Title: The Serapion Brethren, Vol. II

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Release Date: March 16, 2010 [EBook #31668]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Charles Bowen, from scans provided by Google Books

Transcriber's Notes:

Page scans are from Google Books: "http://books.google.com/books?pg=PA2&dq=editions:UCALB4287293&id=ZYQFAQAAIAAJ&as_brr=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false"

THE SERAPION BRETHREN.

VOLUME II.

THE SERAPION BRETHREN.

BY

ERNST THEODOR WILHELM HOFFMANN

Translated from the German

BY

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ETC.**

VOLUME II.

**LONDON:
GEORGE BELL & SONS, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN,
AND NEW YORK.**

1892.

**LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.**

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THE SERAPION BRETHREN.

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The ever-fluctuating vicissitudes of human life had once more scattered our little group of friends asunder. Sylvester had gone back to his country home; Ottmar had travelled away on business, and so had Cyprian; Vincent was still in the town, but (after his accustomed fashion) he had disappeared in the turmoil, and was nowhere to be seen; Lothair was nursing Theodore, who had been laid on a bed of sickness by a malady long struggled against, which was destined to keep him there for a considerable time.

Indeed, several months had gone by, when Ottmar (whose sudden and unlooked-for departure had been the chief cause of the breaking up of the "Club") came back, to find, in place of the full-fledged "Serapion Brotherhood," one friend, barely convalescent, and bearing the traces of a severe illness in his pale face, abandoned by the Brethren, with the exception of one, who was tasking him severely by constant outbreaks of a grim and capricious "humour."

For Lothair was once more finding himself in one of those strange and peculiar moods of mind in which all life seemed to him to have become weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, by reason of the everlasting mockery ("chaff" might be the modern expression of this idea) of the inimical daemonic power which, like a pedantic tutor, ignores and contemns the *nature* of men; giving man (as a tutor of the sort would do) bitter drugs and nauseous medicines, instead of sweet and delicious macaroons, to the end that his said pupil, man, may take a distaste at his own nature, enjoy it no more, and thus keep his digestion in good order.

"What an unfortunate idea it was," Lothair cried out, in the gloomiest ill-humour, when Ottmar came in and found him sitting with Theodore--"what an unfortunate idea it was of ours to insist on binding ourselves together again so closely, jumping over all the clefts which time had split between us! It is Cyprian

whom we have to thank for laying the foundation-stone of Saint Serapion, on which we built an edifice which seemed destined to last a lifetime, and tumbled down into ruin in a few moons. One ought not to hang one's heart on to anything, or give one's mind over to the impressions of excitements from without; and I was a fool to do so, for I must confess to you that the way in which we came together on those Serapion evenings took such a hold on my whole being that, when the brethren so suddenly dispersed themselves over the world, my life felt to me as weary, stale, flat and unprofitable as the melancholy Prince Hamlet's did to him."

"Forasmuch as no spirit has arisen from the grave, revisiting the glimpses of the moon, to incite you to revenge," said Ottmar, with a laugh, "and as you are not called upon to send your sweetheart to a nunnery, or to thrust a poisoned rapier into the heart of a murderer-king, I think you ought not to give way to Prince Hamlet's melancholy, and should consider that it would be the grossest selfishness to renounce every league of alliance into which congenially-minded people enter because the storms of life possess the power of interfering with it. Human beings ought not to draw in their antennas at every ungentle touch, like supersensitive insects. Is the remembrance of hours passed in gladsome kindly intercourse nothing to you? All through my journeyings I have thought of you continually. On the evenings of the meetings of the Serapion Club (which, of course, I supposed to be still in full swing) I always took my place amongst you, in spirit; assimilated all the delightful and entertaining things going on amongst you (entertaining you, at the same time, with whatever the spirit moved me to contribute to you). But it is absurd to continue in this vein. Is there, in Lothair's mind, really the slightest trace of that which his momentary 'out-of-tuneness' has made him say? Does he not himself admit that the cause of his being out of tune is merely the fact of our having been dispersed?"

"Theodore's illness," said Lothair, "which nearly sent him to his grave, was not a matter, either, calculated to put me into a happy state of mind."

"No," said Ottmar, "but Theodore is well again; and as to the Serapion Club, I cannot see why it should not be considered to be in full working order, now that three of the Brethren are met together."

"Ottmar is perfectly right," said Theodore; "it is a matter of indisputable necessity that we should have a meeting, in true Serapiontic fashion, as early as possible. The germ which we form will sprout into a tree full of fresh life and vigour, bearing flowers and fruit--I mean that that bird of passage, Cyprian, will come back: Sylvester will soon be unhappy, there where he is, away; and when the nightingales cease singing, he will long for music of another kind; and Vincent will emerge from the billows again, no doubt, and chirp his little song."

"Have it your own way," said Lothair, rather more gently than before; "only don't expect *me* to have anything to do with it. However, I promise that I will be present when you assemble Serapiontically; and, as Theodore ought to be in the open air as much as possible, I suggest that we hold our meeting out of doors."

So they fixed upon the last day of May--which was only a few days off--for the time; and on a pretty public-garden in the neighbourhood, not too much frequented, for the place, of their next Serapiontic meeting.

A thunderstorm, passing quickly over, and merely sprinkling the trees and bushes with a few drops of Heaven's balsam, had relieved the sultry oppressiveness of the day. The beautiful garden was lying all still, in the most exquisite brightness. The delicious perfume of leaves and flowers streamed through it, while the birds, twittering and trilling in happiness, went rustling amongst the branches, and bathed themselves in the bedewed leafage.

"How refreshed I feel, through and through!" Theodore cried, when the friends had sate themselves down in the shade of some thickly-foliaged lime-trees; "every

trace of illness, down to the most infinitesimal, has left me. I feel as if a redoubled life had dawned on me, in my active consciousness of reciprocity of action between me and the external. A man must have been as ill as I have been to be capable of this sensation, which, strengthening mind and body, must surely be (as I feel it to be) the true life-elixir which the Eternal Power, the ruling World-spirit, administers to us, directly and without intermediation. The vivifying breath of Nature is breathing out of my own breast. I seem to be floating in that glorious blue Heaven which is vaulted over us, with every burden lifted away from me!"

"This," said Ottmar, "shows that you are quite well again, beloved friend; and all glory to the Eternal Power which fitted you out with an organisation strong enough to survive an illness like that which you have gone through. It is a marvel that you recovered at all, and still a greater that you recovered so quickly."

"For my part," said Lothair, "I am not surprised that he got well so soon, because I never had a moment's doubt that he would. You may believe me, Ottmar, when I tell you that, wretched as the state in which his physical condition appeared to be, he was never really ill, mentally; and so long as the spirit keeps sound--well! it was really enough to vex one to death that Theodore, ill as he was, was always in better spirits than I was, although I was a perfectly well and sound man; and that, so soon as his bodily sufferings gave him an interval of rest, he delighted in the wildest fun and jests. At the same time, he has the rare power of remembering his feverish illusions. The doctor had forbidden him to talk; but when *I* wished to tell him this, that and the other in quiet moments, he would motion me to be silent and not disturb his thoughts, which were busy over some important composition, or other matter of the kind."

"Yes," said Theodore, laughing, "I can assure you that Lothair's communications were of a very peculiar kidney at that time. Directly after the dispersion of the Serapion Brethren he became possessed by a foul fiend of evil humours. This you probably have gathered; but you cannot, by any possibility, divine the extraordinary ideas which he got into his head at this period of gloom and dejection. One day he came to my bedside (for I had taken to my bed by that time) stating that the old Chronicle Books were the grandest and richest mines and treasure-houses of tales, legends, novels and dramas. Cyprian said the same long ago, and it is true. Next day I noticed, although my malady was besetting me sorely, that Lothair was sitting immersed in an old folio. Moreover, he went every day to the public library and got together all the old Chronicles he could lay his hands upon. *That* was all very well; but, besides, he got his head filled with the strange old legends which are contained in those venerable books; and when, in my hours of comparative quiet, he bestirred himself to talk to me on 'entertaining' subjects, what I heard of was war and pestilence, monstrous abortions, hurricanes, comets, fires and floods, witches, auto-da-fé's, enchantments, miracles, and, above all other subjects, his talk was of the manifold works and devices of the Devil--who, as we know, plays such an important part in all those old stories that one can hardly imagine what has become of him *now*, when he seems to keep so quietly in the background, unless he may perhaps have put on some new dress which renders him unrecognizable. Now tell me, Ottmar, don't you think such subjects of conversation well suited for a man in my then state of health?"

"Don't condemn me unheard," cried Lothair. "It is true, and I will maintain it fearlessly, that, for writers of tales, there is an immense amount of splendid material in those ancient Chronicles. But you know that *I* have never taken much interest in them, and least of all in their *diablerie*. However, the evening before Cyprian went away I had a great argument with him as to his having far too much to do with the Devil and his family; and I told him candidly that my present opinion of his tale, 'The Singers' Contest,' is that it is a thoroughly faulty and bungling piece of work, although when he read it to us I approved of it, for many specious reasons. Upon this he attacked me in the character of a real *advocatum diaboli*, and told me such a quantity of things, out of old Chronicles and from other sources, that my head fairly reeled. And then, when Theodore fell ill, I was

seized upon and overmastered by real, bitter gloom and misery. Somehow, I scarce know how or why, Cyprian's 'Singers' Contest' came back to my mind again. Nay, the Devil himself appeared to me in person one night when I couldn't sleep; and although I was a good deal frightened by the evil fellow, still I could not help respecting him, and paying him my duty as an ever helpful aide-de-camp of tale-writers in lack of help; and, by way of spiting you all, I determined to set to work and surpass even Cyprian himself in the line of the fearsome and the terrible."

"*You*, Lothair, undertake the fearful and terrible!" said Ottmar, laughing--"you, whose bright and fanciful genius would seem expressly adapted to wave the wand of comedy!"

"Even so," said Lothair; "such was my idea. And as a first step towards carrying it out, I set to work to rummage in those old Chronicles which Cyprian had told me were the very treasure-houses of the diabolical; but I admit that it all turned out quite differently from what I had expected."

"I can fully confirm that," said Theodore. "I can assure you it is astonishing, and most delicious, the way in which the Devil and the gruesomest witch-trials adapt themselves to the mental bent and style of the author of 'Nutcracker and the King of Mice.' Just let me tell you, dear Ottmar, how I chanced to lay my hands upon an experimental essay on this subject of our doughty Lothair's. He had just left me one day when I was getting to be strong enough to creep about the room a little, and I found, upon the table where he had been writing, the truly remarkable book entitled 'Haftitii Michrochronicon Berlinense,' open at the page where, *inter alia*, occurs what follows:--

"'Ye Divell, in this year of Grace, appeared bodily in ye streets of Berlin, and attended funerals, conducting himself thereat sorrowfullie,' &c., &c., &c.

"You will see, my dear Ottmar, that this entertaining piece of intelligence was of a nature to delight me immensely; but some pages in Lothair's handwriting delighted me still more. In those he had welded up the accounts of this curious conduct of the Devil with a horrible case of misbirth, and a gruesome trial for witchcraft, into an *ensemble* of the most delightful and entertaining description. I have got those pages here; I brought them in my pocket to amuse you with them."

He took them out of his pocket and handed them to Ottmar.

"What!" cried Lothair, "the affair which I styled 'Some Account of the Life of a Well-known Character,' which I thought was torn up and destroyed long ago--the abortive product of a fit of capricious fancy; can it be that you have captured *that* from me and kept it, to bring me into discredit with persons of taste and culture? Here with the wretched piece of scribbling, that I may tear it up and scatter it to the winds of heaven."

"No, no," cried Theodore; "you must read it to Ottmar, as a penance for what you inflicted on me in my illness with your horrible weird Chronicle matter."

"Well," said Lothair, "I suppose I can't refuse, though I shall cut a strange figure before this very grave and carefully-behaved gentleman. However, here goes." So Lothair took the papers, and read as follows:--

THE LIFE OF A WELL-KNOWN CHARACTER.

In the year one thousand five hundred and fifty-one there was to be seen in the streets of Berlin, particularly in the evening twilight, a gentleman of fine and distinguished appearance. He wore a rich and beautiful doublet, trimmed with sable, white galligaskins, and slashed shoes; on his head was a satin barret cap with a red feather. His manners were charming, and highly polished. He bowed

politely to everybody, particularly to ladies, both married and single; and to *them* he was wont to address civil and complimentary speeches. He would say: "Donna! if you have any wish or desire in the depths of your heart, pray command your most humble servant, who will devote his humble powers to the utmost to be entirely at your disposal and service." This was what he said to married ladies of position. To the unmarried he said: "Heaven grant you a nice husband, worthy of your loveliness and virtues." To the men he behaved just as charmingly, and it was no wonder that everybody was fond of this stranger, and came to his assistance when he would stand hesitating, in doubt and difficulty, at some crossing, apparently not knowing how to get over it; for though a well-grown and handsomely-proportioned person in most respects, he had one lame foot, and was obliged to go about with a crutch. But as soon as anybody gave him a hand to help him at a crossing, he would instantly jump up with him some six ells or so into the air, and not come to the ground again within a distance of some twelve paces on the other side of the crossing. This rather astonished people, it need not be said, and one or two sprained their legs slightly in the process. But the stranger excused himself by saying that, before his leg was lame, he had been principal dancer at the Court of the King of Hungary; so that, when he felt himself called upon to take a jump, the old habit came back upon him, and, willy-nilly, he could not help springing up into the air as he used to do in the exercise of his profession. The people were satisfied with this explanation, and even took much delight in seeing some privy councillor, clergyman, or other person of position and respectability, taking a great jump of this sort hand-in-hand with the stranger.

But, merry and cheerful as he seemed to be, his behaviour changed at times in a most extraordinary manner; for he would often go about the streets at night and knock at people's doors; and when they opened to him, he would be standing there in white grave clothes, raising a terrible crying and howling, at which they were fearfully frightened; but he would apologize the following day, saying that he was compelled to do this to remind the citizens and himself of the perishableness of the body, and the imperishableness of the soul, to which their minds ought always to be carefully directed. He would weep a little as he said this, which touched the folks very much. He went to all the funerals, following the coffin with reverent step, and conducting himself like one overwhelmed with sorrow, so that he could not join in the hymns for sobbing and lamenting. But, overcome with grief as he was on those occasions, he was just as delighted and happy at marriages, which in those days were celebrated in a very splendid style at the town-hall. There he would sing all sorts of songs in a loud and delightful voice, and dance for hours on end with the bride and the young ladies (on his sound leg, adroitly drawing the lame one out of the way), behaving and evincing himself on those occasions as a man of the most delightful manners and bearing. But the best of it was that he always gave the marrying couples delightful presents, so that of course he was always a most welcome guest. He gave them gold chains, bracelets, and other valuable things; so that the goodness, the liberality, and the superior morality of this stranger became bruited abroad throughout the city of Berlin, and even reached the ears of the Elector himself. The Elector thought that a person of this sort would be a great ornament at his own Court, and caused him to be sounded as to his willingness to accept an appointment there. The stranger, however, wrote back an answer (in vermilion letters, on a piece of parchment a yard and a half in length, and the same in breadth) to the effect that he was most submissively grateful for the honour offered to him, but implored his Serene Highness to permit him to remain in the enjoyment of the citizenesque life which was so wholly conformed to all his sentiments, in peace; adding that he had selected Berlin, in preference to many other cities, as his residence, because he had nowhere else met with such charming people, persons of such truthfulness and uprightness, of so much "feeling," of such a sense for fine and delightful "manners" so exquisitely after his own heart in every respect. The Elector, and his whole Court along with him, much admired and wondered at the beautiful style in which this reply of the stranger was conceived, and the matter was allowed to rest there.

It happened that just then the lady of Councillor Walter Lütkens was, for the first time, "as ladies wish to be who love their lords"; and the old *accoucheuse*, Mistress Barbara Roloffin, predicted that this fine, grand lady, overflowing with health and strength, would undoubtedly bring into the world a grand and vigorous son, so that Herr Walter Lütkens was all hope and gladness. Our "stranger," who had been a guest at Lütkens's wedding, was in the habit of calling at his house now and then; and it chanced that he made one of those calls of his on an evening when Barbara Roloffin was there.

As soon as old Barbara set eyes on the stranger she gave a marvellous loud ejaculation of delight, and it appeared as though all the deep wrinkles of her face smoothed themselves out in an instant. Her pale lips and cheeks grew red, and the youth and beauty to which she had long said "good-bye" came back to her again. She cried out, "Ah, ah, Herr Junker! Is this you that I see here really and truly? Is this you, yourself? Oh, I welcome you! I am so delighted to see you!" and she was nearly falling down at his feet.

