

"I hear," returned Ehrenthal, without looking up; "if the business be important, why do you not speak?"

"Do you know me, Hirsch Ehrenthal?" said Itzig, bending down and raising his voice.

The man in the leathern chair looked at him with languid eyes, and at length recognized him. He got up in all haste, and stood, his head still nodding, with a glance full of hatred and terror in his eyes. "What do you want here in my office?" cried he, with a quivering voice. "How can you come before me? Get out, man! get out!"

Itzig remained stationary. "Don't scream so; I am not doing any thing to you; I only want to speak to you on important subjects, if you will be calm as a man of your years should be."

"It is Itzig," murmured the old man; "he wants to speak on important subjects, and I am to be calm. How can I be calm," screamed he again, "when I see you before me? You are my enemy; you have ruined me here and ruined me there; you have been to me like the evil spirit with the sword, on which hangs the drop of gall. I opened my mouth, you pierced me with your sword, the gall has reached my heart; I needs must tremble when I see you."

"Be quiet," said Itzig; "and when you are so, listen to me."

"Is his name Itzig?" mumbled the old man to himself. "His name is Itzig, but the dogs bark at him as he walks through the streets. I will not see you," he again exclaimed. "Get out! I loathe the sight of you: I would rather have to do with a spider than with you."

To this Veitel replied in a resigned voice, "What has happened, Ehrenthal, has happened, and it's no use talking of it. You behaved unkindly to me, and I acted against you; both are true."

"He ate every Sabbath at my table," growled the old man.

"If you remember that," continued Itzig, "why, so will I. True, I have eaten at your table, and on that account I am sorry to be on bad terms with you. I have always felt a great attachment to your family."

"You have shown your attachment, young Itzig," continued the old man. "You are he who came into my house, and killed me before I am laid in my grave."

"What nonsense are you talking?" continued Veitel, impatiently. "Why do you always speak as if you were dead, and I the evil spirit with the sword? I am here, and I wish your prosperous life, and not your death. I will so contrive that you shall yet occupy a good position among our people, and that they who pass you in the street shall again take off their hats to you, as they did before Hirsch Ehrenthal became childish."

Ehrenthal mechanically took off his hat and sat down again. His hair had grown white.

"There ought to be friendship between you and me," continued Veitel, persuasively, "and your business ought to be as mine. I have sent to you more than one man of our connection, and have told you my wishes through him, and Mrs. Ehrenthal, your wife, has told you them too. I am become a man who can rank with the best men of business; I can show you a safe capital larger than you imagine. Why should we not put our money together? If you will give me your daughter Rosalie to wife, I shall be able to act for you as your son-in-law."

Old Ehrenthal looked at the suitor with a glance in which something of his old cunning shone through his half-wittedness. "If you want my daughter Rosalie," replied he, "hear the only question I have to put: What will you give me if I give you Rosalie?"

"I will reckon it up to you at once," cried Veitel.

"You can reckon up a good deal, I dare say," said Ehrenthal, declining the statement, "but I will only require one thing: if you can give me back my son Bernhard, you may have my daughter. If you can not bring Bernhard out of the grave, so long as I have any voice left I shall say, 'Get out with you! get out of my office!' Get out!" screamed he, in a sudden transport of rage, clenching both fists against the suitor. Veitel quietly retreated into the shadow cast by the door, the old man sunk down again on his chair, and threatened and muttered to himself. Itzig watched him till his words again became unintelligible, when he shrugged his shoulders and left the room.

As he went up stairs to pay his visit to the ladies, he repeated the movement occasionally, to express his utter contempt of the poor imbecile below. He rang the bell, and was admitted by the untidy cook with a familiar smile.

Meanwhile Eugene drifted helplessly from one officer's room to another. He went to Feroni's; the oysters were flavorless, the Burgundy tasted like ink. Again he paced up and down the streets, the sweat of anguish on his brow. At last he sat down in a confectioner's shop, tired to death, and revolved every possible contingency. If Wohlfart were only here! But there was no time to write to him. These agents had put him off from day to day; it was only last night that they had both finally referred him to Mr. Itzig. But, though it was too late to write to Anton, might not this obliging friend have some acquaintance in the town? In recommending young Sturm, Anton had told him that the future bailiff's father was a safe man, not without substance. Perhaps he could get money from the father of a hussar now in the service of his family, if, indeed, the old man had any money. That was the question.

He turned to the Directory, and found John Sturm, porter, Island Street, No. 17. He drove thither in a drosky. A loud "Come in" was the reply to his hurried knock. The sore-pressed officer crossed the threshold of the porter. Father Sturm sat alone with his can of beer, a small daily paper in his hand. "A hussar!" cried he, remaining seated through very astonishment. The officer, on his part, was astonished at the colossal form now contemplating him, and both were silent.

"To be sure!" said the giant. "A hussar of my Karl's regiment—the coat is the same, the epaulettes the same; you are welcome, comrade!" and he rose. Then for the first time perceiving the metal of the epaulettes, he exclaimed, "As I live, an officer!"

"My name is Eugene von Rothsattel," began the lieutenant. "I am an acquaintance of Mr. Wohlfart."

"Of Mr. Wohlfart and of my son Karl," said Sturm, eagerly; "sit down, sir; it is an exceeding pleasure and honor to me to see you." He brought out a chair, and thumped it down in his zeal so as to make the door shake again.

Eugene was going to sit down. "Not yet," said Sturm; "I will first wipe it, that the uniform take no harm. Since my Karl went away, things are a little dusty here."

He wiped and polished up the chair for his visitor. "Now, sir, allow me to sit opposite you. You bring me tidings of my little fellow?"

"Only," replied Eugene, "that he is well in health, and that my father much values his services."

"Indeed!" cried Sturm, smiling all over, and rapping on the table so as to create a small earthquake in the room. "I knew, sir, that your father the baron would be satisfied with him; I would have given him a bond for that on stamped paper. He was a clever lad, even when he was that high," indicating with his hand a degree of smallness that belongs to no human being, even in the earliest days of its visible life.

"But can he do any thing?" he anxiously inquired, "in spite of—you know what." He held out his great fingers, and made confidential signs with them. "First and middle finger—it was a great misfortune, sir."

Eugene now called to mind the unlucky accident. "He has got over it," said he, rather embarrassed at the part the paternal affections of the giant made him play. "I came here to ask a favor."

"A favor?" laughed Sturm; "ask away, young baron; that is a simple matter. Any one from the house where my Karl is bailiff has a right to ask a favor from old Sturm. That is my view of the case."

"Well, then, Mr. Sturm, to make a long story short, I am called upon to make a heavy payment to-morrow, and I want the money for it. The debt has come upon me suddenly, and I have no time to communicate with my father. I know no one in this town to whom I can turn with so much confidence as to the father of our bailiff."

Sturm bent forward, and in his delight clapped the officer on the knee. "That was nobly said. You are a gentleman, who keeps to his own house, and does not go to strangers for what he can have from his own people. You want money? My Karl is bailiff at your father the baron's; my Karl has some money, so it is all right. How much do you want? A hundred dollars? Two hundred dollars? The money is there."

"I can hardly take courage, Mr. Sturm, to tell you the amount of the sum," said Eugene, embarrassed; "it is nineteen hundred dollars."

"Nineteen hundred dollars!" repeated the giant, in amazement; "that's a capital; that's a firm; that's what people call a fortune."

"So it is, Mr. Sturm," said Eugene, sadly. "And since you are so friendly toward me, I must own to you that I am heartily grieved that it should be so much. I am ready to give you a note of hand for it, and to pay any interest you may like."

"Do you know what," said Sturm, after some cogitation, "we will say nothing about the interest; you can settle that with my Karl; but as to the note of hand, that was a good thought of yours. A note of hand is pleasant, on account of the chances of life and death. You and I would have no need of such a thing; but I may die before my time. That would not matter, for you, who know of the transaction, would still be there. But then you might die, which, however, I have no fear of—quite the contrary; but still such a thing might be, and then my Karl ought to have your signature, so that he might come forward and say, 'My poor young master has written this, therefore pay.'"

"You will then have the kindness to lend me the money?"

"There is no kindness in it," said Sturm; "it is but my duty, as the thing is done regularly, and my dwarf is your bailiff."

Eugene was moved as he looked at the giant's laughing face. "But, Mr. Sturm, I want the money to-morrow."

"Of course," replied Sturm, "that is just what suits me. Come, baron, this way." He took up the candle, and led him into his bed-room. "Excuse things being so disorderly; but I am a lone man, and at my work all day long. Look here, this is my money-box." He drew out the iron chest. "It is safe from thieves," said he, with self-complacency, "for no one in the town can stir it but I, and no one can open it, for the lock is the masterpiece of the father of my dear departed wife. Few besides me can lift the lid, and even if many of them came, they would find it too tough a job for them; so you may believe that the money is safe here from rogues, and swindlers, and the like," said he, triumphantly. He was about to put the key into the lock. "Stop," he suddenly cried; "one word more. I trust you, baron, as I do my Karl—that of course; but just answer me this question: You really are the young baron?"

Now it was Eugene's turn to smile, and, putting his hand into his pocket, he said, "Here is my patent."

"Ah! many thanks," cried Sturm, carefully looking through the paper, and reverentially reading the names, then bowing, and giving it back with two fingers in the most respectful manner possible.

"And here," continued Eugene, "I happen to have a letter of Wohlfart's in my pocket."

"Of course," cried Sturm, looking at the address, "that is his living hand."

"And here is his signature."

"Your devoted Wohlfart," read the giant; "and if he writes that, you may be sure that it is true. So now the business is settled," said he, opening the box. "Here is the money. So, then, nineteen hundred dollars!" He took five great rolls out of the chest, held them comfortably in one hand, and gave them to Eugene. "Here are a thousand."

Eugene tried in vain to hold them.

"Just so," said the porter; "I will bring them down to the carriage. The rest I must give you in promissory notes. These are worth a little less than a hundred dollars, as of course you know."

"It does not signify," said Eugene.

"No," said the giant. "It can be mentioned in the note of hand. And now the matter is all settled." He closed the chest, and pushed it under the bed.

Eugene re-entered the little parlor with a lightened heart.

"Now, then, I will carry the money to the carriage," cried Sturm.

"The note of hand has yet to be written."

"True," nodded the giant; "we must do things in order. Just see, sir, whether you can write with my coarse pen. If I had known that I should have such a visitor, I would have brought a better one with me from Mr. Schröter's."

Eugene wrote out an acknowledgment, while Sturm sat by his can of beer, and looked at him in admiration. Then he accompanied him to the carriage, and said at leave-taking, "Greet my little lad heartily, and Mr. Wohlfart too. I have promised Karl to come to him at Christmas, on account of the Christmas-tree; but my health is no longer as good as it should be. I am forty-nine past."

A short time afterward, Eugene, writing to Anton, casually mentioned that he had borrowed nineteen hundred dollars from father Sturm on a note of hand. "Try to arrange the matter for me," said the letter; "of course my father must know nothing of it. A good-hearted, foolish fellow, that old Sturm. Think of something nice for his son the hussar—something that I can bring him when I pay you a visit."

Anton flung down the letter indignantly. "There is no helping them; the principal was right," said he. "He has squandered the money in golden bracelets for a mercenary *danseuse*, or at dice with his lawless comrades, and he now pays his usurer's bills with the hard earnings of an honest working-man."

He called Karl into his room. "I have often been sorry to have brought you into this confusion, but to-day I deeply feel how wrong it was. I am ashamed to tell you what has happened. Young Rothsattel has taken advantage of your father's good-heartedness to borrow from him nineteen hundred dollars!"

"Nineteen hundred dollars from my governor!" cried Karl. "Had my Goliath so much money to lend! He always pretended that he did not know how to economize."

"Part of your inheritance is given away in return for a worthless note of hand, and what makes it still more aggravating is the coolness of the thoughtless borrower. Have you, then, not heard of it from your father?"

"From him!" cried Karl; "I should think not. I am only sorry that you should be so vexed. I implore you not to make any disturbance about it. You best know how many clouds hang over this house; do not increase the anxiety of these parents on my account."

"To be silent in a case like this," replied Anton, "would be to make one's self an accomplice in an unfair transaction. You must immediately write and tell your father not to be so obliging in future; the young gentleman is capable of going to him again."

Anton's next step was to write Eugene a letter of serious remonstrance, in which he pointed out to him that the only way of giving Sturm tolerably good security would be the procuring the baron's acknowledgment of his son's debt, and begged that he would lose no time in doing this.

This letter written, Anton said to Karl, "If he does not confess to his parents, I shall state the whole affair to the baron in his presence the very next day after his arrival. Don't try to dissuade me; you are just like your father."

The consequence of this communication was, that Eugene left off writing to Anton, and that his next letter to his father contained a rather unintelligible clause: "Wohlfart," he said, "was a man to whom he certainly had obligations; only the worst of that kind of people was, that they took advantage of these to adopt a dictatorial tone that was unbearable; therefore it was best civilly to shake them off."

This opinion was quite after the baron's own heart, and he warmly applauded it. "Eugene always takes the right view of the case," said he; "and I too earnestly long for the day when I shall be able to superintend the property, and to dismiss our Mr. Wohlfart."

The baroness, who had read the letter out to her husband, merely replied, "You would miss Wohlfart very much if he were to leave you."

Lenore, however, was unable to suppress her displeasure; and, leaving the room in silence, she went to look for Anton out of doors.

"What are you and Eugene differing about?" she cried, as soon as she saw him.

"Has he been complaining of me to you?" inquired Anton, in return.

"Not to me; but in his letter to my father he does not speak as he ought of one who has been so kind to him."

"Perhaps this is accidental—a fit of ill-humor that will pass off."

"No, it is more, and I will know about it."

"If it be more, you can only hear it from himself."

"Then, Wohlfart," cried Lenore, "Eugene has been doing something wrong, and you know of it."

"Be that as it may," returned Anton, gravely, "it is not my secret, else I should not withhold it from you. I pray you to believe that I have acted uprightly toward your brother."

"What I believe little signifies," cried Lenore. "I am to know nothing; I understand nothing; I can do nothing in this wretched world but grieve and fret when others are unjust to you."

"I very often," continued Anton, "feel the responsibility laid upon me by your father's indisposition a grievous burden. It is natural that he should be annoyed with me when I have to communicate unwelcome facts. This can not be avoided. I have strength, however, to brave much that is painful, so long as you and the baroness are unshaken in your conviction that I always act in your interest so far as I understand it."

"My mother knows what you are to us," said Lenore. "She never, indeed, speaks of you to me, but I can read her glance when she looks at you across the table. She has always known how to conceal her thoughts; how she does so more than ever—yes, even to me. I seem to see her pure image behind a white veil; and she is become so fragile, that often the tears rush to my eyes merely in looking at her. She always says what is kind and judicious, but she seems to have lost interest in most things; and though she smiles at what I say, I fancy that the effort gives her pain."

"Yes, just so," cried Anton mournfully.

"She only lives to take care of my father. No one, not even her daughter, knows what she inwardly suffers. She is like an angel, Wohlfart, who lingers on our earth reluctantly. I can be but little to her, that I feel. I am not helpful, and want all that makes my mother so lovely—- the self-control, the calm bearing, the enchanting manner. My father is sick—my brother thoughtless—my mother, spite of all her love, reserved toward me. Wohlfart, I am indeed alone."

She leaned on the side of the well and wept.

"Perhaps it will all be for your good," said Anton, soothingly, from the other side the well. "Yours is an energetic nature, and I believe you can feel very strongly."

"I can be very angry," chimed in Lenore through her tears, "and then very careless again."

"You grew up without a care in prosperous circumstances, and your life was easy as a game."

"My lessons were difficult enough, I am sure," remonstrated Lenore.

"I think that you were in danger of becoming a little wild and haughty in character."

"I am afraid I was so," cried Lenore.

"Now, you have had to bear heavy trials, and the present looks serious too; and if I may venture to say so, dear lady, I think you will find here just what the baroness has acquired in the great world—dignity and self-control. I often think that you are changed already."

"Was I, then, an unbearable little savage formerly?" asked Lenore, laughing in the midst of her tears, and looking at Anton with girlish archness.

He had hard work not to tell her how lovely she was at that moment; but he valiantly conquered the inclination, and said, as coolly as he could, "Not so bad as that, dear lady."

"And do you know what you are?" asked Lenore, playfully. "You are, as Eugene writes, a little schoolmaster."

"So that is what he has written!" cried Anton, enlightened.

Lenore grew grave at once. "Do not let us speak of him. As soon as I heard his letter, I came here to tell you that I trust you as I do no one on earth, if it be not my mother; that I shall always trust you as long as I live; that nothing could shake my faith in you; that you are the only friend that we have in our adversity; and that I could ask your pardon on my knees when any one offends you in word or even thought."

"Lenore, dear lady," cried Anton, joyously, "say no more."

"I will say," continued Lenore, "how I admire the self-possession with which you follow your own

way and manage the people, and that it is you alone who keep any order on the estate, or can bring it into a better condition. This has been upon my mind to say; and now, Wohlfart, you know it."

"I thank you, lady," cried Anton; "such words make this a happy day. But I am not so self-possessed and efficient as you think, and every day I feel more and more that I am not the person to be really of service here. If I ever wish that you were not the baron's daughter, but his son, it is when I go over this property."

"Yes," said Lenore, "that is just the old regret. Our former bailiff used often to say the same. When I sit over my work, and see you and Mr. Sturm go out together, I get so hot, and I throw my useless frame aside. I can only spend, and understand nothing but buying lace; and even that I don't understand well, according to mamma. However, you must put up with the stupid Lenore as your good friend;" and she gave him her own true-hearted smile.

"It is now many years since I have, in my inmost soul, felt your friendship to be a great blessing," cried Anton, much moved. "It has always, up to this very hour, been one of my heart's best joys secretly to feel myself your faithful friend."

"And so it shall ever be between us," said Lenore. "Now I am comfortable again. And do not plague yourself any more about Eugene's foolish ways. Even I am not going to do so."

Thus they parted like innocent children who find a pleasure in saying to each other all that the passion of love would teach to conceal.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The enmity between Pix and Specht raged fiercely as ever. Now, however, Specht stood no longer alone; the quartette was on his side; for Specht was wounded in feelings that the quartette respected, and often celebrated in song. Mr. Specht was in love. Certainly this was nothing new to his excitable nature; on the contrary, his love was eternal, though its object often changed. Every lady of his acquaintance had, in her turn, been worshiped by him. Even the elderly cousin had been for a time the subject of his dreams.

On this occasion, however, Mr. Specht's love had some solid foundation. He had discovered a young woman, a well-to-do householder, the widow of a fur-merchant, with a round face and a pleasant pair of nut-brown eyes. He followed her to the theatre and in the public gardens, walked past her windows as often as he could, and did all that in him lay to win her heart.

He disturbed the quiet of her bereaved life by showers of anonymous notes, in which he threatened to quit this sublunary scene if she despised him. In the list of advertisements, among fresh caviare, shell-fish, and servants wanting places, there appeared, to the astonishment of the public, numerous poetical effusions, where Adèle, the name of the widow, was made prominent either in an acrostic, or else by its component letters being printed in large capitals. At length Specht had not been able to resist taking the quartette into his confidence on the subject. The two basses were amazed at such poetical efforts having proceeded from their office. True, they had often ridiculed them with others, while Specht inwardly groaned over counting-house criticism; but now that they knew one of themselves to have been the perpetrator, the *esprit de corps* awoke, and they not only received his confessions kindly, but lent him their assistance in bribing the watchman in the widow's street, and serenading her, on which occasion a window had been seen to open, and something white to appear for a few minutes. Specht was now at the summit of earthly felicity, and as that condition is not a reticent one, he imprudently extended his confidence to others of his colleagues, and so it was that the matter came to the ears of Pix.

And now there began in the local advertiser a most extraordinary game of hide-and-seek. There were numerous insertions appointing a Mr. S. to a rendezvous with one dear to him in every possible part of the town. Wherever the place, Specht regularly repaired to it, and never found her whom he sought, but suffered from every variety of weather, was repulsed by stranger ladies, and had the end of a cigar thrown into his face by a shoemaker's apprentice, whom he mistook for his fair one in disguise. Of course he, on his side, gave vent, through the same medium, to his complaints and reproaches, which led to excuses and new appointments. But he never met the long-sought-for one.

This went on for some weeks, and Specht fell into a state of excitement which even the basses found reprehensible.

One morning Pix was standing as usual on the ground floor, when a plump, pretty lady, with nut-brown eyes, and enveloped in beautiful furs, entered the house, and in an irate tone of voice inquired for Mr. Schröter.

Pix informed her that he was not then at home, adding, with the air and tone of a field-marshal, that he was his representative.

After some reluctance to tell her tale to any other than Mr. Schröter had been overcome by the polite decision of Mr. Pix, the lady preferred her complaint against one of the clerks in that office who persecuted her with letters and poems, and unworthily made her name public in the daily

papers.

The whole thing flashed upon Pix at once. "Can you give me the gentleman's name?"

"I do not know his name," said the widow; "he is tall and has curly hair."

"Gaunt in figure and a large nose, eh?" inquired Pix. "Very well, madam; from this day forth you shall have no further annoyance. I will be answerable for that."

"Still," recommenced the lady in the furs, "I should wish Mr. Schröter himself—"

"Better not, madam. The young man has behaved toward you in a manner for which I can find no adequate terms. Yet your kind heart will remember that he did not mean to offend. He wanted sense and tact, that was his offense. But he was really in earnest; and since I have had the honor to know you, I find it natural." He bowed. "I condemn him, as I said before, but I find it natural."

The pretty widow stood there embarrassed, and Pix proceeded to say that her forgiveness would be a source of happiness to the whole establishment.

"I never meant to make the establishment responsible for the ungentlemanlike behavior of one of its members."

"I thank you with my whole heart for your gracious conduct," said Pix, triumphantly, and then skillfully proceeded to lead the conversation to the goods with which they were surrounded, pointing out the peculiarities of different coffees, and stating that, although the firm had left off retail dealings, yet that in her case they would, at any time, be much flattered to receive an order, however small, and to furnish her with the articles required at wholesale prices.

The lady expressed her gratitude, and went away reconciled to the firm.

Pix went into the office, and calling Specht aside, severely remonstrated with him. Specht was at first speechless with terror. "She began in the daily papers," cried he, at length; "she first appointed the theatre, then the promenade, then the tower to see the view, then—"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Pix, with virtuous indignation; "don't you see that some scapegrace or other has been making a fool of you? The lady has been rendered very unhappy by your conduct."

Specht wrung his hands.

"I have done all I could to set her mind at rest, and have promised that you shall never again intrude upon her in any one way; so mind what you are about, or Mr. Schröter shall hear the whole story."

While Specht, suffering inexpressibly, took counsel with his musical friends, Pix acted. A porter carried an immense packet to the widow's house that very evening, which Pix scrupulously charged to his own account. That same evening he called to announce Specht's penitence, and promises of never offending again. The following Sunday he took coffee at the lady's house, and four weeks after he made her a proposal. This was accepted, and Mr. Pix determined, in spite of moths and other hinderances, to give a fresh impulse to the fur-trade, and to become its centre.

To his honor be it said, he felt bound to communicate the fact to Specht before any one else, and to vouchsafe him a few words of consolation. "Fate has so willed it; be rational, Specht, and make up your mind. After all, it is one of your colleagues who is getting married; take my advice, and fall in love as fast as you can with some one else. It will give you no trouble at all."

"So you think," cried Specht, in despair.

"I assure you it will not, if you set about it in earnest. We will remain good friends; you shall be my groom's-man, and you will soon find another whose name will rhyme quite as well as Adèle."

This consolation, however, proved unavailing at the time, and Specht, indignant at the treachery of his opponent, enjoyed at least the mournful satisfaction of having the whole counting-house on his side, and hearing Pix universally condemned as a hard-hearted, selfish fellow. But time gradually poured its balsam into his heart; and the widow happening to have a niece whose eyes were blue and whose hair was golden, Specht began by finding her youth interesting, then her manners attractive, till one day he returned to his own room fully resolved to be the nephew-in-law of Mr. Pix.

The merchant sat one evening in his arm-chair, and seemed absorbed in his own thoughts. At last, turning to his sister, he said, "Fink has disappeared again."

Sabine let her work fall. "Disappeared! In America!"

"An agent of his father's was in our counting-house to-day. According to what he told me, there has been a fresh difference between Fink and his father, and this time I fear Fink is more in the right of it than the firm. He has suddenly given up the management of its affairs, has broken up by his strong measures a great company founded by his uncle, has renounced his claim upon his inheritance, and has disappeared. The uncertain reports that have come from New York say that he has gone to the prairies of the interior."

Sabine listened with intense interest, but she said not a word. Her brother, too, was silent a while. "After all, there were noble elements in his character," said he, at length. "The present time requires energy and strength like his. Pix, too, is leaving us. He is to marry a widow with

means, and to set up for himself. I shall give his post to Balbus, but he will not replace him."

"No," said Sabine, anxiously.

"This house is growing empty," continued her brother, "and I feel that my strength is failing. These last years have been heavy ones. We get accustomed to the faces, even to the weaknesses of our fellow-men. No one thinks how bitter it often is to the head of a firm to sever the tie that binds him to his coadjutors; and I was more used to Pix than to most men: it is a great blow to me to lose him. And I am growing old. I am growing old, and our house empty. You alone are left to me at this gloomy time; and when I am called upon to leave you, you will remain behind me desolate. My wife and my child are gone; I have been setting my whole hopes upon your blooming youth; I have thought of your husband and your children, my poor darling; but meanwhile I have grown old, and I see you at my side with a cheerful smile and a wounded heart—active, sympathizing, but alone; without great joys and without happy hopes."

Sabine laid her head on her brother's shoulder, and wept silently. "One of those whom you have lost was dear to you," said she, gently.

"Do not speak or think of him," replied her brother, darkly. "Even if he returned from thence he would be lost to us." He passed his hand over her head, took up his hat, and left the room.

"Yet he himself is always thinking of Wohlfart," cried the cousin from her window-niche. "This very day he was cross-examining old Sturm about Karl and the property. I declare I don't understand the man."

"*I* understand him," sighed Sabine, and sat down again to her work. The cousin pouted: "You and he are just alike; there is no speaking to you on certain subjects." And she left the room.

Sabine left the room. The fire crackled in the stove, the pendulum of the clock swung backward and forward monotonously. "Ever so! ever so!" it seemed to say. Those pictures of her parents had been looking calmly down upon her, their last child, for many years. Her youth was passing away silent, serious, still as those painted forms. Sabine bowed her head and listened. Hush! little fairy steps in the corner of the room. Hark again! a merry laugh from a child's lip, and the steps tripped nearer, and a curly head was laid on her knee, and two little arms stretched out lovingly to clasp her neck. She bent down and kissed the air, and listened again to those blessed sounds which swelled her heart with rapture, and brought tears of joy to her eyes. Alas! she but grasped at empty air, and nothing was real but the tears that fell into her lap.

So sat she long till twilight closed in. The vibrations of the pendulum seemed to fail, the fire grew low in the stove, the pictures dim on the walls, the room dark and lonely.

At that moment old Sturm's hammer was heard outside. Every stroke fell strong, vigorous, decided. It sounded through court-yard and house. Sabine rose: "So it shall be," cried she. "I have twice hoped and feared, twice it has been an illusion, now it is over. My life is to be devoted to him to whom I am all. I can not bring to him the husband he hoped for, and no band of children will twine their arms about his neck. Yes, things will go on with us as they have done hitherto, always more silent, always more empty. But me shall he have, and my whole life. My brother, thou shalt never again feel with regret that thy life and mine are wanting in joyousness!"

She caught up her little key-basket, and hurried into her brother's room. Meanwhile the cousin was making up her mind to pay Mr. Baumann a visit.

Between the cousin and Mr. Baumann there had long been a silent understanding, and fate now willed that he should be her neighbor at the dinner-table. When the cousin glanced back over her succession of neighbors, she came to the conclusion that they had lost in sprightliness what they had gained in moral worth. Fink was rather profane, but very amusing; Anton had a certain equipoise of goodness and pleasantness; Baumann was the best of them all, but also the most silent. Her conversation with him, though edifying enough, was never exciting. On Mondays, indeed, they had a mutual interest in discussing the Sunday's sermon, but there was another tie between them, and that was Anton.

The good lady could not account for what she called his unnatural departure. Whether the fault was that of the principal or the clerk, she could not take upon herself to decide, but she was firmly convinced that the step was unnecessary, unwise, and injurious to all parties; and she had done all toward bringing the wanderer back into the firm that tender hints and feminine persuasions can do to counteract manly perversity. When first Anton left, she had taken every opportunity of mentioning and praising him, both to the merchant and to Sabine; but she met with no encouragement. The merchant always answered dryly, sometimes rudely, and Sabine invariably turned the subject or was silent. The cousin was not, however, to be taken in by that. Those embroidered curtains had let in a flood of light upon her mind, in which Sabine stood plainly revealed to her gaze. She knew that Mr. Baumann was the only one of his colleagues with whom Anton kept up a correspondence, and to-day she resolved to call him to her aid; therefore she took up the report of a benevolent society lent her by the future missionary, and, knocking at Mr. Baumann's door, handed it in to him. "Very good," said she, on the threshold; "Heaven will bless such a cause. Pray set me down as a subscriber for the future." Mr. Baumann thanked her in the name of the poor. The cousin went on. "What do you hear of late from your friend Wohlfart? He seems to have vanished from the face of the earth; even old Sturm has nothing to say about him."

"He has a great deal to do," said the reticent Baumann.

"Nay, I should think not more than here. If occupation was all he wanted, he might have remained where he was."

"He has a difficult task to perform, and is doing a good work where he is," cautiously continued Mr. Baumann.

"Don't talk to me of your good work," cried the cousin, entering, in her excitement, and closing the door behind her. "He had a good work to do here too. I beg your pardon, but really I never knew such a thing in all my life. He runs away just when he was most wanted. And no excuse for it either. If he had married or set up for himself, that would have been a different thing, for a man likes a business and a household of his own. That would have been God's will, and I should not have said a word against it. But to run off from the counting-house after sheep and cows, and noblemen's families and Poles, when he was made so much of, and was such a favorite here! Do you know what I call that, Mr. Baumann?" said she, the bows on her cap shaking with her eagerness; "I call that ungrateful. And what are we to do here? This house is getting quite desolate. Fink gone, Jordan gone, Wohlfart gone, Pix gone—you are almost the only one remaining of the old set, and you can't do every thing."

"No," said Baumann, embarrassed; "and I, too, am very awkwardly placed. I had fixed last autumn as the term of my stay here, and now spring is coming on, and I have not followed the voice that calls me."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried the cousin, in horror, "you are not going away too?"

"I must," said Baumann, looking down; "I have had letters from my English brethren; they blame my lukewarmness. I fear I have done very wrong in not leaving you before; but when I looked at the heaps of letters, and Mr. Schröter's anxious face, and thought what hard times these were, and that the house had lost most of its best hands, I was withheld. I too wish that Wohlfart would return; he is wanted here."

"He must return," cried the cousin; "it is his Christian duty. Write and tell him so. Certainly we are not very cheerful here," said she, confidentially; "he may have a pleasanter time of it yonder. The Poles are a merry, riotous set."

"Alas!" replied Mr. Baumann, in the same confidential tone, "he does not lead a merry life. I am afraid he has a hard time of it there; his letters are by no means cheerful."

"You don't say so!" said the cousin, taking a chair.

Baumann drew his near her and went on.

"He writes anxiously; he takes a gloomy view of the times, and fears fresh disturbances."

"God forbid!" cried the good woman; "we have had enough of them."

"He lives in an unsettled district, with bad men around, and the police regulations seem to be quite inadequate."

"There are fearful dens of robbers there," chimed in the excited cousin.

"And I fear, too, that his earnings are but small. At first I sent him a few trifles to which he is accustomed, such as tea and cigars, but in his last letter he told me he was going to be economical, and to leave them off. He must have very little money," continued Baumann, shaking his head; "not more than two hundred dollars."

"He is in want," cried the cousin; "actually he is. Poor Wohlfart! When you next write, we will send him a chest of the Pekoe tea, and a couple of our hams."

"Hams to the country! I fancy there are more swine there than any thing else."

"But they don't belong to him," cried she. "Listen to me, Mr. Baumann; it is your Christian duty to write to him at once, and tell him to return. The business wants him. I have the best reasons to know how much my cousin Schröter is silently feeling the loss of his best coadjutors, and how much he would rejoice to see Wohlfart back again."

This was a pious fraud of the good lady's.

"It does not appear so to me," interpolated Baumann.

"It was only to-day that my cousin Sabine said to her brother how dear Wohlfart had been to us all, and how great a loss he was. If he has duties yonder, he has duties here too, and these are the oldest."

"I will write to him," said Mr. Baumann; "but I fear, honored lady, that it will be to no purpose, for, now that he himself is a loser by it, he will never look back from the plow to which, for the sake of others, he has put his hand."

"He does not belong to the plow, but to the pen," cried the cousin, irritably, "and his place lies here. And because he gets a good name here, and drinks his tea comfortably, he does his duty none the less. And I tell you, too, Mr. Baumann, that I beg never to hear again of your African notions."

Baumann smiled proudly. However, as soon as the cousin had left the room, he obediently sat down and wrote off the whole conversation to Anton.

The snow had melted away from the Polish estate; the brook had swollen to a flood, the landscape still lay silent and colorless, but the sap began to circulate in the branches, and the buds on the bushes to appear. The ruinous bridge had been carried away by the winter torrents, and Anton was now superintending the building of a new one. Lenore sat opposite him, and watched his measurements. "The winter is over," cried she; "spring is coming. I can already picture to myself green grass and trees, and even the gloomy castle will look more cheerful in the bright spring sunshine than it does now. But I will sketch it for you just as it is, and it shall remind you of the first winter that we spent here under your protection."

And Anton looked with shining eyes at the beautiful girl before him, and, with the pencil in his hand, sketched her profile on a new board. "You won't succeed," said Lenore; "you always make my mouth too large and my eyes too small. Give me the pencil; I can do better. Stand still. Look! that is your face—your good, true face; I know it by heart. Hurrah! the postman!" cried she, throwing away the pencil and hurrying to the castle. Anton followed her; for the postman and his heavy bag were to the castle as a ship steering through the sandy deep, and bringing the world's good things to the dwellers on a lonely island. The man was soon relieved from his burden. Lenore gladly caught up the drawing-paper that she had ordered from Rosmin. "Come, Wohlfart, we will look out the best place for sketching the castle, and you shall hang up the picture in your room instead of the old one, which saddens me whenever I see it. Once you sketched our home, now I will sketch it for you. I will take great pains, and you shall see what I can do."

She had spoken joyously, but Anton had not heard a word she said. He had torn open Baumann's letter, and as he read it his face reddened with emotion. Slowly, thoughtfully, he turned away, went up to his room, and came down no more. Lenore snatched up the envelope, which he had dropped. "Another letter from his friend in the firm!" said she, sadly; "whenever he hears from him, he becomes gloomy and cold toward me." She threw away the envelope, and hurried to the stable to saddle her trusty friend the pony.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was the weekly market in the little town of Rosmin. From time immemorial this had been an important festival to the country people around.

For five days of the week the peasant had to cultivate his plot, of ground, or to render feudal service to his landlord, and on Sunday his heart was divided between the worship of the Virgin, his family, and the public house; but the market-day led him beyond the narrow confines of his fields into the busy world. There, amid strangers, he could feel and show himself a shrewd man in buying and selling; he greeted acquaintances whom else he would never have met; saw new things and strange people, and heard the news of other towns and districts. So it had been even when the Slavonic race alone possessed the soil. Then the site where Rosmin now stands was an open field, with perhaps a chapel or a few old trees, and the house of some sagacious landed proprietor, who saw farther than the rest of his long-bearded countrymen. At that time the German peddler used to cross the border with his wagon and his attendants, and to display his stores under the protection of a crucifix or of a drawn Slavonic sword. These stores consisted of gay handkerchiefs, stockings, necklaces of glass and coral, pictures of saints and ecclesiastical decorations, which were given in exchange for the produce of the district—wolf-skins, honey, cattle, and corn. In course of time the handicraftsman followed the peddler, the German shoemaker, the tinsmith, and the saddler established themselves; the tents changed into strongly-built houses that stood around the market-place. The foreign settlers bought land, bought privileges from the original lords of the soil, and copied in their statutes those of German towns in general. In the woods and on the commons round, it was told with wonder how rapidly those men of a foreign tongue had grown up into a large community, and how every peasant who passed through their gate must pay toll; nay, that even the nobleman, all-powerful as he was, must pay it as well. Several of the Poles around joined lots with the citizens, and settled among them as mechanics or shopkeepers. This had been the origin of Rosmin, as of many other German towns on foreign soil, and these have remained what at first they were, the markets of the great plains, where Polish produce is still exchanged for the inventions of German industry, and the poor field-laborer brought into contact with other men, with culture, liberty, and a civilized state.

As we have before said, the market-day at Rosmin is a great day still. From early dawn hundreds of basket-carriages, filled with field-produce, move on toward the town, but the serf no longer whips on the used-up chargers of his master, but his own sturdy horse of German breed. And when the light carriage of a nobleman rolls by, the peasant urges his horse to a sharper trot, and only slightly touches his hat. Every where they are moving on toward the town: the children are driving their geese thither, and the women carrying their butter, fruit, and mushrooms, and, carefully concealed, a hare or two that has fallen a victim to their husbands' guns. Numbers of carts stand at the door of every inn, and crowds are pushing in and out of every drinking-shop. In the market-place the corn-wagons are closely ranged, and the whole wide space covered with well-filled sacks, and horses of every size and color; and a few brokers are winding their way, like so many eels, among the crowd, with samples of grain in each pocket, asking and answering in two languages at once. Amid the white smock frocks of the Poles, and their hats adorned with a

peacock's feather, the dark blue of the German colonists appears, together with soldiers from the next garrison, townspeople, agriculturists, and fine youths, sons of the nobility. You may see the gendarme yonder at the corner of the square, towering high on his tall horse; he, too, is excited to-day, and his voice sounds authoritatively above all the confusion of the carts that have stopped up the way. Every where the shops are opened wide, and small dealers spread out their wares on tables and barrels in front of the houses; there the bargains are deliberately made, and the enjoyment of shopping is keenly felt. The last purchase over, the next move is into the tavern. There, cheeks get redder, gestures more animated, voices louder, friends embrace, or old foes try hard to pick a quarrel. Meanwhile men of business have to make the most of this day, when actions are brought and taxes paid. Now it is that Mr. Löwenberg drives his best bargains, not only in swine, but in cows and wool; besides which, he lends money, and is the trusted agent of many a landed proprietor. So passes the market-day, in ceaseless talking and enjoyment, earning and spending, rolling of carts and galloping of horses, till evening closes in, and the housewife pulls her husband by the coat, remembering that the earthen mugs he carries are easily broken, and that the little children at home are beginning to cry out for their mother. Such has ever been the weekly market in the town of Rosmin.

During the last winter the numbers attending it had not decreased, but there was a degree of restlessness to be observed in many, particularly in the gentry of the district. Strangers of military appearance often entered the principal wine-shop, and went into the back room, of which the door was at once shut. Youths wearing square red caps, and peculiarly attired, walked in and out among the crowd, tapping one peasant on the shoulder, calling another by name, and taking them into a corner apart.

Wherever a soldier appeared, he was looked at as a character in a masquerade; many avoided him; many, Germans and Poles alike, made more of him than ever. In the taverns, the people from the German villages sat apart, and the Poles on Herr von Tarow's estate drank and bought more than they were wont to do. The tenant of the new farm had been unable, last market-day, to find a new scythe any where in the town, and the forester had complained to Anton that he could not in any shop get powder enough to last him more than a week. Something was in the wind, but no one would say what it was.

It was market-day again at Rosmin, and Anton drove thither, accompanied by a servant. It was one of the first spring days, and the sun shone brightly, reminding him how gay the gardens must now be with early flowers, and that he and the ladies in the castle would see none this year, save a few, perhaps, from the little farm garden behind the barn. But, indeed, it was no time to care much for flowers; everywhere men's hearts were restless and excited, and much that had stood firm for years now seemed to totter. A political hurricane was blowing over wide districts; every day the newspapers related something unexpected and alarming; a time of commotion and universal insecurity seemed impending. Anton thought of the baron's circumstances, and what a misfortune it would be to him should land fall in value, and money rise. He thought of the firm, of the place in the office which he secretly still considered his own, and of the letter written by Mr. Baumann, telling him how gloomy the principal looked, and how quarrelsome the clerks had become.

He was roused out of his sorrowful reverie by a noise on the road. A number of gentlemen's carriages drove past him, Herr von Tarowski occupying the first, and politely bowing as he passed. Anton was surprised to see that his huntsman sat on the box as if they were going to the chase. Three other carriages followed, heavily laden with gentlemen; and behind came a whole troop of mounted men, Von Tarow's German steward among them.

"Jasch," cried Anton to the servant who drove him, "what was it that the gentlemen in the second carriage were so careful to hide as they drove by?"

"Guns," said Jasch, shaking his head.

This sunny day, after so long a period of snow and rain, naturally attracted people from all sides of the town. Parties of them hurried forward, but few women were among them, and there was a degree of excitement and animation prevailing that was in general only displayed when returning in the evening. Anton halted at the first public house on the way, and told the driver to remain there with the horses.

He himself walked rapidly on through the gate. The town was so crowded that the carts of grain could hardly make their way along. When Anton reached the market-place he was struck with the scene before him. On all sides heated faces, eager gestures, not a few in hunting costume, and a strange cockade on numerous caps. The crowd was densest before the wine-merchant's store; there the people trode on one another, staring up at the windows, from whence hung gayly-colored flags, the Polish colors above the rest. While Anton was looking with disquietude at the front of the house, the door was opened, and Herr von Tarow came out upon the stone steps, accompanied by a stranger with a scarf bound round him, in whom Anton recognized the same Pole who had once threatened him with a court-martial, and who had been inquiring for the steward a few months ago. A young man sprang out of the crowd on to the lowest step, saying something in Polish, and waving his hat. A loud shout rose in return, and then came a profound silence, during which Von Tarow spoke a few words, the import of which Anton could not catch, owing to the noise of carts and the pushing of the crowd. Next, the gentleman with the scarf made a long oration, during which he was often interrupted by loud applause. At the end of it, a deafening tumult arose. The house door was thrown wide open, and the crowd swayed to and fro like the waves of the sea, some rushing off in another direction, and others running into the

house, whence they hurried back with cockades on their caps and scythes in their hands. The number of the armed went on rapidly increasing, and small detachments of scythe-bearers, headed by men with guns, proceeded to invest the market-place.

Hearing the word of command given behind him, Anton turned, and saw a few men mounted and armed, who were ordering all the wagons to be removed from the market-place. The noise and confusion increased, the peasants dragging off their horses in all haste, the traders flying into the houses with their stores, the shops being gradually closed. The market-place soon presented an ominous appearance. Anton was now swept off by the crowd to its opposite side, where the custom-house stood, made conspicuous from afar by the national escutcheon suspended near the windows. That was now the point of attraction, and Anton saw from a distance a man plant a ladder against the wall, and hack away at the escutcheon till, amid profound silence, it fell to the ground. Soon, however a drunken rabble fell upon it with wild yells, and, tying a rope about it, ignominiously dragged it through the gutter and over the stones.

Anton was beside himself. "Wretches!" cried he, running toward the offenders. But a strong arm was thrown around him, and a broken voice said, "Stop, Mr. Wohlfart, this is their day; to-morrow will be ours." Dashing away the unwelcome restraint, Anton saw the portly form of the Neudorf bailiff, and found himself surrounded by a number of dark-looking figures. These were the blue-coated German farmers, their faces full of grief and anger. "Let me go!" cried Anton, in a phrensy. But again the heavy hand of the bailiff was laid on his shoulder, and tears were in the man's eyes as he said, "Spare your life, Mr. Wohlfart; it is all in vain; we have nothing but our fists, and we are the minority." And, on the other side, his hand was grasped as if in a vice by the old forester, who stood there groaning and sobbing: "That ever I should live to see this day! Oh, the shame, the shame!" Again there rose a yell nearer them, and a voice cried, "Search the Germans; take their arms from them; let no one leave the market-place!" Anton looked round him hastily. "This we will not stand, friends, to be trapped here in a German town, and to have our escutcheon outraged by those miscreants."

A drum was heard at a distance. "It is the drum of the guard," cried the bailiff; "the town militia are assembling: they have arms."

"Perhaps all may not be lost yet," cried Anton; "I know a few men who are to be relied upon. Compose yourself, old friend," said he to the forester. "The Germans from the country must be enlisted; no one knows yet what we can do. We will, at all events, disperse in different directions, and reassemble at the fountain here. Let each go and call his acquaintances together. No time is to be lost. You go in that direction, bailiff; you, smith of Kunau, come with me." They divided; and Anton, followed by the forester and the smith, went once more round the market-place. Wherever they met a German there was a glance, a hurried hand-clasp, a whispered word—"The Germans assemble at the fountain;" and these spirited up the irresolute to join their countrymen.

Anton and his companions paused for a moment in the midst of the dense crowd around the wine-merchant's. About fifty men with scythes stood before the house, near them a dozen more with guns; the doors were still open, and people were still going in to get arms. Some young gentlemen were addressing the crowd, but Anton remarked that the Polish peasants did not keep their ranks, and looked doubtfully at each other. While the forester and the smith were giving the sign to the Germans, of whom many were assembled, Anton rushed up to a little man in working garments, and, seizing him by the arm, said, "Locksmith Grobesch, you standing here? Why do you not hasten to our meeting-place? You a citizen and one of the militia, will you put up with this insult?"

"Alas! Mr. Agent," said the locksmith, taking Anton apart, "what a misfortune! Only think, I was hammering away in my workshop, and heard nothing of what was going on. One can't hear much at our work. Then my wife ran in—"

"Are you going to put up with this insult?" cried Anton, shaking him violently.

"God forbid, Mr. Wohlfart; I head a band of militia. While my wife looked out my coat, I just ran over the way to see how many of them there were. You are taller than I; how many are there carrying arms?"

"I count fifty scythes," replied Anton, hurriedly.

"It is not the scythes; they are a cowardly set; how many guns are there?"

"A dozen before the door, and perhaps as many more in the house."

"We have about thirty rifles," said the little man, anxiously, "but we can't count upon them all to-day."

"Can you get us arms?" asked Anton.

"But few," said the locksmith, shaking his head.

"There is a band of us Germans from the country," said Anton, rapidly; "we will fight our way into the suburb as far as the Red Deer Inn, and there I will keep the people together, and, for God's sake, send us a patrol to report the state of things, and the number of arms you can procure. If we can eject the nobles, the others will run away at once."

"But then the revenge these Poles will take!" said the locksmith. "The town will have to pay for

it."

"No such thing, my man. The military can be sent for to-morrow, if you but help to eject these madmen to-day. Off with you; each moment increases the danger."

He drove the little man away, and hurried back to the fountain. There the Germans were assembled in small groups, and the Neudorf bailiff came to meet him, crying, "There's no time to lose; the others are beginning to notice us; there is a party of scythes forming yonder against us."

"Follow me!" cried Anton, in a loud voice; "draw close; forward! let's leave the town."

The forester sprang from side to side, marshaling the men; Anton and the bailiff led the way. As they reached the corner of the market-place, scythes were crossed; and the leader of the party cocked his gun, and said theatrically, "Why do you wish to leave, my fine sir? Take arms, ye people; to-day is the day of liberty!"

He said no more, for the forester, springing forward, gave him such an astounding box on the ear that he reeled and fell, his gun dropping from his hand. A loud cry arose; the forester caught up the gun, and the scythe-bearers, taken by surprise, were dashed aside, their scythes taken from them, and broken on the pavement. Thus the German band reached the gates, and there, too, the enemy yielded, and the dense mass passed on unmolested till they reached the inn appointed. There the bailiff, urged on by Anton, addressed the people:

"There is a plot against the government. There is a plot against us Germans. Our armed enemies are few, and we have just seen that we can manage them. Let every orderly man remain here, and help the citizens to drive out the strangers. The town militia will send us word how we can best do this, therefore remain together, countrymen!"

At these words, many cried "We will! we will!" but many, too, grew fearful, and stole away home. Those who remained looked out for arms as best they could, taking up pitchforks, bars of iron, wooden cudgels, or whatever else lay ready to hand.

"I came here to buy powder and shot," said the forester to Anton. "Now I have a gun, and I will fire my very last charge, if we can only revenge the insult they have offered to our eagle."