But he answered this demonstration in words of anger, whilst his eyes flashed fire. Nobody could understand what it was that he said to her. But the old woman shrunk into a corner, as pale and wrinkled as she had been at first, and whimpering faintly and unintelligibly.

"My dear Mr. Lütkens," the stranger said to the master of the house, "I hope you will take great care lest something annoying may happen in your house here. I really hope, with all my heart, that everything will go well on this auspicious occasion. But this old creature, Barbara Roloffin, is by no means so well up to her business as perhaps you suppose. She is an old acquaintance of mine, and I am sorry to say that she has on many occasions not paid proper attention to her patients."

Both Lütkens and his wife had been very anxious, and had felt most eery and uncanny about this whole business, and full of suspicion as to old Barbara Roloffin, particularly when they remembered the extraordinary transfiguration which took place in her when she saw the stranger. They had very great suspicions that she was in the practice of black and unholy arts, so that they forbade her to cross the threshold of their house any more, and they made arrangements with another *accoucheuse*.

On this, old Barbara was very angry, and said that Lütkens and his wife would pay very dearly for what they had done to her.

Lütkens's hope and gladness were turned into bitter heart-sorrow and deep grief, when his wife brought into the world a horrible changeling in place of the beautiful boy predicted by Barbara Roloffin. It was a creature all chestnut brown, with two horns on its head, great fat eyes, no nose whatever, a big wide mouth with a white tongue sticking out of it upside down, and no neck. Its head was down between its shoulders; its body was wrinkled and swollen; its arms came out just above its hips, and it had long, thin shanks.

Mr. Lütkens wept and lamented terribly. "Oh, just heavens!" he cried; "what in the name of goodness is going to be the outcome of this? Can this little one ever be expected to tread in his father's steps? Was there ever such a thing known as a Member of Council with a couple of horns on his head, and chestnut brown all over?"

The stranger consoled Lütkens as much as ever he could. He pointed out to him that a good education does a great deal; that though, as concerned form and appearance, the new-born thing was really to be characterized as a most arrant schismatic, still he ventured to say that it looked about it very understandingly with its fat eyes, and that there was room for a deal of wisdom between the two horns on its forehead. Also that though it might, perhaps, never be fit to be a

Member of Council, it was perfectly capable of becoming a distinguished *savant*, inasmuch as excessive ugliness is often a characteristic of *savants*, and even causes them to be highly respected and much looked up to.

However, Lütkens could not but ascribe his misfortune in the depths of his heart to old Barbara Roloffin, particularly when he learned that she had been sitting at the door of the room during his wife's *accouchement*; and Frau Lütkens had declared, with many tears, that the old woman's face had been before her eyes all the time of it, and that she had not been able to get rid of the sight of her.

Now Mr. Lütkens's suspicions were not, it is true, enough to base any legal proceedings upon in the matter; but Heaven so ordered things that in a very short time all the infamous deeds which old Barbara had committed were brought into the clear light of day.

For it happened that shortly after those events there came on one day, about twelve at noon, a terrible storm, and a most violent wind, and the people in the streets saw Barbara Roloffin (who was on her way to attend a lady in need of her professional services) borne, rushing away on the wings of a blast, high up through the air, over the housetops and the church steeples, and set down, none the worse for the trip, in a meadow close to Berlin.

After this, of course, there could be no more doubt about the "black art" of Barbara Roloffin. Lütkens lodged his plaint before the proper tribunal, and the woman was taken into custody. She denied everything obstinately, till she was put to the rack. Upon that, unable to endure the agony, she confessed that she had been in league with the Devil, and had practised magical arts for a very long time. She admitted that she had bewitched poor Frau Lütkens, and foisted off the vile abortion upon her; and that, over and above that, she had in company with two other witches belonging to Blumber killed and boiled several children of Christian parents, with the object of causing a famine in the land.

Accordingly she was sentenced to be burnt alive in the market-place. So when the appointed day arrived old Barbara was conducted there in presence of a great concourse of people, and made to ascend the scaffold which was there erected. When ordered to take off a fur cloak which she was wearing, she would by no means obey, insisting that they should tie her to the stake just as she was. This was done. The pile of wood was already alight, and burning at all four corners, when suddenly the stranger appeared, seemingly grown to gigantic dimensions, and glaring over the heads of the populace at Barbara Roloffin with eyes of flame.

The clouds of black smoke were rolling on high, the crackling flames were catching the woman's dress, she cried out, in a terrible screaming voice, "Satan! Satan! is this how thou holdest the pact thou hast made with me? Help, Satan! Help! my time is not out yet!" and the stranger, it was found, had suddenly vanished. But from the spot where he had been standing an enormous bat went fluttering up, darted into the thick of the flames, and thence rose screaming into the air with the old woman's fur cloak; and the burning pyre went crashing down into extinction.

Horror seized upon all the spectators; every one now saw clearly that the distinguished stranger had been none other than the very Devil in person. He must have had some special grudge against the folks of Berlin, to whom he had so long behaved so smoothly and in such friendly fashion, and with hellish deceit betrayed Councillor Lütkens and many other sapient men and women.

Such is the power of the Evil One; from whom and from all his snares may Heaven in its mercy defend us all.

When Lothair had finished, he looked into Ottmar's face, in utter self-irony, with the peculiar expression of bitter sweetness which he had at his command on

such occasions.

"Well," said Theodore, "what think you of Lothair's pretty little specimen of *diablerie*? One of the best points about it, I think, is that there is not too much of it."

Whilst Lothair had been reading, Ottmar had laughed a great deal, but towards the close he had become grave and silent. "I must admit," he said, "that in this little tale or 'prank'--for I don't know what else to call it--of Lothair's there predominates an attempt, often more or less successful, at a certain sort of amusing *naïveté*, very appropriate to the character of the German Devil. Also, that when he talks about the Devil's jumping over the streets hand in hand with respectable townfolk and of the 'chestnut brown schismatic,' who might turn out a quaint and ugly *savant*, though never a nice, natty, spick-and-span Member of Council, we see the curvets and the caprioles of the same little Pegasus which was bestridden by the author of 'Nutcracker.' Still, I think that he ought to have got on the back of a horse of a different colour; and, indeed, I cannot say what the reason exactly is why the pleasantly comic impression which the earlier part of the story produces vanishes away into nothingness; whilst, out of this nothingness, there ultimately develops a certain something which becomes most uncanny and unpleasant; and the concluding words, which are intended to do away with this feeling, do not succeed in doing away with it."

"Oh, thou most sapient of all critics," Lothair cried, "who dost such high honour to this most insignificant thing of all the insignificant things which I have ever written down as to dissect it carefully with magnifying glasses on nose, let me tell you that it served me as an anatomical study long ago. Did I not style it a mere product of a mood of caprice? Have I not anathematized it myself? However, I am glad that I read it to you, because it gives me an opportunity of speaking my mind concerning tales of this kind. And I am sure that my Serapion Brethren will agree with me. In the first place, Ottmar, I should like to trace out for you the germ of that unpleasant--or, better, 'uncanny'--feeling which you were conscious of when you were at first beginning to see what you have called the 'amusing *naïveté*' of it. Whatever grounds the good old Hafftitz may have had for telling us that the Devil passed a certain time leading the life of a townsman of Berlin, this remains for us a wholly 'fanciful' or 'fantastic' incident. And the quality of the 'supernatural'--the 'spookishness' (to use an expression now not unfamiliar)--which is a leading characteristic of that tremendous 'principle of negation'--that 'spirit which eternally denies and destroys'--is, by reason of the (in a manner) comic contrastedness in which it is presented, calculated to cause in us the strange sensation, compounded of terror and irony, which fetters our attention in a manner the reverse of unpleasant. But the case is quite different as to the terrible witch stories. In them actual life is brought on to the stage with all its reality of horror. When I read about Barbara Roloffin's execution, I felt as though I saw the funeral pyre smoking in the market-place. All the horror of the terrible witchcraft-trials rose to my memory. A pair of sparkling red eyes, and an attenuated weazened body, were enough to cause a poor old creature to be assumed to be a witch, guilty of every description of wicked and unholy arts and practices; to have legal process instituted against her, and to be led to the scaffold. The application of the rack, or other form of torture, confirmed the accusations against her, and decided the case."

"Still," said Theodore, "it is very remarkable that so many of those supposititious witches of their own accord confessed their pact, and other relations, with the Evil One, without any coercion whatever. Two or three years ago it happened that a number of legal documents fell into my hands relating to trials for witchcraft; and I could scarce believe my eyes when I read in them confessions of things which made my flesh creep. They told of ointments, the use of which turned human beings into various animals; they spoke of riding on broomsticks, and, in fact, of all the devilish practices which we read of in old legends. Bat, first and foremost, and invariably, those supposititious witches always openly and shamelessly avowed, and boasted--usually of their own accord--

as to their unchaste relations with the unclean and diabolical 'gallant' (as their term for him was). Now, how could such things be possible?"

"Because," Lothair said, "belief in a diabolical compact actually brought such a compact about."

"How do you mean? What do you say?" the two others cried together.

"Understand me properly, that is all I ask," said Lothair, "It is matter of certainty that, in the times when nobody doubted of the direct and immediate influence of the Devil, or that he constantly appeared visibly, those miserable creatures, who were hunted down and put so mercilessly to fire and sword, actually and firmly believed in all that they were accused of; and that many, in the wickedness of their hearts, tried their utmost, by means of every description of supposed arts of witchcraft, to enter into compact with the Devil, for the sake of gain, or for the doing of evil deeds; and *then*, in conditions of brain-excitement, produced by beverages affecting their senses, and by terrible oaths and ceremonies of conjuration, *saw* the Evil One, and entered into those compacts which were to confer upon them supernatural powers. The wildest of the fabrications of the brain which those confessions contain--based upon inward conviction--do not seem too wild when one considers what strange fancies--nay, what terrible infatuations--even hysteria itself is capable of producing in women. Thus the wickedness of the hearts of those putative witches was often paid for by a fearful death. We cannot reasonably reject the testimony of those old witch-trials, for they are supported by the evidence of witnesses, or other clearly recorded facts; and there are many instances of people who have committed crimes deserving of death. Remember Tieck's magnificent tale, 'The Love-Spell.' There is a deed mentioned in the papers I have been speaking of very analogous to the crime of the horrible woman in Tieck's tale. So that a death on the funeral pyre was often really the proper punishment for those fearful misdoings."

"There occurs to my remembrance," Theodore said, "an occasion when an accursed crime of that description chanced to be brought vividly before my own eyes, filling me with the profoundest pain and sorrow. When I was living in W---- I went to see a certain charming country seat, L----, which you know. It has been justly said of it that it seems to float like some stately swan mirrored on the beautiful lake which lies at its feet. I had heard, before, that there were dark rumours to the effect that the unfortunate possessor of it, who had died but a short time before, had carried on magical practices, with the help of an old woman; and that the aged keeper of the chateau could tell a good deal about this business, could one gain his confidence. As soon as I saw this man he struck me as a very remarkable person. Imagine to yourselves a hoary-headed old man with imprints of the profoundest terror in his face, dressed poorly, like a peasant, but indicating, by his manner, unusual cultivation. Remark that this man, whom you would have taken for an ordinary labourer at the first glance, would talk to you--if you did not happen to understand the patois of the district--in the purest French, or in equally good Italian, just as you chose. I managed to interest and to animate him by touching, as we wandered through the great halls, on the troubles which his late master had had to go through, and by showing that I was, to some extent, acquainted with the subject, and with what had happened in those bygone days. He explained the deeper meaning of many of the paintings and adornments (which, to the uninitiated, seemed mere unmeaning prettinesses), and grew more and more frank and confidential. At last he opened a small closet, floored with slabs of white marble, in which the only piece of furniture was a cauldron of brass. The walls seemed to have been stripped of their former adornments. I knew, I felt, that I was in the place where the former master of the house, blinded and befooled by his lust for sensuous enjoyment, had descended to diabolical practices. When I dropped a word or two hinting at this subject, the old man raised his eyes to heaven with an expression of the bitterest melancholy, and said, with a deep sigh, 'Ah! Holy Virgin! hast thou forgiven him?' He then silently pointed to a large marble slab embedded in the middle of the flooring. I looked at this slab with much closeness of observation, and became aware that there were

reddish veins meandering about through the stone. And, as I fixed my attention upon them more and more closely, heaven aid me! the features of a human face grew more and more distinctly traceable and visible, just as when, on looking at a distorted picture through a lens specially constructed, all its lines and effects then, and not till then, grow clear and sharp.

"It was the face of a child that was looking at me out of that stone, marked with the heartrending anguish of the agony of death. I could see drops of blood welling from the breast; but the rest of the form of the body seemed to flow vaguely into indistinctness, as if a stream of water were carrying it away. It was with a hard struggle that I overcame the horror which well-nigh overmastered me. I could not bring myself to utter a word. We left that terrible, mysterious place in silence. Not till I had walked about in the park and the lawns for some time could I overcome the inexplicable feeling which had so annulled my enjoyment of that little earthly paradise. From many things which I gathered from the detached utterances of the old man, I was led to conclude that the crazy being who had thrust herself into such intimate relations with the last proprietor of the place (in other respects a large-hearted and cultivated man) had worked upon him by promising him, through the exercise of her accursed arts, the fulfilment of his dearest wishes--unfailing and everlasting happiness in love--and so led him on to unutterable crime."

"This is an affair for Cyprian," Ottmar said. "He would be as delighted over the bleeding baby in the marble, and in the old Castellan, as we." "Well," Theodore went on to say, "although all this affair may be traceable to foolish fancies--although it may be nothing but a fable kept up by the people--still, if that strangely-veined slab of marble is capable, even under the influence of a lively imagination, of showing the lineaments of a bleeding baby when looked at closely and carefully, something uncanny must have happened, or the faithful old servant could not have felt his master's guilt so deeply in his heart, nor would that strange stone give such a terrible evidence of it."

Ottmar said, replying, "We will take an early opportunity of laying this matter before Saint Serapion, that we may ascertain exactly how it stands; but for the time, I think we ought to let witches alone, and go back to our subject of the 'German Devil,' as to which I would fain say a word or two. What I am driving at is--that the characteristic German manner of treating this subject is seen in its truest colour when it is a question of the Devil's manner of conducting himself in ordinary everyday life. Whenever he takes part in that, he is thoroughly 'up' in every description of evil and mischief--in everything that is terrible and alarming. He is always on the alert to set traps for the good, so as to lead as many of them as possible over to his own kingdom; but yet he is a thoroughly fair and honourably-dealing personage, abiding by his compacts and contracts in the most accurate and punctilious manner. From this it results that he is often outwitted, so that he appears in the character of a 'stupid' Devil (and this is not improbably the origin of the common expression 'stupid devil'); but, besides all this, the character of the German Satan has a strong tincture of the burlesque mixed up with the more predominant quality of mind-disturbing terror--that horror which oppresses the mind and disorganizes it. Now, the art of portraying the Devil in this distinctively German fashion seems to be very much lost. For this aforesaid amalgamation of his characteristics does not seem to occur in any of the more recent attempts at representing him. He is either shown as a mere buffoon, or as a being so terrible that the mind is revolted by him."

"I think," said Lothair, "you are forgetting one recent story in which this said mingling of the brightly Intellectual (verging sometimes on the comic) with the Terrific is very finely managed, and in which the full effectiveness of the old-world sort of devil-spook-story is carried out in a masterly manner. I mean Fouqué's splendid tale, the 'Galgenmännlein.'[1] The terribly vivacious little creature in the phial--who comes out of it at night, and lays himself down on the breast of that master of his, who has such awful dreams--the fearsome man in the mountain glen, with his great coal-black steed which crawls up the perpendicular cliffs like

a fly on a wall--in short, all the uncanny and supernatural elements which are present in the story in such plentiful measure--together rivet and strain the attention to an extent absolutely frightening; it affects one like some powerful drink, which immensely excites the senses and at the same time sheds a beneficent warmth through the heart. It is owing to the tone which pervades it all through, and to the vividness of the separate pictures, that, although at the end one is thoroughly delighted that the poor wretch does get out of the Devil's clutches, still, the element of the Intellectuality of the evil beings, and the scenes which touch upon the realm of comedy (such as the part about the 'Half Heller') stand out with the principal high-lights upon them. I scarcely can think of any tale of *diablerie* which has produced such an impression upon me."

[Footnote 1: Known in English as "The Bottle Imp."]

"There can't be much doubt," said Theodore, "that Fouqué got the materials for that story out of some old chronicle."

"Even if he did," Lothair said, "I should hope you wouldn't detract from the author's merit on that score, like the more common class of critics, whose peculiar system obliges them always to try and find out the fundamental materials from which a writer has 'taken' his work. They make immense capital out of pointing out said source, and look down with great contempt on the wretched author who merely kneads his characters together out of a pre-existent dough. As if it mattered that the author absorbed into himself germs from without him! The shaping of the material is the important part of the business. We ought to think of our Patron Saint Serapion. His stories were told out of his soul as he had seen them with his eyes, not as he had read about them."

"You do me much injustice, Lothair," said Theodore, "if you suppose I am of any other opinion. And there is nobody who has shown more admirably how a subject may be vividly represented than Heinrich Kleist in his tale of Kohlhaas, the horse dealer."

"However," said Lothair, "as we have been talking of Hafftitz's book, I should like to read to you a story of which I took most of the leading ideas from the Michrochronicon. I wrote it during an attack of a very queer mood of mind, which beset me for a very considerable time. And I hope, Ottmar, my dear friend, it will lead you to admit that the 'spleen,' which Theodore says I am suffering from, is not so very serious as he would make it out to be."

He took out a manuscript, and read:

ALBERTINE'S WOOERS.

(A story in which many utterly improbable adventures happen.)

CHAPTER I.

WHICH TREATS OF SWEETHEARTS, WEDDINGS, CLERKS OF THE PRIVY CHANCERY, PERTURBATIONS, WITCHCRAFT TRIALS, AND OTHER DELECTABLE MATTERS.

On the night of the autumnal equinox, Mr. Tussmann, a clerk in the Privy Chancery, was making his way from the café, where he was in the habit of passing an hour or two regularly every evening, towards his lodgings in Spandau Street. The Clerk of the Privy Chancery was excessively regular and punctilious in

every action of his life. He always had just done taking off his coat and his boots at the exact moment when the clocks of St. Mary's and St. Nicholas's churches struck eleven; so that, as the reverberating echo of the last stroke died away, he always drew his nightcap over his ears, and placed his feet in his roomy slippers.

On the night we are speaking of he, in order not to be late in going through those ceremonies (for the clocks were just going to strike eleven), was just going to turn out of King Street, round the corner of Spandau Street, with a rapid sweep--almost to be denominated a jump--when the sound of a strange sort of knocking somewhere in his immediate proximity rivetted him to the spot.

And he became aware that, down at the bottom of the Town-house Tower--rendered visible by the light of the neighbouring lamp--there was a tall, meagre figure standing, wrapped in a dark cloak, knocking louder and louder on the closed shutters of Mr. Warnatz, the ironmonger's shop (which, as everybody knows, is therein situated); knocking louder and louder, and then going back a few paces and sighing profoundly, gazing up as he did so at the windows of the Tower, which were shut.

"My dear sir," said the Clerk of the Privy Chancery, addressing this personage in a civil and courteous manner, "you are evidently under some misapprehension. There is not a single human creature up in that Tower; and indeed--if we except a certain number of rats and mice, and a few little owls--not a living thing. If you wish to provide yourself with something superior in the hardware line from Warnatz's celebrated emporium here, you will have to take the trouble to come back in the forenoon."

"Respected Herr Tussmann----" the stranger began.

And Tussmann chimed in with "Clerk of the Privy Chancery, of many years seniority." He was a little annoyed, too--astonished, at all events--that the stranger seemed to know him. But the latter did not seem to mind that in the least, but recommenced:

"Respected Herr Tussmann, you are kind enough to be making a complete mistake as to the nature of my proceedings here. I do not want ironmongery or hardware of any description; neither have I anything to do with Mr. Warnatz. This is the night of the autumnal equinox, and I want to see my future wife! She has heard my ardent and longing summons, and my sighs of affection, and she will come and show herself up at that window directly."

The hollow tones in which the man spoke these words had about them something so solemn--nay, so spectral and supernatural--that the Clerk of the Privy Chancery felt an icy shudder run through his veins. The first stroke of eleven rung down from the tower of St. Mary's, and as it did so, there came a clattering and a clinking up at the broken old window of the Tower, and a female form became visible at it. As the bright light of the street lamps fell upon the face of this figure, Tussmann whimpered out in lamentable tones, "Oh, ye just powers!--Oh, ye heavenly hosts!--what--*what* is this?"

At the last stroke of eleven--that is, at the moment when Tussmann generally put on his nightcap--the female figure vanished.

This extraordinary apparition seemed to drive the Clerk of the Privy Chancery completely out of his senses. He sighed, groaned, gazed up at the window, and whispered "Tussmann! Tussmann! Clerk of the Privy Chancery--bethink yourself, sir! Consider what you're about. Don't let your heart be troubled. Be not deceived by Satan, good soul."

"You seem to be put out by what you have seen, Mr. Tussmann," the stranger said. "I only wanted to see my sweetheart--my wife, that is to be. You must have seen something else, apparently."

"Please, please," Tussmann said in a whimper, "I should be so much obliged to

you if you would be good enough to address me by my little title. I am Clerk of the Privy Chancery, and truly, at this moment, a greatly perturbed Clerk of the Privy Chancery--in fact, one almost out of his senses. I beg you, with all due respect, my very dear sir (though I regret that I am unable to style you by your proper title, as I have not the honour to be in the least acquainted with you, having never met you before--however, I shall address you as 'Herr Geheimer Rath'--'Mr. Privy Councillor'--there are such an extraordinary number of gentlemen here in Berlin bearing that title that one can scarcely be in error in applying it)--I beg you, therefore, Herr Geheimer Rath, to be so very kind as not to keep me longer in ignorance as to whom the lady, your future wife, may be, whom you expected to see here at this hour of the night."

"You're a curious fellow, you and your 'titles,'" the stranger said, raising his voice. "If a man who knows a number of secrets and mysteries, and can give good counsel too, is one of your 'privy' or 'secret' councillors, I think *I* may so style myself. I am surprised that a gentleman who is so well versed in ancient writings and curious manuscripts as you are, dear Mr. Tussmann, Clerk of the Privy Chancery, should not know that when an expert--an *expert*, observe!--knocks at the door of this Tower here--or even on the wall of it, on the night of the autumnal equinox, there will appear to him, up at yonder window, the girl who is to be the happiest and luckiest sweetheart in Berlin till the spring equinox comes round."

"Mr. Privy Councillor," Tussmann cried, as if in a sudden inspiration, and with joyful rapture--"Most respected Mr. Privy Councillor! is that really the case?"

"It is," said the stranger. "But what's the good of our standing in the street here any longer? It is past your bed time. Let us go to the new wine-shop in Alexander Street; just that you may hear a little more about this young lady, and recover your peace of mind, which something--I have no idea what--has disturbed so tremendously."

Tussmann was a most abstemious person. His sole recreation (for "dissipation" we cannot term it) consisted in his spending an hour or two every evening in a café; where, whilst he read assiduously political and other articles in newspapers, as well as books which he brought with him, he sipped a glass of good beer. Wine he seldom touched, except that after service on Sundays he allowed himself a small glass of Malaga with a biscuit, in a certain restaurant. To go about dissipating at nights was an abomination in his eyes. So that it seemed incomprehensible how, on this particular occasion, he allowed the stranger, who hurried away towards Alexander Street with long strides, resounding in the darkness, to carry him away with him without a word of objection.

When they came into the wine-shop there was nobody there but one single customer, sitting by himself at a table, with a big glass of Rhine wine before him. The depth of the wrinkled lines on his face indicated extreme age. His eyes were sharp and piercing, and his grand beard marked him as a Hebrew, faithful to the ancient laws and customs of his people. Also his costume was very much in the old Frankish style, as people dressed about the year 1720; and perhaps that was why he had the effect of having come back to life out of a period of remote antiquity.

But the stranger whom Tussmann had come across was still more remarkable of aspect.

A tall, meagre man, powerfully formed as to his limbs and muscles, seemingly about fifty years of age. His face might once have passed for handsome, and the great eyes still flashed out from under the black bushy eyebrows with youthful fire and vigour. The brow was broad and open; the nose strongly aquiline. All this would not have distinguished him from a thousand others. But, whilst his coat and trousers were of the fashion of the present day, his collar, his cloak, and his barret cap belonged to the latter part of the sixteenth century. But it was more especially the wonderful eyes of the man, and the blaze of them (which seemed to come streaming out of deep mysterious night), and the hollow tones of his voice,

and his whole bearing--all in the most absolute contrast with things of the present day--it was, we say, all these things taken together which made everybody experience a strong sense of eeriness in his proximity.

He nodded to the man who was sitting at the table as if to an old acquaintance.

"Ha!" he cried, "here *you* are again, after all this time. How do you feel? Are you all alive and kicking?"

"Just as you see," the old man growled. "Sound as a roach. All ready on my legs at the proper time. All *there*--when there's anything up."

"I'm not quite so sure about that," the stranger said, laughing loudly; "we shall see!" And he ordered the waiter to bring a bottle of the oldest claret in the cellar.

"My good Mr. Privy Councillor," Tussmann began, deprecatingly. But the stranger interrupted him hastily, saying:

"Let us drop the 'titles,' Tussmann, for once and all! I am neither a Privy Councillor nor a Clerk of the Privy Council. What I am is an artist, a worker in the noble metals and the precious jewels; and my name is Leonhard."

"Oh, indeed!" Tussmann murmured to himself--"a goldsmith! a jeweller!" And he bethought himself that he might have seen at the first glance that the stranger could not possibly be an ordinary Privy Councillor, seeing that he had on an antique mantle, collar, and barret cap, such as Privy Councillors never went about in nowadays. Leonhard and Tussmann sat down at the same table with the old Jew, who received them with a grinning kind of smile.

When Tussmann, at Leonhard's instigation, had taken two or three glasses of the full-bodied wine, his pale cheeks began to glow, and as he swallowed the liquor, he glanced about him with smirks and smiles, as if the most delightful ideas were rising in his brain.

"And now," Leonhard said, "tell me openly and candidly, Mr. Tussmann, why you went on in such an extraordinary manner when the lady showed herself at the Tower-window; and what it is that your head is so very full of at the present moment. You and I are very old acquaintances, whether you believe it or not; and as to this old gentleman here, you need be on no ceremony with him."

"Oh, heavens!" answered the Privy Chancery Clerk--"Oh, good heavens! most respected Herr Professor--(I do beg you to allow me to address you by that title; I am sure you are a most celebrated artist, and quite in a position to be a professor in the Academy of Arts)--and so, most respected Herr Professor, how can I hide from you that I am, as the proverb puts it, 'walking on wooer's feet.' I am expecting to bring the happiest of brides home about the vernal equinox. Could it be otherwise than a rather startling thing, when you, most respected Herr Professor, were so very kind as to let me see a fortunate bride that is to be?"

"What!" the old Jew broke in, in a screaming voice--"What! are you thinking of marrying? Why, you're as old as the hills, and as ugly as a baboon into the bargain."

"Never mind him," Leonbard said; for Tussmann was so startled by what the old man said that he could not utter a syllable. "He means no harm, dear Mr. Tussmann, though you may think he seems to do so. I must say, candidly, that it seems to me, too, that it is a little too late in life for you to be thinking about such a thing. You must be well on to your fiftieth birthday; aren't you?"

"I shall be forty-eight," said Tussman, with a certain amount of irritability, "on the 9th of next October--St. Dionysius's day."

"Very well," said Leonhard. "But it isn't only your age that's against you--you have always been leading a simple, solitary, virginal existence. You have no

knowledge or experience of women. I can't see what is to become of you in their hands!"

"Knowledge of them--experience of them! Dear Herr Professor, you must really take me for a most foolish and inconsiderate person if you think I am going to plunge into matrimony without any counsel or reflection or advice. I weigh, consider, and reflect upon every step most maturely; and, having perceived myself to be pierced to the heart by the dart of the wanton deity yclept 'Cupid' by the ancients, could I do otherwise than bend all my thoughts upon the preparation of myself for the matrimonial life? Would any one who was preparing for a difficult examination not be careful to study all the subjects on which he is to be interrogated? Very well, most respected Herr Professor, my marriage is an examination, for which I have prepared myself, and I feel pretty certain that I shall pass it admirably--with honours! Look here, at this little book, which I have always carried about in my pocket, studying it constantly, since the time when I made up my mind to fall in love and get married. Look at it, my dear sir; and you will be convinced that I am setting about this business in the most thorough and fundamental manner possible, and that I shall certainly not be found an ignoramus in it; although, as you say (and as I must admit), the feminine sex is--so far, and up to the present date--to me a complete *terra incognita*."

With these words Tussmann produced from his pocket a little book in parchment binding, and turned up its title-page, which ran as follows:--

"Brief Tractate on Diplomatic Acumen. Embracing methods of Self-Counsel for guidance in all Societies of our fellow-creatures, conducing to the attainment of a proper system of Conduct. Of the utmost importance to all Persons who deem themselves Wise, or wish to become Wiser. Translated from the Latin of Herr Thomasius. With a complete Index. Frankfurt and Leipzig. Johann Grossen's Successors. 1710."

"Now just let me show you," said Tussmann, with a sweet smile, "what this worthy author (in his seventh chapter, which deals with the subjects 'Wedlock, and the Duties of the Father of a Family and Master of a Household') says, in the seventh section of that chapter. You see, what he says is this:

"'Above all things, let there be no hurry about it. He who does not marry till of mature age is so much the wiser, and the better able to cope with the exigencies of the situation. Over-early marriages produce shameless, subtle, and disingenuous people, and sacrifice the vigour of both body and mind. Although the age of manhood is not the commencement of youth, the one should not terminate before the other.'"

"And then, with regard to the choice of the object of the affections--her whom one is to love and to marry--this grand Thomasius says, in his nineteenth section:

"'The middle course is the safest. We should not select one too beautiful or too ill-favoured, too rich nor too poor, too high-born or too low-born, but of like social standing with one's self. And, similarly, as regards the other qualities, the middle course will be found always the safest to follow.'"

"Very well, you see, this is what I have always guided myself by. And (as directed by Thomasius--section seventeen), not only have I had occasional conversations with the lady of my choice, but (inasmuch as, in occasional interviews, misapprehensions may arise with respect to peculiarities of character and modes of looking at matters, &c.) I have taken opportunities to have very *frequent* interviews and conversations with her; because those frequent interviews necessarily make it very difficult for people to conceal themselves from one another, don't you see?"

"My dear Mr. Tussmann," the goldsmith said, "it appears to me that all this sort of intercourse, 'conversation,' or whatever you please to call it, with women requires one to have a good deal of experience, extending over a very

considerable period of time, if one is to avoid being befooled and made an ass of by it."

"Even in this," said Tussmann, "our grand Thomasius comes to our aid, giving us completely adequate instruction as to how we are to 'converse' with ladies, in the most rational and delightful style; even telling us exactly how and when to introduce the due amount of playfulness and wit, suitable to the occasion. My author says, in his fifth chapter, that one ought to be careful to introduce such jocular sayings sparingly--as a cook uses salt; and that pointed speeches should never be employed as weapons against others, but altogether in our own defence--just as a hedgehog uses his spines. And also, that it is wise to rely more upon the actions than upon the words; because it is often the case that what is hidden by words is made evident by actions, and that words very often do not do so much to awaken liking or disliking as actions do."

"I see," the goldsmith said, "there is no getting anything like a rise out of you. You are closed up in armour of proof. So I am prepared to bet, heavily, that you have gained the affections of the lady of your choice by means of those wonderfully deep diplomatic dodges of yours."

Tussmann answered, "I study to direct all my endeavours (following Thomasius's advice) to attain a deferential, though kindly, agreeableness of demeanour, that being the most natural and usual indication of affection, and what is most adapted to awaken liking in reciprocation: just as if you yawn, you will set an entire company gaping too, from sympathy. But, reverentially as I follow his instructions, I don't go too far; I always recollect that (as Thomasius says) women are neither good angels nor bad angels, but mere human beings; and, in fact, as regards strength of mind and body, weaker than we are, which, of course, is fully accounted for by the diversity which exists between the sexes."

"A black year come over you!" the old Jew cried wrathfully, "sitting there chattering your cursed stuff and nonsense without a stop; spoiling for me the good hour in which I hoped to enjoy myself a little after all the hard work I've been going through."

"Hold your tongue, old man," the goldsmith said. "You ought to be very thankful that we put up with you here. I can tell you your company is anything but pleasant; your manners are so abominable. You ought to be kicked out of decent society, if you had your deserts. Don't let the old man disturb you, dear Mr. Tussmann. You believe in the old times; you're fond of old Thomasius. I go a good deal further back. What I care about is the time to which, as you see, my dress partly belongs. Aye! my good friend, those were the days! It is to them that that little spell belongs which you saw me putting into practice to-night at the Town-house Tower."

"I don't quite understand you, Herr Professor,'' Tussmann said.