Meanwhile the hours passed as usual at the castle, and it was now about noon. The baron, accompanied by his wife, walked in the sunshine, grumbling because the molehills against which his foot tripped were not yet leveled. This led him to the conclusion that there was no reliance to be placed upon hired dependents of any kind; and that Wohlfart was the most forgetful of his class. On this theme he enlarged with a kind of gloomy satisfaction, the baroness only contradicting him as far as she could without putting him out of temper. At last he sat down on a chair that one of the servants carried after him, and quietly listened to his daughter, who was discussing with Karl the best site for a small plantation. No one thought of mischief, and each one was occupied with things immediately around him.

Then came the rumor of some great disaster, flying on wings of evil omen over the wide plain. It swooped down on the baron's oasis, heavily fluttered over pines and wild pear-trees, corn-fields and meadows, till it reached the castle. At first it was indistinct, like a little cloud on a sunny sky; but soon it grew, it darkened the air, it brooded with its black pinions over all hearts—it made the blood stand still in the veins, and filled the eyes with burning tears.

In the middle of his work, Karl suddenly looked up, and said in dismay, "That was a shot."

Lenore started, then laughed at her own terror. "I did not hear it," said she; "perhaps it was the forester."

"The forester is gone to town," replied Karl, gravely.

"Then it is some confounded poacher in the wood," cried the baron, angrily.

"It was a cannon shot," maintained the positive Karl.

"That is impossible," said the baron; but he himself listened with intense attention; "there are no cannon for many miles round."

The next moment a voice sounded out from the farm-yard, "There is a fire in Rosmin."

Karl looked at his young lady, threw down his spade, and ran toward the farm-yard. Lenore followed him.

"Who said that there was a fire in Rosmin?" he inquired. Not one would own that he had, but all ran in dismay to the high road, though the town was six miles off, and no view of it was to be had from thence.

"Many scared women have been running along toward Neudorf," said one servant; and another added, "There must be mischief going on in Rosmin, for we can see the smoke rise above the wood." All thought, indeed, that they did perceive a dark cloud in that direction, Karl as well as the rest.

"The nobles are all there to-day," cried one. "They have set the town on fire." Another professed to have heard from a man in the fields that this was to be a serious day for landed proprietors; then, looking askance at Karl, he added, "Many things may yet happen before evening." Next

came the landlord, exclaiming, "If this day were but over!" and Karl returned, "Would that it were!" yet no one knew exactly why.

From that hour, fresh messengers of ill succeeded each other. "The soldiers and the Poles are fighting," said one. "Kunau is on fire too," cried some women who had been working in the fields. At last came the farmer's wife, running up to Lenore. "My husband sends me because he won't leave the farm on a day like this. He wishes to know whether you have any tidings of the forester; there is murder going on in the town, and people say the forester is shooting away in the midst of it all."

"Who says so?" asked the baron.

"One who came running across the fields told it to my husband; and it must be true that there is an uproar in the town, for when the forester went thither he had no gun."

Thus the dark rumor spread. Karl had much difficulty in getting the men out again to their plowing. Lenore meantime went up to the tower with him, but they could not be positive whether or not there was smoke in the direction of Rosmin. They had scarcely got down, when one of the farmer's servants came back with his horses to say that a man from the next district had told him, as he galloped past, that Rosmin was filled with men bearing red flags, and armed with scythes; and that all the Germans in the country were to be shot. The baroness wrung her hands and began to weep, and her husband lost all the self-command he had sought to exercise. He burst out into loud complaints against Wohlfart for not being on the spot on a day like this, and gave Karl a dozen contradictory orders in quick succession. Lenore could not endure her suspense within the castle walls, but kept as much as she could with Karl, in whose trusty face she found more comfort than in any thing else. Both looked constantly along the high road to see if a carriage or a messenger were coming.

"He is peaceable," said she to Karl, hoping for confirmation from him. "Surely he would never expose himself to such fearful risk."

But Karl shook his head. "There is no trusting to that. If things in the town are as people say, Mr. Anton will not be the last to take a hand in them. He will not think of himself."

"No, that he will not," cried Lenore, wringing her hands.

So the day passed. Karl sternly insisted upon keeping all the servants together, he himself shouldering his carbine, not knowing why, and saddling a horse to tie it up again in the stable. At evening the landlord came running to the castle, accompanied by a servant from the distillery. As soon as he saw the young lady, the good-natured man called out, "Here are tidings, dreadful tidings, of Mr. Wohlfart."

Lenore ran forward, and the servant began to give a confused report of the horrors of the day in Rosmin. He had seen the Poles and Germans about to fire at each other in the market-place, and Anton was marching at the head of the latter.

"I knew that," cried Karl, proudly.

The servant went on to say that he had run off just as all the Poles had taken aim at the gentleman. Whether he were alive or dead, he could not exactly say, owing to his terror at the time, but he fully believed that the gentleman must be dead.

Lenore leaned against the wall, Karl tore his hair in distraction. "Saddle the pony," said Lenore, in a smothered voice.

"You are not thinking of going yourself at night through the wood all the way to the town?" cried Karl.

The brave girl hurried toward the stable without answering him; Karl barred the way. "You must not. The baroness would die with anxiety about you, and what could you do among those raging men yonder?"

Lenore stood still. "Then go for him," said she, half unconscious; "bring him to us, alive or dead."

"Can I leave you alone on a day like this?" cried Karl, beside himself.

Lenore snatched his carbine from him. "Go, if you love him. I will mount guard in your stead."

Karl rushed to the farm-yard, got out his horse, and galloped off along the Rosmin road. The sound of the horse's hoofs soon died away, and all was still. Lenore paced up and down before the castle walls; her friend was in mortal peril, perhaps lost; and the fault was hers, for she had brought him hither. She called to mind in her despair all that he had been to her and to her parents. To live on in this solitude without him seemed impossible. Her mother sent for her, her father called to her out of the window, but she paid no attention. Every other feeling was merged in the realization of the pure and sincere attachment that had existed between her and him she had lost.

To return to Rosmin, Anton and his party had remained for about half an hour in expectation before the Red Deer. The frightened market-people kept pouring by, on their way to their village homes; many of them, indeed, passed on, but many, too, remained with their countrymen, and even several Poles went up to Anton and asked whether they could be of use to him. At length came the locksmith, by a back way, in his green uniform and epaulette, followed by some of the

town militia.

Anton rushed up to see how things were going on.

"There are eighteen of us," said the locksmith, "all safe men. The people in the market-place are dispersing, and those in the wine-store are not much stronger than before. Our captain is as brave as a lion. If you will help him, he is prepared to try a bold stroke. We can get into Löwenberg's house from behind. I made the lock on the back door myself. If we manage cleverly, we can surprise the leaders of the insurrection, and take them and their arms."

"We must attack them both in front and in the rear," replied Anton. "Then we shall be sure of them."

"Yes," said the locksmith, a little crestfallen, "if you and your party will attack them in front."

"We have no arms," cried Anton. "I will go with you, and so will the forester and a few more, perhaps; but an unarmed band against scythes and a dozen guns is out of the question."

"Look you, now," said the worthy locksmith; "it comes hard to us, too. Those who have just left wives and children in their first alarm are not much inclined to make targets of themselves. Our people are full of good-will, but those men yonder are desperate, and therefore let us get in quietly from behind. If we can surprise them, there will be the less bloodshed, and that's the chief thing. I have got no arms, only a sword for you."

The party accordingly set off in silence, the locksmith leading the way. "Our men are assembled in the captain's house," said he; "we can enter it through the garden without being seen."

At length, having got over hedges and ditches, they found themselves in the court-yard of a dyer.

"Wait here," said the locksmith, with some disquietude. "The dyer is one of us militiamen. His house door opens upon the back street, which takes into Löwenberg's court-yard: I am going to the captain."

The party had only a few minutes to wait before they were joined by the militia. The captain, a portly butcher, requested Anton to join forces and walk by his side. They moved on to the back entrance of Löwenberg's house, saw that the gate was neither locked nor guarded, and the court empty. They halted for a moment, and the forester proposed his plan.

"We are more than are wanted in the house," said he. "Hard by there is a broad cross-street leading to the market. Let me have the drummer, a few of the militia, and half of the country people. We will run to the market-place and invest the opening of the cross-street, shouting loudly. Those in front of the house will be diverted thither: meanwhile, you can force an entrance and take them prisoners. As soon as you hear the drum, let the captain rush through the court into the house and make fast the door."

"I approve the plan," said the burly captain, his blood thoroughly up; "only be quick about it."

The forester took six of the militia, beckoned to the bailiff and to some of the country people, and went quietly down the side street. Soon the beating of a drum was heard, and loud hurrahs. At that signal all rushed through the court, the captain and Anton waving their swords, and found themselves inside the house before any one was aware of them, for all were looking out at door and window on the other side.

"Hurrah!" cried the captain; "we have them," catching hold of one of the gentlemen. "Not one shall escape. Close the door!" he cried, and he held his victim fast by the collar like a cow by its horns. Ten strong men closed and locked the house door, so that all the more zealous of the enemy who were standing on the steps found themselves shut out. Next some of the band rushed up stairs, and the others spread themselves over the ground floor. All the conspirators on that floor, however, jumped out through the window, so that the Germans took nothing but a list of names, a quantity of scythes, and half a dozen guns belonging to the nobles. These the locksmith caught up, and ran, together with Anton and a few others, to join the forester's detachment, which they found in a critical position.

The beat of the drums and the shouting, together with the attack made simultaneously upon the house, had thrown the enemy into confusion. The men with scythes were standing about in disorder, while the bearer of the scarf, himself unarmed, was busy trying to rally them. On the other hand, all such as had guns—stewards, huntsmen, and a few young men of rank, had marched against the forester's party. Both bands halted with weapons raised, kept back for a moment by the thought of the fearful consequences that must follow the word of command. At that moment, Anton and the valiant locksmith joined them, and the guns they brought were dispensed quick as lightning. A bloody conflict on the pavement now seemed unavoidable.

Just then a loud voice sounded from the window of the wine-store. "Brothers, we have them. Here is the prisoner. It is Herr von Tarow himself." All lowered their guns and listened. The captain showed his prisoner, who made no fruitless struggles to escape from his awkward situation, "And now," went on the orator, "listen to my words: all the windows of this house are invested; all the streets are invested; and as soon as I lift my finger you'll all be shot down dead."

"Hurrah, captain!" cried a voice from a house in the middle of the market-place, while the shopkeeper dwelling there projected his duck-gun from one of the windows of the first floor, the apothecary and post-master soon doing the same.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," cried the butcher, pleasantly, to these unexpected recruits. "You see, good people, that your resistance is vain, so throw away your scythes, or you are all dead men." A number of scythes clattered on the pavement.

"And as for you, gentlemen," continued the captain, "you shall be allowed to depart unmolested, if you give up your arms; but if any of you make any resistance, this man's blood be upon your heads." So saying, he caught hold of Tarowski by the head, and, holding it out of the window, drew a great knife. Throwing down its sheath into the street, he waved it so ferociously round the prisoner's head that the worthy butcher seemed for the moment transformed into a very cannibal.

Then the forester cried, "Hurrah! we have them! March, my friends." The drummer thundered away, and the Germans charged. The Poles fell into disorder, some random shots were fired on both sides, then the rebels took to flight, pursued by their enemies. Many sought refuge in the houses, others ran out of the town; while, on the other hand, armed citizens began to present themselves, and the dilatory members of the militia corps now joined the rest. The captain made over his prisoner to a few trusty men, and, waving off the congratulations that poured in upon him, cried, "Duty before all. We have now to lock and invest the gates. Where is the captain of our allies?"

Anton stepped forward. "Comrade," said the butcher, with a military salute, "I propose that we muster our men and appoint the watches."

This was done, and those belonging to Rosmin were proud of their numbers. The national arms, washed clean and decorated by many busy feminine hands with the first flowers of the town gardens, were solemnly raised to their former place, all the men marching by them and presenting arms, while patriotic acclamations were raised by hundreds of throats.

Anton stood on one side, and when he saw the spring flowers on the escutcheon, he remembered having doubted in the morning whether he should see any flowers that year. Now their colors were gleaming out brightly on the shield of his fatherland. But what a day this had been to him!

Much against his will, he was summoned to the council convened to take measures for the public safety. Ere long he had a pen in his hand, and was writing, at the long green table, a report of the events of the day to the authorities. Prompt steps were taken: messengers were sent off to the next military station; the houses of the suspected searched; such of the country people as were willing to remain till the evening billeted in different houses. Patrols were sent out in all directions, a few prisoners examined, and information as to the state of the surrounding district collected. Discouraging tidings poured in on all sides. Bands of Poles from several villages round were said to be marching on the town. An insurrection had been successful in the next circle, and the town was in the hands of a set of Polish youths. There were tales of plunder, and of incendiarism too, and fearful rumors of an intended general massacre of the Germans. The faces of the men of Rosmin grew long again; their present triumph gave way to fears for the future. Some timid souls were for making a compromise with Herr von Tarow, but the warlike spirit of the majority prevailed, and it was determined to pass the night under arms, and hold the town against all invaders till the military should arrive.

By this time it was evening. Anton, alarmed at the numerous reports of plundering going on in the open country, left the town council, and sent the bailiff to collect all the Germans of their immediate district to march home together. When they reached the wooden bridge at the extremity of the suburb, the townsmen who had accompanied them thither with beat of drum and loud hurrahs took a brotherly leave of their country allies.

"Your carriage is the last that shall pass to-day," said the locksmith; "we will break up the pavement of the bridge, and station a sentinel here. I thank you in the name of the town and of the militia. If bad times come, as we have reason to fear, we Germans will ever hold together."

"That shall be our rallying cry," called out the bailiff; and all the country people shouted their assent.

On their homeward way Anton and his associates fell into earnest conversation. All felt elated at the part they had that day played, but no one attempted to disguise from himself that this was but a beginning of evils. "What is to become of us in the country?" said the bailiff. "The men in the town have their stout walls, and live close together; but we are exposed to the revenge of every rascal; and if half a dozen vagabonds with guns come into the village, it is all over with us."

"True," said Anton, "we can not guard ourselves against large troops, and each individual must just take the chances of war; but large troops, under regular command, are not what we have most to fear. The worst are bands of rabble, who get together to burn and plunder, and henceforth we must take measures to defend ourselves against these. Stay at home to-morrow, bailiff, and you, smith of Kunau, and send for the other Germans round, on whom we can depend. I will ride over to-morrow morning early, and we will hold a consultation."

By this time they had reached the cross-way, and there the two divisions parted, and hurried home in different directions.

Anton got into the carriage, and took the forester with him, to help watch the castle through the night. In the middle of the wood they were stopped by a loud cry of "Halt! who goes there?"

"Karl!" exclaimed Anton, joyfully.

"Hurrah! hurrah! he is alive," cried Karl, in ecstasy. "Are you unhurt too?"

"That I am; what news from the castle?"

Now began a rapid interchange of question and answer. "To think that I was not with you!" cried Karl, again and again.

Arrived at the castle, a bright form flew up to the carriage. "You, lady!" cried Anton, springing out.

"Dear Wohlfart!" cried Lenore, seizing both his hands.

For a moment she hid her face on his shoulder, and her tears fell fast. Anton grasped her hand firmly, while he said, "A fearful time is coming. I have thought of you all day."

"Now that we have you again," said Lenore, "I can bear it all; but come at once to my father; he is dying with impatience." She drew him up the stairs.

The baron opened the door, and cried out, "What news do you bring?"

"News of war, baron," replied Anton, gravely; "the most hideous of all wars—war between neighbor and neighbor. The country is in open revolt."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The baron's estate lay in a corner of the Rosmin circle. Behind the forest, to the north, was the German village of Neudorf, and farther off, to the east, that of Kunau.

Both these spots were separated by a wide expanse of sand and heath from any Polish proprietors, Herr von Tarow being the nearest. To the west and south of the estate the country was inhabited by a mixed population; but the Germans there were strong, rich freeholders and large farmers having settled among the Slavonic race. Beyond Kunau and Neudorf, to the north, there was a Polish district peopled by small freeholders, for the most part in very reduced circumstances, and over head and ears in debt.

"It is on that side that our greatest danger lies," said the baron to Anton on the morning after the memorable market-day. "The villagers are our natural outposts. If you can induce the people to establish a systematic watch, let it be on the north; we will then try to maintain a regular communication with them. Do not forget the beacons and places of rendezvous. As you are already on such friendly terms with the rustics, you will be able to manage that part of the business best. Meanwhile, I shall drive, accompanied by young Sturm, to the next circle, and try to come to the same understanding with the landed gentry there."

Accordingly, Anton rode off to Neudorf. There he found that fresh evil tidings had arrived in the night; some German villages had been surprised by armed bands, the houses searched for arms, and many young people dragged away. No one was working in the fields at Neudorf. The men sat in the bar of the public house, or stood about without any purpose, every hour expecting an attack.

Anton's horse was immediately surrounded by a dense crowd, and in a few minutes the bailiff had gathered the whole population together. Anton proceeded to state what might be done to guard the village against the danger of a sudden surprise; for instance, he advised the calling out of a regular peasant militia, sentinels on the road along the border, patrols, a rallying-place in the village, and other precautions which the baron had pointed out. "In this way," said he, "you will be able to procure our help in a short time, to defend yourselves against a weak foe, or to summon the military to your aid against a strong. In this way you will save your wives and children, your household goods, and, perhaps, your cattle from plunder and ill treatment. It will be no small labor, indeed, to keep watch thus night and day, but your village is a large one. Perhaps these measures will soon be enjoined by the government, but it is safer for all not to wait for that."

His pressing representations and the authority of the intelligent bailiff brought the community to a unanimous resolve. The young men of the village took up the matter eagerly, many professing themselves ready to buy a gun; and the women began to pack up their most valuable effects in chests and bundles.

From Neudorf, Anton went on to Kunau, where similar regulations were made; and finally it was arranged that the young men of both villages should come every Sunday afternoon to the baron's estate to be drilled.

When Anton returned to the castle, the existing means of defense on the estate itself had to be taken into consideration. A martial fever prevailed in the German colony: all were affected by it, even the most peaceful: the shepherd and his dog Crambo, who had, by night patrols, sentinels, and other disturbances, been worked up to such a state of excitement that he took to flying at the legs of all strangers—an act he had often rebuked in his young associate. All thoughts turned on weapons of warfare and means of defense. Alas! the mood of mind was all that could be desired, but the forces were very small. To make up for that, the staff was a distinguished one. First of all,

there was the baron—an invalid, it is true, but great in theory; then Karl and the forester, as respective leaders of the cavalry and infantry; while Anton was not to be despised in the commissariat and fortification department.

The baron now left his room each day to hold a council of war. He superintended the drill, heard reports from surrounding districts, and sent off messengers to the German circles. A remnant of military ardor lit up his face. He good-humoredly rallied the baroness about her fears, spoke words of encouragement to his German tenantry, and threatened to have all the evil-disposed in the village locked up at once, and kept on bread and water. It was touching to all to see how the blind man stood erect, musket in hand, to show certain niceties of manipulation to the forester, and then bent his ear down to ascertain whether the latter had thoroughly acquired them. Even Anton put on something of a martial panoply. He stuck a cockade in his cap; his voice assumed a tone of military severity, and ever since the Rosmin day he took to wearing an immense pair of water-proof boots, and his step fell heavy on the stair. He would have laughed at himself if any one had asked for what purpose he gave this particular outward expression to his state of mind; but no one did ask. It seemed natural and congruous to all, and especially to Karl, who never himself appeared but in such remnants of his dress uniform as he had carefully preserved, and who curled his mustache, and sang military songs all day long. As the greatest danger was to be apprehended from the lawless in their own village, he summoned all the men who had once served, and, with the aid of the forester, who was respected as a magician, made an impressive speech, addressed them as comrades, drew his sword, and cried, "We military men will keep order among the boors here." Then ordering a few quarts of brandy, he sang wild martial songs in chorus with them, gave them new cockades, and constituted them a species of militia. Thus, for a time at least, he gained a hold over the better part of the population, and heard through them of any conspiracy that was carried on in the tavern.

When the whole force of the estate was mustered before the castle walls, the men stared in amazement at each other. They had all been metamorphosed by the last few days. The agent looked like a wild man from some outlandish swamp, where he daily stood up to the hips in water. Those from the new farm resembled forms of a vanished era. The forester, with his close-cut hair, long beard, and weather-beaten coat, looked an old mercenary of Wallenstein's army, who had been asleep in the forest depths for two hundred years, and now reappeared on the stage, violence and cruelty being again in the ascendant. The shepherd marched next to him, resembling a pious Hussite, with the broad brim of his round hat hanging low on his shoulders, a stout leathern girdle round his loins, and in his hand a long crook, to which he had fastened a bright steel point. His phlegmatic face and thoughtful eyes made him as strong a contrast as possible to the forester. All in all, the armed force of the estate did not amount to more than twenty men; consequently, it was very difficult to maintain any regular system of watching, either in the castle or the village. Each individual, it was plain, would have to make the greatest efforts, but none of them complained.

The next step was to see to the securing of the castle—to protect it from any nocturnal assault in the rear. Anton had a strong wooden fence run up from one wing to another. Thus a tolerably large court-yard was inclosed, and an open shed was roughly built on to the walls, to shelter fugitives and horses, if need were. The windows of the lower story were also strongly boarded; and as all the entrances were on this side of the house, strangers were allowed as little ingress as possible. The well that supplied the castle lay outside the fence, between the farm-yard and the castle: on which account, a large water-butt was made and filled each morning.

Next came tidings from Rosmin. The locksmith appeared, after being repeatedly sent for, to strengthen bolts and bars. He brought with him military greetings from the militia, and the fact that a company of infantry had entered the town. "But there are but few of them," said he, "and we militiamen have severe duty."

"And what have you done with your prisoners?" inquired Anton.

The locksmith scratched his ear and twitched his cap as he answered in a crestfallen tone: "So you have not yet heard? The very first night came a message from the enemy to the effect that if we did not give up the nobleman at once, they would march upon us with their whole force and set fire to our barns. I opposed the measure, and so did our captain; but every one who had a barn raised an outcry, and the end of it was that the town had to come to terms with Von Tarow. He gave his word that he and his would undertake nothing further against us, and then we took him over the bridge and let him go."

"So he is free, false man that he is!" cried Anton, in indignation.

"Yes, indeed," said the locksmith; "he is on his estate again, and has a number of young gentlemen about him. They ride with their cockades over the fields just as they did before. Tarowski is a cunning man, who can open every castle door with a stroke of a pen, and get on with every one. There's no reaching him."

Of course, farming suffered from these warlike preparations. Anton insisted, indeed, upon what was absolutely necessary being done, but he felt that a time was come when anxiety about individual profit and loss vanished before graver terrors. The rumors, which grew daily more threatening, kept him, and those around him, in ever-increasing excitement; and at last they fell into a habitual state of feverish suspense, in which the future was looked forward to with reckless indifference, and the discomforts of the present endured as matter of course.

But more strongly than on any of the men around did this general fever seize upon Lenore. Since the day that she had waited for the absent Anton, she had seemed to begin a new life. Her mother mourned and despaired, but the daughter's young heart beat high against the storm, and the excitement was to her a wild enjoyment, to which she gave herself up, heart and soul. She was out of doors the whole day long, whatever the weather, and at the tavern door as often as the worst drunkard in the village, for each day the landlord and his wife had something new to tell her. Ever since Karl had mounted his hussar coat, she treated him with the familiarity of a comrade, and when he held a consultation with the forester, her fair head was put together with theirs. The three spent many an hour in council of war in Karl's room or in the farm-yard, the men listening with reverence to her courageous suggestions, and requesting her opinion as to whether Ignatz, Gottlieb, or Blasius from the village deserved to be trusted with a gun. It was in vain that the baroness remonstrated with her martial daughter; in vain that Anton tried to check her ardor; for, the greater his own, the more the mood displeased him in the young lady. Again, she struck him as too vehement and bold; nor did he disguise his views. Upon that she subsided a little, and tried to conceal her warlike tendencies from him, but they did not really abate. She would have dearly liked to go with him to Neudorf and Kunau, to play at soldiers there, but Anton, once made so happy by her company, protested so strongly against the step that the young lady had to turn back at the end of the village.

However, on the day when the first drill of the men belonging to the estate was to take place, Lenore came out with a soldier's cap and a light sword, took her pony out of the stable, and said to Anton, "I shall exercise with you."

"Pray do nothing of the kind," replied he.

"Indeed I will," replied Lenore, saucily. "You want men, and I can do as good service as if I were one."

"But, dear young lady, it is so singular!"

"It is indifferent to me whether people think it singular or not. I am strong; I can go through a good deal; I shall not be tired."

"But before the servants," remonstrated Anton. "You are letting yourself down before the servants and the country people."

"That is my own concern," replied Lenore, doggedly; "do not oppose me; I am determined, and that is enough."

Anton shrugged his shoulders, and was obliged to acquiesce. Lenore rode next to Karl, and went through all the exercises as well as a lady's saddle allowed; but Anton, who was one of the infantry, looked over from his post at the bright face with dissatisfaction. She had never pleased him so little. Yet, as she sprang forward with the rest, wheeled her horse round, waved her sword, her bright hair floating in the wind, her eyes beaming with courage, she was enchantingly beautiful. But what would have charmed him in mere play seemed unfeminine now that this drilling had become a matter of life and death; and as soon as it was over, and Lenore came up to him with glowing cheeks, waiting that he should address her, he was silent, and she had to laugh and say to him, "You look so morose, sir; do you know that the expression is very unbecoming?"

"I am not pleased at your being so willful," replied Anton. Lenore turned away without a word, gave her horse to a servant, and walked back in dudgeon to the castle.

Since that time she took no share in the drilling, indeed, but she was always present when the men assembled, and looked on longingly from a little distance; and when Anton was away, she would ride off in secret with Karl to the other villages, or walk alone through woods and fields, armed with a pocket pistol, and delighted if she could stop and cross-question any wayfarer.

Anton remonstrated with her on that subject too.

"The district is disturbed," he said. "How easily some rascal or other might do you an injury! If not a stranger, it might be some one from our own village."

"I am not afraid," Lenore would reply, "and the men of our village will do me no harm." And, in fact, she knew how to manage them better than Anton or any one else. She alone was always reverentially saluted, even by the rudest among them; and whenever her tall figure was seen in the village street, the men bowed down to the ground, and the women ran to the windows and looked admiringly after her. And she had the pleasure, too, of hearing them tell her so in Anton's hearing. One Sunday evening, Karl, the forester, and the shepherd sat watching in the farm-yard while the peasants were assembled drinking in the tavern, Sunday being the most dangerous day for those in the castle. Karl had furnished a room for military purposes in the late bailiff's house. Thither Lenore herself now carried a bottle of rum and some lemons, that the sentinels might brew themselves some punch. The shepherd and the forester grinned from ear to ear at the attention. Karl placed a chair for the young lady, the forester began to tell a tale of terror from the neighboring district, and in a few minutes Lenore was sitting with them, exchanging views on the course of events. Just as the punch was ready, and she poured it into two glasses and a mug, in came Anton. She did not exactly want him just then, but, however, he found no fault, and merely turned and beckoned to a stranger to come in. A slender youth in a blue coat, with bright woolen epaulettes, a soldier's cap in his hand, and wide linen trowsers pushed into his boots, proudly entered the room. As soon as he saw the lady, he was at her knees, and then he stood

before her with downcast eyes, cap in hand. Karl went up to him: "Now then, Blasius, what news from the tavern?"

"Oh, nothing," replied the youth, in the melodious cadence with which the Pole speaks broken German. "Peasant sits, and drinks, and is merry."

"Are there strangers there? Has any one come from Tarow?"

"No one," said Blasius. "No one is there; but the host's niece is come to him, Rebecca, the Jewish maiden." Meanwhile he looked steadfastly at Lenore, as though it were to her that he had to deliver his report.

Lenore stepped to the table, poured out a glass of punch, and gave it to the youth, who received it with delight, quaffed it, set down the glass, and bent again at the lady's knee with a grace that a prince might have envied.

"You need never fear," cried he. "No one in the village will harm you; if any one offended you, we would kill him at once."

Lenore blushed and said, looking at Anton the while, "You know I have no fear, at all events of you;" and Karl dismissed the messenger with orders to return in an hour. As he left the room, Lenore said to Anton, "How graceful his bearing is!"

"He was in the Guards," replied Anton, "and is not the worst lad in the village; but I pray you not to rely too much upon the chivalry of the worthy Blasius and his friends. I was uneasy about you again all the afternoon, and sent your maid to meet you on the Rosmin road; for a traveling apprentice came running to the castle, frightened out of his senses, saying that he had been detained by an armed lady, and obliged to produce his passport. According to his story, the lady had a monstrous dog, as large as a cow, with her, and he complained that her aspect was awful. The poor man was positively beside himself."

"He was a craven," said Lenore, contemptuously. "As soon as he saw me with the pony he ran off, scared by his own bad conscience. Then I called after him, and threatened him with my pocket pistol."

In this manner the dwellers on the baron's estate daily awaited the outbreak of the insurrection on their own oasis. Meanwhile it spread like a conflagration over the whole province. Wherever the Poles were thickly congregated, the flames leaped up fiercely. On the borders, they flared unsteadily here and there, like fire in green wood. In many places they seemed quenched for a long time, then suddenly broke out again.

One Sunday afternoon there was to be a great drill of the united forces. The men of Neudorf and Kunau came with their flags—the foot-soldiers first, the mounted behind—the small band of cavalry from the castle riding to meet them, led by Karl, together with some men on foot, at whose head marched the forester, the generalissimo of all the troops. Even Anton was under his command. When Lenore saw them set out, she ordered her pony to be saddled.

"I will look on," said she to Anton.

"But only look on, dear lady!" said the latter, imploringly.

"Don't tutor me," cried Lenore.

The drilling-ground was at the edge of the wood. The forester had contrived, through ancient recollections, and after manifold consultations with the baron, to bring his men into good order; and Karl led his squadron with an ardor that might well make amends for lack of skill. For a long time they had marched, countermarched, performed various evolutions, and fired at a mark. The mock artillery echoed cheerfully through the forest. Lenore had looked on from a distance, but at last she could not resist the pleasure of taking part in the cavalry exercise, and, trotting on to their head, she whispered to Karl, "Just for a minute or two."

"What if Mr. Wohlfart see you?" whispered Karl, in reply.

"He will not see," was Lenore's laughing answer, as she took her place in the ranks.

The youths looked in amazement at the slender figure which trotted at their side. Owing to the admiration she excited, many performed their parts ill, and Karl had much fault to find.

"The young lady does it best," cried a Neudorf man during a pause, and all took off their hats and cheered her loudly.

Lenore bowed low, and made her pony curvet gayly. But her amusement was soon interrupted, for up came Anton. "It is really too bad," whispered he, angry in good earnest. "You expose yourself to familiar observations, which are not ill meant, but which would still offend you. This is no place for the display of your horsemanship."

"You grudge me every pleasure," replied Lenore, much aggrieved, and rode away.

When she found herself alone, she let her pony prance and caracole under a great pear-tree, and inwardly chafed against Anton. "How rudely he spoke to me!" thought she. "My father is right; he is very prosaic. When I saw him first, I was on this pony too, but then I pleased him better; we were both children then, but his manner was more respectful than now." The thought flashed

across her mind how bright, fair, and pleasant her life was then, and how bitter now; and while she dreamed over the contrast, she let the pony cut caper after caper.

"Not bad, but a little more of the curb, Fräulein Lenore," cried a sonorous voice near her. Lenore looked round in amazement. A tall slight figure leaned against the tree, arms crossed, and a satirical smile playing over the fine features. The stranger advanced and took off his hat. "Hard work for the old gentleman," said he, pointing to the pony. "I hope you remember me."

Lenore looked at him as at an apparition, and at last, in her confusion, slipped down from her saddle. A vision out of the past had risen palpably before her; the cool smile, the aristocratic figure, the easy self-possession of this man, belonged to the old days she had just been thinking of.

"Herr von Fink!" she cried, in some embarrassment. "How delighted Wohlfart will be to see you again!"

"I have already been contemplating him from afar," replied Fink, "and did I not know by certain infallible tokens that he it is whom I behold wading in uniform through the sand, I should not have believed it possible."

"Come to him at once," cried Lenore. "Your arrival is the greatest pleasure that he could have."

Accordingly, Fink went with her to the place where the men were engaged in shooting at a mark. Fink stepped behind Anton, and laid his hand on his shoulder. "Good-day, Anton," said he.

Turning round in amazement, Anton threw himself on his friend's breast. There was a rapid interchange of hasty questions and short answers.

"Where do you come from, welcome wanderer?" cried Anton, at length.

"From over there," replied Fink, pointing to the horizon. "I have only been a few weeks in the country. The last letter I got from you was dated last autumn. Thanks to it, I knew pretty well where to look for you. In the prevailing confusion, I consider it a remarkable piece of luck to have found you. There's Master Karl, too," cried he, as Karl sprang forward with a shout of delight. "Now we have half the firm assembled, and we might begin offhand to play at counting-house work; but you seem to have a different way of amusing yourselves here." Then turning to Lenore, he continued, "I have already presented myself to the baron, and heard from your lady mother where to find the martial young spirits. And now I have to implore your intercession. I have some acquaintance with this man, and would willingly spend a few days with him, but I am well aware how inconsiderate it would be to tax your hospitable home at a time like this with the reception of a stranger. But yet, for his sake—he is a good fellow, on the whole—allow me to remain long enough clearly to understand the *façon* of the prodigious boots which the boy has drawn over his knees."

Lenore replied in the same strain: "My father will look upon your visit as a great pleasure; a kind friend is doubly valuable at a time like this. I go at once to desire a servant to place all Mr. Wohlfart's boots in your apartment, that you may be able to study their *façon* at your leisure." She bowed, and went off in the direction of the castle, leading her pony by the bridle.

Fink looked after her and cried, "By Jove! she is become a beauty; her bearing is faultless—nay, she even knows how to walk. I have no longer a shadow of doubt as to her having plenty of sense." Then, putting his arm into Anton's, he led him off to the shade of the wild pear-tree, and then, shaking him heartily by the hand, exclaimed, "I say again, well met, my trusty friend. Understand that I have not yet got over my astonishment. If any one had told me that I should find you painted red and black like a wild Indian, a battle-axe in your hand, and a fringe of scalp-locks round your loins, I should naturally have declared him mad. But you—born, as it would seem, to tread in the footsteps of your forefathers—to find you on this desolate heath, with thoughts of murder in your breast, and, as I live, without a neckcloth! If we two are changed, you, at all events, are not the least so. Perhaps, however, you are pleased with your change."

"You know how I came here?" replied Anton.

"I should think so," said Fink. "I have not forgotten the dancing-lessons."

Anton's brow grew clouded.

"Forgive me," continued Fink, laughing, "and allow something to an old friend."

"You are mistaken," replied Anton, earnestly, "if you believe that any thing of passion has brought me here. I have become connected with the baron's family through a series of accidents." Fink smiled. "I confess that these would not have affected me had I not been susceptible of certain influences. But I may venture to say that I am accidentally in my present responsible situation. At a time when the baron was very painfully circumstanced, I was fixed upon by his family as one who at all events had the will to be of use to them. They expressed a wish to engage my services for a time. When I accepted their proposal, I did so after an inward conflict that I have no right to disclose to you."

"All that is very good," replied Fink; "but when the merchant buys a gun and a sword, he must at least know why he makes those purchases; and therefore forgive me the point-blank question, What do you mean to do here?"

"To remain as long as I feel myself essential, and then to look out a place in a merchant's office," said Anton.

"At our old principal's?" asked Fink, hastily.

"There or elsewhere."

"The deuce!" cried Fink. "That does not seem a very direct course, nor an open confession either; but one must not ask too much from you in the first hour of meeting. I will be more unreserved and candid to you. I have worked myself free over there; and thank you for your letter, and the advice your wisdom gave. I did as you suggested, made use of the newspapers to explode my Western Land Association. Of course, I flew with it into the air. I bought half a dozen pens with a thousand dollars, and had the New York gazettes and others continually filled with the most appalling reports of the good for nothingness of the company. I had myself and my partners cursed in every possible key. This made a sensation. Brother Jonathan's attention was caught; all our rivals fell upon us at once. I had the pleasure of seeing myself and my associates portrayed in a dozen newspapers as bloodthirsty swindlers and scoundrels—all for my good money too. It was a wild game. In a month the Western Land Company was so down that no dog would have taken a crust of bread from it. Then came my co-directors and offered to buy me out, that they might be rid of me. You may fancy how glad I was. For the rest, I bought my freedom dear, and have left the reputation behind me of being the devil himself. Never mind, I am free at all events. And now I have sought you out for two reasons; first, to see and chat with you; next, seriously to discuss my future life; and I may as well say at once that I wish you to share it. I have missed you sadly every day. I do not know what I find in you, for, in point of fact, you are but a dry fellow, and more contradictious than often suits me. But, in spite of all, I felt a certain longing for you all the time I was away. I have come to an understanding with my father, not without hot discussion and subsequent coolness. And now I repeat my former offer—come with me. Over the waters to England, across the seas, any where and every where. We will together ponder and decide upon what to undertake. We are both free now, and the world is open to us."

Anton threw his arm round his friend's neck. "My dear Fritz," cried he, "we will suppose that I have expressed all that your noble proposal causes me to feel. But you see, for the present, I have duties here."

"According to your own most official statement, I presume that they will not last forever," rejoined Fink.

"That is true; but still we are not on equal terms. See," said Anton, stretching out his hand, "barren as this landscape is, and disagreeable the majority of its inhabitants, yet I look upon them with different eyes to yours. You are much more a citizen of the world than I, and would feel no great interest in the life of the state of which this plain and your friend are component parts, however small."

"No, indeed," said Fink, looking in amazement at Anton. "I have no great interest in it, and all that I now see and hear makes the state, a fragment of which you so complacently style yourself, appear to me any thing but respectable."

"I, however, am of a different opinion," broke in Anton. "No one who is not compelled to do so should leave this country at the present time."

"What do I hear?" cried Fink, in amazement.

"Look you," continued Anton; "in one wild hour I discovered how my heart clung to this country. Since then, I know why I am here. For the time being, all law and order is dissolved; I carry arms in self-defense, and so do hundreds like me in the midst of a foreign race. Whatever may have led me individually here, I stand here now as one of the conquerors who, in the behalf of free labor and civilization, have usurped the dominion of the country from a weaker race. There is an old warfare between us and the Slavonic tribes; and we feel with pride that culture, industry, and credit are on our side. Whatever the Polish proprietors around us may now be—and there are many rich and intelligent men among them—every dollar that they can spend, they have made, directly or indirectly, by German intelligence. Their wild flocks are improved by our breeds; we erect the machinery that fills their spirit-casks; the acceptance their promissory notes and lands have hitherto obtained rests upon German credit and German confidence. The very arms they use against us are made in our factories or sold by our firms. It is not by a cunning policy, but peacefully through our own industry, that we have won our real empire over this country, and, therefore, he who stands here as one of the conquering nation, plays a coward's part if he forsakes his post at the present time."

"You take a very high tone on foreign ground," replied Fink; "and your own soil is trembling under your feet."

"Who has joined this province to Germany?" asked Anton, with outstretched hand.

"The princes of your race, I admit," said Fink.

"And who has conquered the great district in which I was born?" inquired Anton, farther.

"One who was a man indeed."

"It was a bold agriculturist," cried Anton; "he and others of his race. By force or cunning, by

treaty or invasion, in one way or other, they got possession of the land at a time when, in the rest of Germany, almost every thing was effete and dead. They managed their land like bold men and good farmers, as they were. They have combined decayed or dispersed races into a state; they have made their home the central point for millions, and, out of the raw material of countless insignificant sovereignties, have created a living power."

"All that has been," said Fink; "that was the work of a past generation."

"They labored for themselves, indeed, while creating us," agreed Anton, "but now we have come into being, and a new German nation has arisen. Now we demand of them that they acknowledge our young life. It will be difficult to them to do this, just because they are accustomed to consider their collective lands as the domain of their sword. Who can say when the conflict between us and them will be ended? Perhaps we may long have to curse the ugly apparitions it will evoke. But, end as it will, I am convinced, as I am of the light of day, that the state which they have constructed will not fall back again into its original chaos. If you had lived much among the lower classes, as I have done of late years, you would believe me. We are still poor as a nation—our strength is still small; but every year we are working our way upward, every year our intelligence, well-being, and fellow-feeling increases. At this moment we here, on the border, feel like brothers. Those in the interior may quarrel, but we are one, and our cause is pure."

"Well done," said Fink, nodding approval; "that was spoken like a thorough German. The wintrier the time, the greener the hope. From all this, Master Wohlfart, I perceive that you have no inclination at present to go with me."

"I can not," answered Anton, with emotion; "do not be angry with me because of it."

"Hear me," laughed Fink; "we have changed parts since our separation. When I left you a few years ago, I was like the wild ass in the desert, who scents a far-off fountain. I hoped to emerge out my prosy life with you into green pastures, and all I found was a nasty swamp. And now I come back to you wearied out, and find you playing a bold game with fate. You have more life about you than you had. I can't say that of myself. Perhaps the reason may be that you have had a home; I never had. However, we have had enough of wisdom; come and instruct me in your mode of warfare. Let me have a look at your squatters, and show me, if you can, a square foot of ground on this charming property in which one does not sink up to one's knees in sand."

Meanwhile preparations were going on at the castle for the stranger. The baron made one servant ascertain that there was a sufficiency of red and white wine in the cellar, and scolded another for not having had the broken harness repaired. The baroness ordered a dress to be taken out which she had not worn since her arrival; and Lenore thought with secret anxiety about the haughty aristocrat, who had struck her as so imposing at the time of the dancing-lessons, and whose image had often risen before her since then.

Below stairs the excitement was no less, for, excepting a few passing callers on business, this was the first visitor. The faithful cook determined to venture upon an artistic dish, but in this wretched country the materials were not to be had. She thought of killing a few fowls out of the farm-yard; but that measure was violently opposed by Suska, a little Pole, Lenore's confidential maid, who wept over the determined character of the cook, and threatened to call the young lady, till the former came to her senses, and sent off a barefooted boy to the forester's in all haste to ask for something out of the common way. A sudden onslaught was made upon spiders and dust; and a room got ready near Anton's, into which Lenore's little sofa, her mother's arm-chair, and carpet, were carried, to keep up the family dignity.

Fink, little guessing the disturbance his arrival occasioned, sauntered over the fields with Anton in a more cheerful mood than he had known for long. He spoke of his experiences, of the refinements in money-making, and the giant growth of the New World; and Anton heard with delight a deep abhorrence of the iniquities in which he had been involved break out in the midst of his jokes.

"Life is on an immense scale over there, it is true," said he, "but it was in its whirl that I first learned to appreciate the blessings of the fatherland."

While thus talking, they returned to the castle to change their dress. Anton had merely time to glance in amazement at the arrangements of Fink's bed-room before they were summoned to the baroness. Now that the anxieties about domestic arrangements were over, and the lamps shed their mild radiance through the room, the family felt themselves cheerfully excited by the visit of this man of fashion. Once more, as of yore, there was the easy tone of light surface-talk, the delicate attention which gives to each the sense of contributing to another's enjoyment, the old forms, perhaps the old subjects of conversation. And Fink solved the problem ever offered by a new circle to a guest with the readiness which the rogue had always at his command when he chose. He gave to each and all the impression that he thoroughly enjoyed their society. He treated the baron with respectful familiarity, the baroness with deference, Lenore with straightforward openness. He seemed to take pleasure in addressing her, and soon overcame her embarrassment. The family felt that he was one of themselves; there was a freemasonry between them. Even Anton wondered how it came about that Fink, the newly-arrived guest, appeared the old friend of the house, and he the stranger; and again something of the reverence arose within him which, as a youth, he had always felt for the elegant, distinguished, and exclusive. But this was a mere shadow passing over his better judgment.

When Fink rose to retire, the baron declared with genuine cordiality how gladly he would have

him remain their guest; and when he was gone, the baroness remarked how well the English style of dress became him, and what a distinguished-looking man he was. Lenore made no remark upon him, but she was more talkative than she had been for a long time past. She accompanied her mother to her bed-room, sat down by the bedside of the weary one, and began merrily to chat away, not, indeed, about their guest, but about many subjects of former interest, till her mother kissed her brow, and said, "That will do, my child; go to bed, and do not dream."

Fink stretched himself comfortably on the sofa. "This Lenore is a glorious woman," cried he, in ecstasy; "simple, open—none of the silly enthusiasm of your German girls about her. Sit an hour with me, as of old, Anton Wohlfart, baronial rent-receiver in a Slavonic Sahara! I say, you are in such a romantic position, that my hair still bristles with amazement. You have often stood by me in my scrapes of former days as my rational guardian angel; now you are yourself in the midst of madness; and, as I at present enjoy the advantage of being in my right mind, my conscience forbids me to leave you in such confusion."

"Fritz, dear friend!" cried Anton, joyfully.

"Well, then," said Fink, "you see that I wish to remain with you for a while. Now I want you to consider how this is to be done. You can easily manage it with the ladies; but the baron?"

"You have heard," replied Anton, "that he esteems it a fortunate chance which brings a knight like you to this lonely castle; only"—he looked doubtfully around the room—"you must learn to put up with many things."

"Hmm—I understand," said Fink; "you are become economical."

"Just so," said Anton. "If I could fill sacks with the yellow sand of the forest, and sell it as wheat, I should have to sell many and many sacks before I could put even a small capital into our purse."

"Where you have pushed yourself in as purse-bearer, I could well suppose the purse an empty one," said Fink, dryly.

"Yes," replied Anton, "my strong-box is an old dressing-case, and, I assure you, it could hold more than it does. I often feel an unconquerable envy of Mr. Purzel and his chalk in the counting-house. Could I but once have the good fortune to behold a row of gray linen bags! As to bank-notes and a portfolio of stocks, I dare not even think of them."

Fink whistled a march. "Poor lad," said he. "Yet there is a large estate and a regular farm-establishment, which must either bring in or take out. What do you live upon, then?"

"That is one of the mysteries of the ladies, which I hardly dare to disclose. Our horses munch diamonds."

Fink shrugged his shoulders. "But is it possible that Rothsattel can have come to this?"

Anton then sketched, with some reserve, the baron's circumstances, speaking enthusiastically, at the same time, of the noble resignation of the baroness, and the healthy energy of Lenore.

"I see," said Fink, "that things are still worse than I supposed. How is it possible that you can carry on such a farm? The birds of the air are rich compared to you."

"As things are," continued Anton, "we may contrive to struggle on till quieter times—till the judicial sale of the family estate. The creditors will not press now, and lawyers are almost without work. The baron can not manage this estate without a large capital, but neither can he give it up at present without forfeiting the little that its sale may hereafter bring; and, besides, the family have no other roof over their heads. All my endeavors, during the last week, to persuade them to leave this province, have been in vain. They are desperately resolved to await their fate here. The baron's pride objects to a return to his former neighborhood, and the ladies will not leave him."

"Then at least send them to the neighboring town, and do not expose them to the assault of every drunken band of boors."

"I have done what I could; I am powerless in this respect," replied Anton, gloomily.

"Then, my son, allow me to tell you that your warlike apparatus is not very encouraging. With the dozen or two that you can collect, you will hardly keep off an invasion of rascals. You can not even defend the premises with that handful, to say nothing of covering the ladies' escape. Have you no prospect of procuring any soldiers?"

"None," replied Anton.

"A thoroughly comfortable, cheerful prospect!" cried Fink. "And, in spite of it, you have sown your fields, and the little farm works on. I have heard from Karl how it looked when you came, and what improvements you have made; you have managed capitally. No American, no man of any other country, would have done the same; in a desperate case, commend me to the German. But the ladies and your infant establishment must be better protected. Hire twenty able-bodied men; they will guard the house."

"You forget that we are as little able to feed twenty idle mouths as is the owl on the tower."

"Let them work!" cried Fink; "you have here land enough to employ a hundred hands. Have you no swamps to drain, or ditches to dig? There is a row of wretched puddles yonder."

"That is work for another season," replied Anton, "the ground is too wet now."

"Have a hundred acres of forest sown or planted. Does the brook hold out in the summer?"

"I hear that it does," replied Anton.

"Then turn it to some account."

"Do not forget," said Anton, smiling, "how difficult it would be to get good workmen with military abilities to come just now into our ill-renowned district."

"To the devil with your objections!" cried Fink; "send Karl into a German district, and he will hire you plenty of people."

"You have already heard that we have no money. The baron is not in a position to carry on greater improvements, with increased expenditure."