"Well," said the goldsmith, "there used to be splendid weddings in those old days in the Town-hall--very different affairs from the weddings nowadays. Plenty of happy brides used to look out of those Tower-windows in those days, so that it's a piece of pleasant glamour when an aerial form comes and tells us what is going to happen now, from knowledge of olden times. Let me tell you, this Berlin was a very different place in those old days; nowadays everything is marked with the same stamp of tediousness and *ennui*, and people *ennuyer* one another just because they are so *ennuyées* and weary in themselves. In those days there were entertainments, feastings, rejoicings worthy the name, very different from the affairs that are so called now. I shall only speak of what was done at Oculi, in the year 1581, when the Elector Augustus of Saxony, with his Consort, and Don Christian, his son, were escorted to Cologne by all the nobles and gentry. There were over a hundred horse, and the citizens of both the cities--Berlin and Cologne--and those of Spandau lined both sides of the road from the gate to the palace in complete armour. Next day there was a splendid running at the ring, at which the Elector of Saxony and Count Jost of Barby appeared, with many nobles--

in fine suits of gold embroidery, and tall golden helms, golden lions' heads on their shoulders, knees, and elbows, with flesh-coloured silk on the other parts of their arms and legs, just as if they had been naked---exactly as you see the heathen warriors painted in pictures. There were singers and musicians hidden inside a gilt Noah's Ark, and on the top of it sat a little boy in flesh-coloured silk tights, with his eyes bandaged, as Cupid is represented. Two other boys, dressed as doves, with white ostrich feathers, golden eyes and beaks, drew ±he ark along; and when the prince had run at the ring and been successful, the music in the ark played, and a number of pigeons were let fly from it. One of them flapped its wings and sang a most delightful Italian *aria*, and did it much better than our Court singer Bernard Pasquino Grosso from Mantua did seventy years afterwards (but not so charmingly as our *prime donne* sing nowadays). Then there was a foot tournay, to which the Elector and the Count went in a ship, which was all dressed over with black and yellow cloth, and had a sail of gold taffeta; and behind His Highness sate the little boy who had been Cupid the day before, in a long coat of many colours, a peaked black and yellow hat, and a long grey beard. The singers and musicians were dressed in the same way; and nil round about the ship a number of gentlemen danced and jumped--gentlemen of good family, mind you!--with heads and tails of salmon, herrings, and fishes of other sorts: most delightful to behold. In the evening, about ten, there was a grand display of fireworks, with thousands of detonations; and the master-gunners played all sorts of pranks--had combats; and there were explosions of fiery stars; and fiery men and horses, strange birds and other creatures, went up into the air with a terrible rushing and banging. They went on for more than two hours, those fireworks."

Whilst the goldsmith was narrating all this, the Clerk of the Privy Chancery gave every sign of the liveliest interest and the utmost enjoyment, crying, in a sympathizing and interested manner, "Ey!--oh!--ah!"--smiling, rubbing his hands, moving backwards and forwards on his chair, and gulping down glass after glass of the wine the while.

"Dearest Professor," he cried at last, in falsetto (always a mark in him of intense enjoyment)--"My dearest, most respected Herr Professor! what delightful things you have been having the kindness to tell me about!--really *quite* as though you had been there and seen them yourself."

"Well!" the goldsmith said, "and wasn't I there?"

Tussmann, who didn't in the least understand this extraordinary query, was going to try to get some further light thrown upon it, when the old Jew came in with a growl, to the following effect: "Don't forget those delightful entertainments when the pyres burned in the market-place--the Berlin folks were much delighted with them, you know; and the streets ran red with the blood of the wretched victims, slain in the most terrific manner, after confessing whatever was imputed to them by the wildest infatuation and the most idiotic superstition. Don't, I merely say, forget to tell your friend about them!"

"Yes, yes," Tussmann said; "of course you mean those terrible witchcraft trials which took place in those old days. Ah! they were atrocious businesses; fortunately the enlightenment of the present age has altered all those things."

The goldsmith cast strange looks at the old Jew and at Tussmann; and presently asked the latter, with a mysterious smile, if he had ever heard about the Jew-coiner, Lippold, and what had happened to him in the year 1512.

Ere Tussmann could answer, the goldsmith went on to say: "This Jew-coiner, Lippold, was accused of an important imposture, and a serious roguery. He had at one time been much in the confidence of the Elector, and was at the head of all the affairs of the mints and the coinage in the country; always ready to produce large sums of money, no matter how large, when required. Whether because he was clever at shifts, or that he had powers at his command which enabled him to clear himself from all blame in the Elector's eyes, or that he was able to 'shoot with a silver bullet' (to use an expression of those times) those who had influence

over the Elector's proceedings, he was on the very point of getting off scot free from the accusations brought against him. But he was still kept under guard, by the town-watch, in his little house in Stralau Street. And it so chanced that he had a quarrel with his wife, in the course of which she said to him, in the hearing of the guard, 'If our gracious lord the Elector only knew what a villain you are, and what atrocities you manage to commit by the help of that magic book of yours, you'd be in your coffin long ago.' This was reported to the Elector, who had careful search made in Lippold's house. The magic book was found, and, when it was examined by those who understood it, Lippold's guilt was clearly established. He had practised magical arts to give him power over the Elector, and to enable him to rule the whole country; and it was only the piety and Godfearingness of the Elector which had enabled him to withstand those spells. Lippold was burned in the market-place. But when the fire was taking effect on his body and upon the magic book, a great mouse came out from under the scaffold, and leaped into the fire. Many supposed that this was Lippold's familiar demon."

Whilst the goldsmith had been relating this, the old Jew had sate leaning his arms on the table, with his hands before his eyes, groaning and sighing like one suffering unendurable tortures. On the other hand, the Clerk of the Privy Chancery did not seem to be paying much attention to what the goldsmith was saying. He was in high good-humour, and his mind was full of quite other ideas and images; and, when the goldsmith had ended, he asked, with many smiles, and in a lisping manner: "Tell me, dear Herr Professor, if you will be so kind, was it really Miss Albertine Bosswinkel who came and looked out of the window of the Tower?"

"What?" cried the goldsmith, furiously--"what business have *you* with Miss Albertine Bosswinkel?"

"My dear sir!" said Tussmann, timidly--"good gracious! My dear friend, she is the very lady whom I have made up my mind to marry!"

"Good God, sir!" the goldsmith cried, with a face as red as a furnace, and eyes glaring with anger; "you must be out of your reason altogether. *You*, an old, worn-out pedant, to think of marrying that beautiful young creature! *You*, who, with all your erudition, and your 'diplomatic acumen,' taken from the idiotic treatise of that old goose Thomasius, can't see a quarter of an inch before that nose of yours! I advise you to drive every idea of the kind out of your head as quickly as you can, or you will probably find that you stand a good chance of having that weazened neck of yours drawn, on this autumn equinoctial night!"

The Clerk of the Privy Chancery was a quiet, peaceable, nay, timorous man, incapable of saying a hard word to anybody, even when attacked; but what the goldsmith had said was just a trifle too infernally insulting; and then, Tussmann had taken more strong wine than he was accustomed to. Accordingly, there was no wonder that he did what he had never done before in his life---that is, he burst into a fury, and yelled out, right into the goldsmith's teeth: "Eh! What the devil business have you with me, Mr. Goldsmith (whose acquaintance I haven't the honour of); and how dare you talk to me in this sort of way? You seem to me to be trying to make an ass of me, by all sorts of childish delusions. I presume you have the effrontery to be paying your addresses to Miss Bosswinkel yourself; you've got hold of a portrait of her on glass, and shown it at the Town-hall in a magic-lantern held under your cloak. My good sir, *I* know something about these matters, as well as *you* do; you're going the wrong way to work if you think you're going to frighten and bully *me* in this sort of way."

"Be careful what you're about," the goldsmith said, very quietly, and with a strange smile. "Be very careful what you're about; you've got strange sort of people to do with here."

And as he so spake, lo! instead of the goldsmith's face, there was a horrid-looking fox's face snarling and showing its teeth at Tussmann from under the goldsmith's bonnet.

The Clerk of the Privy Chancery fell back in his chair in the profoundest terror.

The old Jew did not seem to be in the least degree surprised by this transformation; rather, he had suddenly lost his mood of ill-temper altogether. He laughed, and cried, "Aha! capital sport! But there's nothing to be *made* by those arts. I know better ones. I can do things which were always beyond *you*, Leonhard."

"Let us see," said the goldsmith, who had assumed his human countenance again--"let us see what you can do."

The old man took from his pocket a large black radish, trimmed it and scraped it with a little knife, which also came from his pocket, shredded it into thin strips, and laid them in order on the table. Then he struck each of them a blow with his clenched fist; when they sprung up, one by one, ringing, in the shape of gold coins, which he took up and threw across to the goldsmith. But as soon as the goldsmith took hold of one of those coins, it fell to dust, in a little shower of crackling sparks of fire. This infuriated the old man. He went on striking the radish-shavings into gold pieces faster and faster, hitting them harder and harder, and they crackled away in the goldsmith's hand with fierier and fierier sparks.

Tussmann was nearly out of his senses with fear and agitation. At last he pulled himself together out of the swoon into which he was nearly falling, and said, in trembling accents: "Really, I must beg, with all due courtesy and respect, to say that I feel that I should much prefer to bid 'Good-evening' on this occasion." And grasping his hat and stick, he bolted out of the room as quickly as he could. When he reached the street, he heard those two uncanny people setting up a shout of screaming laughter after him, which made the blood run cold in his veins.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH IT IS RELATED HOW, BY THE INTERVENTION OF A CIGAR WHICH WOULD NOT DRAW, A LOVE-AFFAIR WAS SET AGOING BETWEEN A LADY AND GENTLEMAN WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY KNOCKED THEIR HEADS TOGETHER.

The manner in which young Edmund Lehsen, the painter, made acquaintance with the mysterious goldsmith, Leonhard, was somewhat different to that in which Tussmann had done so.

Edmund was one day sketching a beautiful group of trees in a lonely part of the Thiergarten, when Leonhard came up, and, without any ceremony, looked over his shoulder at what he was doing. Edmund did not disturb himself, but went on with his sketch, till the goldsmith cried--

"That is a most extraordinary picture, young gentleman. Those will come to be something else than trees before you have done with them."

"Do you see anything out of the way, sir?" Edmund said, with flashing eyes.

"I mean," said the goldsmith, "that there are all sorts of forms and shapes peeping out from amongst those high leaves there, in ever-changing variety: geniuses, strange animals, maidens, and flowers. Yet the whole thing ought only to amount to that group of trees before us there, through which the rays of the evening sun are streaming so charmingly."

"Sir!" Edmund answered, "either you have a very profound understanding, and a most penetrating eye for matters of this kind, or I have been unusually successful in portraying my inmost feelings. Don't you perceive when, in looking at Nature, you abandon yourself to all your feelings of longing, all kinds of wonderful shapes and forms come looking at you through the trees with beautiful eyes? That was what I was trying to represent to the senses in this sketch, and I

see I have succeeded."

"I understand," Leonhard said, rather coldly and dryly. "You wanted to drop study, and give yourself a rest, to refresh and strengthen your fancy."

"Not at all," Edmund answered. "I consider this way of working from Nature is my best and most useful 'study.' Study of this sort enables me to put the really poetic and imaginative element into my landscape. Unless the landscape painter is every bit as much a poet as the portrait painter, he will never be anything but a dauber."

"Heaven help us!" cried the goldsmith. "So you, dear Edmund Lehsen, are going to----"

"You know me, then, sir, do you?" the painter cried.

"Why shouldn't I?" said Leonhard. "I first made your acquaintance on an occasion which you, probably, don't remember much about; that is to say, when you were born. Considering the small experience which you had at that time, you had behaved very well--had given your mamma little trouble--and as soon as you came into the world, gave a very pretty cry of pleasure and delight. Also, you showed a great love for the daylight, which, by my advice, you were not kept away from. Because, according to the most recent medical opinions, daylight is far from having a bad effect on babies, but rather is beneficial to their bodies and their minds. Your papa was so pleased that he hopped about the room on one leg, singing

'The manly heart with love o'erflowing,'

from Mozart's 'Flauto Magico.'

"Presently he handed your little person over to me, and asked me to draw your horoscope, which I did. Afterwards I often came to your father's house, and you didn't disdain to suck at the little bags of almonds and raisins which I used to bring you. Then, when you were about six or eight, I went away on my peregrinations. When I got back to Berlin I saw with satisfaction that your father had sent you here from Münchberg to study the noble art of painting; because there is not a very large collection in Münchberg of works adapted for fundamental study, either in the shape of pictures, statues, bronzes, gems, or other art-treasures of value. That good native town of yours can scarcely vie with Rome, Florence, or Dresden in that respect; or perhaps even with what Berlin will one day become, when bran-new antiques, fished out of the Tiber, have been brought to it in some considerable quantity."

"Heavens!" Edmund cried, "the most vivid remembrances out of my childhood are awaking themselves in my mind. You are Herr Leonhard, are you not?"

"Certainly!" Leonhard answered. "Leonhard is my name. Yet I am a little astonished that you should remember me all this long time."

"I do, though," Edmund answered. "I know that I was always glad when you came to my father's, because you always brought me such delicious things to eat, and petted me. But I always felt a sort of reverential awe for you; in fact, more than that--a kind of oppressive anxiousness, which often lasted after you were gone. But what makes the remembrance of you remain so vividly in my mind is what my father used to say about you. He set great store by your friendship, because you had got him out of a number of troubles in the most wonderful way--out of some of those difficulties which come upon people in this world so often. And he used to speak in the most enthusiastic way about the extent to which you had penetrated into deep and mysterious branches of science; how you controlled many of the secret powers of Nature at your will. Not only that, but (begging your pardon for saying so) he often went so far as to give us to understand that you were really nobody other than Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew."

"Why not the Pied Piper of Hamelin? or the King of the Kobolds?" cried the goldsmith. "All the same, there is some foundation for the idea that there is something a little out of the everyday line about me--something which I don't care to talk about, for fear of giving rise to 'unpleasantness.' I certainly did some good turns to your papa, by means of my secret knowledge, or 'art.' He was particularly pleased with the horoscope which I cast for you at your birth."

"It wasn't so very clear, though," Edmund said. "My father often told me you said I should be a great something--either a great Artist, or a great Ass. At all events, I have to thank this utterance for my father's having given consent to my wish to be a painter; and don't you think your horoscope is going to turn out true?"

"Oh, most certainly," the goldsmith answered, very dryly; "there can be no doubt about that. At this moment you are in the fairest possible way to turn out a very remarkable Ass."

"What!" cried Edmund--"you tell me so to my face!--you----"

"It rests altogether with yourself," the goldsmith said, "to avoid the bad alternative of my horoscope, and turn out a very remarkable Painter. Your drawings and sketches show that you have a rich and lively imagination, much power of expression, and a great deal of cleverness in execution. You may raise a grand edifice on those foundations. Carefully keep away from all 'modish' exaggerations and eccentricities, and apply yourself to serious study. I congratulate you upon your efforts to imitate the grave, earnest simpleness of the old German masters. But, even in that direction, you must carefully shun the precipice which so many fall over. It needs a profound intelligence, and a mind strong enough to resist the enervating influence of the Modern School, to grasp, wholly, the true spirit of the old German masters, and to penetrate completely into the significance of their pictures. Without those qualifications, the true spark will never kindle in an artist's heart, nor the genuine inspiration produce works which, without being imitations, shall be worthy of a better age. Nowadays young fellows think that when they patch together something on a Biblical subject, with figures all skin and bone, faces a yard long, stiff angular draperies, a perspective all askew, they have painted a work in the style of the great old German masters. Dead-minded imitators of that description are like the country lad who holds his bonnet before his face while the Paternoster is being sung in church, and says if he doesn't remember the words, he knows the tune."

The goldsmith said much more that was true and beautiful on the subject of the noble art of painting, and gave Edmund a great many valuable hints and lessons; so that the latter, much impressed, asked how it had been possible for him to acquire so much knowledge on the subject without being a painter himself; and why he went on living in such seclusion, and never brought his influence to bear on artistic effort of all descriptions.

"I have told you already," the goldsmith said, in a gentle and serious tone, "that my ways of looking at life, and at things in general, have been rendered exceptionally acute by a long--aye, a marvellously long--course of experience. As regards my living in seclusion, I know that wherever I should appear, I should produce a rather extraordinary effect, as a result, not only of my nature in general, but more especially of a certain power which I possess; so that my living quietly in Berlin here might not be a very easy matter. I keep thinking of a certain person who, in many respects, might have been an ancestor of mine: so marvellously like me in every respect, in body and mind too, that there are times not a few when I almost believe (perhaps it may be fancy) that I am that person. I mean a Swiss of the name of Leonhard Turnhäuser zum Thurm, who lived at the court of the Elector Johann Georg, about the year 1582. In those days, as you know, every chemist was supposed to be an alchemist, and every astronomer was called an astrologer; so Turnhäuser was very probably both. It is certain, at all events, that he did most wonderful things, and, *inter alia*, was a very marvellous doctor. Unfortunately, he had a trick of putting his finger in every pie, and getting

conspicuously mixed up in all that was going on. This made him envied and hated; just as people who have money and make a display with it, though it may be never so well earned, bring enemies about their throats. Thus it came about that people made the Elector believe that Turnhäuser could make gold, and that, if he did not do so, he had his reasons for so abstaining. Then his enemies came to the Elector and said--'See what a cunning, shameless rascal this is. He boasts of powers which he does not possess, and carries on sorceries and Jewish deceptions, for which he ought to be burned at the stake like Lippolt the Jew.' Turnhäuser had been a goldsmith by trade, and this came out. Then everybody said he had none of the knowledge imputed to him, though he had given the most incontrovertible proofs of it in open day. They even said that he had never, himself, written any of the sage and clever books and important prognostications which he published, but had paid others to do them. In short, envy, hatred, and calumny brought matters so far that he was obliged to leave Berlin in the most secret manner, to escape the fate of the Jew Lippolt; then his enemies said he had gone to the Catholics for protection. But »that is not true. He went to Saxony, and worked at his trade there, though he did not give up the study and practice of his science."

Edmund was wonderfully attracted to this old goldsmith, who inspired in him a reverential trustfulness and confidence. Not only was he a critic of the most instructive quality, though severe; but he told Edmund secrets concerning the preparation of colours and the combining of them known to the old masters, and of the most precious importance when he put them to the test of practice. Thus there was formed, between these two, one of those alliances which come about when there is on the one hand hopeful confidence, in a young disciple, and, on the other, affectionate paternal friendship on the part of a teacher.

About this time it happened, one fine summer evening, that Herr Melchior Bosswinkel, Commissionsrath, who was taking his pleasure in the Thiergarten, could not manage to get a single one of his cigars to draw. He tried one after another, but every one of them was stopped up. He threw them away, one after another, getting more and more vexed and annoyed as he did so; at last he cried out: "Oh, God! and those are supposed to be the very finest brands to be got in Hamburg. Damme! I've spared neither trouble nor money, and here they play the very deuce with every idea of enjoyment--not one of the infernal things will draw. Can a man enjoy the beauties of nature, or take part in any sort of rational conversation, when these damnable things won't burn? Oh, God! it's terrible!"

He had involuntarily addressed these remarks to Edmund Lehsen, who happened to be close beside him with a cigar which was drawing splendidly.

Edmund, who had not the slightest idea who the Commissionsrath was, took out his cigar-case and offered it politely to this desperate person, saying that he could vouch for both the quality and the drawing powers of his cigars, although he had not got them from Hamburg, but out of a shop in Frederick Street.

The Commissionsrath accepted, full of gratitude and pleasure, with a "Much obliged, I'm sure." And as, the moment he touched the end of the cigar which Edmund was smoking with the one just obtained from him, this latter drew delightfully, and sent out the loveliest and most delicious clouds of blue odoriferous smoke, he cried, enraptured:

"Oh, my dear sir! you have really rescued me from the profoundest depths of misery. Do please to accept a thousand thanks. In fact, I would almost venture to ask you to let me have one more of those magnificent cigars of yours, to be going on with when this one is finished."

Edmund said the contents of his cigar-case were quite at the gentleman's disposal; and then they went on their several ways.

Presently, when the twilight had fallen a little, and Edmund, with the idea for a picture in his head, was making his way, rather absently, not paying much attention to those about him, pushing through amongst the chairs and tables so as

to get out of the crowd, the Commissionsrath suddenly appeared in front of him, asking him if he would not come and sit down at his table. Just as he was going to decline--because he was longing to get away into the open country--he suddenly caught sight of a young lady, the very incarnation of youth, beauty, and delightsomeness, who was seated at the Commissionsrath's table.

"My daughter, Albertine," the Commissionsrath said to Edmund, who was gazing motionless at the lady, almost forgetting that it was incumbent on him to bow to her. He recognised, at the first glance, in Albertine, the beautiful creature whom he had come across at the last exhibition as she was admiring one of his own pictures. She was describing and pointing out the meaning of this fanciful picture to an old lady and two girls who were with her; explaining the peculiarities of the drawing and the grouping; applauding the painter, and saying that he was quite a young artist, though so full of promise, and that she wished she knew him. Edmund was standing close behind her, drinking in the praise which flowed from her beautiful lips. His heart was so full that he could not bring himself to go forward and say he was the painter. And at this juncture Albertine happened to drop one of her gloves, which she had taken off. Edmund stooped to pick it up, and as Albertine did the same thing at the same instant, their heads banged together with such a crash that it rang through the place.

"Oh, good gracious!" Albertine cried, holding her hands to her head.

Edmund started back in consternation and alarm. At his first step he stamped on the old lady's pug, which yelled aloud; at his second he trampled the gouty toe of a professor, who gave a tremendous shout, and devoted poor Edmund to all the infernal deities. Then the people came hurrying from the neighbouring rooms, and all the lorgnettes were fixed upon Edmund, who made the best of his way out of the place, amid the whimperings of the dog, the curses of the professor, the objurgations of the old lady, and the tittering and laughter of the girls. He made, we say, his escape in those circumstances, blushing over and over with shame and discomfiture, in complete despair, whilst a number of young ladies got out their essence-bottles and rubbed Albertine's forehead, on which a great lump was rapidly rising.

Even then, in the crisis of this ridiculous occurrence, Edmund had fallen deeply in love, though he was scarcely aware of it himself. And it was only a painful sense of his own stupidity that prevented him from going to search for her all over the town. He could not think of her otherwise than with a great red lump on her forehead, and the bitterest reproach, the most distinct expression of anger, in her face and in her whole being.

There was not the faintest trace of this, however, about her as he saw her now. She blushed indeed over and over again when she saw him, and seemed unable to control herself. But when her father asked him his name, &c., she said with a delightful smile, and in gentle accents, "that she must be much mistaken if he were not Mr. Lehsen, the celebrated painter, whose works she so immensely admired."

Those words, we need not say, ran through Edmund's nerves like an electric shock. In his emotion he was about to burst into flowers of rhetoric, but the Commissionsrath would not let him get to that, clasping him to his breast with fervour, and saying, "My dear sir, what about the cigar you promised me?" And whilst he was lighting said cigar at the ashes of the former one, he said, "So you are a painter? and a great one, from what my daughter Albertine tells me--and she knows what she is talking about in such matters, I can assure you. I'm very glad you are. I love pictures, and, as my daughter Albertine says, 'Art' altogether, most tremendously. I simply dote upon it. And I know something about it, too. I'm a first-rate judge of a picture. My daughter Albertine and I know what we're about there. We've got eyes in our heads. Tell me, my dear painter, tell me without hesitation, wasn't it you who painted those pictures which I stop and look at every day as I pass them, because I cannot help standing to admire the colouring of them? Oh, it is beautiful!"

Edmund did not quite understand how the Commissionsrath managed to see any pictures of his daily in passing them, seeing that he had never painted any signboards, that he could remember. But after a good deal of questioning, it turned out that Melchior Bosswinkel meant certain lacquered tea-trays, stove-shades, and things of that sort, which he saw and much admired in a shop-window as he went to business of a morning, after two or three sardines and a glass of Dantziger at the Sala Tarone. These productions constituted his highest ideal of the pictorial art. This disgusted the painter not a little; and he cursed, internally, Bosswinkel and his wretched chatter, which was preventing him from making any approach to the young lady. At last there came up an acquaintance, who engaged him in conversation, and Edmund took advantage of this to go and sit down beside Albertine, who seemed to be very much pleased at his doing so.

Every one who knows Miss Albertine Bosswinkel is aware that, as has been said, she is the very personification of youth, beauty, and delightsomeness; that, like all other Berlin young ladies, she dresses in the best possible taste in the latest fashions, sings in Zelter's choir, has lessons on the piano from Herr Lauska, dances most beautifully, sent a tulip charmingly embroidered and surrounded by violets to the last exhibition, and though by nature of a bright, lively temperament, is quite capable of displaying the proper amount of sentimentality required at tea-parties, at all events. Also, that she copies poetical extracts and sentences which have pleased her in the writings of Goethe, Jean Paul, and other talented men and women, in the loveliest little tiny handwriting into a nice little book with a gilt morocco cover.

Of course it was natural that, sitting beside the young painter, whose heart was beaming with the bliss of a timid affection, she should be several degrees more sentimental than was usual on the tea and reading-aloud occasions; and she lisped in the prettiest manner about such subjects as poetic feeling, depth of idea, childlike simplicity, and so forth.

The evening breeze had begun to sigh, breathing perfume from the flowers and wafting their scents on its wings; and two nightingales were singing a lovely duetto in among the thick darkling leafage, in the tenderest accents of love-complaining.

Albertine began, quoting from Fouqué--

"A rustling, whisper'd singing
  Breaks thro' the leaves of spring,
And over heart, and sense, and soul
  A web of love doth fling."

And Edmund, grown less timid now that the twilight was falling more deeply, took her hand and laid it on his heart, whilst he went on, continuing the quotation--

"Did I, in whispered music, sing
  What my heart hears--aright--
From that sweet lay would burst, in fire,
  Love's own Eternal Light."

Albertine withdrew her hand, but only to take off her glove, and then give the hand back to this lucky youngster. He was just going to kiss it fervently, when the Commissionsrath broke in with a

"Oh! I say! How chilly it's getting! I wish I had brought my great coat! Put on your shawl, Tiny! It's a fine Turkish shawl, my dear painter--cost fifty ducats. Wrap yourself up in it, Tiny; we must be getting home. Good-bye, my *dear* sir."

Edmund was here inspired by a happy thought. He took out his cigar case and offered the Commissionsrath a third Havannah.

"I really am excessively obliged to you," the Commissionsrath said, delighted;

"you really are most kind. The police don't let one smoke walking about in the Thiergarten, for fear of the grass getting burnt; one enjoys a pipe or a cigar more for that very reason."

Bosswinkel went up to the lamp to light the cigar, and Edmund took advantage of his doing so to whisper to Albertine, very shyly, that he hoped she would let him walk home with her. She put her arm in his, they went on together, and Bosswinkel, when he joined them, seemed to consider it a matter of course that Edmund was going to walk with them all the way to town.

Anybody who has once been young, and in love--or who is both now at this present time (there are many who have never been either the one or the other)--will understand how Edmund, at Albertine's side, thought he was hovering over the tops of the trees, rather than walking through amongst them; up among the gleaming clouds, rather than down upon the earth.

Rosalind, in Shakespeare's 'As You Like It,' says that the "marks" of a man in love are "a lean cheek, a blear eye and sunken, an unquestionable spirit, a beard neglected, hose ungartered, bonnet unhanded, sleeve unbuttoned, shoe untied, and everything demonstrating a careless desolation." But those marks were as little seen in Edmund as in Orlando. Like the latter, however, who marred all the trees of the forest with carving his mistress's name on them, hung odes on the whitethorns, and elegies on the bramble-bushes, Edmund spoilt quantities of paper, parchment, canvas and colours, in besinging his beloved in verses which were wretched enough, and in drawing her, and painting her, without ever succeeding in making her in the least like--so far did his fancy soar above his capability. When to this was added the peculiar, unmistakable somnambulistic look of the love-sick, and a fitting amount of sighing at all times and seasons, it was not to be wondered at that the old goldsmith saw into his young friend's condition.

"H'm," he said; "you don't seem to think what an undesirable thing it is to fall in love with a girl who is engaged. For Albertine Bosswinkel is as good as engaged already to Tussmann, the Clerk of the Privy Chancery."

This terrible piece of news sent Edmund into the wildest despair. Leonhard waited patiently till the first paroxysm was past, and then asked if he really wanted to marry Albertine. Edmund declared that was the dearest wish of his heart, and implored the goldsmith to help him as much as ever he could to beat Tussmann out of the field, and win the lovely lady himself.

What the goldsmith thought and said was that a young artist might fall in love as much as ever he liked, but to marry straight away was a very different affair; and that was just why young Sternbald never cared to marry, and, for all he knew, was still unmarried up to that hour.

This thrust took effect, because Tieck's 'Sternbald' was Edmund's favourite book, and he would have been only too glad to have been the hero of that tale himself. So he then and there put on a very pitiful face, and was very near bursting into tears.

"Well," said the goldsmith, "whatever happens, I am going to take Tussmann off your hands. What you have got to do is to get into Bosswinkel's house, by hook or by crook, as often as you can, and attract Albertine to you as much as you can manage to do. As for my operations against the Clerk of the Privy Chancery, they can't be begun till the night of the Autumnal Equinox."

CHAPTER III.

CONTAINS A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF MR. TUSSMANN, CLERK OF THE PRIVY CHANCERY; WITH THE REASON WHY HE HAD TO DISMOUNT THE ELECTOR'S HORSE; AND OTHER MATTERS WORTHY TO

Dear reader! From what you have already learnt concerning Mr. Tussmann, you can see the man before you, in all his works and ways. But, as regards his outward man, I ought to add that he was short of stature, very bald, a little bow-legged, and very grotesque in his dress. He wore a coat of the most old-world cut, with endlessly long tails; a waistcoat, also of enormous length; and long white trousers, with shoes which, as he walked, made as loud a clatter as the boots of a courier. Here it should be observed that he never walked in the streets with regular steps, like most people, but jumped, so to speak, with great irregular strides, and incredible rapidity, so that the aforesaid long tails of his coat spread themselves out like wings, in the breeze which he thus created around him. Although there was something excessively comic about his face, yet there was a most kindly smile playing about his mouth which impressed you in his favour; and everybody liked him, though they laughed at the pedantry and awkwardness of his behaviour, which estranged him from the world. His passion was reading. He never went out but he had both his coat-pockets crammed full of books. He read wherever he was, and in all circumstances; walking or standing, as he took his exercise, in church and in the café. He read indiscriminately everything that came to his hand: but only out of old times, the present being hateful to him. Thus, to-day he would be studying, in the café, a work on algebra; to-morrow, 'Frederick the Great's Cavalry Regulations,' and next the remarkable book, 'Cicero proved to be a Pettifogger and a Windbag: in Ten Discourses. Anno 1720.' Moreover, he had a most extraordinary memory; he marked all the passages which particularly struck him in a book, then read all those marked passages over again, after which he never forgot them any more. Hence he was a polyhistor, and a walking encyclopædia, and people turned over the leaves of him when they wanted information on any point. It was only on the rarest occasions that he was unable to supply the information required on the spot, but, if he couldn't, he would go rummaging in various libraries till he could get at it, and then emerge with it, greatly delighted. It was remarkable that when (as usual) he was reading in society, to all appearance completely absorbed in his book, he heard, and took in, everything that was being said around him, and would often strike in with some most apposite observation, or laugh at anything witty in a high tenor laugh, without looking up from his book.

Commissionsrath Bosswinkel had been at school with Tussmann at the Grey Friars, and from that period dated the intimate friendship which there had always been between them. Tussmann saw Albertine grow up from childhood; and, on her twelfth birthday, after presenting her with a bouquet, the finest that money could procure from the first florist in Berlin, kissed her hand for the first time with an amount of courtesy and ceremonious deference which no one would have supposed him to be capable of. Dating from that day there dawned in the breast of the Commissionsrath an idea that it would be a very good thing if his old schoolfellow were to marry Albertine. He wanted to get Albertine married, and he thought this would be about the least troublesome way of getting it done. Tussmann would be content with very little in the shape of portion, and Bosswinkel hated bother of every kind, disliked making new acquaintances, and, in his capacity of a Commissionsrath, thought a great deal more of money than he ought to have done. On Albertine's eighteenth birthday he propounded this scheme (which he had previously kept to himself) to Tussmann.

The Clerk of the Privy Chancery was at first alarmed at the suggestion. The idea of entering the matrimonial estate, particularly with so youthful a lady, was more than he could quite see his way to. But he got accustomed to it by degrees, and one day, when Albertine, at her father's instigation, gave him a little purse, worked by her own hands in the prettiest of colours (addressing him by his much-prized "title" as she did so), his heart blazed up in a sudden flame of affection. He told the Commissionsrath at once that he had made up his mind to marry Albertine, and as Bosswinkel immediately embraced him in the character of his son-in-law, he, very naturally, considered himself engaged to her. There was still one little point in the matter of some importance, namely, that the young lady

herself had not heard a syllable about the affair, and could not possibly have the very faintest inkling what was going forward.

At an excessively early hour of the morning, after the strange adventures which we have, in our first chapter, described as having been met with by Tussmann at the foot of the Townhouse Tower, and in the wineshop in Alexander Street, the said Clerk of the Privy Chancery came bursting, pale and wild, with distorted features, into his friend Bosswinkel's bedroom. The Commissionsrath was much alarmed and exercised in his mind, for Tussmann had never come in upon him at such an hour, and his manner and appearance clearly indicated that something most remarkable had been happening.