"Let me do it, then," replied Fink; "you can repay me when you are able."

"It is doubtful whether we should ever be able."

"Well, then, he need never know what the men cost."

"He is blind," replied Anton, with a slight tone of reproach; "and I am in his service, and bound to lay all my accounts before him. Certainly, he might accept a loan from you after a few scruples, for his views of his circumstances vary with his moods. But the ladies have no such illusions. Your presence would be an hourly humiliation to them, if they were conscious of owing additional comforts to your means."

"And yet they have accepted the greater sacrifice that you have made for them," said Fink, gravely.

"Perhaps they consider that my humble services entail on me no sacrifice," replied Anton, blushing. "They are accustomed to me as the baron's agent. But you are their guest, and their self-respect will endeavor to conceal from you, as much as possible, the difficulties of their position. To make your apartment habitable, they have plundered their own; the very sofa on which you lie is from the young lady's bed-room."

Fink looked eagerly at the sofa, and settled himself on it again. "As it does not suit me," said he, "to travel off immediately, you will have the goodness to point out to me some way of living here with propriety. Tell me, offhand, something about the mortgages, and the prospects of the estate; assume for the moment that I am to be the unfortunate purchaser of this Paradise."

Anton made the statement required.

"That, at all events, is not so desperate," said Fink. "Now hear my proposal; you can not go on as at present; this restricted establishment is too undesirable for all parties, most of all for you. The property may be fearfully devastated, but still it seems to me possible to make something of it. Whether you are the people to do so or not, I will not decide; though if you, Anton, are willing to devote some years of your life to it, and to sacrifice yourself still further to the interests of others, it is not impossible that, in more tranquil times, you may succeed in procuring the necessary capital. Meantime I will advance—say fifteen thousand dollars, and the baron will give me a mortgage for that sum. This loan will not much diminish your income, and it will make it easier for you to get over this bad year."

Anton rose and paced up and down uneasily.

"It won't do," cried he, at length; "we can not accept your generous proposal. Look you, Fritz: a year ago, before I knew the man as well as I do now, I was intensely anxious to lead our principal to take an interest in the baron's affairs, and if you had made me this offer then, I should have been delighted; but now I should consider it unjust to you and to the ladies to accept your proposal."

"Shall the sofa out of Lenore's bed-room be defiled by the tobacco-ashes of your guests? I do it now; later it will be done by the Polish scythe-bearers."

"We must go through with it," replied Anton, mournfully.

"Headstrong boy!" cried Fink; "you shall not get rid of me thus. And now off with you, stiff-necked Tony!"

After this conversation, Fink did not allude further to his projected loan, but he had several confidential conversations in the course of the following day with Karl, and when evening came, he said to the baron, "May I request you to lend me your horse to-morrow? He is an old acquaintance of mine. I should like to ride over your property. Do not be angry with me, dear lady, if I fail to make my appearance at dinner."

"He is rich; he is come here to buy," said the baron to himself. "This Wohlfart has told his friend that there is a bargain to be made in this quarter. The speculation is beginning; I must be cautious."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was a sunny morning in April—one of those genial growing days that expand the leaf-bud on the trees, and quicken the throbs of the human heart. Lenore went with hat and parasol out into the farm-yard, and walked through the cow-houses. The horned creatures looked full at her with their large eyes, and raised their broad damp noses, some of them lowing in expectation of receiving something good at her hands.

"Is Mr. Wohlfart here?" asked Lenore of the bailiff, who was hurrying by to the stable.

"He is in the castle, my lady."

"His guest is with him, I suppose?" she further inquired.

"Herr von Fink rode off this morning early to Neudorf. He can't rest in the house, and is always happiest on horseback. He should have been a hussar."

When Lenore heard in which direction Herr von Fink had ridden, she walked slowly in a different one to avoid meeting him, and crossed the brook and the fields to the wood. She gazed at the blue sky and reviving earth. The winter wheat and the green grass looked so cheerful that her heart laughed within her. The spring had breathed on the willows along the brook; the yellow branches were full of sap, and the first leaves bursting out. Even the sand did not annoy her to-day. She stepped rapidly through the expanse of it that girdled the forest, and hurried on through the firs to the cottage. The whole wood was alive with hum and cry. Wherever a group of other trees rose amid the firs, the loud chirp of the chaffinch was heard, or the eager twitter of some little newly-wedded birds, disputing about the position of their nest. The beetle in his black cuirass droned around the buds of the chestnut; at times a wild bee, newly wakened from its winter sleep, came humming by; even brown butterflies fluttered over the bushes, and, wherever the ground sunk into hollows, these were gay with the white and yellow stars of the anemone and the primrose. Lenore took off her straw hat, and let the mild breeze play about her temples, while she drew in long draughts of forest fragrance. She often stopped and listened to the sounds around her—contemplated the tender leaves of the trees, stroked the white bark of the birch, stood by the rippling fountain before the forester's house, and caressed the little firs in the hedge, which stood as close and regular as the bristles in a brush. She thought she had never seen the forest so cheerful before. The dogs barked furiously; she heard the fox rattle his chain, and looked up at the bull-finch, who jumped to and fro in his cage, and tried to bark like his superiors.

"Hush, Hector! hush Bergmann!" cried Lenore, knocking at the door. The loud barking changed into a friendly welcome. As she opened the door, Bergmann, the otter-hound, came straddling toward her, wagging his tail immoderately, and Hector made a succession of audacious leaps, while even the fox crept back into its kennel, laid its nose on its trough, and looked slyly at her. But she saw a horse's head on the other side of the hedge; he that she had meant to avoid was actually here. For a moment she remained irresolute, and was going to turn away, when the forester came out. Now, then, retreat was impossible, and she followed him in. Fink stood in the middle of the room, in the full light of the rays which fell through the small panes. He advanced politely. "I came to make acquaintance," said he, pointing to the forester; "and here I am admiring your stout-hearted vassal and his comfortable home." The forester placed a chair; Lenore could but take it. Fink leaned against the brown wall, and looked at her with undisguised admiration. "You are a wonderful contrast to this old boy and to the whole room," said he, glancing round. "Pray make no sign with your parasol; all these stuffed creatures only wait your command to come to life again, and lay themselves at your feet. Look at the heron yonder, raising its head already."

"It is only the effect of the sunshine," said the forester, comfortingly.

Lenore laughed. "We know what that means," cried Fink; "you are in the plot; you are the gnome of this queen. If there be no magic here, let me sleep out the rest of my days. One wave of that wand, and the beams of this great bird-cage will open, and you fly with your whole suite out into the sunshine. Doubtless your palace is on the summit of the fir-trees without; there are the pleasant halls in which your throne stands, mighty mistress of this place, fair-haired goddess of Spring!"

"My comfort is," said Lenore, somewhat confused, "that it is not I who occasion these ideas, but the pleasure you take in the ideas themselves. I only chance to be the unworthy subject of your fancy. You are a poet."

"Fie!" cried Fink; "how can you detract from me so much! I a poet! Except a few merry sailors' songs, I do not know a single piece of poetry by heart. The only lines I care for are some fragments of the old school; for example, 'Hurrah! Hurrah! hop, hop, hop,' in a poem which, if I am not mistaken, bears your name. And even to these classic lines I have to object that they rather represent the material trot of a cart-horse than the course of a phantom steed. But we must not be too exact with these pen-and-ink gentry. Well, then, with this single exception, you will find no poetry in me, except a few of the great Schiller's striking lines: *Potz Blitz, das ist ja die Gustel von Blasewitz*. There's much truth in that passage."

"You are making fun of me," said Lenore, somewhat offended.

"Indeed I am not," asseverated Fink. "How can any one make or read poems in these days of

ours, when we are constantly living them? Since I have been back in the old country, scarce an hour passes without my seeing or hearing something that will be celebrated by knights of the pen a hundred years hence. Glorious material here for art of every kind! If I had the misfortune to be a poet, I should now be obliged to rush out in a fit of inspiration, hide myself in the kennel, and, at a safe distance from all exciting causes, write a passionate sonnet, while the fox kept biting my heels. But, as I am no poet, I prefer to enjoy the beautiful when it is before me, to putting it into rhyme." And again he looked admiringly at the lady.

"Lenore!" cried a harsh voice from a corner of the room. Lenore and Fink looked in amazement at each other.

"He has learned it," said the forester, pointing to the raven; "in a general way he has left off learning, and sits there sulking with every one, but still he has learned that."

The raven sitting on the stove bent down his head, cast a shrewd glance at both the guests, kept moving his beak as though speaking to himself, and alternately nodding and shaking his head.

"The birds already begin to speak," cried Fink, going up to the raven; "the ceiling will soon fly off, and I shall be left alone with Hector and Bergmann. Now, sorcerer, does the water boil?"

The forester looked into the stove. "It boils famously," he said; "but what is to be done next?"

"We will ask the lady to help us," replied Fink. "I have," said he, turning to Lenore, "already been with your family trapper as far as the distillery and back, and I have brought what always serves me on my travels for breakfast and dinner." He took out a few tablets of chocolate. "We will concoct something like a beverage with this, if you do not disdain to lend us your aid. I propose that we try to mix this with water as well as we can. It would be charming of you to vouchsafe an opinion as to how we ought to set about it."

"Have you a grater or a mortar?" inquired Lenore, laughing.

"I have neither of those machines," replied the forester.

"A hammer, then," suggested Fink, "and a clean sheet of paper."

The hammer was soon brought, but the paper was only found after a long search. Fink undertook to pound the chocolate, the forester brought fresh water from the spring, Lenore washed out some cups, and Fink hammered away with all his heart. "This is antediluvian paper," said he, "thick as parchment; it must have lain for some centuries in this magic hut." Lenore shook the chocolate powder into the saucepan, and stirred it. Then they all three sat down, and much enjoyed the result of their handiwork.

The golden sunbeams shone fuller into the room, lighting up the bright form of the beautiful girl, and the fine face of the man opposite her; then they fell upon the wall, and decked the head of the heron and the wings of the hawk. The raven came to the end of his soliloquy, and fluttered from his seat, hopping about the lady's feet, and croaking out again, "Lenore! Lenore!"

Lenore now conversed at her ease with the stranger, and the forester every now and then threw in a suitable remark. They spoke of the district and its inhabitants.

"Wherever I have met Poles in foreign lands, I have got on very well with them," said Fink. "I am sorry that these disturbances prevent one visiting them in their own homes; for, certainly, one best learns to know men from seeing them there."

"It must be delightful to see so many different scenes and people," cried Lenore.

"It is only at first that the difference strikes you. When one has observed them a while, one comes to the conclusion that they are every where much alike: a little diversity in the color of the skin and other details; but love and hate, laughter and tears, these the traveler finds every where, and every where these are the same. About twenty weeks ago I was half a hemisphere off, in the log hut of an American, on a barren prairie. It was just the same as here. We sat at a stout rustic table like this, and my host was as like this old gentleman as one egg is to another, and the light of the winter sun fell in just the same way through the small window. But if men have so little to distinguish them, women are still more alike in essentials. They only differ in one trifling particular."

"And what is that?" asked the forester.

"They are rather more or less neat," said Fink, carelessly; "that is the whole difference."

Lenore rose, offended at his tone more than at his words.

"It is time that I should return," said she, coldly, tying on her straw hat.

"When you rose, all the brightness left the room," cried Fink.

"It is only a cloud passing over the sun," said the forester, going to the window; "that causes the shadow."

"Nonsense," replied Fink; "it is the straw hat hiding the lady's hair that does it; the light comes from those golden locks."

They left the house, the forester locked the door, and each went off in different directions.

Lenore hurried home; the linnet sang, the thrush whistled, but she did not heed them. She blamed herself for having crossed the threshold of the forester's house, and yet she could not turn away her thoughts from it. The stranger made her feel uneasy and insecure. Was he thus daring because nothing was sacred to him, or was it only through his extreme self-possession and self-dependence? Ought she to be angry with him, or did her sense of awkwardness only arise from the folly of an inexperienced girl? These questions she kept constantly asking herself, but, alas! she found no answer.

When Anton wanted to send a message that evening to the shepherd, neither Karl nor any other messenger was to be found, so he went himself. He was not a little surprised to see in one of the farthest fields through which he had to go his friend Fink on horseback, and the German farmer and Karl busily occupied near him. Fink was galloping along short distances, the others placing black and white pegs in the ground, and taking them out again. And then Karl looked through a small telescope that he rested on his peg. "Five-and-twenty paces," cried Fink.

"Two inches fall," screamed back Karl.

"Five-and-twenty, two," said the farmer, making an entry in his pocket-book.

"So you have come, have you?" cried Fink, laughing, to his friend. "Wait a moment; we shall soon have done." Again a certain number of leaps, observations through the telescope, and entries in the pocket-book; then the men collected their pegs, and Fink rapidly cast up the figures in the farmer's book. Then giving it back with a smile, he said, "Come on with me, Anton, I have something to show you. Place yourself by the brook, with your face to the north. There the brook forms a straight line from west to east, the border of the wood a semicircle. Wood and brook together define the segment of a circle."

"That is evident," said Anton.

"In olden times the brook ran differently," continued Fink. "It swept along the curve of the wood, and its old bed is still visible. If you walk along the ancient water-course toward the west, you come to the point where the old channel diverges from the new. It is the point where a wretched bridge crosses the brook, and the water in its present bed has a fall of more than a foot, strong enough to turn the best mill going. The ruins of some buildings stand near it."

"I know the place well enough," said Anton.

"Below the village, the old channel bends down to the new. It encompasses a wide plain, more than five hundred acres, if I can trust the paces of this horse. The whole of this ground slopes down from the old channel to the new. There are a few acres of meadow, and some tolerable arable land. The most part is sand and rough pasture, the worst part of the estate, as I hear."

"I allow all that," said Anton, with some curiosity.

"Now mark me. If you lead back the brook to its old channel, and force it to run along the bow instead of forming the arc of that bow, the water that now runs to waste will irrigate the whole plain of five hundred acres, and change the barren sand into green meadows."

"You are a sharp fellow," cried Anton, excited at the discovery.

"These acres, well irrigated, would yield a ton of hay an acre; consequently, each acre would bring in a clear profit of five dollars, or, in other words, the five hundred acres would give a yearly income of two thousand five hundred, and to bring this about would require an outlay of fifteen thousand dollars at the very outside. This, Anton, was what I had to say to you."

Anton stood there amazed. There was no doubt that Fink's calculations were not made at random either as to outlay or return, and the advantageous prospect which such a measure opened out occupied him so much that he walked on for some time in silence. "You show me water and pastures in the desert," said he, at length. "This is cruel of you, for the baron is not in a condition to carry out this improvement. Fifteen thousand dollars!"

"Perhaps ten might do," said Fink, sarcastically. "I have drawn this castle in the air for you, to punish you for your stiff-neckedness the other evening. Now let us speak of something else."

At night the baron, with an important air, summoned his wife and Lenore to a conference in his room. He sat up in his arm-chair, and said, with a greater degree of satisfaction than he had for a long time evinced, "It was easy to discover that this visit of Fink's was not exactly accidental, nor occasioned by his friendship for Mr. Wohlfart, as the young men both made it appear: you two pretended to be wiser than I; but I was right after all, and the visit concerns us more nearly than our agent."

The baroness cast a terrified glance at her daughter, but Lenore's eyes were so fully fixed on her father that her mother was comforted.

"And what do you suppose has brought this gentleman here?" continued the baron.

Lenore shook her head, and said at last, "Father, Herr von Fink has long been most intimate with Wohlfart, and they have not seen each other for some years. How natural that Fink should take advantage of his slight acquaintance with us to spend a few weeks with his dearest friend! Why should we seek any other reason for his presence?"

"You speak as young people always do. Men are less influenced by ideal impressions, and more

ruled by their own interest, than your juvenile wisdom apprehends."

"Interest!" said the baroness.

"What is there surprising in it?" continued the baron. "Both are tradespeople. Fink knows enough of the charms of business to lose no opportunity of making a good bargain. I will tell you why he is come here. Our excellent Wohlfart has written to him stating, 'Here is an estate, and this estate has an owner who is at present unable to overlook its management himself. There is something to be made here. You have money, therefore come; I am your friend; some of the profits will naturally fall to my share.'"

The baroness gazed steadfastly at her husband, but Lenore sprang up and cried, with all the energy of a deeply-wounded heart, "Father, I will not hear you speak thus of a man who has never shown us any thing but the most unselfish devotion. His friendship for us is such as to enable him to bear with boundless patience the privations of this lonely place, and the disagreeables of his present position."

"His friendship?" said the baron; "I never laid claim to so great a distinction."

"We have done so, though," cried Lenore, impetuously. "At a time when my mother found no one else to stand by us, Wohlfart faithfully clung to us still. From the day that my brother brought him to us till this very hour, he has acted for you and cared for us."

"Very well," admitted the baron; "I find no fault with his activity. I willingly allow that he keeps the accounts in good order, and is very industrious in return for a small salary. If you understood men's motives better, you would hear me more patiently. After all, there is no harm in what he has done. I want capital, and am, as you know, a good deal embarrassed besides. What should prevent proposals being made to me which would advantage others and do me no injury?"

"For God's sake, father, what proposals do you mean? It is false that Wohlfart has any other interest at heart but yours."

The baroness beckoned to her daughter to be silent. "If Fink wishes to purchase the estate," said she, "I shall hail his resolve as a blessing—the greatest blessing, beloved Oscar, that could happen to you now."

"We are not talking of buying," replied the baron. "I shall think twice before I give away the estate in such a hurry under the present circumstances. Fink's proposal is of a different kind; he wishes to become my tenant."

Lenore sank down speechless in her chair.

"He wishes to rent from me five hundred acres of level ground, in order to convert them into profitable meadows. I do not deny that he has spoken openly and fairly on the subject. He has proved to me in figures how great his gains would be, and offered to pay the first year's rent at once—nay, more, he has offered to give up his tenancy in five years, and make over the meadows to me, provided I repay him the expenses incurred."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Lenore; "you have surely refused this generous proposal."

"I have required time for deliberation," replied the baron, complacently. "The offer is, as I have already said, not exactly disadvantageous to myself; at the same time, it might be imprudent to concede such advantages to a stranger, when, in a year or so, I might be able to carry out this improvement on my own account."

"You will never be able to do so, my poor, my beloved husband," cried the baroness, weeping, and throwing her arms about the baron's neck, while he sank down annihilated, and laid his head on her breast like a little child.

"I must know whether Wohlfart knows of this proposal, and what he says to it," cried Lenore, decidedly; "and, if you allow me, father, I will at once send for him." As the baron did not reply, she rang the bell for the servant, and left the room to meet him at the door.

Fink sat, meanwhile, in Anton's room, amusing himself with rallying his friend. "Since you have given up smoking, your good angel has deserted you, after having so torn his hair at your stiff-neckedness that there he is now sitting bewigged among the angel choir. As for you, your punishment is to be the having your soul sewed up in a turnip-leaf, and daily smoked by the smallest imps in the pit."

"Have you been a member of some pious fraternity in America, that you are so well acquainted with the proceedings of the spiritual world?" inquired Anton, looking up from his account-book.

"Silence!" said Fink; "formerly there were, at least, occasional hours when you could trifle too, but now you are always carrying on your everlasting book-keeping, and, by Tantalus, all for nothing—for nothing at all!"

The servant entered, and summoned Anton to the baron.

As the latter left the room, Fink called out, "Apropos; I have offered to rent the five hundred acres from the baron at two dollars and half the acre—the land to be made over in five years' time on repayment of the capital expended, either in money or by a mortgage. Off with you, my boy!"

When Anton entered the baron's apartment, he found the baroness at her husband's side, his hand in hers, while Lenore walked restlessly up and down the room. "Have you heard of the offer that Herr von Fink has made to my father?" asked she.

"He has this moment told me of it," replied Anton. The baron made a face.

"And is it your opinion that my father ought to accept the offer?"

Anton was silent. "It is an advantageous one for the estate," said he, at length, with considerable effort. "The outlay of capital is essential to its improvement."

"I don't want to be told that," replied Lenore, impatiently, "but to know whether you, as our friend, advise us to accept this offer?"

"I do not," said Anton.

"I knew that you would say so," cried Lenore, stepping behind her father's chair.

"You do not; and wherefore, if you please?" inquired the baron.

"The present time, which makes all things uncertain, seems to me little fitted for so bold a speculation; besides which, I believe Fink to be influenced by motives which do him honor, but which would render it painful to the baron to accept his offer."

"You will allow me to be the judge of what I ought or ought not to accept," said the baron. "As a mere question of business, this measure would be advantageous to both parties."

"That I must allow," said Anton.

"And as to the views that people may take of political prospects, that is merely a personal matter. He who does not allow his undertakings to be interfered with is more praise-worthy than he who, through a vague fear, postpones advantageous measures."

"That, too, I allow."

"Would this undertaking lead to Herr von Fink permanently taking up his abode in our neighborhood?" asked the baroness.

"I do not think so; he would make over the task to a farmer, and his temperament is sure to send him wandering off again. As to his motives, I can but surmise. I believe them to be mainly the respect and regard he feels for your family, and possibly the wish to have some right to remain with you in these unquiet times. The very danger that would make this country undesirable to others has a charm for him."

"And would you not be glad to retain your friend with you?" inquired the baroness further.

"Till to-day I had no hope of it," answered Anton. "Formerly, my task used to be that of holding him back from precipitate resolves, and from staking much upon a sudden fancy."

"You consider, then," said the baron, "that your friend has been precipitate in his proposal to me?"

"His proposal is a bold one, so far as he himself is concerned," returned Anton, significantly; "and there is something in it, baron, which does not satisfy me on your account, though I should find a difficulty in defining it."

"Thank you," said the baron; "we will discuss the subject no further; there is no hurry about it." Anton bowed and left the room.

Lenore stood silently at the window, repeating to herself his last words, "I should find a difficulty in defining it," while a crowd of painful thoughts and forebodings rushed through her mind. She was angry with her father's weakness, and indignant with Fink for presuming to offer them assistance. Whether his offer were accepted or not, their relations to their guest were changed by it. They were indebted to him. He was no longer a stranger. He had intruded into their private griefs. She thought of the curl of his lip, of the contraction of his eyebrows; she fancied she heard him laughing at her father and at her. He had entered their house in his offhand way, and now carelessly seized the reins, and meant to direct their fortunes as he liked. Perhaps her parents might owe their deliverance to one of his arbitrary caprices. This morning she could feel at her ease with him, brilliant man of the world as he was; they were on equal terms, but how should they meet henceforth? Her pride rebelled against one whose influence she so sensibly felt. She determined to treat him coldly; she made castles in the air as to how he would speak, and how she would reply, and her fancy kept flying round the image of the stranger as the scared mother-bird does around the enemy of her nest.

"And what will you do, Oscar?" inquired the baroness.

"My father can not accept," cried Lenore, energetically.

"What is your opinion?" said the baron, turning to his wife.

"Choose what will soonest set you free from this estate—from the care, the gloom, the insecurity which are secretly preying on you. Let us go to some distant land, where men's passions are less hideously developed. Let us go far away; we shall be more peaceful in the narrowest

circumstances than we are here."

"Thus, then, you advise the acceptance of his offer," said the baron. "He who rents a part will soon undertake the whole."

"And pay us a pension!" cried Lenore.

"You are a foolish girl," said her father. "You both excite yourselves, which is unnecessary. The offer is too important to be refused or accepted offhand. I will weigh the matter more narrowly. Your Wohlfart will have plenty of time to examine the conditions," added he, more good-humoredly.

"Listen, dear father, to what Wohlfart has already spoken, and respect what he keeps back."

"Yes, yes, he shall be listened to," said the baron. "And now good-night, both of you. I will reconsider the matter."

"He will accept," said Lenore to her mother; "he will accept, because Wohlfart has dissuaded him, and because the other offers him ready money. Mother, why did you not say that we could never look the stranger in the face if he gave us alms in our very house?"

"I have no longer any pride or any hope," replied her mother, in a low voice.

As Anton slowly re-entered his room, Fink called out cheerfully, "How goes it, man of business? Am I to be tenant, or will the baron himself undertake the matter? He would like it dearly. In that case, I lay claim to compensation—free room for myself and my horse as long as they play at war hereabouts."

"He will accept your offer," replied Anton, "though I advised him not."

"You did!" cried Fink. "Yes, indeed, it's just like you. When a drowning mouse clings to a raft, you make it a long speech on the imperative nature of moral obligations, and hurl it back into the water."

"You are not so innocent as a raft," said Anton, laughing.

"Hear me," continued Fink; "I have no superfluous sentimentality; but in this particular case I should not consider it friendly in you to wish to edify me by a lecture. Is it then so unpleasant to have me to help you through these confounded times?"

"I have known you long enough, you rogue," said Anton, "to feel sure that your friendship for me has had a good deal to do with your offer."

"Indeed!" said Fink, sarcastically; "and how much, pray? It is a good for nothing age: however virtuously one may act, one is so dissected that virtue turns to egotism under the knife of malice."

Anton stroked his cheek. "I do not dissect," said he. "You have made a generous offer, and I am not discontented with you, but with myself. In my first delight at your arrival, I disclosed more about the baron's circumstances and the ladies' anxieties than was right. I myself introduced you into the mysteries of the family, and you have used the knowledge you acquired from me in your own dexterous way. It is I who have entangled you with the affairs of this family, and your capital with this disturbed country. That all this should have happened so suddenly is against my every feeling, and I am amazed at my own incaution in having brought it about."

"Of course," laughed Fink, "it is your sweetest enjoyment to be anxious about those around you."

"It has twice happened to me," continued Anton, "whose caution you so often laugh at, to speak unguardedly to strangers about the circumstances of this family. The first time that I asked help for the Rothsattels it was refused me, and this, more than any thing else, led me out of the counting-house hither; and now that my second indiscretion has procured the help I did not ask, what will the consequences be?"

"To lead you hence back into the counting-house," laughed Fink. "Did one ever see such a subtle Hamlet in jack-boots? If I could only find out whether you secretly desire or fear such a logical conclusion!" Then drawing a piece of money from his pocket, he said, "Heads or tails, Anton? Blonde or brunette? Let us throw."

"You are no longer in Tennessee, you soul-seller!" laughed Anton against his will.

"It should have been an honorable game," said Fink, coolly. "I meant to give you the choice. Remember that hereafter."

CHAPTER XXXV.

The baron accepted. Indeed, it was difficult to resist Fink's offer: even Anton acknowledged that. But the baron did not come to this resolve in a straightforward way. His mind underwent many oscillations. It was disagreeable to him to let a stranger make so considerable a profit out of lands of his; and when he had confessed with a sigh that it was impossible to prevent this, it was further disagreeable to him that Fink should have ventured upon such a proposition as this the

third day after his arrival; and he felt that Lenore's continued opposition was well-grounded. At these times he saw himself poor, dependent, under Anton's management, and was imbittered almost to the point of giving up the plan. But, after such divergences, he always came back to the main point—his own interest. He knew well how great a help the rent paid beforehand would be during the current year, and he foresaw that the outlay of capital would, in the course of a few years, double the value of the estate. Then he could not but admit to himself that, at the present disturbed time, Fink would be a desirable associate. However, he preserved a rigid silence toward his wife and daughter; good-naturedly threw back Lenore's attempts to bring him to a decision; and was more dignified than usual in bearing during this period of deliberation.

After a few days he called his old servant, and said, in strict confidence, "Find out, John, when Mr. Wohlfart goes out, and Herr von Fink remains alone in his room, and then go to the latter and announce me to him."

The baron being accordingly privately introduced into Fink's apartment, told him in a friendly way that he accepted his offer, and left it to him to get the contract drawn up by the Rosmin attorney.

"All right," said Fink, shaking hands with him; "but have you reflected, baron, that your kind consent obliges me to claim your hospitality for weeks, if not months? for I consider my presence desirable, at all events till the farming operations are fairly set going."

"I shall be delighted," replied the baron, "if you will put up with our unsettled establishment. I shall take the liberty of setting apart some rooms for you. If you have a servant to whom you are accustomed, pray send for him."

"I want no servant," said Fink, "if you will desire your John to keep my room in order; but I have something better from which I don't like to be long parted—a fine half-blood, which is at present standing in my father's stable."

"Would it not be possible to have the horse sent over here?"

"If you would allow it," said Fink, "I shall be very grateful to you."

Thus the two concluded their treaty in perfect amity, and the baron left the room with the comfortable impression of having made a clever bargain.

"The matter is settled," said Fink to Anton, on the return of the latter. "Make no lamentations, for the mischief is done. I shall settle myself in two rooms in a corner of this wing, and see to the furnishing of them myself. To-morrow I am off to Rosmin, and farther still. I am on the scent of an experienced man who can overlook the undertaking, and I shall bring him and a few laborers back with me. Can you spare me our Karl for a week or so?"

"He is not easily spared; but, since it must be so, I will do what I can to replace him. You must leave me abundant instructions."

The next morning Fink rode away, accompanied by the hussar, and things returned to their old course. The drill went on regularly; patrols were sent around as before; frightful reports were greedily listened to and repeated. Sometimes small detachments of military appeared, and the officers were welcome guests at the castle, telling as they did of the strife going on beyond the forest, and comforting the ladies by bold assurances that the insurrection would soon be put down. Anton was the only one who felt the heavy burden on the family funds that their entertainment involved.

Nearly a fortnight had passed away, and Fink and Karl were still absent. One sunny day, Lenore was busy enlarging her plantation, where about fifty young firs and birches already made some show. In her straw hat, a small spade in her hand, she seemed so lovely to Anton as he was hurrying by that he could not resist standing still to look at her.

"I have you, then, at last, faithless sir," cried Lenore; "for a whole week you have never given my trees a thought; I have been obliged to water them all alone. There is your spade, so come at once and help me to dig."

Anton obediently took the spade and valiantly began to turn up the sods.

"I have seen some young junipers in the wood; perhaps you can make use of them," said he.

"Yes; on the edge of the plantation," answered Lenore, appeased.

"I have had more to do these last days than usual," continued he. "We miss Karl every where."

Lenore struck her spade deep in the ground, and bent down to examine the upturned earth. "Has not your friend written to you yet?" inquired she, in a tone of indifference.

"I hardly know what to think of his silence," said Anton; "the mails are not interrupted, and other letters come. I almost fear that some misfortune may have happened to the travelers."

Lenore shook her head. "Can you imagine any misfortune happening to Herr von Fink?" inquired she, digging away.

"It is, indeed, difficult to imagine," said Anton, laughing; "he does not look as if he would easily allow any ill luck to settle down upon him."

"I should think not," replied Lenore, curtly.

Anton was silent for a while. "It is singular that we should not yet have talked over the change that Fink's remaining here will occasion," said he, at length, not without some constraint, for he had a vague consciousness that a certain degree of embarrassment had risen up on Lenore's side as well as his own—a light shadow on the bright grass, cast no one knows from whence. "Are you, too, satisfied with his sojourn here?"

Lenore turned away and twisted a twig in her fingers. "Are you satisfied?" asked she, in return.

"For my part," said Anton, "I may well be pleased with the presence of my friend."

"Then I am so too," replied Lenore, looking up; "but it really is strange that Mr. Sturm should not have written either. Perhaps," exclaimed she, "they will never return."

"I can answer for Karl," said Anton.

"But the other? He looks as changeable as a cloud."

"He is not that," replied Anton; "if he has difficulties to contend with, all the energy of his nature awakes; he is only bored by what gives him no trouble."

Lenore was silent, and dug on more zealously than ever. Just then a hum of cheerful voices sounded from the farm-yard, and the laborers ran from their dinner to the road. "Mr. Sturm is coming," cried one of them to the diggers. A stately procession was seen moving through the village toward the castle. First of all came half a dozen men all dressed alike, in gray jackets, wearing broad-brimmed felt hats set on one side, and decorated with a green sprig, a light gun on their shoulder, and a sailor's cutlass at their sides. Behind them came a series of loaded wagons: the first full of shovels, spades, rakes, and wheelbarrows symmetrically arranged; the latter laden with sacks of meal, chests, bundles of clothes, and household furniture. The procession was closed by a number of men dressed like those above described. As they neared the castle, Karl and a stranger sprang down from the last wagon; the former placed himself at the head of the procession, had the wagons driven to the front of the castle, arranged the men in two rows, and made them present arms. Last of all came Fink galloping up.

"Welcome!" cried Anton to his friend.

"You are bringing an army and ammunition," laughed Lenore, greeting him. "Do you always march with such heavy baggage?"

"I bring a corps that will henceforth be in your service," replied Fink, jumping down. "They seem decent folk," said he, turning to Anton; "but I had some trouble to collect them. Hands are scarce just now, and yet nothing gets done. We have been drumming and bribing in your country like recruiting sergeants. These fellows would hardly have been got here merely to work; the gray jackets and the chasseurs' caps settled the matter. Some of them have served already, and your hussar knows how to keep them together as well as any born general."

The baron and his lady now entered the court. The laborers, at Karl's bidding, raised a loud hurrah, and then strolled off to the side of the castle and lay down in the sunshine.

"Here are your pioneers, my chief," said Fink to the baron; "since your kindness allows me to be your inmate for some time to come, I have now a right to do something toward the security of your castle. The condition of this province is serious. Even in Rosmin they do not feel safe for a single day; and your imbodying a militia has not escaped the enemy, and called attention to your house."

"It is an honor to me," interposed the baron, "to be obnoxious to the rebels."

"No doubt," politely chimed in Fink. "But this is only an additional motive to your friends to watch over your and your family's personal safety. As yet you are hardly strong enough to defend the castle from an assault of the rascals immediately around. The dozen laborers that I bring will form a guard for your house; they have arms, and partly know how to use them. I have bound them to the performance of certain military functions which will help to keep them in order. They can work a few hours less daily, and exercise during the interval, patrol, and, in so far as you, baron, may think it desirable, keep up a regular correspondence with the neighboring districts. Of course their support and payment is my affair, and I have accordingly provided for it. I wish to run up a slight building for them on the land they are to cultivate, but just now it will be well to keep them as near the castle as possible, and therefore I have to ask you for temporary quarters for all these as well as for myself."

"Just as you like, dear Fink," cried the baron, carried away by the young man's enterprising spirit; "all the room we have is at your disposal."

"Then allow me to suggest," said Anton, "that a room in the lower story should be fitted up as a guard-room. There arms and implements can be safely kept, and some of the men might nightly take up their quarters there. The rest must be billeted in the farm-yard. In this way they will get accustomed to consider the castle their place of rendezvous."

"Capital," said Fink, "so that the disturbance thus caused does not prove an annoyance to the ladies."

"The wife and daughter of an old soldier will gratefully submit to any measures taken for their

safety," replied the baron, with dignity.

Accordingly, the new colony began to settle by universal consent. The wagons were unloaded, the manager and his men accommodated for the moment in the farm buildings.

The first thing they did was to free the furniture from its wrappings of straw and canvas, and to carry it into the apartments of their new master.

The castle servants stood round and looked with curiosity at its simple style. One article, however, excited such loud admiration, that Lenore joined the group of gazers. It was a small sofa of singular aspect. The legs and arms were made of the feet of some great beast of prey, and the cushions were covered with the bright yellow skin, all dotted over with regular black spots. At the back and on the bolsters were three large jaguars' heads, and the framework, instead of wood, was of beautifully carved ivory.

"How exquisite!" exclaimed Lenore.

"If the thing does not displease you," said Fink, coolly, "I propose an exchange. There is a small sofa in my room, on which I rest so comfortably that I should like to keep it there. Will you allow your people to carry off this monster to some other room in the castle, and to leave me that sofa instead?"

Lenore could find no reply, and bowed a silent consent; and yet she was dissatisfied with herself for not having at once declined such an exchange. When she returned to her room, she found the jaguar-sofa already there. That vexed her still further. She called Suska and the man-servant, and desired them to move it elsewhere; but they so loudly protested that the beautiful creature was nowhere more in keeping than in their young lady's chamber, that Lenore, to avoid observation, sent them away and put up with the exchange. Thus it came to pass that her fair form rested on the jaguar-skins that Fink had shot in the far forests of the West.

The next day the new undertaking began. The manager went with his apparatus to the land in question, and the men had their work portioned out to them. Karl hunted out day-laborers from the German and Polish districts around, and even found a few in the village ready to help, so that in a few days there were fifty hands employed. It must be owned that things did not go on altogether undisturbed; the laborers came less regularly than might have been wished, but still the work progressed, for Fink as well as Karl well understood keeping men in order—the one by his haughty energy, the other by the invariable good-humor with which he praised or blamed. The forester came assiduously from his forest to conduct the military exercises, the castle was nightly watched, and patrols regularly sent to the villages around. A warlike spirit spread from the castle over the whole district. A strong *esprit de corps* soon sprang up among the broadbrims, which made discipline easy, and after a few days Fink was besieged with petitioners for a like uniform, and a gun, and the privilege of being taken into his service.

"The guard-room is ready," said Fink to Anton; "but you must have holes for muskets cut in the shutters of the lower story windows." Thus the troublous time was endured with fresh spirit. The stranger-guest gave a new impulse to each individual life; the very farm-servants felt his influence, and the forester was proud to do the honors of his wood to such a gentleman. Fink was a good deal in the woods with Anton, who, as well as Karl, soon fell into the habit of asking his advice. He bought two strong cart-horses—for his own use, he said—but he cleverly contrived that they should work on the baron's farm, and laughed at Anton's scruples. The latter was happy to have his friend near him. Somewhat of their former pleasant life had returned—of those evenings when the two youths had chatted, as only youths can, sometimes in mere childish folly, sometimes gravely on the highest subjects. Fink had changed in many respects. He had become more quiet, or, as Anton expressed it in counting-house phrase, more solid; but he was more inclined than ever to make use of men for his own varying interests, and to look down upon them as mere instruments. His physical strength was unabated. After having stood all morning superintending his workmen—after having wandered all through the wood with the forester, ridden, spite of Anton's remonstrances, far into the disturbed districts to seek information or establish relations there, and inspected on his return all the sentry-posts on the estate, there he was at the tea-table of the baroness, a lively companion, with such inexhaustible funds of conversation that Anton had often to remind him by signs that the strength of the lady of the house was not equal to his own. As for the baron, Fink had completely subjugated him. He never showed the least deference to the sarcastic humor which had become habitual to the unfortunate nobleman, never allowed him a bitter observation against Wohlfart or Lenore, or any one else, without making him at once sensible of its injustice. Consequently, the baron learned to exercise great self-control in his presence. On the other hand, Fink took pains to give him many a pleasure. He helped him to play a rubber of whist, initiated Lenore in the game, and gradually drew in Wohlfart as the fourth.

This had the effect of pleasantly whiling away many a weary hour for the baron; of making Wohlfart one of the family circle, and keeping him up, so that Fink might, if so minded, drink a glass of Cognac punch and enjoy his last cigar in his company. The ladies of the house alone did not seem to feel the cheering influence of Fink's presence. The baroness fell sick; it was no violent ailment, yet it came suddenly. That very afternoon she had spoken cheerfully to Anton, and taken from him some letters which the postman had brought for her husband, but in the evening she did not make her appearance at the tea-table, though the baron himself treated her indisposition as trifling. She complained of nothing but weakness, and the doctor, who ventured from Rosmin to the castle, could not give her malady a name. She smilingly rejected all medicine,

and said it was her firm conviction that the exhaustion would pass away. That she might not detain her husband and daughter in her sick-room, she often expressed a wish to join the family circle, but she was not able to sit up on the sofa, and lay resting her head on the pillows. Thus she was still the silent companion of the others. Her eyes would dwell uneasily upon the baron, or searchingly upon Lenore, as they sat at the whist-table, and then she would close them and seem to rest, as if from some great exertion.

Anton looked with sincere sympathy at the invalid. Whenever there was a pause in the game, he took the opportunity of quietly stepping to the sofa and asking her commands. It was a pleasure to him to hand her even a glass of water, or take a message for her. He gazed with admiration at the delicate face, which, pale and thin as it was, retained all its beauty of outline. There was a silent understanding between the two. She spoke, indeed, less to him than to the rest; for while she often addressed her husband in a cheerful tone, or followed Fink's lively narratives with looks and gestures of interest, she did not take the trouble of hiding her weakness from Anton. Alone with him, she would collapse or gaze absently straight before her; but when she did look at him, it was with the calm confidence with which we are inspired by an old friend from whom we have no longer any secrets. Perhaps this arose from the baroness being able fully to appreciate his worth—perhaps, too, it arose from her never having looked at him in any other light than that of an obliging domestic since he first promised his services; but had this view of hers been discernible to our hero, it would in no way have shaken his allegiance to the noble lady. She seemed to him perfect, just as she was—a picture that rejoiced the heart of all who came within its influence. He could not get rid of the impression that some external cause, perhaps one of those letters he had himself given her, was answerable for the change in her health; for one of them was directed in a trembling hand, and had an unpleasant look about it, which had made Anton instinctively feel that it contained bad news. One evening, while the others were at the card-table, the invalid's head sunk down from the silken cushions; Anton having arranged them more comfortably, she looked at him gratefully, and told him in a whisper how weak she was. "I wish to speak with you once more alone," continued she, after a pause; "not now, but the time will come;" and then she looked upward with an expression of anguish that filled Anton's heart with painful fears.

Neither the baron nor Lenore, however, shared his anxiety.

"Mamma has often suffered from similar attacks of weakness before," said the latter. "The summer is her best cure, and I hope every thing from warmer weather."

But indeed Lenore was too preoccupied to be a good judge of what was going on around her. She too was changed. Many an evening she would sit mute at the tea-table, and start if addressed; at other times she would be immoderately lively. She avoided Fink; she avoided Anton too, and was reserved in manner to both. Her blooming health appeared disturbed; her mother would often send her out of doors from her own sick-room; and then she would have her pony saddled, and ride round and round the wood, till the indignant pony would take her home without her finding it out. Anton saw this change with silent sorrow. He was deeply conscious how different Lenore's relation to him had become, but he did not speak of this to her, and kept his feelings to himself.

It was a sultry afternoon in May. Dark thunder-clouds hung over the forest, and the sun threw its burning rays on the parched land, when the patrol which had been sent to Kunau came hurrying back to the guard-room to say that there were strange men lurking in the Kunau woods, and that the villagers wished to know what was to be done. Fink gave the alarm to his laborers, and sent a message to the forester and to the new farm. While the men carried the implements into the castle, and the farm-servants rode home with teams and prepared for a sally, a horseman came from Kunau to say that a band of Poles had broken into a court-yard in the village, and that the peasants requested help. All were now in the cheerful excitement which an alarm occasions when it promises adventures.

"Keep some of the workmen back," said Fink to Anton, "and guard the castle and village. I will send the forester with his little militia to Kunau, and ride over thither myself first of all, with Karl and the servants."

He sprang to the stable and saddled his own horse, while Karl was getting ready that of the baron for himself.

"Look at the clouds, Herr von Fink," said Karl. "Take your cloak with you; we shall have a tremendous shower."

Fink called accordingly for his plaid, and the little band galloped off toward Kunau. When they entered the forest they remarked how stifling the atmosphere was. Even the rapid pace of their horses brought with it no relief.

"Look how restless the beasts are," said Karl. "My horse pricks his ears. There is something in the wood."

They stopped for a moment. "I hear a horse's tread, and a rustling among the branches."

The horse that Karl rode stretched out his neck and neighed loudly.

"It is an acquaintance—one of our own number," said Fink, looking at the animal. The branches of the young trees parted, and Lenore, mounted on her pony, sprang out and barred the way. "Halt! who goes there?" cried she, laughing.

"Hurrah! the young lady!" exclaimed Karl.

"The password?" cried Lenore, in true martial style.

Fink rode up, saluted her, and whispered, "*Potz Blitz, das ist ja die Gustel von Blasewitz*."

Lenore blushed and laughed. "All right," said she; "I shall ride with you."

"Of course," cried Fink; "only let's go on."

The pony exerted himself to keep up with the tall horse of the stranger, and thus they reached Kunau and stopped at the rendezvous, where the village militia was assembled; and its commander, the smith, met the riders with an anxious face.

"Those hidden in our wood," cried he, "are an accursed set—armed Poles. This very day, in broad noonlight, a band of the men, carrying guns, came to Leonard's farm, which lies out there by the wood, invested the doors and gate, while their leader and some of the men marched into the room where the farmer and his family were sitting, and demanded money and the calf out of the stable. He was a blackguard fellow, with a long gun, a peacock feather in his cap, and a red scarf around his loins, like a thorough Klopice. The farmer refused to give up his money, at which they took aim at him; and his wife, in terror, ran to the closet, and threw all the money they had at the rascals. Next, they carried away the geese from the yard, and went off with their booty into the wood, leaving four rogues armed with guns to mount guard, and prevent any one getting off the premises till they were far enough. Next, two of the thieves discharged their guns into the roof, and then all ran away. The thatch took fire, but fortunately we got it put out."

"Hours have passed since then," cried Fink; "the rogues are over the mountains by this time."

"I do not think so," replied the smith. "I at once sent off Leonard to the border with our mounted men, that they might watch whether the thieves crept out of the wood or not, and a woman who crossed it two hours ago saw Poles there. They had some beast with them too, but the woman was too much terrified to know whether it was a calf or a dog; if it were a calf, the hungry wolves would rather eat it than carry it farther. I have just come from Neudorf; the men there are assembled like ourselves. We might make a search through the forest if your people would help us, and if you would show us the way." "Good," said Fink; "let us set about it." He then sent a message to the forester to the effect that those in the castle should set out on the search from their side, and discussed with the smith the best way of disposing the Kunau men. He next dispatched Karl and the servants to join the Kunau horsemen on the opposite side of the wood. "Don't stand upon ceremony with the rascals," he called out after Karl, with a significant tap on his pistols. "Now, then," said he to the smith, "I will go to Neudorf. When you have searched your half of the wood, wait for us; you shall then be joined by the Neudorf detachment."

The Kunau men set off accordingly to avenge the robbery committed. Fink, accompanied by Lenore, rode off to the neighboring village. On the way thither, he said, "At Neudorf we must part, lady." Lenore was silent.

Fink glanced sidelong at her. "I don't think," said he, "that the rogues will do us the pleasure of awaiting our approach; and if they are minded to run off, the evening is closing in, and we shall hardly hinder them; but the chase will be good practice for our people, and therefore we must make the most of it."

"Then I will go with you to the wood," said Lenore, resolutely.

"That is hardly necessary," replied Fink. "True, I fear no risk for you, but fatigue, and probably rain."

"Let me go with you!" prayed Lenore, looking up at him. "I have given you sensible advice; what more can be demanded from any one?"

"Between ourselves, I am rejoiced to find you so spirited. Gallop then, comrade!"

Arrived at Neudorf, Fink left the horses in the bailiff's stable, and led the band of villagers to the borders of the wood. There they deployed into a *cordon*, and the march now began; Fink walked with Lenore at the head of the right wing, which, according to the plan laid down, would be the first to join the Kunau detachment. All went silently onward, and looked with keen glance from tree to tree. As they got farther into the wood, there was a rustling in the tops of the trees, and looking through them, a leaden-colored sky was seen; but below, the sultriness was undisturbed, the birds sat supinely on the branches, and the beetles had crept into the heather.

"The very sky is on the side of these rogues," said Fink, pointing out the clouds to his companion; "it is getting so dark up there that in half an hour's time we shall not be able to see ten yards before us."

The forest now thickened and the light decreased. Lenore had some difficulty in discerning the men before her. The ground grew swampy, and she sank up to her ankles. "If only no cold be caught," laughed Fink. "None will," replied she, cheerfully; but the forest expedition no longer appeared to her the easy matter it had done an hour before.

The man nearest to Fink stood still, his whispered word of command ran along the whole chain, and all stopped to wait for the Kunau men. The sky grew still blacker, the wood still darker. The thunder began to roll in the distance, hollow and muffled, beneath the fir-wood arches. At first

the rain sounded only on the tree-tops, but soon large, heavy drops came down, till at length all view was shut out by the sheets of water that fell. Each individual was isolated by darkness and rain, and when the men called to each other, they were hardly audible.

At that moment Lenore, as she looked at Fink, caught her foot in the root of a tree, and suppressing a cry of anguish, sank on one knee. Fink hastened to her.

"I can go no farther," said she, conquering her pain; "leave me here, I beseech you, and call for me on your return."