"What, in the name of Heaven, is the matter with you?" Bosswinkel cried. "Where have you been? What have you been up to? You look like I don't know what!"

Tussmann threw himself feebly into an arm-chair, and it was not till he had gasped for breath during several minutes that he was able to begin to speak--which he did in a whimpering voice.

"Bosswinkel! here, as you see me, in these self-same clothes, with 'Thomasius on Diplomatic Acumen' in my pocket, I come straight here from Spandau Street, where I have been running up and down, and backwards and forwards, ever since the clock struck twelve last night. I have not set a foot across my own doorstep, or seen the sight of a bed, nor have I closed an eye the whole livelong night!"

And he told the Commissionsrath all that had happened to him from the time when he first came across the mysterious and fabulous sort of Goldsmith, till he had made his escape from the winehouse as fast as he could, in his terror at the sorcery which was going on there.

"Tussmann, old fellow," said Bosswinkel, "I see what it is, you're not accustomed to liquoring up. You go to your bed every night at eleven o'clock, after a couple of glasses of beer, and last night you went and took more liquor than was good for you, long after you ought to have been asleep; no wonder you had a lot of funny dreams."

"What!" Tussmann cried; "you think I was asleep, do you, and dreaming? Don't you know I'm pretty well up in the subject of sleep and dreams. I'll prove to you out of Rudow's 'Theory of Sleep,' and explain to you, what sleep really is, and that people can sleep without dreaming at all; and as for what dreaming is, you will know as well as I do, if you will read the 'Somnium Scipionis,' and Artimidorus's great work on Dreams, and the Frankfort Dreambook; but, you see, you never read *anything* and that's why you are always making such a hash of everything you have to do with."

"Now, my dear old man," the Commissionsrath replied, "don't you go and get yourself into a state of excitement. I can see, easily enough, how you may have allowed yourself to break out of bounds a bit last night, and then have got somehow into company with a set of mountebanks, who got the better of you when you had more liquor than you could carry; but what I cannot make out is, why, in all the earth, when you had once got out of the place, you didn't go straight home to your bed, like a reasonable man? Whatever for did you go wandering about the streets?"

"Oh, Bosswinkel!" lamented Tussman, "my old friend! my chum at the Grey Friars!--don't you go and insult me by base insinuations of that sort. Let me tell you that the infernal, diabolical enchantment which was practised upon me did not fairly commence till I got *into* the street. For, when I came to the Town-hall, every one of its windows was blazing with light, and there was music playing inside--a brass band, playing waltzes and so forth. How it came about I can't tell you; but, though I'm not a particularly tall man, I found that I was able to reach up on my tiptoes so that I could see in at the windows. And *what* did I see?--Oh,

gracious powers of Heaven! *whom* did I see? *Your daughter*, Miss Albertine Bosswinkel, dressed as a bride, and waltzing like the very deuce (if I may permit myself such an expression) with a young gentleman! I thumped on the window; I cried out, 'Dearest Miss Bosswinkel, what are you doing? What sort of goings-on are those, here, at this time of the night?' But just as I was saying so, there came some horrible beast of a fellow down King Street, pulled my legs away from under me as he passed, and ran away from me, with them, in peals of laughter. As for me, wretched Clerk of the Privy Chancery that I am, I plumped down flat into the filthy mud of the gutter. 'Watchman!' I shouted, 'Police! patrol; guard, turn out! Come here!--look sharp!--Stop the thief!--stop him!--he's got both my legs!' But upstairs in the Town-hall everything had suddenly grown pitch-dark, and my voice died away in the air. I was getting desperate, when the man came back, and, as he flew by me like a mad creature, chucked my legs back to me, throwing them right into my face. I then picked myself up, as speedily as, in my state of discomfiture, I could, and ran to Spandau Street. But when I got to my own door (with my latchkey in my hand), there was *I--I*, myself, standing there already, staring at *me*, with the same big black eyes which you see in my head at this moment. Starting back in terror, I fell against a man, who seized me with a strong grip of his arms. By the halbert he was carrying, I thought he was the watchman; so I said, 'Dearest watchman!--worthy man!--please to drive away that wraith of Clerk of the Privy Chancery Tussmann from that door there, so that *I*, the *real* Tussmann, may get into my lodgings.' But the man growled out, 'Why, Tussmann! you're surely out of your senses!' in a hollow voice; and I saw it wasn't the watchman at all, but that terrible Goldsmith who had got me in his arms. Drops of cold perspiration stood on my forehead. I said: 'Most respected Herr Professor, pray do not take it ill that I should have thought you were the watchman, in the dark. Oh, Heavens! call me whatever you choose; call me in the most uncourteous manner 'Tussmann,' without the faintest adumbration of a title at all; or even 'My dear fellow!' I will overlook anything. Only rid me of this terrible enchantment--as you can, if you choose. 'Tussmann!' he said, in that awful hollow voice of his, 'nothing shall annoy you more, if you will take your solemn oath, here where we stand, to give up all idea of marrying Miss Albertine Bosswinkel.' Commissionsrath! you may fancy what I felt when this atrocious proposition was made to me. I said: 'Dearest Herr Professor! you make my very heart bleed. Waltzing is a horrible and improper thing; and Miss Albertine Bosswinkel was waltzing upstairs there--in her wedding-dress as my bride into the bargain--with some young gentleman or other (I don't know who he was), in a manner that made my sight and my hearing abandon me, out and out. But still, for all that, I cannot let that exquisite creature go. I must cleave to her, whatever happens, come what will.' The words were scarcely out of my mouth, when that awful, abominable Goldsmith gave me a sort of shove which made me begin immediately to spin round and round, and, as if impelled by some irresistible power, I went waltzing up and down Spandau Street, with my arms clasped about a broom-handle--not a lady, but a besom, which scratched my face. And all the time there were invisible hands beating my back black and blue. More than that; all round me, wherever I turned, the place was swarming with Tussmanns waltzing with their arms round besoms. At last I fell down exhausted, and lost my consciousness. When the light shone into my eyes in the morning--oh, Bosswinkel, share my terror!--I found myself sitting up on the horse of the Elector's statue, in front of him, with my head on his cold, iron breast. Luckily the sentry must have been asleep, for I managed to get down without being seen, at the risk of my life, and got away. I ran to Spandau Street; but I got so terribly frightened again that I was obliged to come on here to you."

"Now, now, old fellow!" Bosswinkel said, "do you think I'm going to believe all this rubbish? Did ever anybody hear of magical phenomena of this sort happening in our enlightened city of Berlin?"

"Now," said Tussmann, "don't you see what a quagmire of ignorance and error the fact that you never *read* anything plunges you into? If you had read Hafftitz's Chronicon, you would have seen that much more extraordinary things of the kind have happened here. Commissionsrath, I go so far as to assert, and to feel quite

convinced, that this Goldsmith is the very Devil, in *propria persona*."

"Pooh, pooh!" said Bosswinkel, "I wish you wouldn't talk such nonsense. Think a little. Of course, what happened was that you got screwed, and then went and climbed up on to the Elector's statue."

The tears came to Tussmann's eyes as he strove to disabuse Bosswinkel's mind of this idea; but Bosswinkel grew graver and graver, and at last said:

"The more I think of it, the more I feel convinced that those people you met with were old Manasseh, the Jew, and Leonhard, the goldsmith, a very clever hand at juggling tricks, who comes every now and then to Berlin. I haven't read as many books as you have, I know; but, for all that, I know well enough that they are good honest fellows, and have no more to do with black art than you or I have. I'm astonished that you, with your knowledge of law, shouldn't be aware that superstition is illegal, and forbidden under severe penalties; no practitioner of the black art could get a licence from the Government to carry it on, under any circumstances. Look here, Tussmann. I hope there is no foundation for the idea which has come into my head. No! I can't believe that you've changed your mind about marrying my daughter; that you are screening yourself behind all sorts of incredible nonsense and stuff which nobody can believe a word of; that you are going to say to me, 'Commissionsrath: You and I are men of the world, and I can't marry your daughter, because, if I do, the Devil will bolt away with my legs and beat me black and blue!' It would be too bad, Tussmann, if you were to try on a trick of that sort upon me."

Tussmann could not find words to express his indignation at this notion on the part of his old friend. He vowed, over and over again, that he was most devotedly in love with Miss Albertine; that he would die for her without the least hesitation, like a Leander or a Troilus, and that the Devil might beat him black and blue, in his innocence, as a martyr, rather than he should give Albertine up.

As he was making these asseverations, there was heard a loud knocking at the door, and in came that old Manasseh of whom Bosswinkel had been speaking.

As soon as Tussmann saw him he cried out: "Oh, gracious powers of Heaven! That's the old Jew who made the gold pieces out of the radish, and threw them in the Goldsmith's face! The dreadful Goldsmith will be coming next, I suppose."

And he was making for the door. But Bosswinkel held him fast, saying: "Wait till we see what happens." And, turning to the old Jew, he told him what Tussmann had said about him and the events of the previous night in the wineshop and in Alexander Place.

Manasseh looked at Tussmann with a malignant grin, and said: "I don't know what the gentleman means. He came into the wineshop last night with Leonhard, the goldsmith (where I happened to be taking a glass of wine to refresh me after a quantity of hard work which had occupied me till nearly midnight). The gentleman drank rather more than was good for him: he couldn't keep on his legs, and went out to the street staggering."

"Don't you see," Bosswinkel said, "this is what comes of that terrible habit of liquoring up? You'll have to leave it off, I can assure you, if you're going to be my son-in-law."

Tussmann, overwhelmed by this unmerited reproof, sank down into a chair breathless, closed his eyes, and murmured something completely unintelligible in whimpering accents.

"Of course," said Bosswinkel, "dissipating all night, and now done up and wretched."

And, in spite of all his protestations, Tussmann had to submit to Bosswinkel's wrapping a white handkerchief about his head, and sending him home in a cab to

Spandau Street.

"And what's *your* news, Manasseh?" the Commissionsrath inquired. Manasseh simpered most deferentially, and with much amiability, and said Mr. Bosswinkel would scarcely be prepared for the news he had to tell him, which was that that splendid young fellow, his nephew Benjamin Dümmerl, worth close upon a million of money, had just been created a baron on account of his remarkable merits, was recently come back from Italy, and had fallen desperately in love with Miss Albertine, to whom he intended to offer his hand.

We see this young. Baron Dümmerl continually in the theatres, where he swaggers in a box of the first tier, and oftener still at concerts of every description. So that we well know him to be tall, and as thin as a broom-handle; that in his dusky yellow face, overshadowed by jetty locks and whiskers, in his whole being, he is stamped with the most distinctive and unmistakeable characteristics of the Oriental race to which he belongs; that he dresses in the most extravagant style of the very latest English fashion, speaks several languages, all in the self-same twang (that of "our people"); scrapes on a violin, hammers on the piano; is an art connoisseur without acknowledge of art, and would fain play the part of a literary Mecænas; tries to be witty without wit, and *spirituel* without *esprit*; is stupidly forward, noisy, and pushing. In short, to use the concise and descriptive expression of that numerous class of individuals amongst whom his desire is to shove himself, an insufferable snob and boor. When we add to all this that he is avaricious and dirtily mean in everything that he does, it cannot be otherwise than that even those less elevated souls that fall down and worship wealth very soon leave him to himself.

When Manasseh mentioned this nephew, the thought of that approximation to a million which "Benjie" possessed passed through the Commissionsrath's mind; but along with that thought came the objection which, in his opinion, made the idea of him as a son-in-law impossible.

"My good Manasseh, you are forgetting that your nephew belongs to the old religion, and that----"

"Ho!" cried Manasseh, "what does *that* matter? My nephew is in love with your daughter, and wants to make her happy. A drop or two of water more or less won't make much difference to him. He'll be the same man still. You just think the matter over, Herr Commissionsrath; I shall come back in a day or two with my little baron, and get your answer." With which Manasseh took his departure.

Bosswinkel began to think over the affair at once, but, spite of his boundless avarice and his utter absence of conscience or character, he could not endure the idea of Albertine's marrying that disgusting Benjamin, and in a sudden attack of rectitude he determined that he would keep his word to Tussmann.

CHAPTER IV.

TREATS OF PORTRAITS, A GREEN FACE, JUMPING MICE, AND ISRAELITISH CURSES.

Albertine, soon after she made Edmund's acquaintance, came to the conclusion that the big oil portrait of her father which hung in her room was a horribly bad likeness of him, and dreadfully scratched into the bargain. She pointed out to her father that though it was so many years since the portrait was painted, he was really looking much younger, and better in every way, than the painter had represented him. Also, she particularly disliked the gloomy, sulky expression of the face, the old-fashioned clothes, and a preposterous bunch of flowers which he was holding between his fingers in a delicate manner, displaying in so doing certain handsome diamond rings.

She talked so much, and so long, on this subject, that at last her father himself saw that the portrait was horrible, and couldn't understand how the painter had managed to turn out such a caricature of his well-looking person. And the more he thought the matter over and looked at the picture, the more he was convinced that it was an execrable daub. He determined to take it down, and stow it away in the lumber room.

Albertine said that was the best thing that could be done, but that, all the same, she was accustomed to see dear papa's picture in her room, that the bare space on the wall would be such a blank to her that she should never feel comfortable; so that the only course was for dear papa to have *another* portrait painted, by some painter who knew what he was about, and that *she* could think of nobody but Edmund Lehsen, so celebrated for his admirable portraits.

"My dear," the Commissionsrath said, "you don't know what you're talking about. Those young painters are so full of conceit, they don't know where to turn themselves, don't care how much they ask for those bits of scumblings of theirs, won't think of anything under gold Fredericks."

But Albertine declared that Edmund Lehsen painted for the love of the thing much more than for money, and would be sure to charge very little. And she kept on at her father so assiduously, that at last he agreed to go to Edmund Lehsen, and see what he would say about a portrait.

We can imagine the delight with which Edmund expressed his readiness to undertake the Commissionsrath's portrait; and his delight became rapture when he heard that it was Albertine who put the idea in her father's head. He saw, of course, that her notion was that this would give him opportunities of seeing her. So that it was a matter of course that when the Commissionsrath asked, rather anxiously, about the price, Edmund said that the honour of being admitted, for the sake of Art, to the house and society of a gentleman such as he, was more than sufficient remuneration for any little effort of his.

"Good Heavens! Can I believe my ears?" the Commissionsrath cried. "No money, dearest Mr. Lehsen? No gold Fredericks for your trouble? Not even the expense of your paints and canvas?"

Edmund laughingly said all that was too insignificant to be taken into account.

"But," Bosswinkel said, "I'm afraid you don't know that I'm thinking of having a three-quarters length life-size."

"It doesn't matter in the slightest," the painter answered.

The Commissionsrath pressed him warmly to his heart, and cried, while tears of joy rose to his eyes, "Oh, heavenly powers! Are there human souls of this degree of disinterestedness in this world which lieth in wickedness? First his cigars, and now this picture. Marvellous man!--or 'youth' I ought to say. Dear Mr. Lehsen, within your soul dwell those virtues, and that true German singleness of heart, which one reads of more than enough, but which are rare in these times of ours. But let me tell you, though I am a Commissionsrath, and dress in French fashions, I am quite of the same way of thinking as yourself. I can appreciate your large-mindedness, and am as unselfish, and as free with my money, as anybody in the land."

Crafty Miss Albertine had, of course, known exactly how Edmund would proceed with her father's commission, and her object was attained. Bosswinkel overflowed with laudation of this grand young fellow, so entirely free from the least trace of that greediness which is such a hateful quality in a man. And he ended by saying that young people, especially the artistic, always have a turn for the romantic, and set great store by withered flowers and the ribbons which some beloved girl has worn, and go out of themselves altogether over any piece of work done by the hands of those divinities; so that Albertine had better knit a little

purse for Edmund, and, if she saw no particular objection, even put into it a little lock of her bonny nut-brown hair, and thus get out of any little obligation they might be thought to be under to him. To do this she had his full permission, and he undertook to answer to Tussmann on the subject. Albertine, who was not yet taken into her father's confidence as to his projects, had not the remotest notion what Tussmann might have to say to the matter, and did not take the trouble to inquire.

That very evening Edmund had his painting gear taken to Bosswinkel's house, and the next morning he made his appearance there for the first sitting.

He begged the Commissionsrath to think of the very happiest moment of his life. For instance, when his dead wife first said she loved him, or when Albertine was born, or when he unexpectedly saw some dear friend whom he had thought to be lost to him; and to try and look as he had done *then*.