"To leave you in this condition," cried Fink, "would be barbarity, compared to which cannibalism is a harmless recreation. You will be good enough to put up with my proximity. But first of all allow me to lead you out of this shower-bath to some spot where the rain is less audacious; and, besides, I have, already lost sight of our men; not one of the worthy fellows' broad shoulders can I now discern." He raised Lenore, who tried to use the injured foot, but the pain extorted another cry of agony. She tottered, and leaned against Fink's shoulder. Winding his plaid about her, he lifted her from the ground, and carried her, as one carries a child, underneath some fir-trees, whose thick branches spread over a small dry space. Any one stooping might find tolerable shelter there.

"I must set you down here, dear lady," said Fink, carefully placing Lenore on the ground. "I will keep watch before your green tent, and turn my back to you, that you may bind your wet handkerchief round the naughty ankle."

Lenore squeezed herself in under the fir canopy. Fink stood leaning against the trunk of a tree.

"Is nothing broken?" said he; "can you move the foot?"

"It hurts me," said Lenore, "but I can move it."

"That is well," said Fink, looking straight before him; "now bind the handkerchief round it; I hope that in ten minutes you will be able to stand. Wrap yourself up well in the large plaid; it will keep you warm; else my comrade will catch a fever, and that would be paying too dear for the chase after the stolen calf. Have you arranged the bandage?"

"Yes," said Lenore.

"Then allow me to wrap you up." It was in vain that she protested; Fink wound the large shawl round and round her, and tied it behind in a firm knot. "Now you may sit in the wood like the gray manikin."

"Leave me a little breathing space," implored Lenore.

"There, then," said Fink; "now you will be comfortable."

Indeed, Lenore soon began to feel a genial warmth, and sat silent in her shady nook, distressed at the singular position in which she found herself. Meanwhile Fink had again taken up his post against the tree-trunk, and chivalrously kept aloof. After a time Lenore called out of her hiding-place, "Are you there still, comrade mine?"

"Do you take me for a traitor who forsakes his tent-companion?" returned Fink.

"It is quite dry here," continued Lenore, "only that a drop falls now and then upon my nose; but you, poor you, will be wet through out there. What fearful rain!"

"Does this rain terrify you?" inquired Fink, shrugging his shoulders. "It is but a weak infant, this. If it can break off a twig from a tree, it thinks it has done wonders. Commend me to the rain of warmer climates. Drops like apples—nay, not drops at all, streams as thick as my arm! The water rushes down from the clouds like a cataract. No standing, for the ground swims away beneath one's feet: no taking shelter under a tree, for the wind breaks the thickest trunks like straw. One runs to his house, which is not farther off, perhaps, than from here to that good for nothing stump that hurt your foot, and the house has vanished, leaving in its place a hole, a stream, and a heap of well-washed stones. Perhaps, too, the earth may begin to shake a little, and to raise waves like those of the sea in a storm. That is a rain which is worth seeing. Clothes that have been wet through by it never recover; what was once a great-coat is, after a whole week's drying, nothing more than a black and shapeless mass—in aspect and texture like to a morel. If one chances to be wearing such a coat, it sticks on fast enough indeed, but it never can be got off except by the help of a penknife, and in narrow strips, peeled away as one peels an apple!"

Lenore could not help laughing in spite of pain. "I should much like to have experience of such a rain as that," said she.

"I am unselfish in not wishing to see you in such a plight," replied Fink. "Ladies fare worst of all. All that constitutes their toilette vanishes entirely in torrents such as these. Do you know the costume of the Venus of Milo?"

"No," said Lenore, distressed.

"All women caught in a tropical rain look exactly like that lady, and the men like scarecrows. Nay, sometimes it happens that human beings are beaten down flat as penny-pieces, with a knob in the middle, which, on closer examination, proves to be a human head, and mournfully calls out to passers-by, 'Oh, my fellow-beings, this is what comes of going out without an umbrella!'"

Again Lenore could not help laughing. "My foot no longer hurts me so much; I believe that I could walk."

"That you shall not do," replied Fink. "The rain has not abated, and it is so dark that one can hardly see one's outstretched hand."

"Then do me the kindness of going to look for the others. I am better now, and I crouch here like a roe, hidden alike from rain and robbers."

"It won't do," rejoined Fink from his tree.

"I implore you to do so," cried Lenore, anxiously, stretching out her hands from the plaid. "Leave me now alone." Fink turned round, seized her hand, pressed it to his lips, and silently hurried off in the direction the men had taken.

Lenore now sat alone beneath the fir-tree. The rain still rushed down, and the thunder rolled above her, and at times a sudden flash showed her the two long rows of trunks, looking like the yellow pillars of an unfinished building, a black roof over them. At such moments the forest seemed like an enchanted castle, rising out of the earth and sinking into nothingness again. Mysterious tones, such as fill the woods by night, sounded through the rain. Over her head there was a knocking at regular intervals, as if some wicked wood-sprite were seeking admittance to her shelter, which made her start, and ask herself whether it proceeded from a spectre or the branch of a tree. Farther off was heard the vehement croaking of some crow whose nest had been flooded, and whose first sleep was disturbed. Close to her there was ghastly laughter. "Hee, hee! hoo, hoo!" and again Lenore started. Was it a malicious forest kobold, or only a night-owl? Nature spoke around her in a hundred melancholy tones. Lenore sometimes enjoyed, and sometimes trembled at the wild charm of this solitude. Other thoughts, too, passed through her mind: she blamed herself for having foolishly stolen out to join an undertaking that made such a result as this possible; she pictured to herself how they were seeking for her at home; and, above all, wondered what he who had just left her, at her earnest request, was thinking of her in his inmost heart. Pushing back the plaid, she listened, but there was not a human voice to be heard; nothing but the fall of the rain and the sighing of the wood. But near her something moved. At first she heard it indistinctly, then plainly as in leaps it came closer, and presently she felt something press against her plaid. Terrified, she cautiously reached out her hand, and touched the wet skin of a hare, who, scared from its form by the incessant rain, now sought shelter like herself. She held her breath not to disturb her little companion, and for a while the two cowered side by side.

Then shots sounded afar off through the rain and thunder. Lenore started, and the hare bounded away. Yonder there were men fighting; yonder, blood was being poured out on the dark ground. A scream was heard—a fierce, ominous scream, then all was still. "Was he in danger?" she asked herself; yet she felt no fear, and shook her head under her plaid, sure that, even if he were, no danger would reach him: the gun aimed at him would strike some broken branch, the knife drawn against him would break like a splinter before it struck him, the man who rushed on him would stumble and fall before he could touch that haughty head. He was above all danger, above all fear; he knew neither care nor grief; alas! he did not feel like other men. His head was lifted freely, his eyes were clear and bright when all others were cast in terror down to earth. No difficulty affrighted, no hinderance stopped him. With a mere wave of his hand he could remove what crushed other men. Such was he. And this man had seen her weak, precipitate, and helpless; it was her own fault that he had now a right to assume a transient intimacy. She trembled lest he should presume upon this right by a glance, a presumptuous smile, a passing word. In this way her heart kept beating and her thoughts fluttering for long hours.

The storm passed off. Instead of torrents there was small rain, and a dull gray succeeded to the black darkness and the fiery flashes. Lenore could now trace the trunk of the nearest trees. The feeling of solitariness oppressed her more and more. Just then she heard again the distant sound of human voices, call and counter-call grew louder, and the bailiff's voice cried, "They went beyond the quarry; look yonder, you Neudorf men." The steps of the speakers drew near, and Karl, making a speaking trumpet of his hands, shouted with all his might, "Halloa, hillo hoa, Fräulein Lenore!"

"Here I am," cried a female voice at his very feet.

Karl started back in amazement, and joyfully called out, "Found!" The peasants surrounded Lenore's shelter.

"Our young lady is here!" cried a youth of Neudorf, and hurraed in his delight as though he were at a wedding.

Lenore rose; her foot still pained her; but, leaning on Karl's arm, she exerted herself bravely to walk. Meanwhile the young men broke down a few poles, and laid fir branches across them. In spite of her resistance, Lenore was constrained to seat herself upon the rude litter, while some ran on to the bailiff's stable to get her horse ready for her.

"Have you found the thieves?" inquired Lenore from Karl, who walked at her side.

"Two of them," replied he. "The calf had been killed; we have got its skin and part of its flesh. The geese were hanging up on a bough, with their necks wrung, but the rascals had divided the money. We found very little of it on our prisoners."

"Those we have caught are Tarow men," said the bailiff, anxiously; "the worst in the village. And yet I wish they were any where but here, for there are some desperately revengeful fellows yonder."

"I heard shots," inquired Lenore, further; "was any harm done?"

"Not to us," answered Karl. "In their foolhardiness they made a fire, not much beyond the border where our riders formed a *cordon*. The embers were glimmering in spite of the rain, and thus they betrayed themselves. We dismounted, crept near, and surprised them. They fired their guns and ran into the bush. There the darkness swallowed them up. It was a long time before the party on foot could join us, and but for the shots and the noise they would never have found us out. Herr von Fink described to us the place where we should meet with you. He is taking the prisoners with him to the estate, and to-morrow we will send them farther."

"But to think that Herr von Fink should have left you thus alone in the wood!" said the worthy bailiff: "that was a bold stroke indeed."

"I begged him not to remain behind," cried Lenore, casting down her eyes in spite of the darkness.

Half way to the village Lenore's pony was brought to meet them. At Neudorf, Karl got back the baron's horse and accompanied his young lady to the castle. It was very late before they arrived. Lenore's long absence had excited her mother's alarm, and put the baron fearfully out of temper. She escaped from his cross-questioning as fast as she could, and hurried to her room. An hour later, Fink, with the forester, came back from Kunau, bringing both the prisoners, who walked haughtily, with their hands bound, and carried their peacock's feathers as high as though they were leading the dance in a tavern.

"You shall pay for this," said one of them in Polish to his escort, and clenched his fettered fists.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The rain still continued. It had ceased indeed in the morning, but only to begin again with double energy. The laborers had gone early to the field, but they soon returned. They were now sitting silently in the guard-room of the castle, drying their wet garments at the stove.

The baron sat in the arm-chair, listening to old John, who read him the newspaper that had reached the castle on the previous day. The monotonous voice of the domestic announced nothing but unwelcome news; the rain-drops rattled on the panes, and the wind rushed howling round the corner of the house in discordant accompaniment.

Anton was busy at his desk. Before him lay a letter from Commissary Horn, announcing that the judicial sale of the family estate was fixed for the middle of next winter; and that, since the advertisement of this definite period, several mortgages on the property had passed from one hand to another, bought up, as he feared, by one speculator, who disguised himself under different names. Accordingly, Anton reflected in gloomy mood upon the hazardous position of the baron.

In the neighboring room Fink was keeping the ladies company, the baroness lying back on the sofa cushions, covered by a shawl of Lenore's. She gazed in silence straight before her, but when her daughter came up with some tender inquiry, she nodded smilingly at her, and spoke a few cheering words. Lenore was sitting in the window occupied with some light work, and listening with rapture to the jests by which Fink brightened the otherwise mournful room. To-day, in spite of the rain, he was in the wildest spirits. From time to time Lenore's ringing laugh reached Anton through the massive door, and then he forgot sale and mortgage, looked with clouded brow at the door, and felt, not without bitterness, that a new struggle was approaching both for the family and for himself.

Without, as we have already said, the rain poured and the storm raged. The wind from the forest wailed to the castle. The old firs creaked, and ceaselessly bent down their branches toward the building. Around the pear-trees in the meadows leaves and white blossoms fluttered timidly to earth. The storm angrily stripped them off, and crushed them, low with his rain, howling the while. "Down with your smiling pomp! to-day all belonging to the castle shall wear mourning." Then the fierce spirit flew from the trees to the castle walls; it shook the flag-staff on the tower; it hurled the rain in slanting torrents against the windows; it groaned in the chimneys and thundered at the doors. It took advantage of every opening to cry, "Guard your house!" And this it did for hours together, but those within understood not its speech.

Neither did any one heed the horseman who was urging his weary horse through the village to the castle. At last the knocker outside the gate was heard, the strokes sounded impatient, and loud voices resounded in the court-yard and on the stairs. Anton opened the door; an armed man, dripping with wet and stained with mud, entered the room.

"It is you!" cried Anton, in amazement.

"They are coming," said Karl, looking cautiously round; "prepare for it; this time it is our turn."

"The enemy?" rapidly asked Anton. "How strong is the band?"

"It was not a band that I saw," replied Karl, seriously; "it was an army of about a thousand scythe-bearers, and at least a hundred horsemen at their head. I hear that they have orders to enlist all Poles and disarm all Germans."

Anton opened the door of the next room and made a sign to Fink.

"Ah!" cried Fink, as he cast a look on Karl, "he who brings half the highway into the room with him has no good tidings to tell. From which side comes the enemy, sergeant?"

"From the Neudorf birch wood straight down upon us. Our villagers are assembled in the tavern drinking and quarreling."

"No beacon-fires have been seen—no tidings have come from the neighboring villages," cried Anton at the window. "Have the Germans at Neudorf and Kunau been fast asleep, then?"

"They were taken by surprise," continued the messenger of ill. "Their watch saw the enemy yesterday evening half a mile beyond Neudorf, going down the high road toward Rosmin. When they had passed the turning to Neudorf, the villagers took heart again, but their horsemen followed the enemy till the last scythe-bearers were out of sight. In the night, however, the whole troop turned back; this morning they fell upon the village, and wrought sad havoc there. The bailiff is lying on the straw, covered with wounds, and a prisoner; the guard-house is burned down; but for this heavy rain we should see the smoke. At this present moment the enemy has divided. They are making the round of all the German villages: one party has gone off to Kunau, one to our new farm, the largest is on its way hither."

"How much time have we to prepare for these gentry?" asked Fink.

"In weather like this, the infantry will take an hour to get here."

"Is the forester warned?" asked Anton; "and do those at the new farm know?"

"There was no time to apprise them. The farm is farther from Neudorf than the estate, and I might have been too late getting here. I lit our beacon, but in rain like this, neither fire nor smoke is visible, and all signals are useless."

"If they have not looked out for themselves," said Fink, decidedly, "we can do no more for them."

"The forester is a fox," replied Karl; "no one will catch him; but as to the farmer and his young wife, Heaven have mercy on them!"

"Save our people!" cried a supplicating voice close to Fink. Lenore stood in the room, pale, with folded hands.

Anton hurried to the door through which she had silently entered. "The baroness!" cried he, anxiously.

"She has heard nothing as yet," hurriedly replied Lenore. "Send to the farm; help our people!"

Fink caught up his cap. "Bring out my horse," said he to Karl.

"You can't be spared now," said Anton, barring the way. "I will take your horse."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Wohlfart," interpolated Karl; "if I may ride Herr von Fink's horse, I shall be quite able to make it out."

"So be it, then," decided Fink; "send hither the forester and any man you can beat up; the women, horses, and children you can dispatch to the forest. Let the farmer go with all his cattle into the thicket as far as he can, and keep a look-out on the castle from the old firs near the sand-pit. As for you, keep on my horse, which I shall, alas! have to make over to you for some days to come; ride off to Rosmin, and seek out the nearest detachment of our soldiers; tell them we implore them to come to our aid, and, if possible, to bring cavalry with them."

"Our red-caps are about three miles beyond Rosmin," said Karl, turning to go. "The Kunau smith called that out to me as I rode by."

"Bring any military you can. I'll write a line to the commanding officer while you are saddling the horse."

Karl made a military salute, and hurried down stairs, Anton with him. While he was fastening the girths, Anton said, "As you pass by, call out to the men in the farm-yard that I will be with them at once. Poor fellow, you have hardly had any breakfast to-day, and there is little prospect of your getting any thing for some hours to come." He ran back to the house, got a bottle of wine, some bread, and the remnant of a ham, stuffed them into a bag, and, together with Fink's letter, gave them to the hussar just as he was setting off.

"Thanks," said Karl, seizing Anton's hand; "you think of every one. But I've one thing to ask: think of yourself too, Mr. Wohlfart; this Polish set, here and yonder, are not worth your risking your life; there are some at home with whom it would go hard if any thing happened to you."

Anton shook his hand heartily. "Good-by, Karl. I'll do my duty. Don't forget to send us the forester, and, above all, rescue the farmer's wife. Lead the military hither through the wood."

"No fear," said Karl, cheerily; "this gallant bay shall find out how much a stout-hearted trooper can get through."

With these words he waved his cap, and vanished behind the farm-buildings.

Anton bolted the gate, then hurried to the guard-room, and rang the alarm-bell, giving orders to the superintendent to let in the men, to invest the back door, and not to admit any one without questioning them, not even fugitives.

"Eat heartily and drink moderately; we shall have enough to do to-day," he cried.

Meanwhile Fink stood at the table in Anton's room, loading the guns, while Lenore reached him whatever he needed. She was pale, but her eyes glowed with an excitement which did not escape Anton as he entered. "Leave this serious game to us alone," said he, beseechingly.

"It is the home of my parents that you defend," cried she. "My father is unable to act at your head. You shall not expose your lives for our sakes without my sharing your danger."

"Forgive me," replied Anton; "your first duty most undoubtedly is to prepare the baroness, and not to leave her during the next few hours."

"My mother! my poor mother!" cried Lenore, clasping her hands, laying down the powder-flask, and hurrying to the neighboring room.

"I have set all the men eating," said Anton to Fink. "From this moment you must take the command."

"Good," replied Fink. "Here are your arms; this double-barrel is light; one barrel loaded with ball, the other with slugs. The bag of bullets is under your bed."

"You think of standing a siege, then?" inquired Anton.

"We must either not seek to defend ourselves at all, but surrender at the friendly discretion of the approaching band, or we must hold out to our last bullet. We are all prepared for the latter course; perhaps surrender would be the wiser, but I own it does not suit my taste. As there is a master of the house, however, still extant, he may decide; go to the baron."

Anton hurried through the passage to the other wing. Even when at a distance he could hear the chairs knocked about in the baron's room. There was an angry "Come in," and he entered. The baron was standing in the middle of the room, highly excited. "I hear," said he, "that there is something going on. I must consider it an unpardonable want of attention that I have not been apprised of it."

"Your pardon, baron," replied Anton; "we only heard a few minutes ago that a band of the enemy's cavalry and scythe-bearers was moving on toward your property. We sent off a messenger in all speed to the nearest military station, then bolted the door, and now we wait your orders."

"Send me Herr von Fink," replied the baron, authoritatively.

"He is at this moment in the guard-room."

"I beg that he will take the trouble of coming to me at once," cried the angry nobleman. "I can not discuss military matters with you. Fink is a gentleman, and half a soldier; I will give all necessary instructions to him. What are you waiting for?" rudely continued he. "Do you young people suppose that you are to trifle with me because I have the misfortune to be blind? He at least whom I feed and pay shall respect my commands."

"Father!" cried Lenore, on the threshold, looking imploringly at Anton.

"You are right, baron," replied Anton; "I crave your forgiveness for having in the hurry of the moment forgotten my first duty. I will send Herr von Fink here at once." Then hastening off, he made his friend acquainted with the baron's angry mood.

"He is a fool," said Fink.

"Go up at once," urged Anton; "the ladies must not suffer from his temper." Then throwing on a laborer's jacket, he sprang out through the door into the rain and to the back farm-yard.

There he found a dreary scene of confusion. German families from the neighboring villages had taken refuge in the guard-house, and sat there with their children, and some of their goods and chattels round them. There were about twenty persons lying on the floor—men, women, and children, the women lamenting, the children weeping, the men looking gloomily down. Several of them belonged to the village militia, and some had their guns with them. Their little carts stood in the yard. Servants, horses, cows, were all running against each other. Anton called the superintendent to his assistance.

He next made over the farm-horses and the cattle to the most trustworthy of the servants, and to the German dairy-maid. Calling aside the head servant, a resolute kind of man, he described to him a place in the thicket, not far from the sand-pit, where man and beast might lie concealed, and be in some degree protected from the weather. Thither the man was to drive the cattle, and to keep a sharp look-out for the bailiff, who was to have the management of the wood-party. Next he desired the maid to leave a cow behind, opened the gate himself, and saw them all set out

toward the forest.

"What are we to do with the horses of the baron and of Herr von Fink?" hurriedly asked the superintendent.

"They must be brought, together with some of the vehicles, into the court-yard, come what will. Who knows whether we shall not have to fly, after all?"

Accordingly, Anton had Karl's newly-painted carts laden with sacks of potatoes, meal, oats, and as much hay as they could hold. He had the great water-butt brought in too, and filled to the brim with fresh water. The skies were still pouring down bucketfuls, and the servants had to load in the drenching rain. All was confusion; and weeping and cursing, in German and Polish, was heard on every side. As Anton approached the fugitives, the screams of the women grew louder, the men surrounded him and began to relate their disasters, the children clung about his knees: it was a mournful spectacle. Anton did what he could to comfort them. "Above all, be quiet; we will protect you as well as we can. I hope the military may come to our aid, meanwhile you will be safe in the castle. You have been faithful to us in this season of distress; as long as we have bread you shall not want."

After a quarter of an hour of extreme exertion Anton returned to the castle. The servants drove the carts to the back door, the troop of fugitives followed. People still poured in from the German villages around, and soon the smith of Kunau, with some of his near neighbors, stood at the castle gate. The whole party was now got into order, the horses unharnessed, the carts unloaded. The women and children were led by Anton into two rooms on the lower floor, which, were dark indeed, but far more comfortable than the guard-house in the soaked fields. The bringing in the horses was the most troublesome part of the matter; about a dozen of them had to crowd up beneath an open shed, poorly protected from rain or bullets. The water-butt was placed in the middle of the yard, and the potato-carts pushed up to the paling, to serve, in case of need, as a position for the guard. Next, all the men capable of bearing arms were assembled by the smith, and, besides Fink's laborers and four servants, fifteen German peasants were mustered, the larger number of them armed. Their footsteps sounded heavy in the long passages, and joining the laborers in the hall, the whole force was seen at once, Fink in his hunting-coat walking quietly up and down before his own corps. Anton now went up to him and gave in his report.

"You bring us men," replied Fink; "that is all very well; but we did not want a whole clan of women and children into the bargain; the castle is as full as a bee-hive—more than sixty mouths; to say nothing of a dozen horses; spite of your potato-carts, we shall have to gnaw the stones before twenty-four hours are over."

"Could I leave them outside?" asked Anton, dryly.

"They would have been just as safe in the wood as here," said Fink, with a shrug.

"Possibly," replied Anton; "but to send off people to the forest in rain like this, without provisions, and in deadly terror, would have been barbarity for which I could not be responsible. Besides, do you think we should have got the men without their wives and children?"

"At all events, we can make use of the men," concluded Fink, "and you may manage the commissariat as you can."

Fink next gave arms to those who wanted them, and divided the forces into four sections, one for the yard, two for the upper and lower stories, and one as a reserve in the guard-room. Next he had an exact report of the enemy given him by the Kunau smith and others. Meantime Anton had rushed to the underground kitchen, where he gave the provisions in charge of the superintendent, and caused wood and water to be carried in by the baron's servants. A sack of potatoes and one of meal were placed near the hearth, and the great caldron put on the fire.

As he went out, he confided to the cook that a cow had been taken into the stable, that, at all events, the family might not be without milk at this doleful time. Old Barbette wrung her hands in anguish. "Alas! Mr. Wohlfart, what a frightful thing it is!" cried she; "the balls will be flying about in my kitchen."

"Heaven forbid!" said Anton; "the window is much too deep for that. No one can reach you; cook away in peace; the people are famished; I will send two of the stranger women down to help you."

"Who could eat in such danger as this?" cried she.

"We will all eat," said Anton, comfortingly.

"Will you have soup or potato-broth?" inquired Barbette, feverishly brandishing her spoon in her despair.

"Both, my good woman."

The cook held him back. "But, Mr. Wohlfart, there are no eggs for the family; indeed, there is not an egg in the whole house. Mercy on us! to think of this misfortune happening to-day, of all days. What will the baron say when he has no fresh egg this evening?"

"The devil take the eggs!" cried Anton, impatiently; "we must not be so particular to-day."

As he returned, Fink called to him, "All is ready; we may now quietly await their arrival. I am going to the tower, and taking a few good shots with me. If any thing happens, I am to be found

there."

And again the hall was empty and the house quiet. The sentinels stood silently watching the edge of the forest; the rest of the men sat talking in a low voice in the guard-room; but the noise was unceasing in the apartment where the children were, and a constant communication was kept up between the kitchen and the occupied rooms in the lower story. Anton walked to and fro in restless suspense from the house to the court, and back again to his own room, where he tied the baron's papers together; then through the passages and to the guard-room. In this way one quarter of an hour after another passed, till at length Lenore came from her mother's room crying, "This uncertainty is intolerable!"

"And we have no tidings from the farm either," replied Anton, anxiously; "but the rain is over, and whatever happens to-day will happen in sunshine. The clouds are breaking yonder, and the blue sky is seen through them. How is the baroness?"

"She is calm," said Lenore, "and prepared for every thing."

Both walked silently up and down the hall. At last Lenore went up to Anton, and passionately exclaimed, "Wohlfart, it is horrible to me to think of you in a position such as this for our sakes."

"Is this position, then, so terrible?" asked Anton, with, a mournful smile.

"You do not perhaps feel it so," said Lenore, "but you are sacrificing for us far more than we deserve. We are ungrateful to you; you would be happier elsewhere."

She placed herself at the window, and wept bitterly.

Anton tried to soothe her. "If," said he, "you allude to the hasty expressions of the baron, you need not pity me on that account. You know what we have formerly said on that subject."

"It is not that alone," cried Lenore, weeping.

Anton knew as well as she did that it was not that alone, and felt that a confession lay in the words. "Be it what it may," said he, cheerfully, "why should you grudge me the pleasure of an adventure? Certainly I am an inexperienced soldier, but it seems that our enemies will not give me much opportunity of doing them any harm to-day."

"No one thanks you for all that you bear for our sakes. No one!" cried Lenore.

"No one?" repeated Anton. "Have I not a friend here who is only too much inclined to overrate the little I am able to do? Lenore, you have permitted me to draw nearer to you than would have been possible under ordinary circumstances. Do you reckon it nothing that I should have won some of a brother's privileges with regard to you?"

Lenore fervently seized and pressed his hand. "Even I have been different to you of late to what I should have been. I am very unhappy," cried she, passionately. "I can not tell to any human being what I feel—not to my mother—not to you either. I have lost all confidence and all control." She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Lenore!" cried her father, impatiently, from his apartment.

"This is no time for explanations," said she, more calmly. "When we have got over this day, I will try hard to be stronger than I am now. Help me in this, Wohlfart."

She hurried away to the baron's room. Anton remained behind, lost in sad thoughts. Meanwhile the bright sunshine streamed down on the court-yard, the men left the guard-room and stood on the threshold; even the women made their way out of their dark retreat, and had to be scolded back again.

"Who knows whether they have not overlooked the castle?" said one; "or if they have courage to attack us?" suggested another; while a sagacious tailor proved, by a clever *résumé* of the different reports received, that all the Polish frocks were by this time far beyond Rosmin. Yet, eagerly as each asserted that the danger must now be over, all listened anxiously to the step of the sentinels, and looked constantly to the tower, to see if any signal were given thence. Even Anton found the suspense unbearable, and at length he too betook himself to the tower. Here the whole staff was assembled. The blind baron sat in his arm-chair, behind him stood Lenore's tall figure shading his eyes with her parasol; four riflemen sat in the broad embrasures; and Fink, perched on the wall, hung down his legs into space, and puffed the blue clouds of a cigar into the wind.

"Nothing to be seen?" asked Anton.

"Nothing," replied Fink, "except a drunken band of our villagers, who are moving off on the Tarow road." He pointed to a dark mass just vanishing into the wood. "It is very well that we have got rid of the rabble. They are afraid of the gray-jackets, and are off to plunder elsewhere. Every hour's delay is a gain, since we reckon that at best there is no help to be looked for till to-morrow. Now those gentlemen behind the wood are not interesting enough to wish for a visit of twenty-four hours from them. This is a grand spot, Baron Rothsattel," continued Fink. "Certainly there's not much to be seen—some fir woods, your fields, and plenty of sand; but it is a glorious station to defend, because it is so bare all round the castle—without tree or bank. Your sentimentalists, indeed, might pronounce it an uninteresting view. But what I consider splendid is this: with the exception of the nearest barn, which is about three hundred yards off in a straight

line, there is no shelter better than that of a molehill for one of the enemy's skirmishers. Far as a rifle-ball can range, we are monarchs of the plain below; only there is a thicket in the way yonder —a plantation, I believe, of Fräulein Lenore's."

"I acknowledge myself guilty," said Lenore.

"Very well," replied Fink, carelessly; "then you shall pay the cost if we are hit. Half a dozen riflemen might lurk safely there."

"It is Lenore's favorite spot," said the baron, apologetically; "she has a grass-plot there; it is the only place outside the wall where she can sit in the open air."

"Indeed!" said Fink; "that's a different thing;" and, looking round for Lenore, he saw she had disappeared. The next moment the yard gate opened, and Lenore, followed by a few laborers, hurried to the plantation.

"What are you going to do?" cried Fink from his height.

Lenore signified by a gesture that she was going to have the trees removed; and, seizing a young fir, she exerted all her strength to uproot it. The men followed her example. In a few moments the young plantation was done away with. Then Lenore herself caught up a spade, and began to level the grassy mound.

Now Anton had planted these trees with the young lady. Both had thoroughly enjoyed the improvement. Since then, Lenore had gone there daily, and each of the little trees had been to her a personal friend. When, therefore, Anton saw it all annihilated, he could not help saying somewhat coldly, "That feeble plantation would have done us little harm; surely you have caused useless devastation."

"Why," replied Fink, "the lady has acted like a prudent commandant of a fortress, the first display of whose talents always consists in leveling about the building, and a plantation can be made again any spring day. Carry off the wood to the farm-yard," cried he to the men; "tear down the wooden inclosure of the well, bring the boards to the yard, and hide the well's mouth."

When Lenore returned to her place behind her father's chair, Fink nodded to her like an elder comrade to a younger, took up his telescope, and again explored the border of the forest.

And thus the party spent another hour. No one was inclined to speak, and Fink's occasional jests fell on unfruitful ground. Anton went down to keep the people in order, but something soon impelled him to return to the battlements, and watch the forest with the rest. At last, after a longer silence than usual, Fink, throwing away his cigar, observed, "It is getting late, and we pay our guests too much honor by expecting them with such silent devotion. When the news came of their march, Wohlfart and I were both wanted in the house; and as Karl is breaking my poor horse's legs at a distance, we sent no one to reconnoitre. Now we pay for that sin of omission; we sit here prisoners, and our men are getting tired before the enemy comes. It is essential that one of us should mount and away to bring in further tidings. This stillness is unnatural: not a creature to be seen in the fields, not one on the roads. It seems odd to me, too, that for the last two hours no refugees should have arrived from the forest; and, besides, the very smoke of Neudorf has disappeared."

Anton silently turned away. "Go, my son," said Fink; "take one of the most trustworthy of our men with you; look how things are going on in our village, and beware of the pine wood. Stay a moment; I will take one other look through the telescope." He looked long, examined each tree, and at last laid down the glass. "There is nothing to be seen," said he, thoughtfully. "If the gentry we are expecting carried any thing besides scythes, we should be compelled to believe there is some witchcraft at work. But now all is uncertainty. Beware of the woods."

Anton left the tower, called the superintendent and two servants, had the baron's horse and two of the swiftest farm-horses got ready, and the gate opened by the Kunau smith. All was silent and peaceful. The fowls that Karl had bought a few weeks before were scratching away on the dunghill; the pigeons were cooing on the thatch; a little dog, belonging to the smith, had constituted himself the guardian of the forsaken buildings, and barked suspiciously at the riding party.

They trotted away through the village, and stopped at the tavern. The bar was empty. Anton called for the landlord. After a while the man came to the door, looking pale and frightened, and clasped his hands when he saw Anton. "Just God! Mr. Wohlfart, to think of your still being in the country! I believed that you and the family had fled to Rosmin or to the heart of our troops long ago. Heavens! this is a misfortune! Bratzy has been here, and has been stirring up the people against the family in the castle, and against the Germans every where; but he could not bring them to attack the castle; so the greatest part of the villagers have gone off to the Poles at Tarow. Those that have remained behind have concealed themselves; and here I am, burying what I may want to carry off in a hurry."

"Where are the enemy now?" inquired Anton.

"I do not know," cried the landlord; "but I know that they are a great host, and that they have with them lancers in uniform."

"Do you know whether the wood is safe toward Neudorf?"

"How can it be safe? No one has come from Neudorf here for several hours. If the way were open, half the village would now be here in my inn or at the castle."

"You are right. Will you wait here for the band that is coming?" inquired Anton, ready to start. "You would be safer in the castle."

"Who knows!" cried the host. "I can not leave; if I do, my whole place will be laid waste."

"But your women?" asked Anton, holding in his horse.

"I must have people to help me," wailed the distracted man. "As they are young, they must just endure it. There is Rebecca, my sister's child: she belongs to a family that understands business. She knows how to deal with the peasants; she knows how to get money from them, even when they are dead drunk. Rebecca," cried he; "Mr. Wohlfart asks whether you will go to the castle, to be safe from these wild men."

The face of Rebecca, surrounded with red hair, now emerged from the cellar.

"What have I to do with the castle, uncle?" cried she, resolutely. "Who do you call wild men? Our peasants are the wildest men in the whole country; if I can get on with them, I shall get on with any. My aunt has quite lost her wits, and there must be some one here who knows how to deal with guests. I am much obliged to you, kind sir, but I am not afraid; the gentlemen who are with the party will not let any harm happen to me."

"Forward, my men!" cried Anton. They galloped farther on through the village; all the doors were closed, but a woman's face was seen here and there looking through the small windows after the riders. In this way they came along the broad highway till they got near the wood.

One of the servants now said to Anton, "There is a young plantation on the left as you enter the wood, where a hundred men might lie in ambush without our seeing them, and if there, they would soon snuff us out, or cut off our way to the castle."

"You are right," said Anton. "We will ride along the field till we have got behind the plantation, where the trees stand singly, and we can venture in and out. From thence we can explore the plantation on foot." They turned accordingly off the road, and crossed the fields, keeping their horses out of the range of shot from the wood. Now Anton bade them dismount, gave the bridles into the superintendent's keeping, and cautiously advanced. "Fire into the wood," ordered Anton, "and then run back to your horses as hard as you can."

The shots rattled through the plantation, and were answered in a few moments by an irregular fire and a loud yell. The balls whistled over Anton's head, but the distance was great, and the men got back to their horses without injury. "Gallop! we know enough. They had not the wisdom to keep quiet." The little band flew along the highway, the loud cries of their pursuers sounding behind them. They arrived breathless at the castle, where they found all in alarm. Fink met them at the entrance.

"You were right," cried Anton: "they are lying in ambush no doubt these many hours, perhaps in hopes of surprising you, or both of us, indeed, on the way to Neudorf. They would then have got the castle without a struggle."

"How many of them may there be?" asked Fink.

"Indeed, we had no time to count them," replied Anton. "No doubt, only a detachment has advanced so far; the greater number are behind in the wood."

"We have roused them," replied Fink; "now we may expect their visit. It is better for our people to receive them before sunset than in the night."

"They come," cried Lenore's voice from the tower.

The two friends hurried to the platform. As Anton looked over the battlements the sun was preparing to set. The golden sky turned the green of the woods to bronze. Forth from the forest came, in orderly procession toward the village, a troop of horsemen, about half a squadron, followed by more than a hundred men on foot, the nearest of them armed with muskets, the others carrying scythes. The lovely evening light suffused the figures on the tower. A cockchafer hummed merrily at Anton's ear, and, high in air, the lark was chanting his evening lay. Meanwhile the danger was approaching. It came nearer and nearer along the winding way, a dark, long-drawn-out mass, unheard as yet, but plainly seen.

Still the cockchafer kept on humming, and the lark soared higher in its rapturous song. At length the procession disappeared behind the first cottages in the village. These were moments of breathless silence. All looked steadfastly at the place where the enemy would emerge into sight. Lenore stood next to Anton, her left hand clutched a gun, and her right kept unconsciously moving the bullets in a sportsman's pouch. As soon as the horsemen appeared in the middle of the village, Fink caught up his cap, and said gravely, "Now, gentlemen, to our posts! You, Anton, be kind enough to lead the baron down stairs." As Anton supported the blind man down the steps, he pointed back at Lenore, who remained motionless, gazing at the advancing enemy. "And you too, dear lady," continued Fink, "I pray you to think of your own safety."

"I am safest here," replied Lenore, firmly, letting her gun drop on the flags. "You will not require me to hide my head in the sofa-cushions when you are about to risk your life."

Fink looked with intense admiration at her beautiful face, and said, "I have no objection to make. If you are resolved to take up your station on this platform, you are as safe as any where in the castle."

"I will be cautious," replied Lenore, waving him off.

"And you, my boys," said Fink, "hide behind the walls; take care not to let a shoulder or the top of your cap be seen, and do not fire before I sound an alarm with this. You will hear it plainly up here." He took out a broad whistle of foreign aspect. "Good-by till we meet again," said he, looking at Lenore with a beaming glance.

"Till we meet again," answered Lenore, raising her arm and looking after him till the door closed behind him.

Fink found the baron in the hall. The poor nobleman was reduced to a most pitiable state of mind by the excitement of the day and the sense of his own uselessness at a time when he felt action the rightful privilege of his station. In his earlier years he had ever met personal danger in the most intrepid manner. How much his strength was broken now plainly appeared in his unsuccessful attempts to maintain his self-control. His hands were restlessly outstretched as though seeking some weapon, and painful groans forced themselves through his lips.

"My kind host and friend," said Fink, addressing him, "as your indisposition makes it inconvenient to you to deal with these strangers, I crave permission to do so in your stead."

"You have *carte blanche*, dear Fink," replied the baron, in a hoarse voice; "in fact, the state of my eyes is not such as to allow me to hope that I can be of any use. A miserable cripple!" cried he, and covered his face with his hands.

Fink turned away with his usual shrug, opened a slide in the oaken door which had been intended to lead to the unfinished terrace, and looked out.

"Permit me," said Anton to the baron, "to lead you to a place where you may not be unnecessarily exposed to the balls."

"Do not trouble yourself about me, young man," said the baron; "I am of less consequence to-day than the poorest day-laborer who has taken up arms for my sake."

"Have you any thing more to say to me?" asked Anton of Fink, as he took up his gun.

"Nothing," replied the latter, with a smile, "except to beg that you will not forget your usual caution if you come to a hand-to-hand scuffle. Good luck to you!" He stretched out his hand. Anton grasped it, and hurried to the court.

"The enemy are passing their opinion upon your farming just now," said Fink to the baron; "we shall have the gentlemen here in a few minutes; there they come, cavalry and infantry. They stop at the barn; a party of riders advance; it is the staff. There are some handsome young fellows among them, and a couple of beautiful horses; they ride beyond the range of our fire, all round the castle. They are seeking an entrance; we shall soon hear the knocker at the back door."

All was silent. "Strange," said Fink. "It is surely the custom of war, before the assault, to summon the besieged to surrender; but there come the officers from their circuit round the castle back to their infantry. Has Wohlfart inspired them with such terror that they have fled away *ventre à terre*?"

The ring of horses' hoofs and the hollow march of the infantry were now heard.

"Zounds!" said Fink; "the whole corps marches as if on parade up to the castle front. If they mean to storm your fortress on this side, they have the most remarkable conceptions of the nature of a strong place. They draw up against us at a distance of five hundred yards. The infantry in the middle, the horsemen at both sides: quite a Roman order of battle. Julius Caesar over again, I declare. Look! they have a drummer; the fellow advances; the row you hear is the beat of drums. Ah ha! the leader rides forward. He comes on, and halts just before our door. Politeness demands that we should inquire what he wants." Fink pushed back the heavy bolts of the door; it opened; he stepped out on the threshold covering the entrance, and carrying his double-barrel carelessly in his hand. When the horseman saw the slender figure in hunting costume standing so quietly before him, he reined in his horse and touched his hat, which Fink acknowledged by a slight bow.

"I wish to speak to the proprietor of this estate," said the horseman.

"You must put up with me," replied Fink; "I represent him."

"Tell him, then, that we have some orders of the government to carry out in his house," cried the rider.

"Would your chivalry permit me to ask what government has been frivolous enough to give you a message for the Baron Rothsattel? From what I hear, the views taken in this country about government in general are a little disturbed."

"The Polish Central Committee is your as well as my government," replied the rider.

"You are very good-natured in allowing a Central Committee to dispose of your heads; you will allow us, however, to hold a different opinion on this particular point."

"You see that we have the means to enforce obedience to the orders of government, and I advise you not by opposition to provoke us to use force."

"I thank you for this advice, and should be still more obliged if, in your zeal for your duty, you would not forget that the ground on which you stand is not public, but private property, and that strange horses are only allowed to exercise thereon by the consent of the proprietor, which, so far as I know, you have not obtained."

"We have had words enough, sir," cried the rider, impatiently; "if you are really authorized to represent the proprietor, I require you to open this castle to us without delay, and to deliver up your arms."

"Alas!" replied Fink, "I am under the unpleasant necessity of refusing your request. I would add a hope that you, together with the gentry in shabby boots ranged behind you there, will leave this place as soon as possible. My young folk are just going to see whether they can hit the molehills under your feet. We should be sorry if the bare toes of your companions were to be hurt. Begone, sir!" cried he, suddenly changing his careless tone to one of such vehement anger and scorn that the Pole's horse reared, and he himself laid his hand on the pistols at his holster.

During this conversation the rest of the horsemen and the infantry had drawn nearer to catch the words.

More than once a barrel had been lowered, but they had always been pushed back by a few riders in advance of the ranks. At Fink's last words, a wild-looking figure in an old frieze jacket took aim, a shot was heard, and the bullet flew past Fink's cheek, and struck the door behind him. At the same moment a suppressed scream was heard, a flash seen on the top of the tower, and the luckless marksman fell to the ground. The man who had conducted the parley turned his horse, the assailants all fell back, and Fink closed the door. As he turned round, Lenore stood on the first flight of the stairs, the recently-discharged gun in her hand, her large eyes fixed wildly upon him. "Are you wounded?" cried she, beside herself.

"Not at all, my faithful comrade," cried Fink.

Lenore threw away the gun, and sank at her father's feet, hiding her face on his knees. Her father bent over her, took her head in his hands, and the nervous agitation of the last few hours brought on a convulsive fit of sobbing. His daughter passionately clasped his trembling frame, and silently held him in her arms. There they were, a broken-down existence, and one in which the warm glow of youthful life was bursting into flame.

Fink looked out of the window; the enemy had retired beyond range of fire, and were, as it seemed, holding a consultation. Suddenly he stepped up to Lenore, and, laying his hand on her arm, said, "I thank you, dear lady, for having so promptly punished that rascal. And now I beg you to leave this room with your father. We shall do better if anxiety on your account does not withdraw our eyes from the enemy." Lenore shrunk back at his touch, and a warm blush overspread her cheek and brow.

"We will go," she said, with downcast eyes. "Come, my father." She then led the baron up stairs to her mother's room. There she heroically strove to compose herself, sat down by the couch of the invalid, and did not go near Fink again the whole evening.

"Now, then, we are by ourselves," cried Fink to the sentinels; "short distances, and a steady aim! If they storm this stone building, they shall get nothing by it but bloody pates."

Accordingly, there he stood with his companions, and looked with keen eye at the ranks of their assailants. There was a great stir among them. Some detachments went off to the village; the horsemen rode up and down; there was evidently something afloat. At last a party brought some thick boards and a row of empty carts. The upper parts of them were lifted off, and the lower placed in a row, the poles away from the castle, the hind wheels toward it. Next, boards were nailed together, and made into pent-houses, which being fastened to the back of the carts, projected a few feet beyond them, and afforded a tolerable shelter for five or six men.

"Ask Mr. Wohlfart to come here," cried Fink to one of his riflemen.

"There has been shooting," said Anton, as he entered the hall; "is any one wounded?"

"This thick door, and one of the rabble yonder," replied Fink. "Without any order, they replied to the first shot from the tower."

"There is not an enemy to be seen in the court. A troop of horsemen came to the gate; one ventured up to the palings, and tried to look through. But when I started up behind them, they all took to flight in terror."

"Look there," said Fink; "they are amusing themselves in making small barricades. As long as this evening light allows us to see, the danger is not great. But in the night, those huts on wheels may come a little too near."

"The sky keeps clear," said Anton; "there will be a bright starlight."

"If I only knew," said Fink, "why they have had the madness to attack the strongest side of our fortress! It can only be that your peaceful visage has had the effect of the Gorgon's head upon them. Henceforth you will be described as a scarecrow in all Slavonic fights."

It was dark when the hammering away at the carts ceased. A word of command was heard. The officers summoned a few men by name to the poles, and six movable roofs rolled on rapidly to about thirty yards from the front of the castle.

"Now for it," cried Fink. "Remain here and look to the lower story." He sprang up the steps; the long row of front rooms was opened; one could see from one end of the house to the other. "Mind your heads," cried he to the sentinels. Immediately came an irregular fire against the windows of the upper story, the leaden shower rattling through the panes, the glass clattering on the floor. Fink took out his whistle; a shrill sound vibrated loudly through the house, and was responded to by the salvos of the besieged from both stories and from the tower.

And now followed an irregular fire from both sides. The besieged had the advantage—their aim was truer, and they were better concealed than those without.

During the brief pauses, Fink's voice was to be heard crying, "Steady, men; keep close." He was every where; his light step, the clear tones of his voice, his wild jests from time to time, kept up the spirits of all. They filled Lenore's soul with a thrill of rapture; she hardly felt the full terrors of her situation; nor did the convulsive starts of her father, nor her mother's low groans, lead her to despair, for the words of the man she loved sounded like a message of salvation in her ear.

For about an hour the battle raged around the walls. The great building rose dark in the pale starlight; no light, no form was to be seen from without; only the flashes that from time to time shone out from a corner of the windows announced to those outside that there was life within. He who walked through the rooms could discover a dark shape here and there behind a pillar, could see eyes glowing with excitement, and a head bent to observe the foe. True, none of the men there assembled were used to this bloody work; they had been gathered from the plow, the workshop, from every species of peaceful industry; and painful excitement, feverish suspense, protracted during the whole day, was visible in the aspect of the strongest among them.

Yet Anton remarked with a gloomy satisfaction how calm he himself was, and how brave the men in general. They were busy, they were at work, and, even in the midst of their deadly occupation, the strength and energy were evident which all active labor gives to man. After the first shots, those on the front side loaded as composedly as though they were at their every-day toil. The face of the farm-servant hardly looked more anxious than when he walked between his oxen in the field, and the skillful tailor handled his gun with as much indifference as he would his smoothing-iron. It was only the reserve guard who were restless; not from fear, but from dissatisfaction with their own inactivity. At times a bold fellow would steal into the house, behind Anton's back, in order to have a chance of firing off his gun in front, and Anton was obliged to place the superintendent at the court-door to prevent this courageous way of desertion.

"Only once, Mr. Wohlfart; do let me have one shot at them!" urgently pleaded a young fellow from Neudorf.

"Wait," replied Anton, loading; "your turn will come; in an hour you will relieve the others here."

Meanwhile the stars rose higher, and the shots became fewer as both parties grew weary.

"Our people are the strongest," said Anton to his friend; "the men in the court are not to be kept back any longer."

"It is all little better than shooting in the dark," replied Fink; "true, they make it matter of conscience to take good aim, but it is generally a mere accident if their balls take effect. Nothing has happened to our side but a few slight wounds, and I believe those without have not suffered more."

The rolling of wheels was now heard. "Listen! they are drawing back their war-chariots." The firing ceased, and the whole line disappeared in the darkness. "Leave off," continued Fink; "and, Anton, if you have any thing to drink, give it, for these have shown themselves brave men. Then let us quietly await the renewal of the siege."

Anton accordingly had some refreshments distributed to the men, and went through the whole house, dismissing them, and examining the rooms from the cellar upward. As he drew near the women's rooms on the lower story, he heard, even at a distance, a lamentable chaos of voices. Entering, he found the bare walls dimly lighted, the floor covered with straw, on which crouched women and children. The women expressed their terror by every kind of passionate gesture, many ceaselessly imploring the help of Heaven, without any alleviation of their intense misery; others staring straight before them, stunned by the horrors of the night; in short, the pleasantest impression was that made by the children, who, having howled with all their might, had no further care. In the midst of all this wretchedness, these little ones lay, their heads resting on a bundle of clothes, their small hands clenched, sleeping as quietly as in their beds at home, while one young woman sat in a corner rocking her sleeping infant in her arms, apparently forgetful of all besides. At last, still watching the child, she came up to Anton, and asked how her husband was faring.