"Wait a moment, Mr. Lehsen," said Bosswinkel; "I know what to do. One day, about three months ago, I got a letter from Hamburg telling me I had drawn a big prize in the lottery. I ran to my daughter with the letter open in my hand. That was the happiest moment I ever had in all my life. Let's choose *that* one; and, just to place the whole thing more vividly before your eyes--and mine--I'll go and get the letter, and be taken with it in my hand--just as I was when it came."

So Edmund had no help but to paint Bosswinkel accordingly; and he wouldn't be content, either, unless the writing on the letter was rendered legibly and distinctly, word for word, as follows:--

"Honoured Sir,

"I have the honour to inform you----"

and so forth; moreover, the envelope had to be portrayed lying on a little table, so that the address on it, displaying all the Commissionsrath's official titles written out at full length, could be clearly read. The very postmark Edmund had to copy with the utmost minuteness.

For the rest, he made a portrait of a well-looking, good-tempered, handsomely-dressed man, who *did* display, in some of the features of his face, a more or less distant resemblance to the Commissionsrath; so that nobody who read what was on the envelope could make any mistake as to whom the portrait was intended for.

The Commissionsrath was delighted with it. "There," he said; "there you see what a painter who knows his business can make of a more or less well-looking fellow, though he *may* be getting a little on in years! I begin to understand now (I didn't before), a thing that the Professor in the Humanity Class used to say, that a proper portrait ought to be a regular historical picture. Whenever I look at that one, I remember that delicious and happy moment when the news came of my prize in the lottery, and I understand the meaning of that smile on my face--that reflection of the happiness I felt within me then."

Before Albertine could carry out the plans which she had formed in her mind, her father took the initiative by begging Edmund to paint *her*, as well. Edmund begun this work at once; but he did not find it so easy to satisfy himself with her portrait as with her father's. He put in a most careful outline, and then rubbed it out again; outlined once more--carefully--begun to lay on some colour, and then threw the whole thing aside; commenced again; altered the pose. There was always either too much light in the room, or not enough. The Commissionsrath, who had always been present at those sittings at first, got tired presently, and betook himself elsewhere.

Upon this, Edmund came forenoon and afternoon, and if the picture did not make much progress, the love-affair made a great deal, and entwined itself more and more firmly. I have no doubt, dear reader, that your own experience has

shown you that when one is in love, and wants to give to all the fond, longing words and wishes, which one has got to express, their due and proper effect, so that they may go to the listener's very heart, it is a matter of absolute necessity that one should take hold of the hand of the beloved object, press it, and kiss it; upon which, as by the operation of some sudden development of electrical force, lip goes into contact with lip; and the electricity (if that is what we are to call it), arrives at a condition of equilibrium by means of a fire-stream of sweetest kisses. Thus Edmund was very often obliged to stop painting, and not only that, but he had very frequently to get down from the scaffold upon which he and his easel were placed.

Thus it came about that, one forenoon, he was standing with Albertine at the window, where the white curtains were drawn, and (on the principle we have been explaining), in order to give more force to what he was saying to her, was holding her in his arms, and kissing her hand.

At this particular hour and moment, Mr. Tussmann, Clerk of the Privy Chancery, happened to be passing Bosswinkel's house, with the 'Treatise on Diplomatic Acumen,' and sundry tractates and pamphlets (in which the useful and the entertaining were combined in due measure) in his pockets. And although he was bounding along as fast as ever he could--according to his manner--because the clock was just on the very stroke of the hour at which he used always to enter his office, still he drew up for a moment, in order to cast a sentimental glance up at the window of his love.

There he saw, as in a cloud, Albertine with Edmund; and, although he could not make out anything at all distinctly, his heart throbbed, he knew not why. Some strange sense of anxious alarm impelled him to undertake things previously unattempted, undreamt of, namely, to go upstairs to Albertine's rooms, at this totally unprecedented hour of the day.

As he entered, Albertine was saying, quite distinctly:

"Oh, yes, Edmund! I must always--always love you!" And she pressed Edmund to her heart, whilst a whole battery of "restoration of electrical equilibrium" began to go off, rushing and sparkling.

The Clerk of the Privy Chancery walked mechanically forward into the room, and then stood, dumb and speechless, like a man in a cataleptic fit. In the height of their blissfulness the two lovers had not heard the elephantine tread of Tussmann's peculiar boot-like shoes, nor his opening of the door, nor his coming in, and striding into the middle of the room.

He now squeaked out, in his high falsetto:

"But--Miss Albertine Bosswinkel!----"

Edmund and Albertine fled apart like lightning--he to his easel, she to the chair where she was supposed to be sitting for her portrait. Tussmann, after a short pause, during which he tried to get back his breath, resumed, saying--

"But, Miss Albertine Bosswinkel, what are you doing? What are you after? First of all, you go and waltz with this young gentleman (I haven't the honour of his acquaintance), in the Town-hall at twelve o'clock at night, in a way that made me, your husband that is to be, almost lose the faculties of seeing and hearing; and now--here--in broad daylight, behind those curtains--Oh! Good gracious!--is this a way for an engaged young lady to go on?"

"Who's an engaged young lady?" Albertine cried out, in immense indignation. "Whom are you talking about, Mr. Tussmann? Tell me, if you will be so kind."

"Oh, thou, my Creator," cried Tussmann, in the fulness of his heart. "You ask, dearest Miss Albertine, who is an engaged young lady, and of whom I am talking? To whom else can I be alluding but to yourself? Are you not my future bride,

whom I have so long adored in secret? Did not your dear papa ever so long ago promise me your beautiful, white, *so* kissable little hand?"

"Mr. Tussmann," said Albertine; "either you have been to a wineshop, early as it is in the day--(my father says you go to them a great deal more than you ought),--or you've gone out of your mind in some extraordinary way. My father can never have had the slightest idea of *your* marrying *me*."

"Dearest Miss Albertine," cried Tussmann; "consider for a moment. You have known me for many long years. Have I not always been a man of the strictest moderation and temperance? Have I ever been given to dissipation? Can you suppose that I have taken to drinking and improper conduct all at once? Dearest Miss Albertine, I shall be only too happy to close my eyes to what I have seen going on here; not a syllable concerning it shall ever pass my lips--we'll forget and forgive. But remember, adored one, that you promised to marry me out of the tower window of the Town-hall at twelve o'clock at night; and, although you were waltzing in such a style with this young gentleman (whose acquaintance, as I said, I have not the honour of), still I----"

"Don't you see?" interrupted Albertine; "don't you know, that you're talking all sorts of incoherent nonsense, like some lunatic out of the asylum? Please go away. I feel quite unwell; do go away, for goodness' sake."

Tears started in Tussmann's eyes.

"Oh, heavens!" he cried. "Treatment like this from the beloved Miss Albertine! No; I shall not go. I shall remain here till you have arrived at a truer opinion concerning my unworthy person, dearest Miss Albertine."

"Go; go!" reiterated Albertine, running into a corner of the room, and covering her face with her handkerchief.

"No, dearest Miss Albertine," answered Tussmann; "I shall not go until, in compliance with the sapient advice of Thomasius, I endeavour to----" and he made as if he would follow her into the corner.

While this was going on, Edmund had been scumbling angrily at the background of his picture. But at this point he could contain himself no longer.

"Damned, infernal scoundrel!" he cried, and flew at Tussmann, making four dashes over his face with the brush, full of a greyish green tint, which he had been working at his background with. Then he grasped him, opened the door, and sent him out of it with a kick so forcible that he went flying down stairs like an arrow out of a bow.

Bosswinkel, who was just coming up, started back in much alarm as this school-chum of his came bumping into his arms.

"What in the name of all that's----" he cried; "what's going on? what ails your face?" Tussmann, almost out of his mind, related all that had happened, in broken phrases; how Albertine had behaved to him--how Edmund had treated him. The Commissionsrath, brimful of rage and fury, took Tussmann by the hand and led him back to the room.

"What's all this?" he cried to Albertine. "This is very pretty behaviour; is this the way you treat your husband that is to be?"

"My husband that is to be?" echoed Albertine, in wild amazement.

"Most undoubtedly!" the Commissionsrath answered. "I don't know why you should pretend to be in a state of mind about a matter which has been understood and arranged for such a long time. My dear old friend Tussmann is your affianced husband, and the wedding will come off in a week or two."

"*Never!*" said Albertine. "Never will I marry him. Good heavens! how could anybody have *that* old creature; nobody could ever bear him."

"I don't know about 'bearing' him, or whether he's an 'old creature' or not," said her father. "What you have got to do is to marry him. Certainly my friend Tussmann is not one of your giddy young fools. Like myself, he has reached those years of discretion when a man is, very properly, considered to be at his best; and into the bargain, he is a fine, upright, straightforward, honourable fellow, most profoundly learned, perfectly eligible, in every way, and my old schoolfellow."

"No!" cried Albertine, in the utmost agitation, with the tears starting to her eyes. "I can't endure him. He's insupportable to me. I hate him! I abhor him! Oh, Edmund!"

She sank, almost fainting, into Edmund's arms; and he pressed her to his heart with the warmest affection.

The Commissionsrath, utterly amazed, opened his eyes as wide as if he were seeing spectres, and then cried--"What's all this? what do I see?"

"Ah, yes! yes, indeed!" Tussmann said, in a lamentable tone. "It appears, unfortunately, to be the fact that Miss Albertine doesn't care to have anything to do with me, and seems to cherish a remarkable partiality for this young gentleman--this painter (whose acquaintance I have not the honour of, by the way)--inasmuch as she kisses him without the slightest hesitation or shyness, though she will scarcely give wretched *me* her hand. And yet I hope to place the ring on her lovely finger very shortly indeed."

"Come away from one another, you two," the Commissionsrath cried out, and forced Albertine out of Edmund's arms. But Edmund shouted that he would never give her up, if it cost him his life.

"Indeed, sir!" said the Commissionsrath, with scathing irony. "Nice business, upon my word! A fine little love-affair going on behind my back here! Excessively pretty! Very nice indeed, my young Mr. Lehsen! This is the meaning of your liberality--your cigars and your pictures. He comes sliding into my house--leads my daughter into all this sort of thing. A charming idea, that I should go and hang her round the neck of a miserable beggar of a dauber, without a rap to bless himself with!"

Beyond himself with anger, Edmund had his mahlstick raised in the act to strike, when the voice of Leonhard was heard crying, in tones of thunder, as he burst in at the door--

"Stop, Edmund! don't be in a hurry. Bosswinkel is a terrible ass; he'll think better of it presently."

The Commissionsrath had run into a corner, frightened by the unexpected arrival of Leonhard; and, from that corner, he cried--"I really do not know, Mr. Leonhard, what business you have to----"

But Tussmann had hidden himself behind the sofa as soon as he saw Leonhard come in. He was crouching down there, and chirping out, in a voice of terror--"Gracious powers! take care, Commissionsrath! Hold your tongue; don't say a word, dearest schoolfellow. Good God! here's the Herr Professor come, the Ball-Entrepreneur of Spandau Street."

"Come along out, Tussmann," said the Goldsmith, laughing; "Don't be frightened, nothing's going to happen to you. You've been punished enough already for that foolish idea you had of wanting to marry. That poor face of yours is going to be green all the rest of the days of your life."

"Oh Lord!" cried the Clerk of the Privy Chancery, almost out of his mind, "my face green for ever and ever! What will people say? What will His Excellency, the

minister, say? His Excellency will think I have had my face painted green from motives of mere worldly vanity! Ah! it's all over with me. I shall be suspended from my official functions. The Government will never hear of such a thing as a Clerk of the Privy Chancery with a green face. Wretched man that I am; what's to become of me?"

"Come, come, Tussmann!" the Goldsmith said; "don't make such a fuss. I have no doubt there's hope for you yet, if you pull yourself together, and get rid of this idiotic notion of marrying Miss Bosswinkel."

In answer to this, Tussmann and Bosswinkel cried out together, in what is termed on the lyric stage "*ensemble*"--

"I can't."

"He shan't."

The Goldsmith fixed his sparkling, penetrating eyes on the two of them; but just as he was going to burst out at them, the door opened, and in came Manasseh, with his nephew, Baron Benjamin Dümmerl, from Vienna. "Benjie" went straight up to Albertine--who had never seen him in her life before--and said, in a disagreeable, drawling tone, as he took her hand--

"I have come here in person, dear Miss Bosswinkel, to lay myself at your feet. Of course you know that is a mere *façon de parler*. Baron Dümmerl doesn't really lay himself at anybody's feet, not even at the Emperor's. What I mean is--let me have a kiss."

So saying, he went nearer to Albertine, and bent down towards her.

But, at that moment, a something happened which neither he nor anybody else--except the Goldsmith--anticipated, and which caused them all much alarm. Benjie's rather sizeable nose suddenly shot forward to such a length that, passing beyond Albertine's face, it struck the opposite wall of the room with a tremendous, resounding bang. He started back a step or two, and his nose at once drew in to its ordinary dimensions. He approached Albertine again, with exactly the same result. To make a long tale short, his nose kept on shooting in and out like a trombone.

"Cursed necromancer!" Manasseh roared; and took a thin cord, fastened in a sort of knot, out of his pocket, which he threw to the Commissionsrath, crying--"Throw that about the brute's neck--the Goldsmith, I mean--and then drag him out of the room. Never mind about ceremony. Do as I tell you. All will be right then."

The Commissionsrath took hold of the noose, but instead of throwing it about the Goldsmith's neck, he threw it over the Jew's; and immediately he and the Jew began flying up to the ceiling and then down again. And so they went on, shooting up and down, while Benjie carried on his nose-concerto, and Tussmann laughed like a mad creature, till the Commissionsrath fell down nearly fainting in an arm-chair.

"Now's the time! now's the time!" Manasseh cried. He slapped his pocket, and out sprung an enormous, horrible-looking mouse, which made a spring right at the Goldsmith. But as it was jumping at him, the Goldsmith transfixed it with a sharp needle of gold, upon which it gave a yell, and disappeared, none knew whither.

Then Manasseh clenched his fists at the fainting Commissionsrath, and cried, with rage and hatred blazing in his face--

"Ha! Melchior Bosswinkel! thou hast conspired against me. Thou art in league with this accursed sorcerer, whom thou hast brought into thine house. But cursed, cursed shalt thou be. Thou and all thy race shall be swept away like the helpless brood of a bird. The grass shall grow on thy doorstep, and all that thou

settest thy hand to shall be as the dream of the famishing, who sates himself, in dreams, with savoury food. And the Dā-lĕs shall take up his dwelling in thine house, and consume thy substance. And thou shalt beg thy bread, in rags, before the doors of the despised people of God; and they shall drive thee away like a mangy cur, and thou shalt be cast to the earth like a rotten branch. And instead of the sound of the harp, moths shall be thy fellows, and dogs shall make a divan of the tomb of thy mother! Curses!--curses!--curses upon thee! Commissionsrath Melchior Bosswinkel!"

And, having thus delivered himself, this raging Manasseh seized hold of his nephew, and went storming out of the house with him.

Albertine, in her terror and horror, had taken refuge with Edmund, hiding her face on his breast; and he held her closely to him, though he had difficulty in mastering his own emotion. But the Goldsmith went up to those two, and said, with a smile, and in a gentle voice:

"Don't you be put out in the slightest by all this business: everything will come right. I give you my word for it. But, just now, you must bid each other good-bye, before Tussmann and Bosswinkel come back to their senses."

And he and Edmund left Bosswinkel's house.

CHAPTER V.

WHEREIN THE READER LEARNS WHAT THE DĀ-LĔS IS: ALSO HOW THE GOLDSMITH SAVES THE CLERK OF THE PRIVY CHANCERY FROM A MISERABLE DEATH, AND CONSOLES THE DESPAIRING COMMISSIONSRATH.

Bosswinkel was utterly shaken; more by Manasseh's curse than by the wild piece of spookery which, as he saw, the Goldsmith had been carrying on. And indeed it was a terrible curse, for it set the Dā-lĕs on to him.

Dear reader, I don't know if you are aware what the Dā-lĕs of the Jews is.

One of the Talmudists says that the wife of a certain poor Jew, one day on coming into her house, found a weazened, emaciated, naked stranger there, who begged her to give him the shelter of her roof, and food and drink. Being afraid, she went to her husband, and told him, in tones of complaint: "A naked, starving man has come in, asking for food and shelter. How are we to help him, when it is all we can do to keep body and soul together ourselves?" The husband said: "I will go to this stranger, and see how I can get him out of the house."

"Why," he said to him, "hast thou come hither, I being so poor and unable to help thee? Begone! Betake thee to the house of Riches, where the cattle are fat, and the guests bidden to the feast!"