Meanwhile the enemy made large fires, and part of their soldiery sat near them, and were seen to boil their coffee. There was great disturbance, too, in the village; men were heard shouting and ordering, lights were seen in all directions, and there was rapid coming and going along the streets.

"That does not look like a truce," cried Anton.

At that moment a loud knock was heard at the back door; the friends looked at each other, and rushed down to the court.

"Rothsattel and roebucks," whispered a voice, improvising a password.

"The forester!" cried Anton, pushing back the bars and letting the old man in.

"Shut the gate," said the forester; "they are close on my track. Good-evening to you all; I am come to inquire whether you can make any use of me?"

"Get into the house," cried Anton, "and tell us all."

"Every thing is as quiet in the forest as in the church," said the forester; "the cattle are lying in the quarry, and the shepherd, too, is there with his creatures. The farmer keeps watch. I crept, in the dark, into the village to reconnoitre, and now come to warn you. As they have not made much of their guns, the rascals are going to try fire. They have got together all the grease and tar in the village, they have taken all the women's shavings, and whenever they found an oil lamp, they poured it over bundles of rushes."

"They mean to burn the yard gate?" asked Fink.

The forester made a face. "Not the yard gate; they have a deadly fear of that, because you have artillery-wagons and a cannon in the yard."

"Artillery!" cried both friends, in amazement.

"Yes," nodded the forester; "through the chinks of the planks they have seen blue carts, horses, and a gun-carriage."

"Karl's new potato-carts, the plow, and the water-butt!" cried Anton.

"No doubt," replied the forester. "On my way here I peeped into the inn yard, and waited for some one that I knew. Then Rebecca ran by me with a basket; I whistled, and called her out behind the stable. 'Are you there, old Swede?' said the wild thing. 'Take care that your head be not set on fire. I have no time to talk with you; I must attend to the gentlemen; they want coffee.' 'Why not Champagne?' said I. 'No doubt the gentlemen are very polite, you pretty creature,' said I; for one gets over women with flowery speeches. 'You are an ugly fellow yourself,' said the girl, laughing at me; 'get away with you!' 'They won't hurt you, my little Rebecca,' said I, stroking her cheeks. 'What's that to you, old sorcerer?' said the little toad; 'if I were to scream, the whole roomful would come to my aid.' 'Don't be so contradictious, my child,' said I; 'be a good girl, fill another bottle, and bring it out here. One must do something for one's friends in bad times.' Then she snatched the bottle out of my hand, telling me to wait, and ran off with her basket. After a while she returned with the bottle quite full, for she is a good creature at heart, and as she gave it me, she cried, 'If you see the young gentlemen in the castle, tell them that the folks here have a great dread of their artillery; they have been asking me whether it was true that they had cannon. I told them I was quite sure that was the name of a great thing I had often seen on the property.' Then I slunk off again, and crept along the ditch, past fellows with scythes, who are mounting guard behind our farm-yard. When I was about a hundred yards from them, I tore away, and they swore after me. That's how things stand."

"That notion of theirs about fire is uncomfortable," said Fink; "if they understand the thing, they may smoke us out like badgers."

"The threshold is stone, and this thick door is high above the ground," said the forester.

"I am not afraid of the flames, but of the smoke and glare," replied Fink; "if they light up our windows, our men will aim still worse. One good thing for us is that the gentlemen on the English saddles, who head the enemy, have never stormed any but a petticoat fortress before. We will bring all our men to the front, and leave only two or three sentinels behind; we will trust Rebecca's story."

Fresh cartridges were given out, and a fresh detachment stationed at the windows, additional men were placed in the halls of the upper and lower story, and on the platform of the tower, Anton commanding up stairs, the smith below, and the forester remaining with a small body in reserve. All these arrangements were just made in time, for a loud hum was heard at a distance, together with shouts of command, the march of an advancing body, and the rumbling of carts.

"Keep your guns at full cock," cried Fink, "and fire only at those who press in at the door."

The wheeled pent-houses moved on as before, a Polish order was given, and a rapid fire began on the part of the enemy, exclusively directed to the important door and the windows near it. The balls thundered on the oaken planks and on the masonry, and more than one found its way through the window openings, and struck the ceiling above the heads of the garrison. Fink cried to the forester, "You shall run a risk, old man; take your people to the back door, open it, creep round close to the house, and drive away those fellows behind the three carts to the left, who have ventured too near; get close to them; you can knock them all over if you aim true; the carts have no covering; you can be back before the fellows run out from behind. Be quick and cautious; with this whistle I will give the signal for your rushing out from the shadow of the walls."

The forester collected his men and hurried to the court. Fink ran up stairs to Anton. The enemy's fire grew still more frequent. "This time it is grim earnest," said Anton. "Our people, too, are

getting excited."

"Here comes the real danger," cried Fink, pointing through a loop-hole in the wall to a high shapeless mass which slowly approached. It was a harvest-wagon, loaded to an immense height and breadth, and propelled by invisible hands to the front of the castle. "A fire-ship! there are the yellow straw bundles on the top. Their plan is evident; they are steering it against the door. Now, then, we must shoot well; not one of the fellows who mount it must get back safe." He sprang up the stairs, and cried to those stationed on the tower, "Every thing now depends upon you; as soon as you see the men who are pushing the wagon onward, fire! wherever you can see a head, or even a leg, fire! Every one of them must die!" The wagon came nearer. Fink raised his own rifle twice, took aim, and twice laid it down. The wagon load was so high that it was impossible to see those who propelled it. These were moments of painful suspense on both sides; even the enemy's fire ceased; every eye was fixed on the fearful vehicle which was to bring the bitter conflict to a fatal close. At length the backs of the hindmost men at the pole came into sight. Two flashes from Fink's rifle, two yells, the wagon stood still; those who were pushing it crowded closer. Two dark bodies lay on the ground. Fink loaded again, a wild smile playing round his lips. A raging fire upon the tower was the answer given by the foe. One of the men on the tower was shot in the breast; his gun fell down over the wall; he sank at Fink's feet. Fink merely glanced at him, and rammed his second bullet down. At that moment some figures rushed out of the darkness to the wagon. A spirited shout was heard, and the machine was once more set in motion. "Brave fellows!" muttered Fink; "they are doomed to death." Other forms were now visible at the end of the pole. Fink again took aim. Again a cry of anguish; but the wagon moved on. It was not more than thirty yards from the door; the moment was indeed critical. The shrill sound of the whistle was heard through the night; from the windows of the upper story flew the fiery salvo, and from the left side of the house rose a loud cry. The forester made a sally, a crowd of dark figures rushed against the pent-house that stood nearest to the corner of the castle; for a moment there was a scuffle, then some shots fired, and the conquered foe fled from their shelter to the open plain. For the third time the deadly double-barrel flashed from the tower, and struck the pole of the wagon, and the men who were propelling it, seized with a sudden panic, retreated from its cover into the sheltering darkness. But this did not avail them. From the tower and the windows of the upper story bullets pursued them, and more than one fell. Behind them rose a cry of rage, and a dark line rapidly advanced to receive the fugitives. A universal fire against the house began. Then the enemy retreated rapidly as they had advanced, carrying the wounded and the carts back with them. The fire-ship alone, a dark mass, still stood a few yards from the door. The firing ceased, and an uncomfortable silence succeeded to the deadly conflict.

In the hall of the upper story Anton and Fink met, and were immediately joined by the forester. Each of the friends silently sought to ascertain, in the dim light, whether the other stood before him unharmed. "Capitally done, forester," cried Fink. "Demand to be admitted to the baron, and give in your report."

"And request Fräulein Lenore to give you linen for dressings; we have had losses," said Anton, mournfully, as he pointed to the floor, where two men sat leaning against the wall and groaning.

"Here comes a third," replied Fink, as a dark shape was slowly carried down stairs from the tower. "I fear the man is dead; he lay at my feet like a log."

"Who is it?" inquired Anton, shuddering.

"Barowsky, the tailor," whispered one of the bearers.

"What a fearful night!" cried Anton, turning away.

"We must not think of that now," said Fink. "Human life is only valuable when one is ready to surrender it on a fitting opportunity. The great point is, that we have shaken off that fiery millstone from our throats. It is not impossible that the wretches may yet succeed in kindling it; but it will not do much harm at its present distance."

At that moment a bright light shone through the loop-holes of the tower. All rushed to the window. A dazzling light flamed up from the opposite side of the wagon, and a sudden impetus hurled the heavy mass against the wall of the house. A single man sprang back from the wagon; a dozen guns were pointed at him at once.

"Stop!" cried Fink, in a piercing voice. "It is too late. Spare him; he is a fine fellow; the mischief is done."

"Merci, Monsieur; au revoir!" said a voice from below; and the man sprang uninjured into the darkness.

In a moment the wagon was in a blaze, and from the straw and rushes with which it was laden on the top, the yellow flames rose crackling, while firebrands flew in all directions. The house was suddenly illuminated: masses of smoke burst through the shattered windows.

"That is powder," cried Fink. "Steady, steady, my men! We will keep the enemy off if they force an entrance. You, Anton, see whether you can put out the fire."

"Water!" cried the men; "the window-frame has caught!" Without, there were fresh orders shouted out. The drums beat; and, with a wild cry of triumph, a cordon of skirmishers neared the house. The fire of the besiegers began once more, in order to impede the quenching of the flames. Water was brought from the great butt in the yard, and poured on the burning window-

frames—a dangerous task enough; for the front of the house was lighted up, and the ever-advancing skirmishers aimed at every figure as it became visible. The besieged glanced anxiously at the flames, and returned the fire of their opponents unsteadily. Even the sentinels in the court looked more behind than before them. The disorder became general. The moment of greatest danger had come. All seemed lost.

Next a man called down from the tower, "They are bringing short ladders from the village; we can see the axes in their hands."

"They will get over the palings, and break in the windows of the lower story," cried the men to each other, in utmost alarm.

The forester rushed to the court. Fink carried off a few men with him to the side of the house on which the men with ladders were advancing. All were in confusion. Even Fink's threatening voice no longer took effect upon them.

At that moment some men, with bars of iron in their hands, were seen hurrying in from the court-yard to the hall door. "Make way!" cried a stalwart figure; "this is blacksmith's work!" The man pushed back the bolts of the door. The opening was filled by the burning wagon. Spite of smoke and flames, the smith leaped upon its burning frame. "Help me, you hares!" screamed he, in angry tones.

"He is right," cried Anton. "Onward, my men!"

Boards and poles were brought, and the men unweariedly pressed onward through the smoke, and pushed and heaved away at the glowing mass. At length the smith succeeded in throwing down some of the sheaves. One could now get a glance of the dark sky, and the smoke was less stifling.

"Now we have it!" cried he, triumphantly; and bundle after bundle fell to the ground, and burned harmlessly away. The wagon was more and more quickly unloaded, blazing feather-beds and billets of wood falling with other things.

Anton had the door half closed as the enemy's bullets passed through the flames, and the men had to use their levers from the side. The wagon-ladders fell down, burned to charcoal; and with a shout of triumph, all the levers were applied at once, and the fragments of the wagon pushed a few yards from the door, which was quickly locked again from inside; while the men, black as imps, and with clothes burned, loudly congratulated each other.

"Such nights as these make strong friendships," cried the smith, in great delight, as he shook Anton's hand, which was little less black than his own.

Meanwhile the axes of the besiegers were hacking away at several windows of the lower story, the loosened boards creaked, and Fink's voice was heard saying, "Knock them down with the butt-ends!"

Anton and the forester now betook themselves upon the window through which the besiegers sought to enter. But the worst was over there too. Fink came to meet them, the bloody axe of an insurgent in his hand, and, flinging it away, he cried to Anton and his party, "Put new boards into the windows. I hope the butchery is at an end."

A few more salvos from without, and single shots from within, and all was still in the castle and in the field. The walls still glowed a while in the firelight, but it faded and faded away. The wind rose and drove away the smoke curling round the windows from the burning fragments before the door. The pure night air filled the corridors and the halls once more, and the starlight shone quietly on the sunken eyes and pale faces of the garrison. On both sides the energies of the combatants were exhausted.

"What hour of the night is it?" asked Fink, going up to Anton, who was watching the movements of the enemy through the loop-holes of the wall.

"Past midnight," replied Anton.

They went up to the tower and looked about them. The fields around the castle were empty.

"They have laid themselves down to sleep," said Fink. "Even the fires below are out, and but few isolated voices sound from the village. Those shadows all round the house alone tell us that we are besieged. We have some hours of peace before us; and as we shall hardly get sleeping-time to-morrow, our people must avail themselves of the present. Leave only the necessary sentinels, and let the posts be relieved in two hours. If you have no objection, I shall go to bed too. Let me be called as soon as any thing is stirring outside. You will take very good care of the night-posts, that I know." So saying, Fink turned away and went to his room, where he threw himself on his bed, and in a few moments was fast asleep.

Anton hurried to the guard-room, arranged the posts with the forester, and fixed the order in which they were to be relieved.

"I shall not be sleepy," said the old man; "firstly, because of my age; next, from my habits as a huntsman. I will, if you allow, arrange the posts, and look after things in general."

Once more Anton went round the court and the stables. Here, too, quiet was restored: only the horses restlessly stamped their hoofs on the hard ground. Anton gently opened the door of the

women's rooms, in the second of which the wounded had been laid. As he entered, he saw Lenore on a stool near the straw beds, two of the stranger women at her feet. He bent down over the couch of the wounded: the colorless face and disordered hair of the unfortunate men looked ghastly on the white pillows which Lenore had snatched from her own bed.

"How fares it with you?" whispered Anton.

"We have tried to bind up the wounds," replied Lenore. "The forester says that there is hope of both."

"Then," continued Anton, "leave them in charge of the women, and avail yourself of these hours of rest."

"Do not speak to me of rest," said Lenore, rising. "We are in the chamber of death." She took him by the hand, and led him to the opposite corner, drew aside a dark cloak, and pointed to a human form beneath it. "He is dead!" said she, with a hollow voice. "As I raised him with these hands, he died. His blood is on my clothes; and it is not the only blood that has been spilled to-day. It was I," she wildly cried, convulsively pressing Anton's hand, "it was I who began this blood-shedding. How I am to bear this curse, I know not; how I am to live on after this day, I know not. If I have henceforth a place in this world, it is in this room. Leave me here, Wohlfart, and think no more about me."

She turned away and resumed her seat on the stool by the side of the straw bed. Anton drew the cloak over the dead, and silently left the room. He went next to the guard-room and took up his gun. "I am going to the tower, forester," said he.

"Each has his own way," muttered the old man. "The other is wiser—he sleeps. But it will be cold up there; this one shall not be without a wrap." He sent a man up with a villager's cloak, and ordered him to remain with the gentleman.

Anton told the man to lie down and sleep, and wrapped himself up in the warm covering. Then he sat in silence, resting his head against the wall over which Lenore had leaned as she fired, and his thoughts flew over the plain—from the gloomy present to the uncertain future. He looked beyond the circle of the enemy's sentinels, and over the darker boundary of the fir woods, which kept him prisoner here, and bound him to circumstances which appeared to him strange and improbable, as though he read them in a book. His wearied mind contemplated his own fate as though it were that of a stranger, and he could now calmly look down into the depths of his own spirit, which the stormy alternations of the day had hitherto hid from him. He saw his former life pass in review before him: the figure of the noble lady on the balcony of her castle; the beautiful girl in her skiff, surrounded by her swans; the waxlights in the dancing-saloon; the mournful hour when the baroness had placed her jewels in his hands—each of those moments when Lenore's eyes had lovingly met his own. All those seasons now returned to his mind, and he plainly discerned the glamour that she had cast around him. All that had chained his fancy, warped his judgment, and flattered his self-love, now appeared to him an illusion.

It had been an error of his childish spirit which vanity had fostered. Alas! the brilliant mirage had long been dissipated in which the life of the aristocratic family seemed great, noble, enviable to the poor accountant's son. Another feeling had replaced it, and a purer—a tender friendship for the only one in that circle who had retained her strength when the others sank. Now, she too parted from him. He felt this was, and must be so more and more. He felt this now without pain, as natural, as inevitable. And further, he felt that he was thus free from the ties that detained him here. He raised his head, and looked over the woods into the distance. He blamed himself, first, that this loss did not grieve him more, and, next, that he was conscious of a loss. Had there, then, been a silent hope at the bottom of his heart? Had he thought to win the beauteous girl to share his future life? had he dreamed of becoming a member of the family by whom he was employed? If he had occasionally been weak enough to do this, he now condemned himself.

He had not always felt rightly; he had secretly cherished many a selfish thought when looking at Lenore. That had been wrong, and it served him right that he now stood alone among strangers, in relations that pained him because they were indefinite, and in a position from which his own resolve could not free him at present, could hardly free him for some time to come.

And yet he felt himself free. "I shall do my duty, and only think of her happiness," said he, aloud. But her happiness? He thought of Fink—thought of the character of his friend, which always impressed, but often angered him. Would he love her in return, and would he allow himself to be bound? "Poor Lenore!" he sighed.

In this way Anton stood till the bright aspect of the northern horizon passed over to the east, and thence a pale gray spread over the sky, the chilly forerunner of the rising sun. Then Anton looked once more at the landscape round him. He could hardly count the enemy's sentinels, who surrounded the castle in pairs, and here and there a scythe shone in the brightening light. Bending down, he woke the man, who had gone to sleep on the flags stained by his comrade's blood; then he went to the guard-room, threw himself on the straw that the forester carefully shook down for him, and fell asleep just as the lark soared from the dewy ground, by its joyous call to summon forth the sun.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

After an hour the forester woke the sleeper. Anton started up and looked round, stupefied at the unfamiliar scene.

"It is almost a sin to disturb you," said the good old man; "all is quiet outside, only the enemy's cavalry have gone off to Rosmin."

"Gone off!" cried Anton; "then we are free."

"Except for the foot-folks," said the forester, "and they are still two to one of us. They hold us fast. And I have something else to say. There is no more water in the butt. Our men have drunk half of it, the rest was thrown on the fire. For my part, I can do without it, but the castle is full of men, and they will hardly get through the day without a drink."

Anton sprang up. "This is a melancholy good-morning, my old friend."

"The well is broken," continued the old man; "but how if we were to send some of the women to the brook? The sentinels would not do much to the women; perhaps they would not prevent them from getting a few bucketfuls of water."

"A few buckets would not do much for us," replied Anton.

"They would raise the spirits," said the old man; "they would have to be shared. Were Rebecca here, she would get us the water. We must try what we can do with the others. Those confounded fellows are not bad to women, if they be but bold. If you approve, I will see what I can make of some of our girls."

The forester called down to the kitchen—"Suska!" The young Pole sprang up stairs.

"Listen to me, Suska," said the forester, anxiously; "when, the baron awakes, he will call for his hot water; all the water in the castle is done; we have beer and schnapps enough, indeed, but what Christian can wash his hands in beer? so take the buckets, and get us water. Run down to the brook; you will get on very well with your countrymen. Don't stay too long chattering, or we shall get a scolding. And, I say, just ask our neighbors why they stand there still with their lances; their horsemen have gone away; we have no objection to their moving off too."

The girl willingly caught up the buckets, the forester opening the yard door for her, and down she went to the water. Anton watched her in anxious suspense. She got to the brook without any hinderance, and without troubling herself about the sentinels, who were some twenty yards off, and who looked with much curiosity at her. At length one of the men with scythes went up to her. The girl put down her buckets, crossed her arms, and both began a peaceful conversation. Then the Pole took up the buckets, filled them with water, and gave them to the girl, who slowly returned to the castle, the forester opening the gate for her, and saying, in a caressing tone, "Bravo, Susan! what did the sentinel say to you?"

"Stupid things," replied she, blushing. "He told me that I must open the door for him and his comrades when they return to the castle."

"As if that were all?" said the forester, slyly. "So they mean to return to the castle?"

"To be sure they do," said the girl. "Their horsemen are gone to meet the soldiers from Rosmin. When they return, the man said they would all run together to the castle."

"We shall hardly admit them," replied the forester. "None shall enter the gate but your sweetheart yonder. You have, I suppose, promised him admittance, if he comes alone and late?"

"No!" answered Susan, indignantly; "but I dared not be uncivil."

"Perhaps we may try it once more," suggested the forester, glancing at Anton.

"I don't think it," replied the latter. "An officer is riding round the posts, and the poor fellow will get a rough return for his gallantry. Come, and let us divide our little store. Half of this first bucket for the family—half for us men; let the other make a breakfast for the women and children."

Anton himself poured the water into the different vessels, and appointed the smith to guard it. While so doing, he said to the forester, "This is the hardest task that we have had as yet. I do not know how we are to hold out during the day."

"Many things may happen," replied the forester, consolingly.

A bright spring day now began; the sun rose cloudlessly behind the farm-yard, and soon warmed the mist that hung around the walls; the people sought out the sunny corner of the court; the men sat in little groups with their wives and children, and all seemed in good heart. Anton went in and out among them. "We must have patience till noon—perhaps till the afternoon; then our troops will come."

"If those fellows yonder do no more than at present," replied the smith, "we may be easy enough. They stand there like so many wooden posts."

"They lost their courage yesterday," said another, contemptuously.

"It was a mere straw-fire; the smith threw it down, and they have nothing to follow it up with," cried a third.

The smith folded his arms and smiled proudly, his wife looking at him with delight.

Next the upper story began to show symptoms of life. The baron rang and demanded a report. Anton went up to give it him, then entered Fink's room and woke his friend, who was still fast asleep.

"Good-morning, Tony," cried Fink, comfortably stretching himself. "I shall be down in a moment. If you can send me a little water through some of your connections, I shall be very grateful to you."

"I will get you a bottle of wine from the cellar," replied Anton; "you must wash in wine to-day."

"Ha!" cried Fink, "is it come to that? At all events, it is not Port wine, I hope."

"We have but a few bottles of either kind," continued Anton.

"You are a bird of ill omen," said Fink, looking for his boots. "You have doubtless the more beer in your cellars."

"Just enough to give the garrison one draught. A small cask of brandy is our chief treasure."

Fink whistled the Hessian march. "You will own, my son, that your tenderness for the women and children was somewhat sentimental. I already see you, in my mind's eye, with your shirt sleeves tucked up, killing the lean cow, and, with your old conscientiousness, administering mouthfuls to the famished household—you in the middle—fifty gaping mouths around you. Be sure that you prepare a dozen birch rods; in a few hours the screams of the hungry children will rise to heaven, and, in spite of your philanthropy, you will be obliged to scourge the whole troop of them. Otherwise, I think we managed pretty well yesterday. I have had a famous sleep, and so things must take their chance another day. Now let's go and have a look at the enemy."

The two friends mounted to the tower. Anton reported what he had heard. Fink carefully explored the sentries' posts and the line of road till lost in the wood. "Our situation is too quiet to be comfortable," said he, shutting up the glass.

"They mean to starve us out," said Anton, gravely.

"I give them credit for that clever notion; and they do not judge ill, for, between ourselves, I have strong doubts whether we have any relief to hope for."

"We may depend upon Karl," said Anton.

"And upon my bay too," replied Fink; "but it is very possible that my poor Blackfoot may have the misfortune to be carrying the carcass of one of the insurgents at this very moment; and whether the youth Karl may not have fallen into the hands of one of the bands who, no doubt, swarm throughout the country; whether he ever found our soldiers; whether they chose to march to our aid; whether, in short, they will have the sense to come in time; and whether they are strong enough, after all, to disperse the troop gone out to meet them—these, my boy, are all questions which may reasonably be put, and I, for one, dare not answer them hopefully."

"We might attempt a sally, but it would be bloody work," said Anton.

"Pooh!" said Fink; "it would be useless, which is worse. We might disperse one set of them, and another would be there in an hour; nothing but having a strong party to relieve us can get us out of the scrape. As long as we keep within these walls we are strong; on the open field, encumbered with women and children, a dozen horsemen might ride us down."

"We must wait, then," said Anton, gloomily.

"Well said, after all. The whole of human wisdom consists in never putting to one's self or to others questions which nobody can answer. The affair threatens to be tedious."

The friends came down again, and hour after hour passed—weary hours of leaden inactivity. First Anton, then Fink, looked through the glass at the opening into the wood. There was little to be seen; patrols came and went; armed peasants entered the village, and were dispatched in different directions; the sentinels were regularly inspected and relieved every two hours; the besiegers were busy in searching and disarming the surrounding villages, in order to make a more vigorous assault than ever on the castle.

The Germans were pent up in their fortress like a wild beast in his lair, and the huntsmen waited with calm confidence for the time when hunger, or else fire, should complete their conquest.

Meanwhile Fink tried to employ his people; made the men clean and brighten their arms, and himself inspected them all; next, powder and lead were given out, bullets cast, and cartridges made. Anton showed the women how to clean the house and the court, as well as they could, without water. All this had the good effect of keeping the prisoners occupied for a few hours.

The sun rose higher, and the breeze wafted the peaceful chime of bells from the nearest village.

"Our breakfast will be sparing enough," said Anton to his comrades. "The potatoes are roasted in the ashes, meat and bacon are finished; the cook can not bake, for we are again without water."

"As long as we have the milch-cow in the stable," replied Fink, "we still possess a treasure which we can display to the hungry ones. Next, we have the mice in the castle, and, finally, our boots. He who has been condemned to eat beefsteaks in this country ought not to find boot-leather a tough diet."

The forester interrupted them. "A single horseman is coming from the farm-yard to the castle with a woman behind him. I lay any thing it is Rebecca."

The horseman approached the front door, waving a white handkerchief, halting near the burnt fragments of the great wagon, and looking at the windows of the upper story. It was the envoy of the preceding day.

"We will not be so unpolite as to keep the gentleman waiting," said Fink, pushing back the bolts, and appearing unarmed on the threshold. The Pole silently bowed; Fink raised his cap.

"I told you yesterday evening," began the former, "that I should have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"Ah!" replied Fink; "you, then, were the gentleman who occasioned all that smoke? It was a pity to spoil the wagon."

"You prevented your men from firing on me yesterday," continued the Pole, in German, spoken with a hard foreign accent. "I am grateful to you for it, and anxious to prove myself so. I hear that there are ladies in the castle; this girl brings them milk. We know that you are without water, and I should not wish the ladies to be inconvenienced by our conflict."

"Jackanapes!" muttered the forester.

"If you will permit me to give you a few bottles of wine in exchange for your milk," replied Fink, "I will accept your present with thanks. I presume you have no superfluity of this commodity at your command."

"Very good," said the Pole, smiling. Rebecca hurried with her pitcher to the yard gate, gave in the milk, and received the wine from the growling forester. The Pole continued: "Even if you be well supplied with wine, it can not serve instead of water. Your garrison is numerous, and we hear that you have many women and children in the house."

"I should consider it no hardship," replied Fink, "for these women and children to drink wine, as well as we men, till you do us the favor which I yesterday requested, of leaving this estate and the brook yonder altogether."

"Do not hope it, sir," said the Pole, gravely; "we shall employ all our strength to disarm you; we know now that you have no artillery, and it would be at any time in our power to force an entrance. But you have held out like brave men, and we do not wish to go further than is absolutely necessary."

"Prudent and sensible," replied Fink.

"Therefore I make you a proposal which need not offend your self-respect. You have no relief to hope for. Between your soldiers and this village there is a strong body of our troops. A collision of the armies is expected in the course of the next few days at no great distance from here, and your generals are, therefore, unable to detach any number of men. I am telling you no news; you know this as well as I; therefore I promise to you and to all within these walls a safe-conduct, if you will give up the castle and your fire-arms. We are ready to escort you and the ladies in any direction that you may wish, as far as our occupation of the country extends."

Fink replied more seriously than he had hitherto done, "May I ask who it is whose word of honor would be pledged to me?"

"Colonel Zlotowsky," replied the horseman, with a slight bow.

"Your offer, sir," returned Fink, "demands our thanks. I have no doubt of its sincerity, and will assume that you have influence enough over your companions to carry it out. But, as I am not the master of this house, I must communicate your proposal to him."

"I will wait," replied the Pole, retreating to a distance of about thirty yards, and stopping opposite the door.

Fink closed it, and said to Anton, "Let us go to the baron at once. What should you think best?"

"To hold out," replied Anton.

They found the baron in his room, his head resting on his hands, his face distorted, a picture of distress and nervous agitation. Fink told him of the Pole's offer, and begged for his decision.

The baron replied, "I have perhaps suffered more hitherto than any of the brave men who have risked their lives in this house. It is a horrible feeling to be obliged to sit still when honor summons one to the foremost ranks. But, for this very reason, I have no right to dictate to you. He who is incapable of fighting has no right to decide when the fighting shall cease; nay, I have hardly a right to tell you my views, because I fear that they may influence your high-hearted minds; besides which, unfortunately, I do not know the men who defend me; I can not judge of their mood or of their strength. I confidently leave every thing to you, and place the fate of my

nearest and dearest in your hands. May Heaven reward you for what you do for me. Yet not for me—for God's sake, not for me—the sacrifice would be too great," cried he, in utmost excitement, raising his folded hands and sightless eyes to heaven; "think of nothing but the cause that we defend."

"Since you repose so generous a trust in us," said Fink, with chivalrous bearing, "we are resolved to hold your castle so long as we have the very least hope of relief. Meanwhile there are serious contingencies to be anticipated; our men may refuse to fight longer, or the enemy may force an entrance."

"My wife and daughter beg, as I do also, that you will not consider them at a time like this. Go, gentlemen," cried the baron, with outstretched arms; "the honor of an old soldier is in your hands."

Both bowed low before the blind man, and left the room. "After all, there is honor in the man," said Fink, nodding as he went along. Then he opened the door and the officer rode up.

"The Baron Rothsattel thanks you for your proposal; but he is resolved to defend his house, and the property of those who have trusted to him, to the very utmost. We can not accept your offer."

"Take, then, the consequences," cried the officer, "and the responsibility of all that must ensue."

"I will take the responsibility," said Fink; "but I have still one request to make from you. Besides the wives and children of the country people, there are two ladies in the castle, the wife and daughter of the Baron Rothsattel; if an accident should enable you to occupy this house, I recommend these defenseless ones to the protection of your honor."

"I am a Pole!" cried the officer, proudly rising in his stirrups. Then taking off his hat, he galloped back to the farm-yard.

"He looks a bold fellow," said Fink, turning to the men who had gathered round him from the guard-room; "but, my friends, when one has the choice of trusting to an enemy's promises or to this little iron barrel, I always think it best to rely upon what we have in our hand."

He shook his rifle as he spoke.

"The Pole promises safe-conduct," continued Fink, "because he knows that in a couple of hours his band will be dispersed by our soldiers. We should be a good bite for him with our thirty guns. And then, if our cavalry came, and instead of us, who sent for them, found the house full of that rabble yonder, they would send a rattling curse after us, and we should be disgraced forever."

"I wonder whether he meant fair?" inquired one of the men, doubtingly.

Fink took him confidentially by the lappet of his coat. "I do believe, my boy, that he meant fair; but I ask you how far one could calculate upon the discipline of those men? We should not get much beyond the wood yonder before another party would overtake us, and the women and our property would be maltreated before our eyes; and so I calculate we shall do the best to show them our teeth."

Warm approbation followed this speech, and a few hurrahs were raised for the young gentlemen in the castle.

"We thank you," said Fink; "and now all of you to your posts, my men, for it may chance that you will get a few cracks on your heads again. That will keep them quiet for an hour or two," said he, turning to Anton. "I don't expect an attack by day, but it is better for them to stand at their posts than to be putting their heads together. It was unlucky that they should have heard the negotiations."

But even the severe discipline which Fink maintained did not avail to ward off the depression which fell upon the little garrison as the day wore on. The Pole's proposal had been heard by many; even the women had in their curiosity opened their door and pushed into the hall. Quietly, gradually, fear began to take possession of the men's hearts, and, contagious as a disease, it spread from one to the other. It broke out, too, in the women's apartments. Suddenly some of them felt a great desire for water, complaining of thirst, first timidly, then louder, pressing against the door of the kitchen, and beginning to sob aloud. Not long after, all the children took to screaming for water, and many who, under other circumstances, would not have thought about drinking at all, now felt themselves unspeakably wretched.

Anton had the last bottle of wine brought out of the cellar, cut the last loaf and soaked it in the wine, giving a piece to each, assuring them that it was the best remedy against thirst, and that if one held it in the mouth, he would be quite unable to drink water, even if paid for it. This expedient answered for a time, but terror found other avenues by which to enter. Many began to consider whether they would have lost any thing in giving up an old gun, and gaining thereby their liberty, and the right to go where they would. This view of things was loudly combated by the forester, who placed himself in the midst of the guard-room, and resolutely replied: "I tell you, Gottlieb Fitzner, and you, you stout Bökel, that the giving away our guns would be a mere trifle to any of us; the only thing is, that any one of you to whom this vile thought could occur would be a low, mean, cowardly scoundrel, who would make me sick whenever I saw him." To which proposition Fitzner and Bökel eagerly acceded, and Bökel declared that, for his part, he could stand such a fellow just as little as the forester himself; so that danger was averted. But the

unemployed sentinels were engaged in anxious conversation. The castle forces were contrasted with those of the enemy, and finally the slight nature of the palings in the yard became the leading object of a searching criticism. It was clear that the next attack would be directed against them, and the most stout-hearted admitted that they could offer little resistance. Even the faithful smith shook them with his strong hand, and by no means admired the manner in which they were nailed together.

In the middle of the day these attacks of timidity were not actually dangerous, for the greatest portion of the men were waiting ready armed for the enemy's approach. But as the sun began to decline without any attack, and without the sentinels on the top of the tower announcing any prospect of relief, inactivity and exhaustion combined to increase the universal distress. Their dinner had been unsatisfying: potatoes burnt to a cinder, and a little salt; no wonder that they should again begin to be thirsty, and that the women should return and complain to Anton that his expedient had only availed for a very short time. Among the men, too, fear, hunger, and thirst spread fast from one story to another. Anton had served out a double ration of brandy, but that did not avail. Several of the men became, not rebellious, but weaker and more depressed. Fink looked with contemptuous smile at these symptoms of a condition of which his elastic spirit and iron nerves had no experience; but Anton, to whom all came with petitions and laments, felt the whole distress of these hours. Something must be done to help efficiently, or all was lost. Accordingly, he went into the court-yard, determined to sacrifice the cow. He walked up to her, stroked her neck: "Lizzie, my poor beast, you must go," said he. As he led her out, his eye fell upon the empty water-butt, and a happy thought flashed across him. The yard was only raised a few feet above the brook. The whole district was full of springs; it was probable that, if dug for here, water might be found, and it would be an easy thing for the garrison to dig a well. If the earth excavated were pushed up against the palings, their strength would be considerably increased, and, what was the chief thing, the work would set all idle hands going, and might last for hours, nay, days. He knew, indeed, from former attempts, that the water immediately about the castle was muddy, and in ordinary times undrinkable, but that did not signify to-day. Anton looked up at the sun; there was not a minute to be lost. He called the superintendent into the court, and the latter joyfully agreeing to the proposal—all the unoccupied hands about the castle, and the women and children too—the laborers' implements were produced, and in a few minutes ten men with spades and rakes were occupied in digging a large hole in the middle of the court, while the women and children heaped the thrown-up earth against the palings. Some men, and such of the women as were to be had, were summoned by Anton to the slaughter of the poor cow, who was once more exhibited before she fell a victim to the exigencies of the day. Soon all were in full employment. The well-mouth, which was far wider than would have been required for an ordinary shaft, deepened visibly, and a wall rose inside the palings, which seemed the work of friendly underground gnomes. The people worked as they had never in their life done before; the men's spades emulated each other; little bare legs sprang actively over the ground; wooden shoes and slippers left deep traces in the mound of earth. Each wanted to work; there were more hands than space in which to move them. All sadness and anxiety were over and gone. Jests were bandied about. Even Fink came to look on, and said to Anton, "You are a missionary, and you know how to promote the spiritual good of your people."

"They work!" replied Anton, with greater cheerfulness than he had felt for the last four-and-twenty hours.

The well had now become so deep that it became necessary to have a ladder to descend by; the ground got damper and damper, till the men worked in a perfect swamp. The mud had to be taken out in buckets; but the people were more eager than ever, and the buckets flew from hand to hand, while all laughed like little children at the mud-sprinkling their impatience got. The mud wall rose rapidly above the palings, and wood and stones were thrown in to consolidate it. Anton could hardly get the little doorway kept open. Meanwhile there was restless agitation among the enemy. Horsemen rode rapidly along the line of sentries, and watched the progress of the new fortification: from time to time, one would venture nearer than the rest, then withdraw as soon as the forester raised his gun above the wall. Thus hour after hour passed; the sun sank down, and the red light of evening suffused the sky. But those in the court-yard took no heed of it, for at the bottom of the well the men were standing up to their waists in water. It was a yellow, dirty liquid enough; but the people stared down the hole as though streams of gold were flowing there. At last, when the twilight shadows lay dark on its mouth, Anton ordered the diggers to leave the well. A coarse sheet was brought, and laid over the water-butt, and the water strained through it.

"My horses first," cried one of the servants, snatching a bucketful for the thirsting animals.

"When it has settled a little, it will be as good as river-water," exclaimed the smith, in delight.

As for the diggers, they were never tired of tasting, and each triumphantly corroborated the worthy man's assertion. Meanwhile, Anton had fresh palings driven into the mud rampart, and the strong planks of the potato-carts securely fastened to them. At nightfall all was finished. The women kept straining water into the butt. Great joints of meat were taken to the kitchen, where a brisk fire was crackling away, and the cheerful hopes of an excellent supper rose in the hearts of the besieged.

Then the drums of the enemy were again heard, and the shrill call of Fink's whistle vibrated through the castle. For a moment the men in the court-yard stood still; they had, during the last few hours, thought little about the foe; then all rushed into the guard-room and caught up their arms. The lower story was doubly occupied. The forester hurried off with a strong detachment to

the court-yard, and clambered up the new wall.

"The crisis approaches," whispered Fink to Anton; "in the course of the last few hours strong parties have come into the village, and just now a troop of horsemen has joined them. We shall not be able to hold out for a second night. They will attack on both sides at once, and with the help of short ladders they will soon make their way into the castle. And that they know, for you may see that every band that leaves the village is armed with axes and ladders. Let us meet our inevitable doom with spirit; the praise is yours if we are beaten like men and not like cowards. I have been with the baron; he and the ladies are prepared; they will all remain together in his room. If you have a few words to spare when one of the Messieurs of the party walks in over you, remind him of the ladies. God willing, Anton, I'll take the court-yard side—you the front."

"It seems to me impossible," cried Anton, "that we should be beaten. I have never had so good a hope as in this very hour."

"Hope of relief!" said Fink, shrugging his shoulders, and pointing through the window at the enemy. "If it comes in an hour's time it comes too late. Since Rebecca's cannon exploded, we are in the hands of the foe as soon as they choose to storm in earnest. And they will choose. One must not indulge in illusions that glow no longer than a cigar. Give me your hand, my dear fellow, and farewell."

He pressed Anton's hand, and a proud smile beamed again over his face. So stood the friends, each looking affectionately at the face of the other, uncertain whether he should ever behold it again. "Farewell!" cried Fink, taking up his rifle as their hands parted; but all at once he seemed rooted to the ground, and intently listened, for above the drums of the foe and the tramp of their approach a clear sound rang through the night air, a merry pealing *fanfare*, and in reply to it there came from the village the regular beat of a drum of the line, then a loud discharge of artillery, and a distant hurrah.

"They come!" was the cry on all sides; "our soldiers come!"

The forester rushed into the hall. "The red-caps!" he screamed out. "They are riding up along the brook to the bridge, and the infantry are storming the village from behind."

"Now our side!" cried Fink; "prepare for a sally!"

The bolts were shot back; the whole garrison was out in a moment; and Anton could hardly get the superintendent and a few of the servants to return and take care of the house. The forester rapidly marshaled the men into order while Fink looked at the position of the combatants. The columns of infantry advanced through the village. The ceaseless discharges showed how inveterate the fight was; but the soldiery slowly approached, the enemy yielded, a few fugitives had already run out of the farm-yard. Meanwhile a detachment of hussars crossed the brook opposite the castle, driving small parties of the besiegers before them. Fink led his men round the house, and stationed them at the corner that lay nearest to the village. "Patience!" cried he; "and when I lead you on, don't forget your password, or you will be ridden and trodden down in the dark like the others."

It was with the greatest difficulty that the men were kept in rank, such was their impatience.

A single horseman now came riding toward them. "Hurrah! Rothsattel!" cried he, while still at a distance.

"Sturm!" called out a dozen voices; and Anton sprang forward to greet his ally.

"We have them," said Karl. "They had occupied the Rosmin high road, but I led our men by by-paths through the woods."

A dark mass was visible at the end of the village, with riders in advance. The enemy halted and assembled in the farm-yard.

"Now for it!" cried Fink.

The garrison marched at a quick pace over the meadow, placed themselves sideways near the first barn, and a salvo from five-and-twenty guns burst upon the flank of the enemy, who fell into confusion and fled across the plain. Again the trumpet sounded, behind them the hussars came galloping up, and cut down those that still kept their ground. Karl joined them, and vanished in the fray. The enemy were thus driven into the fields.

The Polish cavalry now sprang forward from the village, at their head the spokesman of the morning, who with loud shouts urged his men against the hussars.

"Rothsattel!" cried a youthful voice close to Anton, and, heading a detachment of hussars, a tall, slight officer rushed against the Poles. Fink raised his rifle and aimed at the Polish colonel.

"Thanks!" cried he, reeling on his horse, firing his pistol with his last breath at the breast of the hussar who was riding him down. The hussar fell from his horse, and the Pole's charger galloped away with his master's lifeless body.

In a few minutes more the vicinity of the castle was cleared of all foes. Night concealed the fugitives, and the trees of the forest spread their sheltering branches over the sons of the soil. In small detachments, the conquerors followed the last remnant of the enemy's troops.

Before the castle, Anton knelt on the ground and supported the head of the prostrate horseman on his arm. With tears in his eyes, he looked from the dying man up to his friend, who stood on one side with a group of sympathizing officers. Their triumph was rendered a mute one, the peasants surrounding the spot in solemn silence. The motionless form was slowly carried on their crossed hands to the castle.

The baron stood on the hall steps with his daughter, ready to greet the welcome guests. As soon as Lenore saw the wounded officer, she rushed down among the bearers, by whom the body was silently laid at the baron's feet, and sank to the ground with a scream.

"Who is it?" groaned the blind man, groping in the air. No one answered him; all drew back in terror.

"Father!" murmured the wounded youth, and a stream of blood gushed from his mouth.

"My son! my son!" cried the baron, in agony, and his knees sank under him.

The youth had left his garrison to join the troops which were to be stationed near his parents. He had succeeded in exchanging into another regiment, and in accompanying the squadron sent to his father's assistance. He wished to give his father a happy surprise, and, with the raising of the siege, he brought them his bleeding breast into their house, and death into their hearts.

A mournful silence lay upon the high Slavonic castle. The storm had raged itself to rest; the white blossoms floated silently down from the great fruit-trees in the fields, and lay pure and spotless on the ground like a white shroud. Where are ye, airy schemes of the blind man, which he has so striven, suffered, and sinned to realize? Listen, poor father; hold your breath and listen. All is still in the castle, still in the forest, and yet you can not hear the one sound of which you ever thought amid your parchments and your plans—the heart-throb of your only son, the first heir of the house of Rothsattel!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Days of sorrow now passed over the castle, hard to endure by every one who dwelt within its walls. Disease lurked in the family like canker in a flower. Since the dark hour when the dying son had been carried into his father's presence, the baron had never left his room. His small measure of remaining strength had been broken; grief consumed mind and body. He would sit silently brooding throughout the livelong day, and neither the entreaties of Lenore nor the companionship of his wife availed to rouse him. When the fatal tidings were first communicated to the baroness, Anton had feared that the fragile thread that bound her to the earth would burst, and for weeks Lenore never left her side; but, to the astonishment of all, she rallied, her husband's state so claiming her care that her own sorrows and weakness seemed to pass away. She appeared stronger than before, and solely occupied with tending her husband: she was able to sit up for hours beside his chair. It is true that the doctor used to shake his head privately, and to tell Anton that this sudden improvement was not be trusted. As for Lenore, for the first few weeks after her brother's death she was invisible to all; and now, whenever she emerged from the sick-room, it was to answer inquiries for the invalids, or to send, through Anton, messages to the doctor.

Meanwhile, beyond the walls, a stormy spring had passed, succeeded by an unsettled summer. True, the property had no longer to dread the horrors of civil war, but the burdens that the times imposed fell heavy on the establishment. Daily the blast of trumpet and beat of drum was heard—castle and village alike had their complement of soldiers to support, and these were frequently exchanged. Anton had enough to do to provide for man and horse. The slender resources of the estate were soon exhausted, and, but for Fink's laborers, they never could have got on. Then there were all manner of interruptions to the work of the farm. More than one acre had been trodden down at the time of the siege. The men had become bewildered by passing events, and had lost their relish for regular employment. But, on the whole, order was maintained, and the plans laid down early in the spring were being carried out. The irrigation of the meadow-land prospered still better; the number of gray jackets went on increasing; and this body-guard of Herr von Fink were acknowledged throughout the district as a stout set, with whom it was well to be on good terms. Fink himself was often away. Having made and renewed the acquaintance of several officers, he threw himself heart and soul into military matters, and shared as a volunteer in the encounter in which the insurgents had been defeated. His defense of the castle had made him a marked man: he was equally hated and admired by the two conflicting parties.

Weeks had passed away since the relief of the castle, when Lenore appeared at the house door, before which Anton and the forester were holding a consultation. She looked across the court-yard, where a pump now stood, and over the palings, from which the earth had been cleared away, to the landscape, now bright with the fresh green of early summer. At last she said with a sigh, "Summer is come, Wohlfart, and we have not noticed it!"

Anton looked anxiously at her pale face. "It is delightful now in the woods," said he. "I was at the forester's yesterday, and since the rain the trees and flowers are in full beauty. If you would but agree to go out!"

Lenore shook her head. "What do *I* signify?" said she, bitterly.

"At least hear the news which the forester has just brought," continued Anton. "The man you shot was the wretched Bratzky. You did not kill him. If you have reproached yourself on that score, I can set your mind at rest."

"God be praised!" cried Lenore, folding her hands.

"That night when the forester came to us, he thought he had seen the rascal sitting in the bar with his arm tied up. Yesterday he was taken prisoner to Rosmin."

"Ay!" said the forester; "a bullet does a fellow like him no harm; he aims higher than that;" and he laid his own hand on his throat with a significant gesture.

"This has weighed on me day and night," whispered Lenore to Anton; "I have looked on myself as one under a curse. I have had the most fearful dreams and visions of the man as he fell, hands clenched, and the blood gushing from his shoulder. Oh, Wohlfart, what have we gone through!" And she leaned against the door, and fixed her tearless eyes on the ground.

A horse's hoof rung on the pavement. Fink's bay was led out.

"Where is he going?" hurriedly asked Lenore.

"I do not know," replied Anton; "he has been a great deal out of late; I see nothing of him the whole day long."

"What is he doing here with us?" said Lenore; "this unhappy house is no place for him."

"If he would only be careful," said the forester. "The Tarow people are mad at him; they have sworn to send a bullet after him, and he always rides alone, and late at night."

"It is in vain to warn him," added Anton. "Do be rational for once, Fritz," cried he, as his friend came out; "do not go riding alone, or, at least, not through the Tarow estate."

Fink shrugged his shoulders. "Ah! so our Fräulein is here! It is so long since we have had the pleasure of seeing you, that our time has hung rather heavy on our hands."

"Listen to the advice of your friends," replied Lenore, anxiously, "and beware of dangerous men."

"Why?" returned Fink; "there is no straightforward danger to apprehend; and in times like these, there is no guarding against every stupid devil who may lurk behind a tree; that would be taking too much trouble."

"If not for your own sake, think of the anxiety of your friends," implored Lenore.

"Have I still friends?" asked Fink, laughing; "I often fancy they have become faithless. My friends belong to the class who perfectly understand the duty of composure. Our worthy Wohlfart, perchance, will put an extra handkerchief in his pocket, and wear his most solemn mien if the game goes against me; and another companion in arms will console herself still more readily. Out with my horse!" cried he, swinging himself on the saddle, and with a slight bow galloping away.

"There he goes, straight to Tarow," said the forester, striking his head as he watched Fink disappear.

Lenore returned in silence to her parents' room.

But late at night, long after the castle lights were all put out, a curtain was drawn back, and a woman listened anxiously for the sound of horses' hoofs. Hour after hour passed away, and it was morning before the window closed as a rider halted at the door, and, whistling a tune, himself took his horse to the stable. After a night of watching, Lenore hid her aching head in her pillows.

Thus months passed away. At length the baron, leaning upon his daughter's arm and on a staff, ventured out into the open air, to sit silently in the shadow cast by the castle walls, or to listen for every trifle which might afford possible scope for fault-finding. At these times his dependents in general would go a good deal out of their way to avoid him, and as Anton never did this, he was not unfrequently their scapegoat. Every day the baron had to hear, in return for his cross-questioning, "Mr. Wohlfart ordered this," or "Mr. Wohlfart forbade that." He eagerly found out what orders were given by Anton, that he might countermand, and all the bitterness and disappointment accumulated in the spirit of the unfortunate nobleman were concentrated in an impotent hatred to his agent.

Fink, for his part, took little heed of the baron, merely contracting his brows when he observed his quarrelsomeness toward Anton, and never saying more than "he can not help it."

Karl was the one who got on best with the baron, never calling him any thing but captain, and making an audible military salute whenever he had any thing to say, and this pleased the blind man. Indeed, the first token of sympathy for others which the baron evinced was elicited by the bailiff. A garden chair had been warped by the sun, and seemed on the point of coming to pieces. Karl, as he passed by, took it up, and with his clenched fist hammered it together. "You are not striking with your right hand, I hope, my good Sturm?" inquired the baron.

"Just as it happens, captain," replied Karl.

"You should not do so," remonstrated the invalid. "An injury like yours should make you careful; very often the pain returns after long years; you can not be sure that this may not be your case in

after-life."

"A short life and a merry one, captain," replied Karl; "I do not look forward."

"That is a very useful fellow," said the baron to his daughter.

The corn ripened, the green fields turned to gold, the cheerful sounds of harvest began. When the first loaded wagon rolled into the farm-yard, Anton stood by the barn and watched the sheaves put in. He was joined by Lenore, who inquired, "What of the harvest?"

"As far as we could contrive to sow this year, the returns have not been bad. At least, Karl seems pleased with the crop, which exceeds our calculations," cheerfully returned Anton.

"Then you have one pleasure, Wohlfart," said Lenore.

"It is a pleasure for all on the farm; look at the steady activity of the men. Even the idle work well to day. But what pleases me most is your question; you have been so estranged from the farm, and all that concerns the property."

"Not from you, my friend," said Lenore, looking down.

"You must be ill!" eagerly continued Anton. "If I dared, I could scold you for having thought so little about your own health all this time; your pony is become quite stiff. Karl has often been obliged to use it, that it might not lose the use of its limbs."

"It may go like the rest," cried Lenore; "I shall never mount it again. Have pity upon me, Wohlfart! I often feel as if I should lose my senses; every thing in the world has become indifferent to me."

"Why so savage, Fräulein?" said a mocking voice behind her. Lenore started and turned round. Fink, who had been absent more than a week, had joined them. "See that you send off Blasius," said he to Anton, without taking any further notice of Lenore. "The rascal has been drunk again; he flogs the horses till the poor beasts are covered with wales. I have a great mind to give them the satisfaction of seeing him punished before their eyes."

"Have patience till after the harvest," replied Anton; "we can not spare him now."

"Is he not a good-natured man in other respects?" timidly suggested Lenore.

"Good-nature is a convenient name for every thing that is morbid," replied Fink. "We call it good-nature in men and sensibility in women." He looked at Lenore. "How has the poor pony sinned, that you will never ride him more?"

Lenore blushed as she replied, "I find that riding gives me headache."

"Indeed!" said Fink, tauntingly; "you once had the advantage of being less delicate. I do not think this lachrymose mood is suitable for you; you will not lose your headache thus."

Lenore, quite subdued, turned to Anton: "Have the newspapers arrived? I came to ask for them for my father."

"The footman has taken them to the baroness's room."

Lenore turned away with a slight inclination, and went back to the castle.

Fink looked after her and said to Anton, "Black does not become her; she is much faded. Hers is one of those faces which only please when they are full and blooming."

Anton cast a dark glance at his friend. "Your behavior toward her has been so strange for the last few weeks, that I have often felt indignant at it. I do not know what your purpose may be, but you treat her with a *nonchalance* which does not offend her alone."

"But you too, Master Wohlfart, eh?" asked Fink, looking Anton full in the face. "I was not aware that you were this lady's duenna too."

"This tone will not avail you," replied Anton, more quietly. "I do right to remind you that you are behaving worse than ungently toward a noble creature who has now a double claim upon the tender consideration of us all."

"Be good enough to pay her that consideration yourself, and don't trouble yourself about me and my manner," returned Fink, dryly.

"Fritz," cried Anton, "I do not understand you. It is true, you are inconsiderate."

"Have you found me so?" interpolated Fink.

"No," replied Anton. "Whatever you have been to others, to me you have always shown yourself generous and sympathizing; but for this very reason it pains me inexpressibly that you should have thus changed toward Lenore."

"Leave that to me," returned Fink; "every one has his own way of taming birds. Let me just add, that if your Fräulein Lenore be not soon shaken out of this sickly way of life, she will be utterly ruined. The pony alone will not do it, I know; but you, my son, and your melancholy sympathy, won't do it either; and so we will just let things take their course. I am going to Rosmin to-day; have you any commands?"

This conversation, although it led to no estrangement between the friends, was never forgotten by Anton, who silently resented Fink's dictatorial tone, and anxiously watched his bearing toward Lenore, whom Fink never sought nor avoided, but simply treated as a stranger.

Anton himself had some unpleasant experiences to go through. Much as he avoided communicating what was unwelcome to the baron, there was one thing he could no longer spare him, and that was the settlement of his son's debts. Soon after Eugene's death, numberless letters, with bills inclosed, had arrived at the castle, been given by Lenore to Anton, and then by him all made over, Sturm's note of hand included, to Councilor Horn, whose opinion and advice he craved to have respecting them. This opinion had now arrived. The lawyer did not disguise that the note of hand given by young Rothsattel to the porter was so informal that it amounted to nothing more than a mere receipt, and did not in any way bind the baron to pay the debt. Indeed, the sum was so great that immediate payment was out of the question. Then Anton himself had lent the young prodigal more than eight hundred dollars. As he drew out Eugene's note of hand from among his papers, he looked long at the handwriting of the dead. That was the sum by which his imprudence had purchased a share in the fate of this noble family. And what had this purchase brought him? He had then thought it a fine thing to help his aristocratic friend out of his embarrassments; now, he saw that he had only abetted his downward course. He gloomily locked up his own note of hand in his desk again, and with a heavy heart prepared for a conversation with the baron.

At the first mention of his son, the baron fell into a state of painful excitement; and when Anton, in the flow of his narrative, chanced to call the departed by his Christian name, the father's pent-up anger found a vent. He interrupted Anton by sharply saying, "I forbid you to use that familiar appellation in speaking of my son. Living or dead, he is still Herr von Rothsattel as far as you are concerned." Anton replied with great self-command, "Herr Eugene von Rothsattel had contracted debts to the amount of about four thousand dollars."

"That is impossible!" broke in the baron.

"The accredited copies of notes of hand and bills of exchange which Councilor Horn has procured, place the matter beyond doubt. With regard to the largest debt, one of nineteen hundred dollars, the certainty is the more complete, as the lender, the father of the bailiff Sturm, happens to be a man of peculiar uprightness. A letter to me from the departed expressly acknowledges this obligation."

"Then you knew of this debt," cried the baron, with increasing anger, "and you have kept it back from me! Is this your much-vaunted fidelity?"

It was in vain that Anton sought to explain the circumstances of the case. The baron had lost all self-control. "I have long ago found out," said he, "how self-willed your whole line of conduct is. You take advantage of my situation to get the disposition of all my means; you make debts, you allow debts to be made, you draw money, you charge it to my account, just as you see fit."

"Say no more, baron," cried Anton. "It is only compassion for your helplessness which at this moment prevents me from answering you as you deserve. How great that compassion is, you may infer from the fact that I will endeavor to forget your words, and still ask you for your decision: will you or will you not acknowledge your late son's debts, and give legal security to the porter Sturm, or to his son, your bailiff?"

"I will do nothing," cried the baron, beside himself, "that you require of me in so peremptory and pretentious a tone."

"Then it is useless to speak to you any longer. I implore you, baron, to reconsider the affair before you pronounce your final decision. I shall have the honor of receiving your ultimatum this evening, and I hope that ere then your sense of honor will have triumphed over a mood to which I should not wish a second time to expose myself."

With these words he left, and heard the poor baron upsetting chairs and tables in his wrath. Scarcely had he reached his room when the confidential servant appeared, and asked for the deeds and account-books, which had hitherto been kept in Anton's room. Silently the latter made them over to the affrighted domestic.

He was dismissed, then—rudely and summarily dismissed; his uprightness questioned: this breach was final. It was a bitter hour. Even now, while indignantly pacing up and down, he felt that this insult offered him was a punishment. True, his aim had been pure, and his actions blameless; but the enthusiastic feelings which had led him hither had not availed to establish proper relations between him and the baron—those of employer and employed. It was not the freewill, the rational choice of both, that had brought them together, but the pressure of mysterious circumstances and his own youthful romance. And thus he had claims beyond what his situation gave him, and by these the baron was oppressed and cumbered.

These reflections were interrupted by Lenore's sudden entrance. "My mother wishes to speak to you," she cried. "What will you do, Wohlfart?"

"I must go," said Anton, gravely. "To leave you thus, with your future so uncertain, is what I never could have believed possible. There was but one thing which could have induced me to part from you before I had made over the property into stronger hands. And this one thing is come to pass."

"Go!" cried Lenore, in utmost excitement. "All is crumbling around us; there is no help to be looked for; even you can not save us; go, and free your life from that of our sinking family."

When Anton joined the baroness, he found her lying on the sofa. "Sit down beside me, Mr. Wohlfart," whispered she. "The hour is come in which I must impart what, to spare myself, I have reserved for the hour when we speak most openly to each other—the last hour spent together. The baron's illness has so affected him that he no longer appreciates your faithful help—nay, your presence aggravates his unhappy state. He has so hurt your feelings that reconciliation is become impossible. Even could you forget, we should consider the sacrifice you would be making far too great."

"I purpose leaving the property on an early day," replied Anton.

"I can not," continued the baroness, "atone for my husband's offenses toward you, but I wish to give you an opportunity of revenging yourself in a manner worthy of you. The baron has attacked your honor; the revenge that I, his wife, offer you, is to assist him to retrieve his own."

Hitherto the baroness had spoken fluently, as was her wont in society; now she stopped, and seemed to lack words.

"Years ago," she said, "he pledged his word of honor, and—and broke it in a moment of desperation. The proof of this is probably in the hands of some low man, who will use this knowledge to ruin him. That I should communicate this to you at a time like this will show you the light in which I regard your connection with our house. If it be possible to restore his peace of mind, you, I know, will do it." She drew a letter from under the pillow, and placed it in Anton's hand.

Anton took it to the window, and saw with surprise that it was in Ehrenthal's handwriting. He had to read it twice before he could master its contents. In a lucid interval the imbecile had happened to recall his former dealings with the nobleman, and wrote to remind him of the stolen notes of hand, to demand his money, and to threaten the baron. The letter was full, besides, of laments over his own weakness, and the wickedness of others; and what its confusion left unexplained was cleared up by the copy of a note of hand—probably from the draught of one agreed upon by the baron and Ehrenthal, for the letter mentioned the existence of the original, and threatened to use it against the baron.

Folding up the letter, Anton said, "The threats which Ehrenthal connects with the copy inclosed need not disturb you, baroness, for the note of hand seems to have no signature, and the sum which it represents is a small one."

"And do you believe that it is a true statement?" asked the baroness.

"I do," was the reply. "This letter explains to me much that hitherto I never could understand."

"I know that it is true," whispered the baroness, in so low a voice that Anton scarcely heard it, while a faint blush overspread her face. "And you, Mr. Wohlfart, will you endeavor to get back the stolen papers for us?"

"I will," replied Anton, earnestly. "But my hopes are small. The baron has no existing claim upon these missing documents. They belong to Ehrenthal, and an understanding with him is necessary in the first instance. It will be difficult to bring about. And again, I very imperfectly understand the circumstances, and must request you to try and inform me of all you can connected with the robbery."

"I will endeavor to write to you," said the baroness. "You can draw up a list of the questions you wish answered, and I will do so as well as I can. Whatever may be the result of your efforts, I now thank you with all my soul. Our house will never pay the debt it owes you. If the blessing of a dying woman can shed a brightness over your future, take it with you on your way."

Anton rose.

"We shall not meet again," said the invalid; "this is our final leave-taking. Farewell, Wohlfart! this is the last time I shall see you on earth." She held out her hand. He bent over it, and, deeply moved, quitted the room.

Yes, she deserved to be called a noble lady. Her nature was noble, her insight into the character of others clear, and her mode of recompensing Anton's zeal dignified—very dignified. In her eyes, at least, he had always worn a powdered wig and silver knee-buckles.

In the evening Fink's step was heard in the corridor, and, entering Anton's room, he cried, "Halloo, Anton, what's up now? John slinks about as if he had broken the great china vase; and when old Barbette saw me, she began to wring her hands."

"I must leave this house, my friend," returned Anton, gloomily. "I have had a painful scene with the baron to-day." He then proceeded to relate it, and concluded by saying, "The position of this family was never so desperate as now. They need the command of twenty thousand dollars to avert new misfortunes."

Fink threw himself into a chair. "First of all," said he, "I hope you availed yourself as little as possible of this fine opportunity of being angry. We won't waste words over the scene; the baron is not accountable; and between ourselves, I am not surprised. I have seen all summer that you

could not retain your romantic connection with this family. On the other hand, it is plain that you are indispensable as father-confessor to the ladies, and confidential man of business to all the people around. And I need not tell you that your sudden departure cuts up many a plan of mine. But now for the question, What will you do?"

"I shall return as soon as possible to our own capital," replied Anton. "There I shall be engaged for some time in the interest of the Rothsattels. My official relations to them cease from this very day, and as soon as the baron's family estate is sold, I shall consider my moral obligations to them canceled."

"Good!" said Fink; "that's all right. If you ever set pen to paper again on their behalf, it can only be from a sense of compassion. Another point is that Rothsattel has brought a curse upon himself by his folly, for without you things can't go on as they do for another month. Now, then, Master Anton, comes the question, What will be done here?"

"I have thought of that the whole day," returned Anton, "and I do not know. There is only one possible plan, and that is, that you should undertake that part of my office which Karl can not fill."

"Thank you," said Fink, "both for your good opinion and your friendly offer. You have been, excuse me, a good-natured fool. I am not of that stamp. In a week's time I should be under the unpleasant necessity of maltreating the baron. Have you no other plan to propose?"

"None," cried Anton. "If you do not with all your heart and soul undertake the management of the property, all that we have effected during the last year will be undone, and our German colony will go to ruin."

"It will," said Fink.

"And you, Fritz," continued Anton, "have, through your intimacy with me, become involved in its fate, and are thus in danger of losing too."

"Spoken like a book!" said Fink. "You run off and leave me here tied and bound. I'll tell you what —wait for me here; I will first of all speak a few words to Lenore."

"What are you going to do?" cried Anton, holding him fast.

"Not to make love," replied Fink, laughing. "You may rely upon that, my boy!" He rang the bell, and requested an interview with Fräulein Lenore in the drawing-room.

When Lenore entered with eyes red from weeping, and only maintaining her composure by a strong effort, he politely advanced and led her to the sofa.

"I abstain from commenting upon what has passed to-day," began he. "We will assume that my friend's presence in the capital will be more desirable for your family interests than his stay here. From all I hear, this is really the case. Wohlfart leaves the day after to-morrow."

Lenore hid her face in her hands.

Fink coldly continued: "Meanwhile, my own interests require that I should attend to them. I have spent several months here, and acquired a share in this estate. For this reason, I request you to be the bearer of a message from me to your father: I am prepared to purchase this estate from the baron."

Lenore started and rose up, wringing her hands, and exclaiming, "For the second time!"

"Be kind enough quietly to hear me," continued Fink. "I by no means intend to play toward the baron the part of angel of deliverance. I have less of the angelic nature about me than our patient Anton, and feel in no way inclined to make any offer to your father that will not advance my own interest. Let us look upon each other as opponents, and my proposal, as it really is, prompted by self-love. My offer, then, is as follows: The price of this estate, if reckoned at a sum that would secure the baron from loss, would amount to more than a hundred and sixty thousand dollars. I offer him the outside of what I consider its present worth—that is, I will accept all its liabilities, and pay the baron twenty thousand dollars in the course of twenty-four hours. Till next Easter, I should wish to leave the castle in your hands, and to remain here as your guest, if this could be arranged without inconvenience. In point of fact, I should generally be absent, and in no way burdensome to you."

Lenore looked wistfully in his face, which was at this moment hard as that of a genuine Yankee; the remnant of her composure gave way, and she burst into tears.

Fink quietly leaned back in his chair, and, without heeding her, continued: "You see I offer you a loss, probably that of half of your inheritance. The baron has been so precipitate in investing his capital in this property that his family must needs suffer, for the market-price of it, in its present state, would assuredly not exceed my offer. I should be acting dishonorably if I disguised from you that, properly cultivated, it would probably be worth twice as much in a few years' time, but not, I am firmly convinced, under the baron's management. Had Anton remained, it might have been possible, but that hope is over. I will not conceal from you either that Wohlfart has even proposed to me to occupy his situation."

Lenore, in the midst of her sobs, here made a deprecating gesture.

"I am glad," continued Fink, "that we are of the same mind on that subject. I considered the proposal quite out of place, and rejected it at once." He then stopped, and looked searchingly at the girl before him, whose heart was torn by his words. He spoke harshly to her, he for whose smile, whose kindly glance she would have done any thing. He mentioned her father with ill-concealed contempt; his language was that of a hard egotist; and yet his offer seemed a blessing in her helpless condition, and with the second-sight of a loving heart she divined a meaning in it that she did not fully understand, but which shone into her abyss of sorrow like a distant ray of hope. However he might phrase it, this offer proceeded from no ordinary motives; and her convulsive sobs giving way to quiet tears, she tried to rise from the sofa, but sank to the floor near his chair, the very picture of sorrowful submission. "You do not deceive me," murmured she; "do with us what you will."

A proud smile passed over Fink's face as he bent over her, wound his arm round her head, pressed a kiss on her hair, and said, "My comrade, I will that you should be free." Lenore's head fell on his breast; she wept, softly supported by his arm; at last taking her hand, he pressed it tenderly. "Henceforth let us understand each other. You shall be free, Lenore, both as regards me and all others. You are losing one who has shown you the self-sacrificing tenderness of a brother, and I am glad that he is leaving you. I do not yet ask you whether you will share my fate as my wife, for you are not now free to answer as your heart dictates. Your pride shall not say me nay, and your 'yes' shall not lessen your self-respect. When the curse that lies on your house is done away with, and you are free to remain with or leave me, your decision shall be made. Till then, an honorable friendship, comrade mine!"

And now Fink went on in another voice: "Let us think of nothing but our property; dry up those tears, which I am not fond of seeing in your blue eyes, and impart the business half of my proposal to your father and mother. If not before, I request an answer by this time to-morrow."

Lenore went to the door, then returned, and silently offered him her hand.

Slowly Fink returned to his friend's room. "Do you remember, Anton," asked he, "what you told me of your patriotism the day of my arrival here?"

"We have often spoken on the subject since then."

"It made an impression on me," continued Fink. "This property shall not fall again under a Bratzky's sceptre. I shall buy it if the baron consents."

Anton started. "And Lenore?"

"She will share her parents' fate; we have just settled that." He then told his friend the offer he had made.

"Now I hope that all will end well," cried Anton. "We shall see."

"What a purgatory for the sinner up stairs! I am glad I don't hear his groans!" said Fink.

The following morning the servant brought each of the friends a letter from the baron's room; the one of apology and thanks to Anton, the other of acceptance to Fink. These they read, and then silently exchanged.

"So the matter is settled," cried Fink, at length. "I have run half over the world, and every where found something to object to; and now I bury myself in this sand-hole, where I must kindle a nightly fire to scare the Polish wolf. As for you, Anton, raise your head and look before you, for if I have found a home, you are going to where the best part of your heart is; and so, my boy, let's go over your instructions once more. Your first commission is to find certain stolen papers. Think, too, of the second. Do what you can to secure to the family the little they have saved in this quarter, and see that their old estate, when sold by auction, is bid up to a price that will cover all mortgages. You must go, I see, and I do not ask you to remain at present, but you know that, under all circumstances, my home is yours. And now, one thing more. I should be sorry to lose the bailiff; employ your eloquence to induce your trusty Sancho to remain here, at least over the winter."

"No one knows as yet that I am leaving," replied Anton; "he must be the first to hear it. I am going to him."

The dirty dwelling which Mr. Bratzky once occupied had changed, under Karl's management, to a comfortable abode, which had only one drawback, that of being too full of useful things, and smelling strongly of glue. Often and often Anton had sat in it to rest and refresh himself by Karl's cheery ways, and as he glanced at each familiar object, his heart sank at the prospect of leaving his faithful, unexacting ally. Leaning against the joiner's table in the window, he said, "Put your accounts by, Karl, and let us have a serious word or two."

"Now for it," cried Karl; "something has been brewing for a long while, and I see by your face that the crisis is come."

"I am going away, my friend."

Karl let his pen fall, and silently stared at the grave face opposite him.

"Fink undertakes the management of the property, which he has just bought."

"Hurrah!" cried Karl; "if Herr von Fink be the man, why, all's right! I give you joy, with all my

heart," said he, shaking Anton's hand, "that things have turned out thus. In the spring I had other foolish notions. But it's all regular and right now, and our farming is safe too."

"I hope so," said Anton, smiling.

"But you?" continued Karl, his face growing suddenly grave.

"I go back to our capital, where I have some business to do for the baron, and then I shall look out for a stool in an office."

"And here we have worked together for a year," said Karl, sadly; "you have had all the pains, and another will have the profits."

"I go back to my proper place. But it is of your future, not mine, dear Karl, that I am now come to speak."

"Of course, I go back with you," cried Karl.

"I come to implore you not to do so. Could we set up together, we would never part; but I am not in a position for this. I must seek another situation. Part of the little I possessed is gone; I leave no richer than I came; so we should have to separate when we got home."

Karl looked down and meditated. "Mr. Anton," said he, "I hardly dare to speak of what I do not understand. You have often told me that my old governor is an owl who sits on money-bags. How would it do," stammered he, in embarrassment, working away at the chair with one of his tools, "that if what is in the iron chest be not too little for you, you should take it; and if any thing can be made of it—it is very presumptuous of me—perhaps I might be useful to you as a partner. It is only an idea, and you must not be offended."

Anton, much moved, replied: "Look you, Karl, your offer is just like your generous self, but I should do wrong to accept it. The money is your father's; and even if he gave his consent, as I believe he would, such a plan would involve great risk. At all events, his substance would be better invested in your own calling than in one you might enter into out of love for me; so it is better for you, my friend, that we part."

Karl snatched his pocket-handkerchief, and blew his nose violently before he asked, "And you won't make use of the money? You would be sure to give us good interest?"

"Impossible," replied Anton.

"Then I'll go back to my father, and hide my head in some hayloft about home," cried Karl, in high dudgeon.

"That you must not do," said Anton. "You have become better acquainted with the property than any other; it were a sin to throw that knowledge away. Fink wants a man like you; the farm can not possibly spare you till next summer. When we came here, it was not to benefit ourselves, but to improve the land. My work is over; you are in the midst of yours, and you will sin against yourself and your task if you forsake it now."

Karl hung his head.

"One thing that used to distress me was the meagre salary that the estate could afford you; that will be changed now."

"Don't let us speak of that," said Karl, proudly.

"We ought to speak of it," returned Anton, "for a man does wrong when he devotes the best gifts he has to an occupation that does not adequately repay him. 'Tis an unnatural life; and good results can scarcely be expected, take my word for that. I therefore beg you to remain, at least till next summer, when, owing to the extended scale of farming operations, an experienced inspector may occupy your post."

"Then," said Karl, "may I go?"

"Fink would always like to keep you; but should you leave him, remember, Karl, our frequent conversations during the past year. You have become accustomed to a life among strangers, and have all a colonist's claims to a new soil. If higher duties do not urge you home, your place is to remain here as one of us. If you leave this estate, buy land from the Poles. You, with the plowshare in your hand, will be still a German soldier, for the boundary of our tongue and our customs is gaining upon our enemies." So saying, he pointed to the east.

Karl reached out his hand, and said, "I remain."

When Anton left the bailiff he found Lenore at the door. "I am waiting for you," cried she; "come with me, Wohlfart; while you remain here, you belong to me."

"If your words were less friendly," replied Anton, "I might fancy that you were secretly glad to get rid of me, for I have not seen you so cheerful for a long time. Head erect, rosy cheeks; even the black dress has vanished."

"This is the dress I wore when we drove together in the sledge, and you admired it then. I am vain," cried she, with a mournful smile. "I wish that the impression you carry away with you of me should be a pleasant one. Anton, friend of my youth, what a mystery it is that, on the very first

day free from care that I have known for years, we must part. The estate is sold, and I breathe again. What a life it has been of late years! always anxious, oppressed, humbled by friend and foe; always in debt, either for money or services: it was fearful. Not as far as you were concerned, Wohlfart. You are my childhood's friend; and if you were in trouble of any kind, it would be happiness to me if you would call me, and say, 'Now I want you; now come to me, wild Lenore.' I will be wild no longer. I will think of all you have said to me." Thus she ran on in her excitement, her eyes beaming. She hung on his arm, which she had never done before, and drew him in and out of every building in the farm-yard. "Come, Wohlfart, let us take a last walk through the farm which was once ours. We bought this cow with the white star together," cried she; "you asked for my opinion of her, and that pleased me much."

Anton nodded. "We neither of us were very sure about it, and Karl had to decide."

"What do you mean? You paid for her, and I gave her her first hay, consequently she belongs to us both. Just look at this lovely black calf. Mr. Sturm threatens to paint its ears red, that it may look a perfect little demon." She knelt down beside it, stroked and hugged it, then suddenly starting up, she cried, "I don't know why I should make so much of it; it is mine no longer; it belongs to somebody else." Yet there was mirth in her tone of pretended regret. "Come to the pony now," she said; "my poor little fellow! He has grown old since the day when I rode after you through our garden."

Anton caressed the favorite, who turned his head now to him, now to Lenore.

"Do you know how it happened that I met you on the pony?" said Lenore to Anton over its back. "It was no accident. I had seen you sitting under the shrubs. I can tell you so to-day; and I had thought, 'Heavens! what a handsome youth! I will have a good look at him.' And that's how it happened as it did."

"Yes," said Anton; "then came the strawberries, then the lake. I stood there and swallowed the strawberries, and was rather inclined to tears; but through it all my heart was full of delight in you, who rose before me so fair and majestic. I see you still in fluttering muslin garments, with short sleeves, a golden bracelet on your white arm."

"Where is the bracelet gone?" asked Lenore, gravely, leaning her head on the pony's mane. "You sold it, you naughty Wohlfart!" The tears stood in her eyes, and she stretched out both hands to him over the pony's back. "Anton, we could not remain children. My heart's friend, farewell! Adieu, girlish dreams! adieu, bright spring-time! I must now learn to go through the world without my guardian. I will not disgrace you," she continued, more calmly. "I will always be steady, and a good housekeeper. And I will be economical. I will keep the book with three long lines down its sides once more, and put every thing down. We shall need to be saving even in trifles, Wohlfart. Alas! poor mother!" And she wrung her hands, and looked sad again.

"Come out into the country," suggested Anton; "if you like it, let us go into the woods."

"Not to the woods, not to the forester's," said Lenore, solemnly, "but to the new farm; I will go with you."

They walked across the fields. "You must lead me to-day," said Lenore. "I will not give you up."

"Lenore, you will make our parting very painful to me."

"Will it be painful to you?" cried Lenore, much pleased. Then immediately afterward, shaking her head, "No, Wohlfart, not so; you have often longed in secret to be far away from me."

Anton looked at her with surprise.

"I know," cried she, confidentially pressing his arm, "I know it very well. Even when you were with me your heart was not always with me too. Often it was, that day in the sledge, for instance; but oftener you were thinking of others, when you got certain letters, that you always read in the greatest hurry. What was the gentleman's name?" asked she.

"Baumann," innocently replied Anton.

"Caught!" cried Lenore, again pressing his arm. "Do you know that that made me very unhappy for a long time? I was a foolish child. We are grown wise, Wohlfart; we are free people now, and therefore we can go about arm in arm. Oh, you dear friend!"

Arrived at the farm, Lenore said to the farmer's wife, "He is leaving us. He has told me that his first pleasure here was the nosegay that you gathered for him. I have no flowers myself; they don't flourish with me. The only garden on the estate is here, behind your house."

The good woman tied up a small nosegay, gave it to Anton with a courtesy, and sadly said, "It is just the same as a year ago."

"But he is going," cried Lenore, and, turning away, her tears began to flow.

Anton now shook hands heartily with the farmer and the shepherd: "Think kindly of me, worthy friends."

"We have always had kindness from you," cried the farmer's wife.

"And fodder for man and beast," said the shepherd, taking off his hat; "and, above all,

consideration and order."

"Your future is secured," said Anton; "you will have a master who has more in his power than I had." Finally, Anton kissed the farmer's curly-headed boy, and gave him a keepsake. The boy clung to his coat, and would not let him go.

On their return, Anton said, "What makes our parting easier to me is the future fate of the property. And I have a prevision that all that still seems uncertain in your life will be happily settled ere long."

Lenore walked in silence by his side; at length she asked, "May I speak to you of the present owner of this estate? I should like to know how you became his friend."

"By not putting up with a wrong he did me. Our intimacy has remained unshaken, because, while I willingly gave way to him in trifles, I always abode by my own convictions in graver matters. He has a high respect for strength and independence, and might easily become tyrannical if he encountered weakness of judgment and will."

"How can a woman be firm and self-reliant with such a one as he?" said Lenore, cast down.

"No doubt," replied Anton, thoughtfully, "this must be much more difficult for a woman who passionately loves him. Every thing that looks like temper or self-will he will rudely break down, and will not spare the conquered; but if opposed by a worthy and modest nature, he will respect it. And if I were ever called upon to give his future wife a counsel, it would be this, that she should carefully guard against whatever might pass for bold or free in woman. The very thing that might make a stranger agreeable, because easily establishing a familiar footing between them, is just what he would least esteem in her."

Lenore clung closer to Anton as he spoke, and bent her head. They returned in silence to the castle.

In the afternoon Anton went once more over the estate with Karl for companion. Hitherto he had always felt that he was living in a strange land; now, when about to leave it, this seemed a home. Wherever he looked, he saw objects that had for a whole year engaged his attention. He had bought the wheat with which this field was sown; he had ordered the plow with which that servant was plowing; here he had roofed-in a barn; there he had improved a ruinous bridge. Like all who enter upon a new field of labor, he had had numberless plans, hopes, projects; and now that he was suddenly called upon to relinquish these, he first discovered how dear they had been. He next spent an hour in the forester's house. As they parted, the latter said, "When you first laid hand on this door, I little thought that the trees around us would stand so safe, and that I should ever live again among my fellow-men. You have made dying difficult to an old man, Mr. Wohlfart."

The parting hour came. Anton took a short and formal leave of the baron; Lenore was quite absorbed in sorrow, and Fink affectionate as a brother. As Anton stood by him, and looked with emotion at Lenore, he said, "Be at ease, my friend; here, at least, I will try to be what you were." One last hand-clasp, one last farewell, then Anton jumped into the carriage. Karl seized the reins. They drove past the barn into the village road; the castle disappeared. At the end of the wood Karl halted. A troop of men were there assembled—the forester, the farmer, the shepherd, the Kunau smith, with a few of his neighbors, and the son of the Neudorf bailiff.

Anton joyfully sprang down and greeted them once more.

"My father sends me to bid you farewell," said the bailiff's son. "His wounds are healing, but he can not leave his room." And the Kunau smith shouted out as a last farewell, "Greet our countrymen at home for me, and say that they must never forget us!"

Silently, as on the day of his arrival, Anton sat by the side of his faithful Karl. He was free—free from the spell that had lured him hither—free from many a prejudice; but while as free, he was as poor as a bird of the air. He had now to begin life over again. Whether the past year had made him stronger or weaker remained to be proved. On the whole, however, he did not regret what he had done. He had had, gains as well as losses; he had helped to found a new German colony; he had opened out the path to a happy future for those he loved; he felt himself more mature, more experienced, more settled; and so he looked beyond the heads of the horses which were carrying him homeward, and said to himself, "Onward! I am free, and my way is now clear."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

It is evening. Sabine stands in her treasure-chamber before the open cupboards, arranging the newly-washed table-linen, and again tying rose-colored tickets on the different sets. Of course, she knew nothing and guessed nothing. Her white damask shines to-day like silver; the cut-glass cover, which she lifts from the old family goblet, rings cheerily as a bell, and the vibrations thrill through the woodwork of the great presses. All the painted heads on the china cups look singularly cheerful to-day. Doctor Martin Luther and the sorcerer Faust positively laugh. Even Goethe smiles, and it is impossible to say how amused old Fritz appears. Yet Sabine, the sagacious mistress of the house, knows not what these know. Or does she guess it? Hark! she

sings. A merry tune has not passed her lips for long; but to-day her heart is light, and as she looks at the shining display of glass and damask, something of their brightness seems to fall upon her, and, low as the notes of the wood-bird, a song of her childhood sounds through the little room. And from the cupboard she suddenly moves to the window, where her mother's picture hangs over the arm-chair, and she looks cheerfully at the picture, and sings before her mother's face the self-same song that once, from that very arm-chair, that mother sang to the little Sabine.

At that moment a cloaked figure is gliding across the ground floor. Balbus, who is superintending the great scales, stands in the arched room, casts a half glance at the figure, and thinks to himself, with surprise, "That is rather like Anton." The porters are closing a chest, and the eldest, turning round accidentally, sees a shadow thrown by a lantern on the wall, and, leaving off hammering for a moment, says, "I could almost have fancied that was Mr. Wohlfart." And in the yard a vehement barking and leaping is heard, and Pluto runs in frantically to the servants, wags his tail, barks, licks their hands, and, in his own way, tells the whole story. But even the servants know nothing, and one of them says, "It must have been a ghost; I have lost sight of it."

Then the door of Sabine's room opens. "Is it you, Franz?" said she, interrupting her song. No one answered. She turned round, her eyes fixed wistfully upon the figure at the door. Then her hand trembled and clasped the back of the chair, while he hurried toward her, and in passionate emotion, not knowing what he was doing, knelt down near the chair into which she had sunk, and laid his head on her hand. That was Anton. Not a word was spoken. Sabine gazed on the kneeling form as at some beatific vision, and gently laid her other hand on his shoulder.

She does not ask why he is come, nor whether he is free from the glamour that led him away. As he kneels before her, and she looks into his eyes, that tenderly and anxiously seek hers, she understands that he is returning to the firm, to her brother, to her.

"How long you have been away!" said she, reproachfully, but with a blissful smile upon her face.

"Ever have I been here!" said Anton, passionately. "Even in the hour when I left these walls I knew that I was giving up all of joy—all of happiness that I could hope to know; and now I am irresistibly impelled to come and tell you how it is with me. I worshiped you as a holy image while living near you. The thought of you has been my safety when far away. It has protected me in solitude, in an irregular life, in great temptation. Your form has ever risen protectingly between me and that of another. Often have I seen your eyes fixed upon me as of yore—often have you raised your hand to warn me of the danger I was in. If I have not lost myself, Sabine, I owe it to you."

And again he bent over her hand. Sabine held him fast and whispered, "My friend! my dear friend! we must both feel that we have dreamed and struggled—that we have resolved and overcome. What must you not have suffered, my friend!"

"No," cried Anton, "it was not the same suffering nor the same strength. I saw and reverenced you at the time when you were silently conquering yourself. I was a weak, willful man. I do not know what would have become of me had not your memory lived in my soul. When far away, the influence you exerted over me went on increasing, and only because I thought of you became I free."

"And how do you know that it may not have been the same in my case?" asked Sabine, looking lovingly at him.

"Sabine!" cried Anton, beside himself.

"Yes, that is your own noble face," cried she. "Alas! in your features, too, I can read the traces of an iron time." She rose. "We have heard of your heroic deeds, though you sent us nothing during the whole long year but a short message."

"Could I venture to do more?" broke in Anton, eagerly.

Sabine nodded archly. "We have, however, watched for tidings that reached us through your friends. Oh! when I, in the midst of these safe walls, thought of my friend exposed to every assault of the enemy! Wohlfart! Wohlfart! I rejoice that I see you again."

"Another has the property now, and the care of the defenseless family," replied Anton.

"It is the ordering of Providence," cried Sabine; and looked with delight on the newly-returned one.

In the uniform tenor of her domestic life, she had for many years had a cordial liking for Anton. Since he had left her, she had found out that she loved him, and had hidden the feeling in her heart. No trace of her love nor her renunciation had appeared in the regular household. Hardly had she by a look betrayed the struggle going on within. Now, in the rapture of meeting, her feelings broke out. She looked at Anton in beaming delight, thinking of nothing but the joy of having him with her again, and not remarking the traces of a different feeling in Anton's pale features. He has found her indeed, but only to lose her again forever.

Still does Sabine hold his hand, and now she leads him through the corridor to her brother's study.

What are you doing, Sabine? This house is a good house, certainly, but not one in which people feel poetically, are easily moved, open their arms at once, and press new-comers to their heart. It

is a straightforward, prosaic house, where requests are made and refused in few words; and it is a proud and rigid house besides. Remember this, it is no tender welcome to which you are leading your friend.

This Sabine felt, and delayed a moment before she opened the door; but her resolve was taken, and, holding Anton's hand in hers, she drew him in, crying to her brother with a beaming face, "Here he is; he is returned to us."

The merchant rose from his writing-table, but he remained standing by it; and his first words, coldly and peremptorily spoken, were these: "Release my sister's hand, Mr. Wohlfart."

Sabine drew back. Anton stood alone in the middle of the room, and looked at the principal. His strongly-marked features were aged during the last year, his hair had grown gray, the lines in his face had deepened.

"That I should enter here at the risk of being unwelcome," said Anton, "will show you how strong my desire was to see you and the firm once more. If I have excited your displeasure, do not let me feel it in this hour."

The merchant turned to his sister. "Leave us, Sabine; I wish to speak to Mr. Wohlfart alone." Sabine went up to her brother, and stood erect before him. She said not a word, but with a bright glance, in which a firm resolve was plainly visible, she looked full into his frowning face, and then left the room. The merchant looked gloomily after her, and turned to Anton. "What brings you back to us, Wohlfart?" said he. "Have you failed to attain what your youthful ambition hoped for, and are you come to seek in the tradesman's house the happiness that once seemed inadequate to your claims? I hear that your friend Fink has settled himself on the baron's property; has he sent you back to us because you were in his way there?"

Anton's brow grew clouded. "I do not appear before you as an adventurer," said he; "you are unjust in expressing such a suspicion; nor does it become me to submit to it. There was a time when your judgment of me was more friendly; I thought of that time when I sought you out; I think of it now, that I may forgive your injurious words."

"You once said to me," continued the merchant, "that you felt yourself at home in my house and firm. And you had a home, Wohlfart, in our hearts and in the business. In a moment of effervescence you gave us up, and we, with sorrow, did the same with you. Why do you return? You can not be a stranger to us, for we have been attached to you, and, personally, I am deeply indebted to you. You can no more be our friend, for you have yourself forcibly rent the ties that bound us. You reminded me, just when I least expected it, that a mere business contract alone bound you to my counting-house. What are you seeking now? Do you want a place in my office, or do you, as appears, want much more?"

"I want nothing," cried Anton, in the utmost excitement—"nothing but a reconciliation with you. I want neither a place in your office, nor any thing else. When I left the baron, I felt that my first step must be to your house, my next to seek employment elsewhere. Whatever I may have lost during the past year, I have not lost my self-respect; and had you met me as kindly as I felt toward you, I should have told you in the course of our first hour together what you now demand. I am aware that here I can not stay. I used to feel this when far away, as often as I thought of this house. Since I have entered its walls and seen your sister again, I know that I can not remain here without acting dishonorably."

The merchant went to the window, and silently looked out into the night. When he turned round again the hard expression had left his face, and he looked searchingly at Anton. "That was well spoken, Wohlfart," said he at length, "and I hope sincerely meant. I will be equally open toward you in saying that I still regret that you have left us. I knew you as an older man seldom knows a younger; I could thoroughly trust you. Now, dear Wohlfart, you are become a stranger to me; forgive me what I am about to say. An unregulated imagination allured you into circumstances which could not but be morally unhealthy. You have been the confidant of a bankrupt and a debtor, who may have retained many amiable characteristics, but who must have lost, in his dealings with unprincipled men, what we here in this firm call honor. I gladly assume that your uprightness refused to do any thing contrary to your sense of right; but, Wohlfart, I repeat to you what I have said before: any permanent dealings with the weak and wicked bring the best man into danger. Gradually and imperceptibly his standard becomes lowered, and necessity compels him to agree to measures that elsewhere he would have peremptorily rejected. I am convinced that you are still what the world calls an upright man of business, but I do not know whether you have preserved that proudly pure integrity, which, alas! many in the mercantile world treat as mere pedantry, and to have to tell you this makes your return painful to me."

Anton, white as the handkerchief he held, with trembling lips replied, "Enough, Mr. Schröter. That you should, in the first hour of meeting, say to me the most bitter thing one could possibly say to an enemy, convinces me that I did wrong to re-enter this house. Yes, you are right. I never, during my year of absence, lost the sense of the danger you speak of. I ever felt it the greatest misfortune to be unable to esteem the man by whom I was employed. But I dare make answer to you, with pride equal to your own, that the purity of the man who carefully shrinks from temptation is worth little; and that, if I have gained any thing from a year of bitterness, it is the consciousness of having been tried, and knowing that I no longer act as a boy, from instinct and habit, but from principle, as a man should. I have gained a confidence in myself that I had not before; and because I know how to respect my own character, I tell you that I perfectly

understand your doubt; but that, since you have given it utterance, I look upon all ties between us as by yourself dissolved, and leave you, never to return. Farewell, Mr. Schröter!"

Anton turned to go, but the merchant hurried after him, and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Not so fast, Wohlfart," said he, gently; "the man who saved me from the stroke of the Polish sword must not leave my house in anger."

"Do not recall the past," replied Anton; "it is useless. It is you, not I, who have mixed up injury and indignation with our meeting; you, not I, who have annihilated the power of old recollections."

"Not so, Wohlfart," said the merchant. "If by my words I have offended you more than I intended, make allowance for my gray hairs, and for a heart full of painful anxiety the past year through, and full of anxiety, too, on your account. We do not meet as we parted; and whenever friends have a mutual misgiving, let them openly express it, that they may stand and start clear. Had I valued you less, I should have kept back my thoughts, and my greeting would have been more polite. Now, however, I bid you welcome." And he held out his hand.

Anton took it, and repeated the word "Farewell."

The merchant held his hand firmly, and said, with a smile, "Not so fast; I can not let you go just yet. Remember that it is your oldest acquaintance who now entreats you to remain."

"I will remain, then, this evening, Mr. Schröter," said Anton, coldly.

The merchant led him to the sofa, and began to communicate the present state of the firm. It was no cheerful picture that he drew, but it proved his entire confidence, and helped to allay the sting of his harsh reception.

Gradually Anton became absorbed in the business details, eagerly went over calculations, and unconsciously began to speak of the business as though he still belonged to it. Once more the merchant held out his hand with a melancholy smile. Anton now grasped it cordially, and the reconciliation was complete.

"And now, dear Wohlfart," said Mr. Schröter, "let us speak of yourself. You once confided to me some particulars connected with your exertions in the baron's cause, and I impatiently cut you short; I now entreat you to tell me all you can."

Anton accordingly proceeded to mention all matters that admitted of being publicly talked of, and the merchant listened with the utmost attention.

"And now," said he, rising from his seat, "allow me to touch upon your future. After what you have said, I will not ask you to spend the next few years with me, welcome as your help would prove just now, but I beg that you will leave it to me to look out for a fitting post for you. We will not be in too great a hurry about it. Meanwhile, spend the few next weeks with us. Your room is empty, and just as you left it. I find, from what you tell me, that you have occupation cut out for you for some months to come. If, in addition to this, you are inclined to help me in the counting-house, your help will be very welcome. As for your relations with my family," he gravely continued, "I fully trust you. It is a positive necessity to me to prove this, and hence my present proposal."

Anton looked down in silence.

"I am not imposing on you any painful ordeal," said the merchant; "you know the habits of our household, and how little opportunity there is of much conversation. For Sabine, as well as for yourself, I wish a few weeks of your olden way of life, and when the time comes, a calm parting. I wish this on my sister's account, Wohlfart," added he, candidly.

"Then," said Anton, "I remain."

Meanwhile Sabine was restlessly pacing up and down the drawing-room, and trying to catch a sound from her brother's study. Sometimes, indeed, a sad thought would intrude, but it did not find a resting-place to-day. Again the fire crackled and the pendulum swung; but the fir-logs burned right merrily, throwing out small *feux de joie* through the stove door, and the clock kept constantly ticking to her ear, "He is come! he is there!"

The door opened and the cousin came bustling in. "What do I hear?" cried she. "Is it possible? Franz will have it that Wohlfart is with your brother."

"He is," said Sabine, with averted face.

"What new mystery is this?" continued the cousin, in a tone of discontent. "Why does not Traugott bring him here? and why is not his room got ready? How can you stand there so quietly, Sabine? I declare I don't understand you."

"I am waiting," whispered Sabine, pressing her wrists firmly, for her hands trembled.

At that moment footsteps were heard nearing the room; the merchant cried out at the door, "Here is our guest." And while Anton and the cousin were exchanging friendly greetings, he went on to say, "Mr. Wohlfart will spend a few weeks with us, till he has found such a situation as I should wish for him." The cousin heard this announcement with intense surprise, and Sabine

shifted the cups and saucers to conceal her emotion; but neither made any remark, and the lively conversation carried on at the tea-table served to disguise the agitation which all shared. Each had many questions to hear and answer, for it had been a year rich in events. It is true that a certain constraint was visible in Anton's manner while speaking of his foreign life, of Fink and the German colony on the Polish estate, and that Sabine listened with drooping head. But the merchant got more and more animated; and when Anton rose to retire, the face of the former wore its good-humored smile of old, and heartily shaking his guest's hand, he said in jest, "Sleep well, and be sure to notice your first dream; they say it is sure to come to pass."

And when Anton was gone, the merchant drew his sister into the unlighted ante-room, kissed her brow, and whispered in her ear, "He has remained uncorrupted, I hope so now with all my soul;" and when they both returned to the lamp-light, his eyes were moist, and he began to rally the cousin upon her secret partiality for Wohlfart, till the good lady clasped her hands and exclaimed, "The man is fairly demented to-day!"

Weary and exhausted, Anton threw himself upon his bed. The future appeared to him joyless, and he dreaded the inner conflict of the next few weeks; and yet he soon sank into a peaceful slumber. And again there was silence in the house. A plain old house it was, with many angles, and secret holes and corners—no place, in truth, for glowing enthusiasm and consuming passion; but it was a good old house for all that, and it lent a safe shelter to those who slept within its walls.

CHAPTER XL.

The next morning Anton hurried to Ehrenthal's. The invalid was not to be spoken to on business, and the ladies gave him so ungracious a reception that he thought it unwise to afford them any inkling of the reason of his visit. That very day he had notice given to Ehrenthal's attorney, by Councilor Horn, of twenty thousand dollars being ready in hand for the discharge of Ehrenthal's claims to that amount. As for his other demands, unsupported as they were by documentary evidence, they were to be referred to proper legal authorities. The attorney refused to accept the payment offered. Anton accordingly took the necessary steps to compel Ehrenthal at once to accept it, and to forego all claims that he had hitherto urged in connection therewith.

It was evening when Anton drew on an old office coat, and with his quickest business step proceeded to the house of Löbel Pinkus. He looked through the window into the little bar, and, seeing the worthy Pinkus there, put a short matter of fact inquiry to him: "Mr. T. O. Schröter wishes to be informed if Schmeie Tinkeles of Brody has arrived, or is expected here. He is immediately to proceed to the firm on business."

Pinkus returned a cautious answer. Tinkeles was not there, and he did not know when he might come. Tinkeles often announced himself, and often he did not. The thing was uncertain. However, if he saw the man, he would give the message.

The next day the servant opened Anton's door, and Schmeie Tinkeles stepped in. "Welcome, Tinkeles!" cried Anton, looking at him with a smile.

The trader was astonished to see Anton. A shadow passed over his sly face, and a secret disquietude was traceable through all his voluble expression of joy. "God's miracle it surely is that I should see you again before me in the body. I have often inquired at Schröter's house, and have never been able to find out whither you were gone. I have always liked to deal with you; we have made many an excellent purchase together.

"We have had our quarrels too, Tinkeles," suggested Anton.

"That was a bad business," said Tinkeles, deprecatingly. "Now, too, there is a sad look out for trade; the grass grows in the streets; the country has had a heavy time of it. The best man did not know, when he went to sleep at night, whether he should have a leg to stand on in the morning."

"You have got through it, however, Tinkeles, and I presume you have not found it so bad, after all. Sit down; I have something to say to you."

"Why should I sit down?" said the Jew, distrustfully, as Anton shut and bolted the door. "In business one has no time for sitting down; and why do you bolt the door? Bolts are not wanted; business disturbs no one."

"I have something to say to you in confidence," said Anton to the trader. "It will do you no harm."

"Speak on, then, but leave the door open."

"Listen to me," began Anton. "You remember our last conversation when we met upon our travels?"

"I remember nothing," said the broker, shaking his head, and anxiously looking at the door.

"You gave me some good advice; and when I tried to hear further, I found you had vanished."

"These are old stories," replied Tinkeles, with growing disquiet. "I can't recall them now. I have something to do in the market; I thought you wanted to speak to me on business."

"It is business about which we are treating, and it may be a profitable business for you," said Anton, significantly. He went to his writing-table, and, taking out a roll of money, laid it on the table before Tinkeles. "This hundred dollars belongs to you if you give me the information I want."

Tinkeles slyly glanced at the roll and replied, "A hundred dollars are all very well, but I can't give you any information. I know nothing; I can not remember. Whenever I see you," he irritably went on, "bad luck follows; whenever I have had any thing to do with you, it has brought me trouble and vexation."

Anton silently went to his desk and laid another roll of money by the first. "Two hundred dollars! They are yours if you give me the information I need," said he, drawing a square around them with a piece of white chalk.

The Galician's eyes fastened greedily upon the square, to which Anton kept silently pointing. Tinkeles at first pretended indifference, but his eyes grew gradually keener, his gestures more restless. He shrugged his shoulders, raised his eyebrows, and tried hard to shake off the spell that bound him. At length he could bear it no longer; he reached out his hands for the money.

"Speak first," said Anton, placing his own hand on it.

"Do not be too severe with me," implored Tinkeles.

"Hear me," said Anton. "I want nothing unfair—nothing which an honorable man need object to. I might perhaps expose you to a legal examination, and get at what I want without cost, but I know of old your objections to law, and therefore I offer you money. If you were amenable to other motives, it would be enough to tell you that a family has been made unhappy because you did not tell me more long ago. But this would be useless with you."

"Yes," said Tinkeles, candidly, "it would be useless. Let me see the money that you have put up for me. Are there really two hundred dollars?" continued he, looking greedily at the rolls. "Very well, I know they are right. Ask me what you want to know."

"You have told me that Itzig, Ehrenthal's former book-keeper, was plotting to ruin Baron Rothsattel?"

"Has it not turned out as I said?" asked Tinkeles.

"I have reason to assume that you spoke the truth. You mentioned two men. Who was the other?"

The trader stopped short. Anton made a feint of removing the money.

"Let it lie there," entreated Tinkeles. "The other is named Hippus, according to what I have heard. He is an old man, and has lived a long time with Löbel Pinkus."

"Is he in business?"

"He is not of our people, and not in business. He is baptized. He has been a barrister."

"Have you ever had any dealings with Itzig?"

"God preserve me from that man!" cried Tinkeles; "the very first day that he came to town he tried to open the cupboard in which my effects were. I had trouble to prevent him from stealing my clothes. I have nothing to do with such men."

"So much the better for you," replied Anton; "now hear me out. The baron has had a casket stolen, in which most important documents were kept. The robbery took place in Ehrenthal's office. Have you chanced to hear of it? or have you any suspicion as to who the thief may be?"

The Galician looked restlessly around the room, at Anton, at the money, and then, with closed eyes and a resolute tone, replied, "I have not."

"This, however, is just what I want to hear; and the money is for him who gives me information respecting it."

"If I must speak, then," said the Galician, "I must. I have heard that the man named Hippus, when drunk, has screamed, and has said, 'Now, then, we have the red cock; he is done for; owing to those papers, he is doomed.'"

"And you know nothing more?" asked Anton, in painful suspense.

"Nothing," said the Galician; "it was long ago, and I understood but little of what they said to each other."

"You have not earned the money," returned Anton, after a pause; "you have told me scarce any thing. However, that you may see the stress I lay upon obtaining information from you, take this hundred dollars; the second will be given when you can put me on the track of the thief or the lost papers. Perhaps that is not out of your power?"

"It is," said the Galician, positively, weighing the one roll in his hand, and contemplating the other. "What Itzig does, he does so as not to be overlooked; and I am a stranger in the place, and have no dealings with rogues."

"See what you can do, however," replied Anton. "As soon as you hear any thing, bring me word,

and this money is yours. I need not caution you to avoid exciting Itzig's suspicions. Do not let it appear that you know me."

"I am no child," answered Tinkeles; "but I fear that I shall not be of use to you in this matter."

With that he withdrew, having hid the money in the folds of his caftan.

Anton had now heard the name of the man who had probably committed the robbery. But the difficulty of obtaining the missing documents without legal aid seemed greater than ever. Meanwhile, he would risk a bold step. He would enter into negotiations with Itzig himself, and make the best use he could of the small amount of knowledge he had gained from the Galician.

Itzig's shrewd boy opened the door to him. Anton stood opposite his former schoolfellow, who knew of his return from the baron's estate, and was prepared for this visit. The two men looked at each other for a moment, both seeking to read the countenance and manner of the other, and to arm themselves for the coming conflict. There were some things that they had in common. Both were accustomed to maintain a calm exterior, and to conceal the point at which they were aiming. Both were accustomed to rapid induction, careful speech, and cool reserve. Both had, in voice and manner, something of the formality which business gives. Both were to-day in a state of excitement, which reddened Anton's face, and even suffused Veitel's gaunt cheek-bones.

But the clear glance of the former encountered one that was unsteady and lowering; the honest earnestness of his manner was met by a mixture of presumption and obsequiousness. Each felt that his opponent was dangerous, and gathered his full strength. The conflict began. Itzig opened it in his own way. "It is a pleasure to me to see you again, Mr. Wohlfart," said he, with sudden friendliness of manner; "it is long since I have been fortunate enough to meet you. I have always taken a great interest in you; we were schoolfellows; we both came to town the same day; we have both got on in the world. I heard you were gone to America. People will talk. I hope you will remain in town now. Perhaps you will return to Mr. Schröter's office; they say he much regretted your departure." In this way he ran on, really intent to discover from Anton's aspect the purport of his call.

He had made an error in pretending not to know where Anton had been of late, for his avoidance of the name of Rothsattel firmly convinced Anton that he had cause for peculiar circumspection regarding it.

Availing himself of this mistake of Veitel's, Anton replied as coldly as though he had not heard a word of the former's introductory flourish, "I am come, Mr. Itzig, to consult you on a matter of business. You are acquainted with the circumstances connected with the family property of Baron Rothsattel, now about to be judicially sold."

"I have the sort of general information respecting it," replied Veitel, throwing himself back resolutely against the corner of the sofa, "that people have on such subjects. I have heard a good deal about it."

"You have yourself for many years, in Ehrenthal's office, conducted transactions with the baron relative to his estate, and therefore you must have exact information on the subject," returned Anton. "And as Ehrenthal is too great an invalid to enter upon business topics, I now apply to you for this information."

"What I heard in Ehrenthal's office when book-keeper there, I heard in confidence, and can not impart. I am surprised that you should ask me to do so," added Itzig, with a malicious glance.

Anton coldly replied, "I ask nothing that need interfere with the sense of duty you profess. I am simply anxious to know in whose hands the mortgages on the estate now are."

"You can easily ascertain that by reference to the mortgage-book," said Veitel, with well-assumed indifference.

"You may perhaps have heard," continued the persevering Anton, "that some of the mortgages have changed hands during the last few months, and, consequently, the present possessors are not entered in the book. It is to be presumed that the deeds have been bought to facilitate or to impede a purchase at the approaching sale."

Hitherto the conversation had been a commonplace preamble to a serious contest, something like the first moves in a game at chess or the beginning of a race. Itzig's impatience now made a decided advance.

"Have you a commission to buy the estate?" he suddenly inquired.

"We will assume that I have," replied Anton, "and that I wish your co-operation. Are you in a position to give me information without loss of time, and will you undertake the measures rendered necessary by the sale of the mortgages?"

Itzig took time to consider. It was possible that Anton's only purpose was to secure the property to his friend Fink, or to the baron himself. In this case he was in danger of losing the fruit of his long scheming and bold deeds. If Fink, by his wealth, covered the baron, Itzig lost the estate. While thus perplexed, he remarked that Anton was watching him, and decided, with the subtlety of a bad conscience, that Anton had heard of his plans, and had some ulterior purpose. Possibly this commission to buy was but a feint. Accordingly, he hastened to promise his co-operation, and to express the hope that he might succeed, at the right time, in discovering the present possessor

of the mortgages.

Anton saw that the rogue understood him, and was on his guard. Changing his mode of attack, he suddenly asked, "Do you know a certain Hippus?" and keenly observed the effect of the query.

For a moment Itzig's eyelids quivered, and a slight flush suffused his face. As if he was trying to recollect the name, he tardily replied, "Yes, I know him. He is a decayed, useless creature."

Anton saw that he had struck home. "Perhaps you recollect that, about a year and a half ago, a casket belonging to the baron, and containing deeds and papers of great importance to him, was stolen from Ehrenthal's office."

Itzig sat still, but his eyes glanced restlessly to and fro. No stranger would have observed that symptom of a bad conscience, but Anton remembered it in the boy Veitel, when accused at school of some petty theft. Itzig, he saw, knew all about the papers and the robbery.

At length, the agent replied in a tone of indifference, "I have heard of this; it occurred a short time before I left Ehrenthal's."

"Very well," continued Anton; "these papers could have no value for the thief himself. But there is reason to believe that they have found their way into the hands of a third person."

"That is not impossible, but I should hardly think it likely any one would keep up worthless papers so long."

"I know that these papers are extant—nay, I know that they are being used to the baron's prejudice."

Itzig writhed upon his seat. "Why do you speak to me upon these subjects?" said he, hoarsely.

"You will soon discover my drift," said Anton. "I know, as I before said, that the papers are still extant, and I have reason to believe that you may discover their possessor. You can gain any information you may still want respecting them from Hippus."

"Why from him?"

"He has, in the presence of witnesses, made use of expressions that plainly prove him to be acquainted with their purport."

Itzig ground his teeth, and muttered something very like the words "Drunken rascal."

Anton continued: "The casket and papers are the baron's property; and as he is less intent upon the prosecution of the thief than on the restoration of the papers, he is prepared to pay a large sum to any one who procures them."

"If," said Itzig, "the baron lays so much stress upon the recovery of the casket, how came it that so little fuss was made about it at the time of its disappearance? I never heard of the police being applied to, or of any steps being taken in connection with it."

This insolence enraged Anton. He replied indignantly, "The robbery was accompanied by circumstances which made an inquiry painful to Ehrenthal; the casket disappeared from his locked-up office, and it was probably on that account that no legal investigation was made."

Itzig rejoined, "If I remember aright, Ehrenthal informed his friends at the time that the investigation was given up out of consideration to the baron."

Anton keenly felt this home-thrust, and could hardly command himself as he replied, "It is possible that the baron may have had, at the time, other reasons for letting the subject drop."

Now, then, Veitel felt safe. He read in Anton's suppressed anger how necessary secrecy was felt. It was a *bona fide* offer; the baron was in dread of the thief. Recovering all his composure, he quietly went on to say, "As far as I know Hippus, he is a lying sort of fellow, who often gets drunk. Whatever he may have said in his cups will not, I fear, help us much in recovering the papers. Has he given you any sufficient ground for applying to him?"

Now, then, Anton had reason to be on his guard. "He has, in the presence of witnesses, made use of expressions which prove that he is acquainted with the papers, knows where they are to be found, and purposes to make use of them."

"That may be enough for a lawyer, but not enough for a man of business," continued Veitel. "Do you know his exact words?"

Anton parried the question, and struck at his opponent by saying, "His statements are known exactly by me and by others, and have occasioned my visit to you."

Itzig had to quit this dangerous ground. "And what sum will the baron spend in the recovery of these papers? I mean to say, is it an affair that is worth the outlay of time and trouble? I have a great many other matters on hand. You could hardly expect me to devote myself, for the sake of a couple of louis-d'or, to the search of any thing so insignificant and difficult to find as papers that some one has hidden."

Years ago, when the two were traveling together to the capital, where they now met as opponents, it was the Jew-boy who was in search of papers on which his childish folly fancied his

fortune dependent. At that time he was ready to buy the baron's estate for Anton, and now it was Anton who was in search of important documents, and who applied to him for the baron's property. Veitel had discovered the mysterious receipt he then looked for; he held the baron's estate in his hands, and his destiny neared its fulfillment. Both thought at the same moment of the day of their common journey.

Anton replied, "I am authorized to treat with you as to the sum; but I would observe that the matter is a pressing one. I therefore entreat you to inform me whether you are prepared to deliver the documents to the Baron Rothsattel, and to be employed in our interest as regards the purchase of the mortgages."

"I will make inquiries, and consider whether I can serve you," coldly replied Veitel.

Anton rejoined as coldly, "How much time do you require to make up your mind?"

"Three days," said the agent.

"I can only give you four-and-twenty hours," said Anton, positively. "If, in that time, you have not informed me of your intention, I shall, on the baron's behalf, take every possible step to procure the papers, or to convince myself of their destruction, and I shall use my present knowledge respecting their abstraction and hiding-place to discover the perpetrator of the felony." Then taking out his watch, he said, "To-morrow, at the same hour, I shall call for your reply."

And so the important interview ended. As the door closed behind Anton, Itzig's resolve was taken. "Only one week," muttered he, "to my betrothal to Rosalie! The following day I shall find the notes of hand in a corner of Ehrenthal's office. Then Rothsattel and his friends must come to an arrangement upon my own terms. By the threat of a legal investigation, and of making the baron's misconduct public, I can force this Wohlfart to any thing I like. Only a week! If I hold out so long, the game is mine."

When Anton returned at the expiration of the four-and-twenty hours, he found the office closed. He called again in the evening: no one at home. The following morning the shrewd youth appeared at the door, and informed him that Mr. Itzig was gone on a journey, that he might perhaps return that very hour, but might, on the other hand, be absent for some days.

Anton knew, from his fluency, that the youth spoke according to orders given.

He next went to an official, who had the reputation of being one of the cleverest detectives in the town—cautiously disclosed the essentials respecting the stolen casket—expressed his suspicions of the robbery having been effected by Hippus, under Itzig's directions—and revealed the incomplete warnings of the worthy Tinkeles. The detective listened with attention, and at length said, "Out of all the inadequate information that you have given, the name of Hippus interests me most. He is a very dangerous character, and hitherto I have not exactly known how to get at him. On account of swindling and petty rascalities, he has often been punished, and the police have their eye upon him. I will do all I can for you, so far as he goes. I will have him and his effects searched this very day. I tell you beforehand we shall find nothing. I am further prepared to repeat this search in the course of a few days, at the risk of lowering my character in the eyes of the brave Hippus; for our trick of making thieves feel safe by means of superficially searching them may indeed answer with novices, but would never avail with this old hand. It is certain that we shall find nothing at our second search."

"Of what use can the measure be to me, then?" asked Anton, in a tone of resignation.

"Of more than you fancy. It may further your game with the agent Itzig; for, generally speaking, the effect of a search is to make the parties uncomfortable. And though I am not quite sure how Hippus will take it, I am inclined to believe it will perplex him. That may help you on. I will see, too, that the first search be clumsily and ostentatiously made. Fortunately, he has now a settled abode again; for some time he has had a respite from us, and has grown bold. I hear, too, that he is getting old and feeble. All this may help you to catch Itzig one way or other."

This decision come to, Anton had to retire.

CHAPTER XLI.

It was a dark November evening; a fog lay heavily on the town, filling the old streets and squares, and forcing its way into the houses. It gathered round the street-lanterns, which looked like dull red balls, and gave no light a yard off. It hung over the river, rolled along the black stream, under the bridge, up the steps, and clung to the wooden pillars of the gallery. At times there would be a rift in its masses, through which the inky stream below became visible, flowing like the river of death along the dwellings of men.

The streets were empty. Here and there, close to a light, a form would be seen to emerge, and then suddenly to disappear. One of these shadows was a short man with a stoop, who unsteadily struggled onward as fast as he could. He tottered into the court where Itzig's office was, and looked up at the agent's windows. The curtains were drawn, but there was a glimmer of light to be seen through them. The little man tried to stand firm, stared at the light, clenched his fists at it, and then going up the steps, rang once, twice, thrice. At length a muffled footstep was heard,

the door was opened, and the little man, entering, ran through the ante-room, which Itzig shut behind him. Itzig looked still paler than his wont, and his eyes glanced unsteadily at his untimely guest. Hippus had never been a model of manly beauty, but to-day he was positively uncanny. His features were sunken, a mixture of fear and insolence sat on his ugly face, and his eyes looked maliciously over his spectacles at his former scholar. Evidently he had been drunk; but some feverish terror had seized him, and for a moment neutralized the effects of the brandy.

"They are on me," he cried, grasping recklessly at empty air; "they are on the look-out for me!"

"Who would look out for you?" asked Itzig. But he knew only too well.

"The police, you villain!" shrieked the old man. "It is on your account that I am in trouble. I dare not go home; you must hide me."

"We are not come to that yet," returned Veitel, with all the composure he could. "How do you know that the police are at your heels?"

"The children in the street are talking of it," cried Hippus. "I heard it in the street when I was going to creep back to my hole. It was a mere chance that they did not find me in my room. They are in my house, standing on the steps, waiting till I come. You must hide me! I must have money! I will cross the border. I can't stay here any longer; you must send me off."

"Send you off!" repeated Itzig, gloomily. "Where to, pray?"

"Any where—where the police can not reach me—over the frontier—to America."

"And suppose I don't choose?" said Itzig, in a tone of enmity.

"You will choose, simpleton. Are you green enough not to know what I shall do if you don't get me out of this scrape, you varlet? They'll have quick ears at the criminal courts for what I have to tell of you."

"You would not be so wicked as to betray an old friend," said Veitel, in a tone that he vainly tried to make pathetic. "Do look at things more calmly. What danger is there, even if they do arrest you? Who can prove any thing? For want of proof they will have to let you off. You know the law as well as the judges do."

"Indeed!" screamed the old man, spitefully. "You think I shall go to prison for the sake of a fellow like you? that I shall sit eating bread and water, while you are feeding upon the fat of the land, and laughing at the old ass Hippus? I will not go to prison; I will be off; and, till I can get off, you must hide me."

"You can't remain here," darkly replied Veitel. "There is no safety here for you or me. Jacob would betray you; the people in the house would find out that you were here."

"Where best to take me is your look-out," said the man; "but I demand your help, or—"

"Hold your jaw!" said Veitel, "and listen to me. If I were disposed to give you money, and get you off by railroad to Hamburg, and over the sea, I could not do so immediately nor without aid. You must be taken by night a few miles hence to some small station on the line. I dare not hire a conveyance—that might betray you; and, as you are, you can not walk. I must look out for some opportunity of getting you off safely. Meanwhile, I must get you to some place that the police do not know you to frequent, for I fear they will look for you here. If you don't go home, they will probably come here this very night. I must go and inquire for a conveyance and a safe shelter. Meanwhile, stay in the back room till I return."

He opened the door, and Mr. Hippus slipped in like a frightened bat. But as Veitel was about to shut the door upon him, the old creature pushed between it and the wall, crying in high dudgeon, "I will not remain in the dark like a rat; you must leave me a light. I will have a light, you devil!"

"They will see from below that there is a light in the room, and that will betray us."

"I will not sit in the dark!" screamed the old man once more.

Muttering a curse, Veitel took up the lamp and carried it into the inner room. Then he closed the door and hurried into the street. Very cautiously he approached the dwelling of Löbel Pinkus. There all was still; and, looking into the bar, he discerned Pinkus sitting among his guests in all the security of a good conscience. He crept up the steps to his former abode, then took some rusty keys from a hidden corner, carefully examined the sleeping-room, and saw with satisfaction that it was both dark and empty. He hurried on to the gallery, where he remained for a moment looking at the rolling cloud-masses and the dusky stream. Every thing was favorable, but there was not an instant to be lost, for a capricious breeze sometimes blew over the water, and the fog seemed to be breaking up. In a short time the wind would clearly reveal the stream, the outlines of the houses, and the lanterns, which now looked like red specks at the corners of the streets.

Itzig hurried on next to the end of the gallery, and turned the key in a door which concealed the way down the steps. The door creaked as it opened. Itzig went down to the river and tried to ascertain its depth. The platform which ran along the base of the houses, and which was generally visible the whole year through, was covered; but a few strides through the water would lead from these steps to those of the neighboring house. Veitel stared down into the river, and put his foot into it to see how deep one would have to wade before reaching those steps. So occupied was he with the escape of the old man, that he did not heed, did not even feel the cold.

The water rose to his knee. He looked round once more. All was darkness, mist, silence, like that of the grave, but for the wail of the water and the rising wind.

Meanwhile Hippus tried to make himself comfortable. After having sent all manner of curses after Veitel, he gave his troubled mind to the investigation of the room. He went to a low cupboard, turned the key, and looked for some fluid that might restore his sinking strength and refresh his parched gums. He found a bottle of rum, poured its contents into a glass, and gulped it down as fast as the fiery nature of the poison allowed. A cold sweat immediately broke out on his brow, and, drawing a remnant of a handkerchief from his pocket, he hurriedly wiped his face, and reeled up and down the room, talking to himself.

"He is a fool! a rascally, cowardly hare! a miserable chafferer! If I wanted to sell him this old handkerchief, he could not help buying; it is his nature; he is a despicable creature. And he tries to defy me, and put me in prison; and he is to sit, forsooth, on this sofa, with the rum-bottle at his side—the scoundrel!" Then taking up the empty bottle, he dashed it against the woodwork of the sofa and broke it to pieces. "Who was he?" he went on, in increasing rage; "a chaffering jack-pudding. I have made him what he is, the noodle. If I whistle, he dances; he is only the decoy, I am the bird-catcher." Here Hippus tried to whistle a tune, and to execute a few steps. Again the cold sweat rained from his brow, and, taking out his handkerchief, he dried his face, and carefully replaced the rag in his pocket. "He does not return," he suddenly cried; "he leaves me here, and they will find me." Then running to the door and violently shaking it, "The villain has locked me in—a Jew has locked me in!" shrieked the miserable creature, wringing his hands. "I am to die of hunger and thirst in this prison. Oh, he has used me ill—used his benefactor basely; he is an ungrateful wretch, an unnatural son!" At this he began to sob: "I have nursed him when he was sick, I have taught him knowing tricks, I have made a man of him, and this is how he rewards his old friend." The lawyer wept aloud. Suddenly stopping before the mirror, he started at his own reflection. His eyes flashed still more angrily as, pushing his spectacles more firmly on, he examined the frame. He knew that mirror. Had chance brought one of the articles belonging to his better days into Pinkus's secret stores, and thence to Veitel's room, or did some resemblance mislead the drunkard? At all events, the thoughts it awoke of his former position filled him with rage. "It is my mirror," he screamed—"my own mirror that the rascal has here;" and, rushing wildly about the room, he snatched up a chair, and struck the mirror with it. The glass soon rattled down in a hundred pieces, but he went on belaboring the frame and screaming like a madman. "It hung in my house; the rogue has stolen my mirror—he has stolen my prosperity." He poured forth hideous imprecations against the supposed thief.

At that moment Veitel rushed in, having heard the noise from the ante-room, and guessing its cause. As soon as the lawyer saw him, he ran at him with the raised chair, crying out, "You have brought me to want, and you shall pay for it," aimed a blow at Itzig's head. But the latter pushed the chair away, and seized hold of the old man with all his strength. Hippus struggled and cursed in vain.

Veitel forced him down into a corner of the sofa, and whispered, as he held him down, "If you do not keep quiet, old man, it's all over with you."

When the drunkard saw in Itzig's eyes, which were fixed upon his, that he had the worst to apprehend from his anger, the paroxysm left him, he sank down powerless, and muttered in a low voice, while shuddering all over, "He will kill me."

"Not if you are quiet, you drunken fool; what devil drove you to destroy my room?"

"He will kill me," mumbled the old man, "because I have found my mirror."

"You are mad," cried Veitel, shaking him. "Collect your senses; you can't stay here. You must come away; I have a hiding-place for you."

"I won't go with you," wailed Hippus; "you want to kill me."

Veitel uttered a horrible curse, took up the old man's shabby hat, forced it on, and, seizing him by the neck, cried, "You must come, or you are lost. The police will look for you here—and find you too, if you lose any more time. Come, or you'll oblige me to do you a mischief."

The old man's strength was broken; he wavered. Veitel took him by the arm, and drew him unresistingly away. He took him down the steps, anxiously looking round for fear of meeting any one.

In the cold night air the lawyer's senses partially returned, and Veitel enjoined him to be silent, and to follow him, and he would get him off.

"He will get me off," mechanically repeated Hippus, running along at his side. As they neared Pinkus's house, Veitel proceeded more cautiously. Leading his companion through the dark ground floor, and whispering, "Take my hand, and come quietly up stairs with me," they reached the large public room, which was still empty. Much relieved, Veitel said, "There is a hiding-place in the next house; you must go there."

"I must go there," repeated the old man.

"Follow me," cried Veitel, leading him along the gallery, and then down the covered staircase.

The old man tottered down the steps, firmly holding the coat of his guide, who had almost to

carry him. In this way they came down step after step till they reached the last one, over which water was rushing. Veitel went first, and unconcernedly stepped up to his knee in the stream, only intent upon leading the old man after him.

As soon as Hippus felt the cold on his boot, he stood still and cried out, "Water!"

"Hush!" angrily whispered Veitel; "not a word."

"Water!" screamed the old man. "Help! he will murder me!"

Veitel seized him and put his hand on his mouth; but the fear of death had again roused the lawyer's energies, and, placing his foot on the next step, he clung as firmly as he could to the banisters, and again screamed out, "Help!"

"Accursed wretch!" muttered Veitel, gnashing his teeth with rage at this determined resistance; then, forcing his hat over his face, he took him by the neckcloth with all his strength, and hurled him into the water. There was a splash—a heavy fall—a hollow gurgling—and all was still.

Beneath the leaden clouds that overhung the river, a dark mass might be seen rolling along with the current. Soon it disappeared; the mist concealed it; the stream rushed on; the water broke wailingly over the steps and palings, and the night-wind kept howling out its monotonous complaint.

The murderer stood for a few moments motionless in the darkness, leaning against the staircase railings. Then he slowly went up the steps. While doing so he felt his trowsers to see how high up they were wet. He thought to himself that he must dry them at the stove this very night, and saw in fancy the fire in the stove, and himself sitting before it in his dressing-gown, as he was accustomed to do when thinking over his business. If he had ever in his life known comfortable repose, it had been when, weary of the cares of the day, he sat before his stove-fire and watched it till his heavy eyelids drooped. He realized how tired he was now, and what good it would do him to go to sleep before a warm fire. Lost in the thought, he stood for a moment like one overcome with drowsiness, when suddenly he felt a strange pressure within him—something that made it difficult to breathe, and bound his breast as with iron bars. Then he thought of the bundle that he had just thrown into the river; he saw it cleave the flood; he heard the rush of water, and remembered that the hat which he had forced over the man's face had been the last thing visible on the surface—a round, strange-looking thing. He saw the hat quite plainly before him—battered, the rim half off, and two grease-spots on the crown. It had been a very shabby hat. Thinking of it, it occurred to him that he could smile now if he chose. But he did not smile. Meanwhile he had got up the steps. As he opened the staircase door, he glanced along the dark gallery through which two had passed a few minutes before, and only one returned. He looked down at the gray surface of the stream, and again he was sensible of that singular pressure. He rapidly crept through the large room and down the steps, and on the ground floor ran up against one of the lodgers in the caravansera. Both hastened away in different directions without exchanging a word.

This meeting turned his thoughts into another direction. Was he safe? The fog still lay thick on the street. No one had seen him go in with Hippus, no one had recognized him as he went out. The investigation would only begin when they found the old man in the river. Would he be safe then?

These thoughts passed through the murderer's mind as calmly as though he were reading them in a book. Mingled with them came doubts as to whether he had his cigar-case with him, and as to why he did not smoke a cigar. He cogitated long about it, and at length found himself returned to his dwelling. He opened the door; the last time he had opened the door a loud noise had been heard in the inner room. He listened for it now. He would give any thing to hear it. A few minutes ago it had been to be heard. Oh, if those few minutes had never been! Again he felt that hollow pressure, but more strongly, ever more strongly than before. He entered the room, the lamp still burned, the fragments of the rum-bottle lay about the sofa, the bits of broken mirror shone like silver dollars on the floor. Veitel sat down exhausted. Then it occurred to him that his mother had often told him a childish story in which silver dollars fell upon a poor man's floor. He could see the old Jewess sitting at the hearth, and he, a small boy, standing near her. He could see himself looking anxiously down on the dark earthen floor, wondering whether the white dollars would fall down for him. Now he knew—his room looked just as if there had been a rain of white dollars. He felt something of the restless delight which that tale of his mother had always awaked, when again came suddenly that same hollow pressure. Heavily he rose, stooped, and collected the broken glass. He put all the pieces into a corner of the cupboard, detached the frame from the wall, and put it wrong-side out in a corner. Then he took the lamp, and the glass which he used to fill with water for the night; but as he touched it a shudder came over him, and he put it down. He who was no more had drunk out of that glass. He took the lamp to his bedside and undressed. He hid his trowsers in the cupboard, and brought out another pair, which he rubbed against his boots till they were dirty at the bottom. Then he put out the lamp, and as it flickered before it went quite out, the thought struck him that human life and a flame had something in common. He had extinguished a flame. And again that pain in the breast, but less clearly felt, for his strength was exhausted, his nervous energy spent. The murderer slept.

But when he wakes! Then the cunning will be over and gone with which his distracted mind has tried, as if in delirium, to snatch at all manner of trivial things and thoughts in order to avoid the one feeling which ever weighs him down. When he wakes! Henceforth, while still half asleep, he

will feel the gradual entrance of terror and misery into his soul. Even in his dreams he will have a sense of the sweetness of unconsciousness and the horrors of thought, and will strive against waking, while, in spite of his strivings, his anguish grows stronger and stronger, till, in despair, his eyelids start open, and he gazes into the hideous present, the hideous future.

And again his mind will seek to cover over the fact with a web of sophistry; he will reflect how old the dead man was, how wicked, how wretched; he will try to convince himself that it was only an accident that occasioned his death—a push given by him in sudden anger—how unlucky that the old man's foot should have slipped as it did! Then will recur the doubt as to his safety; a hot flush will suffuse his pale face, the step of his servant will fill him with dread, the sound of an iron-shod stick on the pavement will be taken for the tramp of the armed band whom justice sends to apprehend him. Again he will retrace every step he took yesterday, every gesture, every word, and will seek to convince himself that discovery is impossible. No one had seen him, no one had heard; the wretched old man, half crazy as he was, had drawn his own hat over his eyes and drowned himself.

And yet, through all this sophistry, he is conscious of that fearful weight, till, exhausted by the inner conflict, he flies from his house to his business, amid the crowd anxiously desiring to find something that shall force him to forget. If any one on the street looks at him, he trembles; if he meet a policeman, he must rush home to hide his terror from those discerning eyes. Wherever he finds familiar faces, he will press into the thick of the assembly, he will take an interest in any thing, will laugh and talk more than heretofore; but his eyes will roam recklessly around, and he will be in constant dread of hearing something said of the murdered man, something surmised about his sudden end. He may deceive his acquaintance: they will perhaps consider him remarkably cheerful, and one and the other will say, "Itzig is a good fellow; he is getting on in business." He will hang on many an arm that he never touched before, will tell merry stories, and go home gladly with any one who asks him, because he knows that he can not be alone. He will frequent the coffee-houses and beer-shops to hunt out acquaintance, and will drink and be as much excited as they, because he knows that he dare not be alone.

And when, late of an evening, he returns home, tired to death and worn out by his fearful struggle, he feels lighter hearted, for he has succeeded in obscuring the truth, he is conscious of a melancholy pleasure in his weariness, and awaits sleep as the only good thing earth has still to offer him. And again he will fall asleep, and when he awakes the next morning he will have to begin his fearful task anew. So will it be this day, next day, always, so long as he lives. His life is no longer like that of another man; his life is henceforth a battle, a horrible battle with a corpse, a battle unseen by all, yet constantly going on. All his intercourse with living men, whether in business or in society, is but a mockery, a lie. Whether he laughs and shakes hands with one, or lends money and takes fifty per cent. from another, it is all mere illusion on their part. He knows that he is severed from human companionship, and that all he does is but empty seeming; there is only one who occupies him, against whom he struggles, because of whom he drinks, and talks, and mingles with the crowd, and that one is the corpse of the old man in the water.

CHAPTER XLII.

Besides all friendly house-sprites and household divinities, there is one other in the secret, and silently triumphant at Anton's return, and that is the cousin.

Strangers indeed may shake their heads at much that passes, but she knows better: that Anton should sit all day long pale and silent in the office; Sabine evince a tendency to blush in her brother's presence, which never appeared before; sit silent for hours over her work, then silently start up and rush through the house, playful as a kitten after a ball of twine; the merchant himself keep constantly looking at Anton, and growing more and more merry from day to day, so that at last he positively rallies the cousin without ceasing—all this, indeed, may seem perplexing, but it was not so to one who had known for years what each of them liked for dinner (although she only ventured to present the favorite dish in order, once a month), who had with their own hands knitted their stockings and starched their collars. She accounted for all their inconsistencies most naturally.

The good lady took all the credit of Anton's return entirely to herself. She had determined to restore her favorite to the office, and she had had no ulterior intention, at least so she declared; for, in spite of the rose-lined coverlet and the embroidered curtains, she knew that the house to which she belonged was a proud house, which had ways of its own, and required very skillful management. And, indeed, when told that Anton was only to be a guest, she was herself in some uncertainty. But soon she got the upper hand of the merchant and his sister, for she made discoveries.

The second story of the house had been uninhabited for years. The merchant and his young wife had occupied it in the lifetime of his parents. When he had lost one after another, parents, wife, and baby son, he moved to the first floor, and since then had seldom gone up stairs. Gray blinds hung down there the whole year through; the furniture and paintings were all covered up; in short, the whole story was like an enchanted castle, and even the ladies' footsteps fell softer when they were obliged to pass through the silent region.

The cousin was coming up stairs one day. In spite of her endless war with Pix, she had contrived to keep one small room to dry linen in. She was just musing upon the change official life made in men's characters, for Balbus, the successor of Pix, on whose humble bearing she had founded great hopes, showed himself in his new post just as aggressive as his predecessor. She had once more found a heap of cigar-boxes outside the three compartments which Pix had erected by main force in her own special domain, and she was just going to declare war against Balbus on their account. At that moment she remarked a door of the upper story wide open, and thought of thieves, and of calling out for help, but, upon consideration, judicially determined first to investigate the mystery. She crept into the curtained rooms, and was in some danger of being petrified with amazement when she saw her nephew standing there alone, looking at a picture of his departed wife, taken as a bride, in white silk, with a myrtle-wreath in her hair. The cousin could not restrain a sympathizing sigh. The merchant turned round in amazement. "I mean to remove the picture to my own room," said he, softly.

"But you have another portrait of Mary there already, and this one has always depressed you," cried the cousin.

"Years make us calmer," replied the merchant; "and, in course of time, another bride may come here."

The cousin's eyes flashed as she repeated "Another!"

"It was only a passing idea," said the merchant, cheerfully walking through the suite of rooms, followed by the cousin, proudly shrugging her shoulders. They might try to blind her as much as they liked; it was all in vain.

Neither did the cautious Sabine succeed any better.

Anton had silently sat near the cousin at dinner. When he rose, the good lady remarked that Sabine's eyes rested with an expression of tender anxiety upon his pale face, and then filled with tears. As soon as he had left the room, she moved to the window that looked into the court. The cousin crept behind her, and looked out too. Sabine was gazing down intently; suddenly she smiled, and her face was perfectly transfigured. Yet there was nothing to be seen but Anton, with his back toward them, caressing Pluto, who barked and jumped up at him.

"Oh!" thought the cousin, "it is not over Pluto that she laughs and cries at once."

And soon after, one day that the merchant opened the drawing-room door and called his sister out, the cousin spied a man with a great parcel standing in the hall. Her sharp eyes recognized in him a porter from one of the great draper's shops. The brother and sister went into the ante-room, a murmur of voices was heard, and a sound uncommonly like suppressed sobs. When Sabine returned her eyes were very red, but she looked happy and bashful. When the cousin went into the ante-room on some pretext or other, the great parcel was lying on a chair; and as she touched it—of course accidentally—and the paper was not tied up, it came to pass that she beheld its contents—a variety of exquisite dresses, and one thing that moved her to tears: it was that white robe of thickest silk which a woman only wears once in her life—on one solemn day of devout and trembling joy.

From that moment the cousin went about her avocations with the comfortable confidence of a good housewife, who forgives people, even though for a season they do behave themselves foolishly, knowing that the end of it all will be great excitement in her own especial province—hard work in the kitchen, a long bill of fare, great slaughter of fowls, and immense consumption of preserved fruit. She, too, waxed mysterious now. The store-room was subjected to a careful inspection, and new dishes often appeared at dinner. On such days the cousin would come from the kitchen with very red cheeks, and look at the merchant and Sabine with an expression which plainly said, "I have found you out," and was met with a severe glance from the master of the house.

And yet he was no longer severe now. Sabine and Anton grew daily more silent and reserved; he became more cheerful, far less silent than of yore, was never weary of drawing Anton into conversation, and listened with intense attention to each word he spoke. There was still a great flatness in trade, but he did not appear to heed it. When Mr. Braun, the agent, poured out his oppressed heart, he only laughed and returned a dry jest.

Anton, however, did not observe the change. When in the office, he sat silently opposite Mr. Baumann, and seemed to think of nothing but his correspondence. The evenings he generally spent alone in his room, burying himself in the books Fink had left, and trying to escape from his own dark thoughts. He did not find the firm as he had left it: several of its old mercantile connections were dissolved, several new ones entered into. He found new agents, new descriptions of goods, and new servants.

The clerks' apartments, too, had grown silent. With the exception of Mr. Liebold and Mr. Purzel, who had never been exciting social elements, he only found Baumann and Specht remaining of all his former acquaintances, and they, too, thought of leaving. Baumann had, immediately on Anton's return, confided to the principal that he must leave in the spring, and this time Anton's earnest representations failed to shake the future missionary's firm resolve: "I can no longer delay," said he; "my conscience protests against it. I go from hence to the London Training College, and thence wherever they choose to send me. I confess that I have a preference for Africa; there are certain kings there"—he pronounced several crack-jaw names—"that I can not

think wholly ill of. There must be some hope of conversion among them. I trust to wean them from that heathenish slave-trade. They may make use of their people at home in planting sugar-cane and cultivating rice. In a couple of years I will send you, by way of London, the first samples of our produce."

Mr. Specht, too, came to Anton. "You have always been friendly to me, Wohlfart, and I should like to have your opinion. I am to marry a very accomplished girl; her name is Fanny, and she is a niece of Pix."

"What!" said Anton, "and do you love the young lady?"

"Yes, that I do," cried Specht, enthusiastically; "but, if I am to marry her, I am to enter into Pix's business, and that is what I want your opinion about. My lady-love has some fortune, and Pix thinks it would be best invested in his firm. Now you know Pix is a good fellow at bottom, but another partner might suit me better."

"I think not, my good old Specht," said Anton; "you are apt to be a little too precipitate, and it would be very well for you to have a steady partner."

"Yes," said Specht; "but only think of the branches he has chosen. No one could have believed it possible that our Pix would have taken to them."

"What are they, then?" asked Anton.

"All sorts of things," cried Specht, "that he never saw before. Skins and leather, and every kind of fur, from the sable to the mole, and, besides, hemp and brushes—every thing, in short, that is hairy and bristling. These are very low articles, Wohlfart."

"Don't be a child," replied Anton; "marry, my good fellow, and trust to the management of your uncle-in-law; it will do you no harm."

The next day Pix himself came to Anton's room. "I found your card, Wohlfart, and come to invite you to coffee on Sunday next. Cuba, and a Manilla! You will make my wife's acquaintance."

"And so you are going to take Specht as your partner?" asked Anton, smiling. "You used to have a great horror of partnerships."

"I should not enter into one with any body else. Between ourselves, I owe the poor fellow some compensation, and I can make the ten thousand dollars he is marrying useful in my business. I have undertaken a retail warehouse, in which I will place him. That will amuse him. He can be polite to the ladies all day long, and can have a new fur coat every winter. He will come out much stronger there than here in the office."

"How comes it that you have chosen this branch of trade?"

"I was obliged," was the reply. "I found a great stock on hand left by my predecessor in sorry plight, I can assure you, and was thrown all at once among those who valued hare-skins and pig's bristles exceedingly."

"And that alone decided you?" replied Anton, laughing.

"Perhaps something else as well," said Pix. "I could not remain here on account of my wife; and you will admit, Anton, that I, who was manager of the provincial department of this firm, could not open another in the same town of the same nature. I know the whole provincial department better than the principal, and all small traders know me better than they do him. I might have injured this house, though my capital is so much smaller. I should, no doubt, have got on, but this house would have suffered; so I was obliged to turn to something else. I went to Schröter as soon as I had decided, and talked it over to him. I only keep one thing in common with you here, and that is horse-hair, and in that I beat you hollow. I have told the principal so."

"The firm can bear that," said Anton, and shook the fur-merchant by the hand.

But it was not in the office only; even among the porters around the great scales a change was observable. Father Sturm, the faithful friend of the house, threatened to quit both it and this little ball of earth together. One of Anton's first inquiries, on his return, had been for Father Sturm. He was told that Sturm had been unwell for some weeks, and did not leave his room. Full of anxiety, Anton went to the dwelling of the giant the second evening after his arrival.

While still in the street, he heard a loud hum, as though a swarm of gigantic bees had settled in the red-painted house. When he entered, the hum sounded like the distant roar of a family of lions. He knocked in amazement. No one answered. When he had opened the door he stood still on the threshold, for at first he could see nothing but a dense smoke, through which a yellow speck of light appeared, with a great halo round it. Gradually he discovered in this smoke a few rotund forms, placed around the candle like so many planets around the sun, and at times something was seen to move, possibly a man's arm, but not unlike an elephant's leg. At length the air through the open door partially cleared away the smoke, and he could see farther into the room. Six giants sat around the table—three on a bench, three on oaken chairs. All had cigars in their mouths, and wooden beer-mugs on the table, and the loud hum was their speech, duly lowered to suit a sick-room.

"I smell something," cried a loud voice, at length; "there must be a man there. I feel a cool draught; the door is open. Let whoever is there say who he is."

"Mr. Sturm," cried Anton, still on the threshold.

The great globes rapidly revolved and eclipsed the light.

"Do you hear?" cried the loud voice; "a man is there."

"Yes, and an old friend too," replied Anton.

"I know that voice," exclaimed some one at the other side of the table.

Anton drew nearer; the porters all rose and called out his name.

Father Sturm moved along to the farthest end of his bench, and held out both his hands. "I heard from my comrades that you had returned. It is a joy to me that you are come safe and sound from that outlandish country."

Anton's hand now passed first into that of old Sturm, who powerfully grasped it, and then tried to set the broken bones; next into that of the other five porters, whence it came out red, weak, and slightly dislocated, so that he was glad to put it into his coat pocket. While the five were exchanging greetings with him, one after the other, Sturm suddenly called out, "When does my Karl come?"

"Have you sent for him, then?" asked Anton.

"Sent for him! No," returned Sturm, shaking his head, "that I could not do, because of his situation as bailiff; for if I were to write him word 'come,' he would come if even a million scythes lay in his way. But then the family might want him, and therefore, unless he comes of his own accord, he will not come."

"He will come in the spring," said Anton, looking anxiously into the father's face.

Old Sturm shook his head. "He will not come in the spring—not to me, at least. Perhaps my little manikin may come here, but not to his father any more." He raised his can of beer and took a long draught, then shut down the lid, cleared his throat, and, looking full into Anton's face, solemnly rapped the table. "Fifty!" said he; "one other fortnight, and then it comes."

Anton threw his arm round the old man's shoulders, and looked inquiringly at the others, who held their cigars in their hands, and stood round like the chorus in a Greek tragedy.

"Look you, Mr. Wohlfart," said the chorus-leader, who, considered as a man, was colossal, but as a giant something less than old Sturm, "I will explain matters to you: This man thinks that he is getting weaker, and shall go on getting weaker, and that in a few weeks the day will come when we porters must each take a lemon in our hands, and put a black tail on our hats. We do not wish this." All shook their heads here and looked disapprovingly at Sturm. "There is an old dispute between him and us about the age of fifty. He is determined to be right—that is the whole of it—and our opinion is that he is not right. He has become weaker—that may be. Many are stronger at one time, and weaker at another. Why should the man think of leaving this place on that account? I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Wohlfart, it is downright absurdity on his part."

All the giants confirmed this statement by nodding their heads.

"So, then, he is sick?" inquired Anton, anxiously. "Whereabouts is your complaint, old friend?"

"It is here and there," replied Sturm. "It is in the air—it comes on slowly—it takes first the strength, then the breath. It begins with the legs, and then moves up." He pointed to his feet.

"Is it a trouble to you to stand?" asked Anton.

"That is just what it is," replied Sturm. "It is a sour trial, and every day more and more so; but, Wilhelm," continued he, addressing the spokesman of the party, "in a fortnight that will be all over, and there will then be no more sourness, except, perhaps, a little in your faces for an hour or two, till evening, when you must come back here and sit down, and talk of old Sturm as of a comrade who has laid him down to rest, and who will never lift another burden; for I fancy that yonder, where we go, there will be nothing heavy."

"You hear him!" said Wilhelm, anxiously. "He is getting absurd again."

"What says the doctor to your complaint?" suddenly inquired Anton.

"The doctor!" said old Sturm; "if he were to be asked about me, he would have enough to say. But we do not ask him. Between ourselves, there is no use in a doctor. They may know what is the matter with many men, that I don't deny; but how should they know what is the matter with us? Not one of them can lift a barrel."

"If you have no doctor, my good Mr. Sturm," cried Anton, throwing open the window, "let me begin at once to play a doctor's part. If your breathing be oppressed, this close atmosphere is poison to you; and if you suffer from your feet, you ought not to go on drinking." And he moved the beer-mug to another table.

"Hum, hum, hum!" said Sturm, watching his proceedings; "well meant, but of no use. A little smoke keeps one warm, and we are accustomed to the beer. After I have sat on this bench all day alone, without work or company, it is a pleasure to me that my friends should come and enjoy themselves with me of an evening. They talk to me, and I get some tidings of the business, and of

what is going on in the world."

"But you yourself, at least, might abstain from beer and tobacco," replied Anton; "your Karl would tell you the same; and, as he is away, you must let me take his place." Then turning to the others, "I will convince him that he is wrong; leave me alone with him for half an hour."

The giants left the room. Anton sat by the invalid and spoke on the father's favorite topic—spoke of his son.

Sturm forgot all his dark forebodings, and got into excellent spirits.

At last he turned to Anton with his eyes shut, and said, confidentially, "Nineteen hundred dollars. He came here once again."

"But you gave him nothing?" anxiously inquired Anton.

"Only a hundred dollars," said the old man, apologetically. "He is dead now, the poor young gentleman. He looked so handsome with his epaulettes. While a man is a son, he ought not to die: it gives too much sorrow."

"I have spoken of your claim to Herr von Fink," said Anton; "he will see that you are paid."

"That Karl is paid," suggested old Sturm, looking round; "and you, Mr. Wohlfart, will undertake to give into my boy's hands what remains in the chest, if I do not myself see my little fellow."

"If you don't give up this idea," cried Anton, "I shall become your foe, and shall treat you with the greatest severity. Early to-morrow morning you may expect me to bring you Mr. Schröter's doctor."

"He is a worthy man, no doubt," said Sturm; "his horses must be remarkably well fed, they are so fat and strong, but he can do nothing for me."

The following morning the doctor visited the invalid.

"I don't consider his case a serious one as yet," said he; "his feet are swollen, indeed, but that might soon be cured. However, his sedentary inactive life is so bad for a frame like his, and his diet is so unwholesome, that I am sorry to say the sudden development of some serious complaint is only too likely."

Anton immediately wrote off this opinion to Karl, and added, "Under these circumstances, your father's own impression that he shall not survive his fiftieth birth-day makes me very uneasy. It would be well that you should be with him at that time."

Several days had now elapsed since Anton had written this letter, and, meanwhile, he had paid a daily visit to Sturm, who did not appear to change for the worse, but yet remained firm in his resolve of not outliving his birth-day. One morning a servant came to Anton's room, and announced that Sturm the porter urgently wished to see him.

"Is he worse?" inquired Anton, in dismay; "I will go to him immediately."

"He is at the door in a cart," said the servant.

Anton hurried out. A carrier's cart was standing there, with great barrel-hoops bent over the wicker-work, and covered by a white sheet, from which—a corner of it being turned back—the head of Father Sturm, ensconced in a colossal fur cap, appeared. He wore an anxious face, and, as soon as he saw Anton, held out a sheet of paper. "Read this, Mr. Wohlfart; I have had such a letter from my poor Karl! I must go to him at once. To the estate beyond Rosmin," he added to the driver, a burly carrier who stood by the vehicle.

Anton looked at the letter. It was written in the forester's clumsy characters, and the contents amazed him. "My dear father, I can not come to you, for a scythe-man has cut off the remainder of my hand, on which account I beg you, as soon as you get this, to set out to your poor son. You must take a large conveyance and drive to Rosmin. There you must stop at the Red Deer. A carriage and a servant from the estate will be waiting for you. The servant does not understand a word of German, but he is a good fellow, and will know you when he sees you. You must buy yourself a fur for the journey, and fur boots which must come above your knees, and be lined with leather. If you can't find any large enough for your great legs, godfather Kürschner must, during the night, sew a skin over your feet. Greet Mr. Wohlfart from me. Your faithful Karl."

Anton held the letter in his hand, not exactly knowing what to make of it.

"What do you say to this new misfortune?" asked the giant, mournfully.

"At all events, you must go to your son at once," was Anton's reply.

"Of course I must," said the porter; "this blow comes heavily upon me just now; the day after to-morrow I shall be fifty."

The meaning of the letter now flashed upon Anton. "Are you accoutred according to Karl's directions?"

"I am," said the giant, throwing back the linen covering; "all is right, the fur and the boots too."

Anton looked in, and had some trouble to preserve his gravity. Sturm looked like a pre-Adamic

bear of colossal dimensions. A great sword leaned against the seat. "Against those scythe-men!" said he, angrily shaking it. "I have still one other request to make you. Wilhelm has got the key of my house; will you take charge of this box? it holds what was formerly under my bed. Keep it for Karl."

"I will give it into Mr. Schröter's care," replied Anton; "he is just gone to the railway station, and may be back any moment."

"Greet him from me," said the giant; "greet him and Miss Sabine, and tell them both how heartily I thank them for all the friendliness they have shown to Karl and me." He looked in with emotion at the ground floor. "Many a happy year I have worked away there, and if the rings on the hundred weights are well polished, these hands have done their part to make them so. I have shared the fate of this house for thirty years, good and bad, and I can tell you, Mr Wohlfart, we were always wide awake. I shall roll your barrels no more," continued he, turning to the servants, "and some one else will help you to unload the wagons. Think often of old Sturm when you fasten up a sugar-cask. Nothing here below can last forever, not even the strongest; but this firm, Mr. Wohlfart, will stand and flourish so long as it has a chief like Mr. Schröter, and men like you, and good hands below there at the great scales. This is my heart's wish." He folded his hands, and tears rolled down his cheeks. "And now farewell, Mr. Wohlfart; give me your hand; and farewell Peter, Franz, Gottfried—all of you, think kindly of me. To Rosmin, driver." The cart rolled away over the pavement, the sheet opening once more, and Sturm's great head emerging for a last look and wave of the hand.

Anton was exceedingly anxious about him for a few days, when a letter came in Karl's own hand.

"Dear Mr. Wohlfart," wrote Karl, "you will of course have seen why I sent that last note to my Goliath. I had to get him out of that room, and to drive that notion about his birth-day out of his head; so, in my anxiety, I hazarded a white lie. This is how it all came about:

"The day before his birth-day, the servant was waiting for him at the Red Deer in Rosmin. I had ridden over there myself to see how my father got on, and how he looked; but I kept myself out of sight. About midday the cart came slowly rumbling up. The driver helped my father out—for he had great difficulty in moving—which at first gave me a fright about his legs; but it was really mainly owing to the fur boots and the jolting. On the street the old boy took out a letter and read it. Then he went up to Jasch, who had run to the cart, and who had to pretend that he did not understand a word of German, and began to make all manner of alarming gesticulations. He held his hand two feet above the pavement, and when the servant shook his head, the governor stooped down to the ground. This was meant to signify, 'My manikin!' but as Jasch failed to understand it, my father caught hold of one hand with the other, and shook it so violently under Jasch's nose, that the servant, who, without this, was frightened at the great creature, was near taking to his heels. At length my father and his effects were packed into a spring-cart, he having several times walked round, and shaken it rather mistrustfully. Then he drove off. I had told the servant to drive straight to the forester's, with whom I had planned every thing. As for me, I had gone there by a by-path; and as soon as the wagon arrived in the evening, I slipped into the forester's bed, and had my hand tied down under the clothes for fear I should stretch it out in my delight. When the old gentleman reached my bedside, he was so moved that he wept, and it went to my heart to be obliged to cheat him. I told him that I was better already, and that the doctor would allow me to get up on the morrow. This quieted him; and he said, with a most solemn mien, that he was glad of that, for that the morrow was a great day for him, and that he must then take to his bed. And so he went on with his nonsense. But not long. He soon got cheerful. The forester joined us, and we made a very good supper on what the young lady had sent us from the castle. I gave the old boy beer, which he pronounced execrable; whereupon the forester made some punch, and we all three drank heartily—I with my amputated hand, my father with his melancholy forebodings, and the forester. What with the long journey, the warm room, and the punch, my father soon got sleepy (I had had a strong bedstead placed in the forester's room); he kissed my head as he wished me good-night, tapped the quilt, and said, 'To-morrow, then, my manikin!' He was asleep in a moment; and how he slept, to be sure! I got out of the forester's bed, and watched every breath he drew. It was a weary night. The next morning he woke late. As soon as he began to stir, the forester came in, clapping his hands at the door, and exclaiming over and over again, 'Why, Mr. Sturm, what have you done?' 'What have I done?' asked my Goliath, still half asleep, and looking round in amazement. The birds were screaming very loud, and every thing looked so strange to him he hardly knew if he was still on earth or not. 'Where am I?' cried he; 'this place is not in the Bible.' However, the forester went on exclaiming, 'No; such a thing never was heard of before,' till the old man was quite alarmed, and anxiously asked what it was. 'What you have done, Mr. Sturm!' cried the forester; 'why, you have slept a night, and then a day, and then another night!' 'How so?' said my old boy; 'to-day is Wednesday, the 13th.' 'No such thing,' affirmed the forester; 'to-day is the 14th: it is Thursday.' So they went on disputing. At last the forester took out his pocket-book, on which he strikes out each day as it passes, and there was a great stroke over Wednesday; and on Tuesday he had put down as a memorandum, 'To-day, at seven o'clock, the bailiff's father arrived: a very tall man, can drink plenty of punch;' and on Wednesday, 'The bailiff's father has been asleep the whole day through.' Having read this, my governor got quite composed, and said, 'It's all correct: here we have it in black and white. Tuesday, I arrived at seven—a tall man—plenty of punch; all this tallies. Wednesday is past. This is Thursday—this is the 14th.' After some musing, he cried, 'Where is my son Karl?' Then I entered, my arm bound up, and told the same tale as the forester, till he said, 'I am like one bewitched; I don't know what to think.' 'Why, don't you see,' said I, 'that I am out of bed?

Yesterday, when you were asleep, the doctor came, and gave me leave to get up. Now I am so well that I can lift this chair with my stiff arm.' 'No more weights,' said the old man. Then I went on: 'I spoke of your case, too, to the doctor. He is a skillful man, and told us one of two things would happen: either you would go off, or sleep through it. If he sleeps throughout the day,' said he, 'he will get over it. It's a serious crisis. Such things will happen sometimes'—'To us porters,' chimed in the old man. And so it was that we got him out of his bed; and he was very cheerful. But I was anxious all day long, and never left him. At noon all was nearly lost when the farmer came in to speak to me. Luckily, though, the forester had locked the yard door, and so he went out and gave the farmer a hint. As soon as the latter came in, my father called out, 'What day is it, comrade?' 'Thursday,' said the farmer, 'the 14th;' at which my father's whole face broke out into a laugh, and he cried, 'Now it's certain; now I believe it.' However, he slept at the forester's that night too, that we might get the birth-day well over.

"The next day I took my father to the farm-yard, to the room next mine. I had had it hastily furnished for him. Herr von Fink, who knew all about it, sent some good stout things from the castle; I had his old Blucher hung up, let in some robin-redbreasts, and put in a joiner's bench and a few tools, that he might feel comfortable. So I said, 'This is your room, father; you must stay with me now.' 'No,' said he; 'that will never do, my manikin.' 'There is no help for it,' I replied; 'Herr von Fink will have it so, Mr. Wohlfart will have it so, Mr. Schröter will have it so; you must give way. We won't part again as long as we are on earth.' And then drew my hand out of its bandages, and gave him such a fine lecture about his unhealthy way of life, and his fancies, that he got quite soft, and said all manner of kind things to me. Next came Herr von Fink, and welcomed him in his own merry way; and in the afternoon our young lady brought the baron in. The poor blind gentleman was quite delighted with my father; he liked his voice much, felt him all over, and as he went away, called him a man after his own heart; and so he must be, for the baron has come every afternoon since to my father's little room, and listened to his sawing and hammering.

"My father is still a good deal perplexed at all he sees here, and he is not quite clear about that day he is said to have slept, though he must be up to it too, for ever since he often catches me by the head, and calls me a rascal. This word now replaces 'dwarf' and 'manikin' in his talk, although it is a still worse appellation for a bailiff. He is going to be a wheelwright, and has been cutting out spokes all day. I am only afraid he will work too hard. I rejoice to have him here, and if he once gets over the winter, he will soon walk off the weakness in his feet. He means to sell the little house, but only to a porter. He begs that you will offer it to Wilhelm, who now rents one, and say that he shall have it cheaper than a stranger."

CHAPTER XLIII.

A week after the death of Hippus, Anton was sitting in his own room, writing to Fink. He was telling him that the lawyer's corpse had been taken out of the river at the wear at the end of the town, and that the cause of his death was uncertain. A child belonging to the house in which the wretched man lived had told that, on the evening of the search made by the police, Hippus had been met in the street, near his own dwelling; since then, nothing had been seen of him. Under these circumstances, suicide did not appear unlikely. However, the police were of opinion that the crushed hat afforded evidence of violence. No papers had been found at his dwelling, and a second search had been made there without results. Anton gave it as his own opinion respecting the fearful event that Itzig was in some way connected with it.

At that moment the door was opened, the Galician hastily entered the room, and, without speaking a word, laid an old pair of spectacles, set in rusty steel, on the table before Anton, who, looking at the agitated face before him, sprang from his seat.

"His spectacles," hoarsely whispered Tinkeles; "I found them close to the water. Just God! that any one should have such a fright as that!"

"Whose spectacles are they, and where did you find them?" inquired Anton, guessing at what the Galician lacked strength to tell, and looking with horror at the dim glasses before him. "Compose yourself, Tinkeles, and speak."

"It can not remain concealed—it cries to Heaven!" said Tinkeles, in great excitement. "You shall hear how it came to pass. Two days after I had spoken with you about the two hundred dollars, I went in the evening to the sleeping-room at Löbel Pinkus's. As I entered the court a man ran against me in the dark. I thought, is that Itzig, or is it not? I said to myself, It is Itzig; that is his run when he runs in haste. When I got up into the large room, it was empty, and I sat down at the table and looked into my pocket-book; and as I sat there, the wind rose outside, and there was a knocking in the gallery, as if some one was knocking who wanted to get in, and could not open a door. I was frightened, and put up my letters, and cried, 'If any one is there, let him say so.' No one answered, but the knocking went on all the time. Then I summoned up courage, took up the lamp, and went into the gallery, and searched every room. I could see no one. And again there was the knocking close to me, and then a great crack, and a door flew open, which had never been open before, and from the door steps led down to the water. When I put the lamp near the steps, I saw that a wet foot had come up them, and the marks of it were to be seen all the way to the room—wet spots on the floor. And I marveled, and said to myself, 'Schmeie,' said I, 'who has

gone by night out of the water into the room, leaving the door open, like a spirit?' And I was afraid; and before I closed the door, I once more looked along the steps with the lamp, and then I saw something sparkle in the light close to the water, on the last step of all, and I ventured down one step after the other: woe is me, Mr. Wohlfart, it was a hard task. The wind howled, and blew my lamp about, and the staircase became as dark as a well; and that which I picked up is yonder"—pointing to the spectacles—"the glasses that he wore before his eyes."

"And how do you know that they are the dead man's spectacles?" asked Anton, in painful suspense.

"I know them by the joint, which is tied round with black worsted. I have often seen him in Pinkus's room with those spectacles on. So I hid the spectacles, and thought to myself that I would say nothing about them to Pinkus, but give them myself to Hippus, and see whether he could be of use to me in business. I carried about the glasses till to-day, expecting to see him; and when he did not come, I asked Pinkus for him, and he answered, 'I know not where he is hiding.' And to-day, at noon, as I entered the inn, Pinkus came running toward me, and said, 'Schmeie,' said he, 'if you want to speak to Hippus, you'll have to go into the water; he has been found in the water.' It went through me like a shot when he said this, and I had to hold on by the wall."

Anton went to his writing-table, dashed off a few lines to the detective, who had not long left him, rang the bell, and desired the servant to take the note in all haste.

Meanwhile Tinkeles had sunk down on a chair, and kept muttering unintelligibly.

Anton, scarcely less agitated, paced up and down the room. At last the silence was broken by the Galician raising his voice, and inquiring, "Do not you think that the spectacles will be worth the hundred dollars you have for me in your writing-desk?"

"I don't know," curtly replied Anton, continuing to pace up and down. Schmeie relapsed into exhaustion and silence. At length he looked up again and said, "At least fifty?"

"None of your bargaining at present," replied Anton, dryly.

"Why not?" cried Tinkeles, in dudgeon. "I have had a great fright; is that to go for nothing?" And he was again absorbed in distress.

The interview was interrupted by the appearance of the detective. This experienced officer made the Galician repeat his tale, took the spectacles, ordered a coach for himself and the reluctant Tinkeles, and said to Anton as he left, "Prepare for a sudden clearing up; whether I shall carry out my purpose is still uncertain, but there is a prospect for you of finding the documents you seek."

"At what a cost!" cried Anton, shuddering.

The drawing-room in Ehrenthal's house was brilliantly lit up, and through the drawn curtain a slight glimmer fell upon the small rain that sank down like mist on the streets. Several rooms were opened; heavy silver candelabra stood about; bright tea-services, gay sets of porcelain—every thing in the house had been brushed up, washed, and displayed; the dark floor had been newly waxed; even the cook had a newly plaited cap—in short, the whole house was renovated. The fair Rosalie stood in the midst of all this splendor, in a dress of yellow silk, trimmed with purple flowers, gorgeous as a *houri* of Paradise, and, like them, prepared to receive her elect. Her mother smoothed the thick folds of her dress, looked triumphantly at her, and said, in a transport of motherly love, "How beautiful you are to-day, Rosalie, my only child!"

But Rosalie was too much accustomed to this admiration to heed it, and went on trying to fasten a bracelet on her round arm. "It was really too bad of Itzig to bring me turquoises; he ought to have known that they are out of fashion."

"They are very handsomely set," said her mother, soothingly. "The gold is massive, and the pattern quite new."

"And where is Itzig? To-day, at least, he ought to come early; the relatives will all be here before the bridegroom," said Rosalie, complainingly.

"He will be here in time," replied Itzig's patroness. "You know how he toils and moils that you may have a brilliant establishment. You are fortunate," said she, with a sigh; "you are now entering upon life, and you will be a lady of consequence. You must go to the capital for a few weeks after your marriage, to spend the honeymoon quietly, and be introduced to my relations; and, meanwhile, I shall have this story furnished for you, and will move up stairs, and spend the rest of my life in nursing Ehrenthal."

"Will my father make his appearance to-day?" inquired Rosalie.

"He must do so on account of our relations. He must pronounce the paternal blessing upon you."

"He is sure to bring disgrace upon us, and to talk nonsense again," said the dutiful daughter.

"I have told him what he is to say," answered her mother; "and he nodded, to show that he understood me."

The bell rang, the door opened, and company appeared. The room soon filled. Ladies in gorgeous gold-embroidered silk dresses, with sparkling chains and ear-rings, occupied the large sofa and

arm-chairs around. They were mostly large in figure, with here and there a pair of lustrous eyes and a set of handsome features. They looked like a gay tulip-bed out of which the gardener has rooted every sober-colored flower. Behind them stood the gentlemen, with cunning faces and hands in their pockets, altogether much less imposing and agreeable to behold. Thus all the company waited for the bridegroom, who still delayed his coming.

At length he appeared. His eyes wandered suspiciously around; his voice faltered as he accosted his betrothed. He strove to the utmost to find some polite words to say to the beautiful girl, and could almost himself have laughed savagely at the blank he felt within. He did not see her brilliant eyes, her gorgeous bust, and magnificent attire. Even when at her side he was obliged to think of something else—of that of which he was always thinking. He soon turned away from her and joined the gentlemen, who became more conversable after his arrival. A few commonplace observations, made by the younger men, were heard from time to time, such as, "Miss Rosalie looks enchantingly beautiful;" and, "I wonder whether Ehrenthal will appear;" and, "This long continuance of fog is unusual, and very unhealthy: one is obliged to wear flannel." At length some one uttered the words "four and a half per cent." There was an end of detached remarks; a subject of conversation had been found. Itzig was one of the loudest, gesticulating on all sides. They spoke of the funds—of wool—of the failure of a money-broker who had over-speculated in paper. The ladies were forgotten; and, being quite accustomed to it on such occasions, they solemnly held their tea-cups in their hands, smoothed the folds of their dresses, and moved their throats and arms so as to make their bracelets and chains sparkle in the light.

The conversation was now interrupted by a strange sound: a door was opened, and in the midst of profound silence a heavy arm-chair was rolled into the room.

In the arm-chair sat an old, white-haired man, with a fat, swollen face, with staring eyes, bent frame, and arms supinely hanging down. It was Hirsch Ehrenthal, the imbecile. The chair being rolled into the midst of the assembly, he looked slowly round, nodded, and repeated over and over again the words he had been taught: "Good-evening—good evening." His wife now bent over him, and, raising her voice, said in his ear, "Do you know the company here assembled? They are our relatives."

"I know," nodded the figure; "it is a soiree. They all went to a great soiree, and I remained alone in my room, and I sat on his bed. Where is Bernhard, that he does not come to his old father?"

The guests who had surrounded the arm-chair now retreated in confusion; and the lady of the house again screamed in the old man's ear, "Bernhard is traveling, but your daughter Rosalie is here."

"Traveling?" mournfully inquired the old man. "How can he be traveling? I wanted to buy him a horse, that he might ride it; I wanted to buy him an estate, that he might live on it, like a respectable man, as he always was. I know," he cried, "when I last saw him, he was in bed. He lay on a bed, and he raised his clenched hand, and shook it at his father."

"Come here, Rosalie," cried her mother, distressed at these reminiscences. "When your father sees you, my child, he will have other thoughts."

Rosalie approached, and, spreading out her handkerchief, knelt down before the arm-chair. "Do you know me, father?" she cried.

"I know you," said the old man. "You are a woman. Why should a woman lie on the earth? Give me my praying-cloak, and speak the prayer. I will kneel in your place, for a long night has come upon us. When it is past, we will kindle the lights, and will eat. It will be time to put on gay garments then. Why do you wear gay garments now, when the Lord is wroth with the congregation?" He began to murmur a prayer, and again collapsed.

Rosalie rose impatiently; and her mother said, in much embarrassment, "He is worse to-day than he has ever been. I wished your father to be present at his daughter's betrothal, but I see that he can not perform the duties of the head of the family. I have, then, in my character of mother, to make a happy announcement to the company assembled." Then solemnly taking her daughter's hand, she said, "Draw nearer, Itzig."

Hitherto Itzig had silently stood with the rest, and stared at the old man, from time to time shrugging his shoulders, and shaking his head over the melancholy spectacle, as became his position in the family. But there was another form present before his eyes: he knew better than any who it was that wailed and groaned; he knew, too, who had died and had not forgiven. Mechanically he advanced, his eyes still fixed on Ehrenthal. The guests now formed a circle around him and Rosalie, and her mother took his hand.

Then the old man in the arm-chair began again. "Hush!" said he, distinctly; "there he stands—the invisible. We go home from the burial, and he dances among the women. He will strike down all he looks upon. There he stands!" he screamed, and rose from his chair. "There! there! Throw down your water-jars and fly into the house, for he who stands there is cursed of the Lord. Cursed!" he screamed; and, clenching his hands, he tottered like a madman toward Itzig.

Itzig's face grew ghastly; he tried to laugh, but his features quivered with fear. Suddenly the door was opened, and his errand-boy looked anxiously into the room. One glance sufficed to tell Itzig all that the youth had to say. He was discovered—he was in danger. He sprang to the door and disappeared.

Lay aside your bridal attire, fair Rosalie; throw off the turquoise bracelet. For you there is no betrothal—no marriage feast. Soon you will leave the town with drooping head, glad, by flying among strangers, to escape the mockery of cruel hearts at home. The gold that your father heaped up for his children by usury and fraud will again roll from hand to hand, will serve good and bad alike, will swell the mighty tide of wealth by which human life is sustained and adorned, peoples and states made great and powerful, and individuals strong or weak, each according to his work.

Without, the night was dark, small rain was falling, and the air was chill. Itzig rushed down the steps. A trembling voice called out after him, "The police are in the house; they are breaking open the room-door." He heard no more; a horrible dread filled his soul. Thought after thought passed through his brain with delirious rapidity. He felt his pocket, in which he had for the last week kept a large sum of money. It was not the hour of departure of any train that would take him to the sea, and at all the stations he would be watched for. He ran along through narrow streets in remote parts of the town, turning back whenever he got near a lamp, his pace increasingly rapid, his thoughts increasingly confused. At last his strength failed him, and he cowered down in a corner to collect himself. But soon he heard a watchman's hollow horn sound near him. Here, too, was danger. Again he rushed onward to the one and only place that stood out clearly defined in his thoughts—the place he shuddered at, yet turned to as a last refuge. As he neared the inn he saw a dark shadow at the door. The little lawyer had often stood there in the dark, waiting for Veitel's return. Was he standing there now and waiting? The wretched fugitive started back, then approached—the door was free; he stepped in, but the shadow rose again behind him and stood at the door. Veitel took off his boots and crept up stairs, groped in the dark for a room door, opened it with trembling hand, and took down a bunch of keys from the wall, with which he hurried to the gallery, hearing, as if at a great distance, the long-drawn breath of sleeping men. He stood at the door of the staircase; a violent shudder convulsed him as he went down step after step. When he first put his foot into the water he heard a lamentable groan. He clung to the banisters as that other had done, and looked down. Again there was a groan, and he now found out it was only his own breathing. He felt the depth of the water with his foot. It had risen since that time—it was higher than his knee, but he found a footing and stood safely in the stream.

The night was dark, the rain still came down, the mist hung thick over the houses—a gable, a paling peeping out here and there; the water rushed along, the only sound to break the silence of the night, and in this man's ear it roared like thunder. He felt all the torments of the lost while wading on and groping for his way. He had to cling to the slippery palings in order not to sink. He reached the staircase of the next house, felt in his pockets for the key—one swing round the corner, and his foot would be on the lowest step. Just as he was about to turn he started back, his raised foot fell into the water; he saw a dark stooping figure on the staircase. There it sat motionless. He knew the outline of the old hat; dark as it was, he could see the ugly features of the well-known face. He wiped his eyes, he waved his hands to dispel it; it was no illusion; the spectre sat there a few steps off. At length the horrible thing stretched out a hand toward him. The murderer started back, his foot slipped off the platform, he fell up to his neck in water. There he stood in the stream, the wind howling over him, the water rushing ever louder and louder. He raised his hands, his eyes still fixed upon the vision. Slowly it rose from its seat—it moved along the platform—it stretched out its hand. He sprang back horror-stricken into the stream—a fall, a loud scream, the short drowning struggle, and all was over. The stream rolled on, and carried the corpse away.

There was a stir along the river's edge; torches flared, arms glistened, loud shouts were heard, and from the foot of the steps a man waded into the water and exclaimed, "He was gone before I could reach him. To-morrow we shall find him at the wear."

CHAPTER XLIV.

The tavern of Löbel Pinkus was thoroughly searched, the secret stores in the next house brought to light, and several stolen goods of new and old date being therein found, the tavern-keeper himself was sent to prison. Among the things thus discovered was the baron's empty casket, and, in the secret door of a locked-up press, the missing notes of hand, and both the deeds of mortgage. In Itzig's house a document was found, by which Pinkus declared Veitel possessor of the first mortgage of twenty thousand. Pinkus's obdurate nature being a good deal softened by the search, he confessed what he had no longer any interest in denying, that he, had been commissioned by Veitel to pay the money to the baron, and that the sum only amounted to about ten thousand dollars; so the baron recovered his claim to the half of the first mortgage. Pinkus was sentenced to long imprisonment. The mysterious tavern was given up; and Tinkeles, who had, immediately upon Veitel's death, demanded his second hundred dollars from Anton, carried his bundle and his caftan to another retreat. His friendly feelings for the firm of T. O. Schröter had been so quickened by the late occurrences, that they had to be on their guard, and to decline some weighty commercial transactions on which he was most anxious that they should enter with him. The natural consequence of their shyness was to impress Tinkeles with their wisdom, and he continued to frequent the counting-house, without, by any further audacious speculations, hazarding its favor. Pinkus's house was sold to a worthy dyer, and blue and black wool were seen hanging down from the gallery over which Veitel's haggard form had so often leaned.

After long discussions with the attorney and the humbled Ehrenthals, Anton received the notes of hand and the last mortgage in return for payment of twenty thousand dollars.

Meanwhile the sale of the family property came on. A purchaser sought out Anton even before the term, and arrangements were made which more than insured the covering of all mortgages.

The day after the term Anton wrote to the baroness, inclosing the baron's notes of hand. He sealed up the letter with the cheerful feeling that out of all the wreck and ruin he had saved for Lenore a dowry of about thirty thousand dollars.

The white snow again lay heavy on the Polish castle, and the crows left the print of their feet on its roof. Winter's holiday robes were spread over wood and field, the earth was hushed in deepest slumber, no sheep-dog barked in the meadows, the farming implements were all laid by, and yet there was life and animation on the estate, and workmen were busy in the second story with foot-rule and saw. The ground was uneven in the farm-yard, for the foundation of a new building had been dug; and in the rooms around, and even out in the sunshine, workmen from the town—-joiners, wheelwrights, and cabinet-makers—were busily employed. They whistled cheerily at their work, and the yellow shavings flew far and wide. New energies, in short, are visible in all directions, and when spring comes, a colony of laborers will spread over the country, and force the long-dormant soil to yield the fruits of industry.

Father Sturm sat in his warm room; hammering away.

Opposite him, in the only cushioned chair, reclined the blind baron, staff in hand, listening intently.

"You must be tired, Sturm," said the baron.

"Nay," cried the giant, "my hands are as strong as ever, and this is only a small barrel for rain-water—mere child's work."

"He once hid in a little barrel," said the baron to himself. "He was a delicate child. His nurse had put him in to bathe him, and he had bent his back and knees in such a way that he could not get out. I was obliged to have the hoops knocked off to extricate my boy from his prison."

The giant cleared his throat. "Were they iron hoops?" he asked, sympathizingly.

"It was my son," said the baron, his features quivering.

"Yes," whispered Sturm, "he was stately; he was a handsome man; it was a pleasure to hear his sword rattle; and to see how he twisted his little beard." Alas! how often he had said this before to the blind father.

"It was the will of Heaven!" said the baron, folding his hands.

"It was," repeated old Sturm. "Our Lord God chose to take him when at his best. That was an honor; and no man could leave the world more beautifully. It was for his parents and his fatherland that he put on his coat with epaulettes, and he was victorious, and driving those Poles before him, when the Lord called out his name and enrolled him in his own guard."

"But I must remain behind," said the baron.

"And I rejoice that I, too, have seen our young master," continued Sturm, more fluently; "for you know that he was our young master then. You trusted my Karl with the whole management of the farm, and so it was an honor for me to be able to show that I trusted your son."

"It was wrong of him to borrow money from you," said the baron, shaking his head. And this he said, because he had often heard old Sturm's comforting reply, and longed to hear it again.

The giant laid his tool aside, ran his hand through his hair, and tried to look very bold as he began, in a light-hearted tone, "Do you know, sir, that one must make allowance for a young gentleman? Youth will be wild. Many have to borrow money in their young days, particularly when they wear such a beautiful coat, with silver fringe upon it. We were no niggards either, baron," he continued, deprecatingly, gently tapping the blind man's knee with his tool. "And the young officer was very polite, and I believe that he was somewhat bashful. And when I gave him the money, I could see how sorry he was to want it. I gave it him all the more readily. Then, when I helped him into the drosky, and he leaned out of the carriage, I can assure you he was much moved, and reached out both of his little hands to clasp my fist, and shake it once more. And while he was sitting there, the light fell on his face—a sweet, kind face it was, something like yours, and still more like the baroness, as far as I have been able to see her."

The blind man, too, stretched out his hands to grasp the porter's fist. Sturm pushed his bench forward, took the baron's hands in his right one, and stroked them with his left. Both sat silent, side by side.

At last the baron began with broken voice to say, "You were the last who showed kindness to my Eugene. I thank you for it from my inmost heart. An unfortunate, broken-down man thanks you. So long as I live I shall implore the blessing of the Most High on your head. My son will never support my feeble footsteps in my old age, but Heaven has preserved a good son to you. All the blessings that I wished for my poor Eugene, I now pray to God may be the portion of your Karl."

Sturm wiped his eyes, and then clasped the baron's hands again. The two fathers sat together in

silence, till, with a sigh, the baron rose. Sturm carefully took his arm, and led him through yard and meadow to the castle terrace; for there is a road now up to the tower—a road with a stone parapet, and the door can be reached by carriages and on foot. Sturm rings the bell, the baron's valet hurries down, and leads his master up the steps, for Father Sturm still finds a staircase hard work.

Meanwhile a carriage stops in the farm-yard. Karl respectfully hurries from his room, and the new proprietor jumps down.

"Good-day, sergeant," cried Fink; "how goes it in the castle and on the farm? How are the Fräulein and the baroness?"

"All right," reported Karl, "only the baroness is very feeble. We have been expecting you for a week past. The family have been daily asking whether there were any tidings of you."

"I was detained," said Fink; "and perhaps I should not be back now, but that, since this fall of snow, there is no judging of land. I have bought Dobrowitz."

"Zounds!" cried Karl, in delight.

"Capital ground," continued Fink; "five hundred acres of wood, in which the manure lies nearly a foot deep. In the Polish hole close by, which they call a town, the Jews thronged like ants when they heard that henceforth our spurs would jingle daily over their market-place. I say, bailiff, you will be delighted when you see the new property. I have a great mind to send you over there next spring. But what have you there—a letter from Anton? Let's have it." He hastily tore it open. "Is the Fräulein in the castle?"

"Yes, Herr von Fink."

"Very well. A messenger goes this evening to Neudorf;" and with rapid step he hurried into the house.

Lenore sat in her room sewing, with a good deal of cut-out linen round her. She diligently passed her needle through the stiff cloth, sometimes stretching the seam on her knee, smoothing it with her thimble, and looking doubtfully to see whether each individual stitch was small and even. Then that rapid footstep was heard in the passage, and springing up, she convulsively pressed her work together. But she composed herself by a mighty effort, and sat down again to her task. He knocked at her door. A deep blush spread slowly over her face, and her "Come in" hardly reached her guest's ear. As Fink entered, he glanced with some curiosity around the plainly-furnished room, which had a few chalk drawings by Lenore on the walls, but nothing else except absolutely necessary furniture. Even the little panther-skin sofa was gone.

When Fink bowed before her, she inquired in a tone of indifference, "Have you been detained by any thing unpleasant? We were all uneasy about you."

"A property that I have bought interfered with my return. I come now in all haste to report myself to my mistress, and, at the same time, I bring a packet which Anton has sent for the baroness. If she feels sufficiently well to see me, will you prepare her to do so?"

Lenore took the letter. "I will go immediately to my mother; pray excuse me;" and, slightly bending, she tried to pass him.

Fink waved her back, and said jokingly, "I find you most housewifely busy with needle and scissors. Who is the happy one for whom you are sewing those wedge-shaped pieces together?"

Lenore blushed again. "Gentlemen must not inquire into the mysteries of feminine work," said she.

"I know, however, that the thimble did not usually stand high in your favor," said Fink, good-humoredly. "Is it necessary, dear lady, that you should ruin your eyes?"

"Yes, Herr von Fink," returned Lenore, firmly, "it is, and it will be necessary."

"Oh ho!" cried Fink, shaking his head, and comfortably leaning against the back of a chair. "Do you suppose, then, that I have not long ago remarked your secret campaigns with needle and scissors, and also your grave face, and the magnificent bearing you assume toward me, naughty boy that I am? Where is the panther-sofa? Where is the brotherly frankness that I have a right to expect after our understanding? You have kept very imperfectly to our agreement. I see plainly that my good friend is inclined to give me up, and withdraw with the best grace possible; but permit me to remark that this will hardly avail you. You will not get rid of me."

"Be generous, Herr von Fink," cried Lenore, in extreme excitement. "Do not make what I have to do still harder. Yes, I am preparing to part from this place—to part from you."

"You refuse, then, to remain with me?" said Fink, with a frowning brow. "Very well; I shall return, and implore till I am heard. If you run away, I shall run after you; and if you cut off your beautiful hair and fly to a convent, I'll leap the walls and fetch you out. Have I not wooed you as the adventurer in the fairy tales does the king's daughter? To win you, proud Lenore, I have turned sand into grass, and transformed myself into a respectable farmer. Therefore, beloved mistress, be reasonable, and do not torment me by maidenly caprices."

"Oh, respect such caprices," cried Lenore, bursting into tears. "In the solitude of these last weeks

I have wrestled hourly with my sorrow. I am a poor girl, whose duty it is to live for her afflicted parent. The dower that I should bring you would be sickness, gloom, and poverty."

"You are mistaken," replied Fink, earnestly. "Our friend has provided for you. He has hunted two rascals into the water, and has paid your father's debts. The baron has a nice little fortune remaining; and I can tell your perverse ladyship you are no bad match after all, if you lay any stress upon that. The letter you hold upsets all your philosophy."

Lenore looked at the envelope and threw the letter away.

"No," cried she, beside herself. "When, shattered by sorrow, I lay upon your breast, you then told me I was to get stronger; and every day I feel that, when I come into contact with you, I have no strength, no opinion, no will of my own. Whatever you say appears to me right, and I forget how I thought before. What you require I must needs do, unresisting as a slave. The woman who goes through life at your side should be your equal in intellect and power, and should feel reliant in her own province; but I am an uncultivated, helpless girl. In my foolish love I let it appear that I could do for your sake what no woman should. You find nothing in me to respect. You would kiss me and—endure me." Lenore's hand clenched, and her eyes flashed as she spoke.

"Does it then repent you so much that for my sake you sent a bullet into that villain's shoulder?" said Fink. "What I now see looks less like love than hatred."

"I hate you?" cried the poor girl, hiding her face with her hands.

He took her hands, drew her to him, and pressed a kiss upon her lips. "Trust me, Lenore."

"Leave me! leave me!" cried Lenore, struggling; but her lips were pressed to his, and her arms twined around him; and, looking into his face with a passionate expression of love and fear, she gradually sank down at his feet.

Thoroughly moved, Fink stooped and raised her. "Mine you are, and I hold you fast," cried he. "With rifle and bullet I have bought your stormy heart. In the same breath you tell me sweet things and bitter. What, then, am I such a despot that a noble-minded woman should fear to come under my yoke? Just as you are, Lenore—resolute, bold, a little passionate devil—just so will I have you remain. We have been companions in arms, and so we shall continue to be. The day may return when we shall both raise our guns to our cheeks, and the people about us need natures more disposed to give than to take a blow. Were you not my heart's desire, were you a man, I should like to have you for my life's companion; so, Lenore, you will be to me not only a beloved wife, but a courageous friend, the confidante of all my plans, my best and truest comrade."

Lenore shook her head, but she clung to him firmly. "I ought to be your housewife," sighed she.

Fink caressingly stroked back her hair and kissed her burning brow. "Be content, sweetheart," said he, tenderly, "and make up your mind to it. We have been together in a fire strong enough to bring love to maturity, and we know each other thoroughly. Between ourselves, we shall have many a storm in our house. I am no easy-going companion, at least for a woman, and you will very soon find that will of yours again, the loss of which you are now lamenting. Be at rest, darling, you shall be as headstrong as of yore; you need not distress yourself on that account; so you may prepare for a few storms, but for hearty love and a merry life as well. I will have you laugh again, Lenore. You will have no need to make my shirts, and, if you don't like account-keeping, why, let it alone; and if you do sometimes give your boys a box on the ear, it will do our brood no harm. I think you will give yourself to me."

Lenore was silent, but she clung closer to his breast. Fink drew her away. "Come to our mother!" cried he.

Both bent over the bed of the invalid. A brightness passed over the pale face of the baroness as she laid her hands on Fink's head and gave him her blessing.

"She is still a child," said she. "It remains with you, my son, to make a good woman of her."

She sent her children out of the room. "Go to your father; bring him to me, and leave us alone together."

When the baron sat by the side of his wife, she drew his hand to her lips and whispered, "Let me thank you, Oscar, to-day, for many years of happiness—for all your love."

"Poor wife!" murmured the blind man.

"What you have done and suffered," continued the baroness, "you have done and suffered for me and my son, and we both leave you behind in a joyless world. You were not to have the happiness of transferring an inheritance; you are the last to bear the name of Rothsattel."

The baron groaned.

"But the reputation we leave behind will be spotless as was your whole life till two hours of despair." She placed the bundle of notes of hand in the blind man's grasp; then, having torn each one up, she rang the bell, and told the servant to put them piece by piece into the stove. The flames leaped up and threw a red light over the room till the last was consumed. The evening closed in, and the baron lay on the sick lady's bed, and hid his face in the pillows, while she held her hands folded over him, and her lips moved in prayer.

In the early morning light the ravens and jackdaws fluttered over the snowy roof; their black wings hovered a while above the tower; then, with loud cries, they broke away to the wood, to announce to their feathered race that the castle walls contained a bride and a corpse. The pale lady from a foreign land has died in the night, and the blind man who is lying in his daughter's arms has but one consolation, that of knowing that he shall soon follow her to her endless rest. And the ill-omened birds scream out to the winds that the old Slavonic curse has fallen on the castle, and the doom has lighted on the foreign settlers too.

But little cares the man who now holds sway within the castle walls whether a raven croak or a lark sing, and if a curse lie on his property, he will laughingly blow it away. His life will be a ceaseless and successful conflict with the dark influences around, and from the Slavonic castle will come out a band of noble boys, and a new German race, strong and enduring in mind and body, will overspread the land—a race of colonists and conquerors.

In a few cordial lines Fink announced to his friend his own betrothal and the death of the baroness. A sealed note to Sabine was inclosed in the envelope.

It was evening when the postman brought the letter to Anton's room. Long did he sit pondering its contents; at length he took up the note to Sabine, and hurried to the front part of the house.

He found the merchant in his study, and gave him the letter.

The merchant immediately called in Sabine. "Fink is betrothed; here is his announcement."

Sabine clasped her hands in delight, and was hurrying off to Anton, but she stopped with a blush, took her note to the lamp, and opened it. There could not have been much in it, for she read it in an instant, and, though she tried hard to look grave, could not suppress a smile. At another time Anton would have watched her mood with passionate interest; to-day he scarcely heeded it.

"You will spend the evening with us, dear Wohlfart?" said the merchant.

Anton replied, "I was going to ask you to spare me a few moments. I have something to say to you." He looked uneasily at Sabine.

"Let her hear it. Remain, Sabine," said the merchant to his sister, who was just going to slip away; "you are good friends; Mr. Wohlfart will not object to your presence. Speak, my friend; what can I do for you?"

Anton bit his lips and looked again at the beloved form that leaned with downcast eyes against the door. "May I inquire, Mr. Schröter," he at length began, "whether you have found the situation for which you kindly promised to look out?"

Sabine moved uneasily, and the merchant looked up in amazement. "I believe I shall soon have something to offer you; but is there any great hurry about it, dear Wohlfart?"

"There is," replied Anton, gravely. "I have not a day to lose. My relations to the Rothsattel family are now entirely closed, and the fearful events with which I have been connected during the last weeks have affected my health. I yearn for repose. Regular employment in some foreign city, where nothing will remind me of the past, is, however, positively essential to me."

Again Sabine moved, but a look from her brother kept her back.

"And could you not find that repose which I too wish for you here with us?" inquired the merchant.

"No," replied Anton, in a faint voice; "I beg you not to be offended if I leave you to-day."

"Leave us!" cried the merchant. "I see no reason for such haste. You can recruit here; the ladies must take better care of you than hitherto. Wohlfart complains of you, Sabine. He looks pale and worn. You and our cousin must not allow that."

Sabine did not answer a word.

"I must go, Mr. Schröter," said Anton, decidedly. "To-morrow I set out."

"And will you not at least tell your friends the reason of so hasty a departure?" said the merchant, gravely.

"You know the reason. I have done with my past. Hitherto I have ill provided for my future; for I am about to seek and win, in some subordinate situation, the confidence and good opinion of strangers. I have become, too, very poor in friends. I must separate for years from all I love. I have some cause to feel alone, and since I must needs begin life again, it is best to do so as soon as possible, for every day that I spend here is fruitless, and only makes my strength less, the necessary parting harder." He spoke in deep emotion, his voice trembling, but he did not lose his self-control. Then going up to Sabine, he took her hand. "In this last hour I tell you, in the presence of your brother, what it can not offend you to hear, for you have known it long. Parting from you pains me more than I can say. Farewell!" And now he fairly broke down, and turned to the window.

After a pause the merchant said, "Your sudden departure, dear Wohlfart, will be inconvenient to my sister as well as to me. Sabine was anxious to request such a service from you as a merchant's sister is likely to require. I, too, wish very much that you should not refuse her. Sabine begs that you will look over some papers for her. It will be no great task."

Anton turned, and made a deprecating gesture.

"Before you decide, listen to a fact that you have probably not known before," continued the merchant. "Ever since my father's death, Sabine has secretly been my partner, and her advice and opinion has decided matters in our counting-house oftener than you think. She, too, has been your principal, dear Wohlfart." He made a sign to his sister, and left the room.

Anton looked in amazement at the principal in white muslin, with black braided hair. For years, then, he had served and obeyed the youthful figure which now blushingly approached him.

"Yes, Wohlfart," said Sabine, timidly, "I, too, have had a small hold upon your life. And how proud I was of it! Even those Christmas-boxes you used to receive, I knew of them; and it was my sugar and coffee that the little Anton drank. When your worthy father came to us and asked for a situation for you, it was I who persuaded my brother to take you; for Traugott asked me about it, he himself objecting, and thinking you were too old. But I begged for you, and from that time my brother always called you my apprentice. It was I who promised your father to take care of you here. I was but an inexperienced child myself, and the confidence of a stranger enchanted me. Your father, good old gentleman, would not wear, while with us, the velvet cap that peeped out of his pocket, till I drew it out and put it on his white curls; and then I wondered whether my apprentice would have such beautiful curls too. And when you came, and all were pleased with you, and my brother pronounced you the best of all his clerks, I was as proud of you as your good father could have been."

Anton leaned on the desk, and hid his face with his hands.

"And that day when Fink insulted you, and again after that boating excursion, I was angry with him, not only for his presumption, but because he had taken my true apprentice into danger; and because I always felt that you belonged a little to me, I begged my brother to take you with him on that dangerous journey. It was for me, too, Wohlfart, that you toiled in that foreign land; and when you stood by the loaded wagons, amid fire and clash of arms that fearful night, they were my goods that you were saving; and so, my friend, I come to you now in the character of a merchant, and pray you to do me a service. You shall look over an account for me."

"I will," said Anton, turning away, "but not at this moment."

Sabine went to a book-case, and laid out two books, with gilt leaves and green morocco binding, on the desk. Then taking Anton by the hand, she said, in a trembling voice, "Please come and look at my Debit and Credit." She opened the first volume. Beneath all manner of skillful flourishes stood the words, "With God—Private Ledger of T. O. Schröter."

Anton started back. "It is the private book of the firm," cried he. "This is a mistake."

"It is no mistake," said Sabine. "I want you to look over it."

"Impossible!" cried Anton. "Neither you nor your brother can seriously wish this. God forbid that any one should venture to do so but the heads of the concern. So long as a firm lasts, these pages are for no human eyes but those of its head, and after that of the next heir. He who reads this book knows what no stranger should—nay, as far as this book goes, the most intimate friend is a stranger. Neither as merchant nor as upright man can I comply with your wish."

Sabine held his hand fast. "But do look at it, Wohlfart; look at least at its title." She pointed out its cover. "Here you have T. O. Schröter." Then turning over the pages, "There are few empty columns here; the book ends with the last year." Then opening the second volume, she said, "This book is empty, but here we find another firm; look at least at its title."

Anton read, "With God—Private Ledger of T. O. Schröter and Company."

Sabine pressed his hand, and said gently, and as with entreaty, "And you are to be the new partner, my friend."

Anton stood motionless; but his heart beat wildly, and his face flushed up brightly. Sabine still held his hand. He saw her face near his, and, light as a breath, her lips touched his. He flung his arms around her, and the two happy lovers were clasped in speechless embrace.

The door opened, and the merchant appeared. "Hold fast the runaway!" cried he. "Yes, Anton, I have wished this for years. Since that time when you knelt by my bed and bound up my wound in a foreign land, I have cherished the hope of uniting you forever to our life. When you left us, I was angry at seeing my hope baffled. Now then, enthusiast, we have you safe—safe in our private book and in our arms." He drew the lovers to him.

"You have chosen a poor partner," cried Anton, on his new brother's breast.

"Not so, my brother. Sabine has shown herself a judicious merchant. Neither wealth nor position have any value for the individual or the community without the healthy energy which keeps the dead metal in life-producing action. You bring into the business the courage of youth and the wisdom of experience. Welcome to our house and to our hearts!"

Radiant with joy, Sabine held both the hands of her betrothed: "I have been hardly able to bear seeing you so silent and so sad. Every day when you rose from the dinner-table I used to feel that I must fly after you, and tell you before that you belonged to us. You blind one, you never found out what was passing within me, and Lenore's betrothed has known it all!"

"He!" exclaimed Anton. "I never spoke of you to him."

"Look here!" cried Sabine, taking Fink's note from her pocket. There was nothing in it but the words, "Hearty friendship, best wishes, Mrs. Sister-in-law."

Again Anton caught his beloved in his arms.

Deck thyself out, old house! rejoice, discreet cousin! dance, ye friendly house-sprites on the shadowy floor! The poetic dreams that the boy Anton nursed in his early home, beneath the prayers for blessings of his worthy parents, were honorable dreams, and here is their fulfillment. That which allured and unsettled, and diverted him from his life-purpose, he has with manly heart overcome.

The old diary, of his life is at an end, and henceforth, ye gracious house-sprites, in your private book will be inscribed, "With God, his future career of Debit and Credit."

THE END.

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