"How," said the stranger, "canst thou drive me from this shelter which I have found? Thou seest that I am bare and naked: how can I go to the house of Riches? Have clothing made for me that shall be fitting, and I will leave thee." "Better," thought the master of the house, "better were it for me to spend all I possess in getting rid of him, than that he should stay, and consume whatever I earn in the time to come, as well." So he killed his last calf, on which he and his wife had thought to live for many days; sold the meat, and with the price provided good clothing for the stranger. But when he took the clothing to him, behold! the stranger, who had before been lean, and short of stature, was become tall and stout, so that the clothing was everywhere too short for him and too narrow. At this the poor Jew was much afraid. But the stranger said: "Give up the foolish idea of getting me out of thy house. Know that I am the Dā-lĕs!" At this the poor Jew wrung his hands and lamented, crying: "God of my fathers! I am scourged with

the rod of Thine anger, and poverty-smitten for ever and ever! For if thou art the Dā-lĕs, thou wilt never leave us, but consume all that we have, and always grow bigger and stronger. For the Dā-lĕs is Poverty; which, when once it takes up its abode in a house, never departs from it, but ever increases more and more."

If, then, the Commissionsrath was terrified that Manasseh, by his curse, had brought poverty into his house, on the other hand, he stood in the utmost dread of Leonhard, who, to say nothing of the extraordinary magical powers at his command, had a certain something about him which created a decided sense of awe. The Commissionsrath could not but feel that there was nothing (with respect to the two of them) which one could "do;" and thus the full brunt of his anger was discharged upon Edmund Lehsen, upon whom he laid all the blame of all the "unpleasantness" which had come about. Over and above all this, Albertine came to the front, and declared, of her own motion, having evidently completely made up her mind on the subject--declared, we say, with the utmost distinctness, that she loved Edmund more than words could express, and would never marry either that insufferable and unendurable old pedant of a Tussmann, or that equally not-to-be-heard-of beast of a Baron Benjamin. So that the Commissionsrath got into the most tremendous rage imaginable, and wished Edmund at (ahem!) Hong Kong, or Jericho, or, to speak idiomatically, "where the pepper grows." But inasmuch as he could not carry this wish into effect, as the late French Government did (which actually *did* send objectionable persons to the place "where the pepper grows"), he had to be content with writing Edmund a nice little note, into which he poured all the gall and venom which was in him at the time (and that was not a little), and which ended by telling him that if ever he crossed his, the Commissionsrath's, threshold again, he had better--look out for squalls.

Of course we all know the state of inconsolable despair in which Leonhard found Edmund, when he went to see him, at the fall of the twilight, according to his wont.

"What have *I* to thank you for?" Edmund cried, indignantly. "Of what service have your protection and all your efforts been to *me*? Your attempts to send this cursed rival of mine out of my way--what has been the result of them? Those damnable conjuring tricks of yours--all that *they* have done has been to send everybody into a state of higgledy-piggledy, where nobody knows what to think of anything! Even that darling girl of mine is in the same boat with all the rest of them. It's just this stupid, nonsensical bosh of yours--that, and nothing else,--which is blocking up *my* way, and so I tell you. Oh Lord! the only thing which I can see that I can do is to be off to Rome at once, and, I can assure you, I mean to do it, too."

"Just so," the Goldsmith said: "that is exactly what I want you to do. Be good enough to remember what I said to you when you first told me you were in love with Albertine. I said my idea was that a young artist was right to be in love, but that he should not go and marry, all at once, because that was most inadvisable. When I said that to you, I brought to your mind, half in jest, the case of Sternbald; but now I tell you, in the utmost seriousness, that, if you really wish to become a great painter, you must put all ideas of marrying out of your head. Go you away, free and glad, into the Father-land of Art; study, in the most enthusiastic manner that ever you can, the inner-being of that world of Art; and then, and only then, will the technical and practical skill (which you might pick up here) be of the slightest real use to you."

"Good gracious!" Edmund cried, "what an idiot I was to say anything to you about my love affairs. I see, now, that it was you--you, on whom I relied for advice and help in them--who have been purposely throwing difficulties in the way, playing Old Harry with my most special heart's desires, out of mere nastiness and unkindness."

"My good young sir!" the Goldsmith said, "just be good enough to keep a rather quieter tongue in your head. Don't be quite so forcible in your expressions. Please to remember that you have got one or two things to learn, still, before you can

quite see through *me*. *I* can excuse you, of course. I know very well what has upset your temper. This insane spooniness of yours."

"As regards Art," Edmund said, "I really can't see why I should not go to Rome and study, though I do stand in this intimate relation with Albertine. You say yourself that I have a certain amount of 'turn' for painting, and some practical skill, already. What I was thinking of was, that, as soon as I was quite sure that Albertine would be mine, one day, I should be off to Italy; spend a year there, and then come back to my darling girl, having some real knowledge of my work."

"What, Edmund?" the Goldsmith cried; "was this really your idea, arrived at after proper consideration?"

"Yes," Edmund answered: "deeply as I love Albertine, my heart burns for that grand country which is the home of my Art."

"Will you give me your sacred word," the Goldsmith asked, "that if you are sure that Albertine is yours you will be off at once to Italy?"

"Why shouldn't I?" Edmund replied, "inasmuch as it is my firm determination to do so? It always has been so, and would be so--if she were to be mine (I have my doubts as to whether she over will or not").

"Well, Edmund," the Goldsmith said, "be of good courage. This firm resolve of yours has gained you your sweetheart. I give you my word of honour that in a very few days Albertine will be your affianced wife. And you know well enough that you need have no doubt as to my having the power to keep my word."

Joy and rapture beamed from Edmund's eyes; and the mysterious Goldsmith went quickly away, leaving him to all the sweet hopes and dreams which had been awakened in his heart.

In an out-of-the-way corner of the Thiergarten, under a shady tree, the Clerk of the Privy Chancery, Mr. Tussmann, was lying "like a dropped acorn," as Celia, in 'As You Like It,' expresses it, or like a wounded knight, pouring forth his heart's complainings to the perfidious autumn breeze.

"Oh, God of justice!" he lamented. "Unhappy, pitiable Clerk of the Privy Chancery that you are! how did you ever come to deserve all the misery which has fallen to your share? Thomasius says that the estate of matrimony in no wise hinders the acquisition of wisdom. And yet, though you have only been *thinking* of entering into that estate, you have nearly lost that proportion of understanding (and it was not so very small, neither,) which originally fell to your share. Whence comes the aversion which dear Miss Bosswinkel displays towards your--not particularly striking, but still, fairly well endowed--personality? Are you a politician, who ought not to take a wife (as some have laid down), or an expert in the laws, who (according to Cleobolus) ought to give his wife a licking if she misbehaves herself? Am I either of those, that this beautiful creature should be warranted in entertaining some certain quantum of bashful repugnance to me? Why, oh, why, dearest Clerk of the Privy Chancery, Tussmann, must you go and get mixed up with a lot of horrible wizards, and raging painters, who took your face for a stretched canvas, and painted a Salvator Rosa picture on it without saying with your leave or by your leave? Aye! that's the worst of the business! I put all my trust in my friend, Herr Seccius, whose knowledge of chemistry is so extensive and so profound, and who can help people out of every difficulty. But all in vain! The more I rub my face with the liquid he gave me, the greener I get! though the green does take on the most extraordinary variety of different tints and shades that anybody could imagine. My face has been a face of spring, of summer, and of autumn. Ah, yes! it's this greenness which is driving me to my destruction. And if I don't attain to the whiteness of winter (the proper colour for me), I shall run desperate, pitch myself into this frog-pond here, and die a green death!"

It was no wonder that Tussmann complained most bitterly, for the colour of his countenance was a very great annoyance to him. It was not like any ordinary oil-colour, but as if it were some cleverly compounded tincture or dye, sunk into his skin, and not to be obliterated by any human means. In the day-time the poor wretch dared not go about except with his hat down over his eyes, and a pocket-handkerchief before his face. And even when night came on he could only venture to go flitting through the more out-of-the-way streets at a gallop. He dreaded the street-boys, and he also was afraid that he might come across somebody belonging to his office, as he had reported himself sick.

We often feel any trouble that has befallen us more keenly in the silent hours of night than during the more stirring daylight. And so--as the clouds rolled blacker and blacker over the sky, as the shadows of the trees fell deeper, and the autumn wind soughed louder and louder through the branches--Tussmann, as he pondered over all his wretchedness, got into a state of the profoundest despair.

The terrible idea of jumping into the green frog-pond, and so terminating a baffled career, assailed his mind so irresistibly that he looked on it as an unmistakable hint of destiny, which he was bound to obey.

"Yes!" he cried, getting up from the grass, where he had been lying; "yes!" he shouted; "it's all over with you, Clerk of the Privy Chancery! Despair and die, good Tussmann; Thomasius can't help you! On, to a green death! Farewell, terrible Miss Albertine Bosswinkel! Your husband, that was to have been--whom you despised so cruelly--you will never see again! Here he goes, into the frog-pond!"

Like a mad creature he rushed to the edge of the basin (in the darkness it looked like a fine, smooth, broad road, with trees on each side of it), and there he remained standing for a time.

Doubtless the notion of the nearness of death affected his mind; for he sang, in a high-pitched, penetrating voice, that Scotch song, which has the refrain--

> "Green grow the rashes, oh!
> Green grow the rashes!"

And he shied the 'Diplomatic Acumen,' and the 'Handbook for Court and City,' and also 'Hufeland, on the Art of Prolonging Life,' into the water, and was in the very act of jumping after them, when he felt himself seized from behind by a pair of powerful arms.

He at once recognized the well-known voice of the necromantic Goldsmith. It said--"Tussmann, what are you after? I beg you not to make an ass of yourself; don't go playing idiotic tricks of this sort."

Tussmann strove with all his might to get out of the Goldsmith's grasp, while, scarcely capable of utterance, he croaked out--

"Herr Professor! I am in a state of desperation, and all ordinary considerations are in abeyance. Herr Professor, I sincerely trust you will not take it ill if a Clerk of the Privy Chancery, who is (as we have said) in a state of desperation, and who (in ordinary circumstances) is well versed in the *convenances* of official etiquette--I say, I hope you won't take it ill, Herr Professor, if I assert, openly and unceremoniously, that (under all the circumstances of the case) I wish to heaven that you and all your magic tricks were at the devil! along with your unendurable familiarity, your 'Tussmann! Tussmann!' never giving me my official title!----there!"

The Goldsmith let him go, and he tumbled down, exhausted, in the long, wet grass.

Believing himself to be in the basin, he cried out, "Oh, cold death! oh, green

rashes! oh, meadows! I bid ye farewell. I leave you my kindest wishes, dearest Miss Albertine Bosswinkel. Commissionsrath, good-bye! The unfortunate 'intended' is lying amongst the frogs that praise God in the summer time."

"Tussmann," cried the Goldsmith, in a powerful voice, "don't you see that you're out of your senses, and worn out and wretched into the bargain? You want to send me to the devil! What if I *were* the Devil, and should set to and twist that neck of yours, here on this spot, where you think you're lying in the water?"

Tussmann sighed, groaned, and shuddered as if in the most violent ague.

"But I mean you kindly, Tussmann," the Goldsmith said; "and your desperate condition excuses everything. Get up, and come along with me." And he helped him to get on his legs.

Tussmann, completely exhausted, said, in a whisper--

"I am completely in your power, most honoured Herr Professor. Do what you will with my miserable body; but I most humbly beg you to spare my immortal soul."

"Do not talk such absurd nonsense," the Goldsmith said, "but come along with me as fast as you can." He took hold of Tussmann by the arm, and led him away. But when they came to where the walk which leads to the Zelten crosses at right angles, he pulled up, and said--

"Wait a moment, Tussmann. You're wet through, and look like I don't know what. Just let me wipe your face, at all events."

The Goldsmith took a handkerchief of dazzling whiteness out of his pocket, and wiped Tussmann's face with it.

The bright lights of the Weberschen Zelt were visible, shining brightly through the trees. Tussmann cried out, in alarm--

"For God's sake, Herr Professor, where are you taking me? Not into town? not to my own lodgings? not (oh, heavens!) into society, amongst my fellow-men? Good heavens! I can't be seen. Wherever I go I give rise to unpleasantness--create a *scandalum*."

"Tussmann," said the Goldsmith, "I cannot understand that ridiculous shyness of yours. What do you mean by it? Don't be an ass. What you want is a drop of something pretty strong. I should say a tumbler of hot punch, else we shall be having you laid up with a feverish cold. Come on!"

Tussmann kept on lamenting as to his greenness, and his Salvator Rosa face; but the Goldsmith paid not the slightest attention to him, merely hurrying him along with him at a rapid rate.

When they got into the brightly lighted coffee-room, Tussmann hid his face in his handkerchief, as there were still some people there.

"What's the matter with you, Tussmann?" the Goldsmith asked. "Why do you keep hiding that good-looking face of yours, eh?"

"Oh, dearest Herr Professor, you know all about this awful face of mine," Tussmann answered. "You know how that terrible, passionate painter young gentleman went and daubed it all over with green paint?"

"Nonsense," said the Goldsmith, taking the Clerk of the Privy Chancery by the shoulders and placing him right in front of the big mirror at the top of the room, while he threw a strong light on to him from a branched candlestick which he had taken up. Tussmann forced himself--much against the grain--to look. He could not restrain a loud cry of "Gracious heavens!"

For not only had the terrible green tint of his face disappeared, but he had a much more beautiful complexion than he ever had had in his life, and was looking several years younger. In the excess of his delight he jumped up and down with both feet together, and cried, in a voice of sweet emotion--"Oh, just Heaven! what do I see? what do I contemplate? Most honoured Herr Professor, I have no doubt that it is to you that I am indebted for this great happiness!--to you alone! Ah! now I feel little doubt that Miss Albertine Bosswinkel--for whose dear sake I was so very nearly jumping into the frog-pond--won't make much difficulty about accepting me. Really, dearest Professor, you have rescued me from the very profoundest depths of misery. There is no doubt that I did feel a certain sense of relief and well-being when you were so kind as to pass that snow-white handkerchief of yours over my face. You really were my benefactor, were you not?"

"I won't deny, Tussmann," the Goldsmith answered, "that I wiped the green colour away from your face; and, from that, you may gather that I am not by any means so much your enemy as you have supposed me to be. What I can't bear to think of is this ridiculous notion of yours (which you have allowed the Commissionsrath to put in your head) that you are going to go and marry a splendid young creature, bursting with life and love. It is this, I say, which I can't bear to think about. And even now--though you have scarcely got clear of the little trick which has been played on you--you see, you go and begin at once to think about this marriage again. I feel inclined to take away your appetite for it in a very effectual style; and I could do so if I chose, without the slightest difficulty. However, I don't want to go so far as that. But what my advice to you would be is--that you should keep as quiet, and as much out of the way as ever you can till Sunday next, at twelve o'clock at noon, and then you will see more into things. If you dare to go and see Albertine before that time, I will make you go on dancing in her presence till your breath and senses abandon you. Then I will transform you into the very greenest of frogs, and chuck you into the basin of the Thiergarten, or into the River Spree itself, where you'll go on croaking till the end of your days. Good-bye! I have something to do in town which obliges me to get back there as quickly as possible. You won't be able to follow me, or keep up with me. Good-bye!"

The Goldsmith was right in saying that it would not be possible for Tussmann, or anybody else, to keep up with him, for he was off through the door and out of sight, as if he had Schlemihl's seven-leagued boots on.

Perhaps this was why, the next minute after he had disappeared from Tussmann, he appeared suddenly, like a ghost, in the Commissionsrath's room, and bade him good evening in a rough tone.

The Commissionsrath was very frightened, but he pulled himself together, and asked the Goldsmith, with some warmth, what he meant by coming in at that time of the night, adding that he wished he would take himself off, and not bother him any more with any of those conjuring tricks of his, as he presumed he was about to do.

"Ah!" said the Goldsmith very calmly, "that is how people are, particularly Commissionsraths. Just the very people who come to them, wishing to do them a service, into whose arms they ought to throw themselves with a confident heart--just those are the people whom they want to kick out of the door. My good Herr Commissionsrath, you are a poor unfortunate man, a real object of pity and commiseration. I have come here--I have *hastened* here--at this late hour of the night, to consult with you as to how this terrible blow which is hanging over you may be averted--if averted it can be--and you----"

"Oh, God," the Commissionsrath cried, "another bankruptcy in Hamburg, I suppose, or in Bremen, or London, to ruin me out and out! That was all that was wanted. Oh, I'm a ruined man!"

"No," the Goldsmith said, "it's an affair of a different kind altogether; you say

that you won't allow young Edmund Lehsen to marry Albertine, do you not?"

"What's the good of talking about such a piece of absurdity?" the Commissionsrath replied. "I to give my daughter to this beggar of a penciller."

"Well," said the Goldsmith, "he has painted a couple of magnificent portraits of you and her."

"Oh, oh," cried Bosswinkel, "a fine piece of business it would be to hand over my daughter for a couple of daubs on canvas; I've sent the trash back to him."

"If you don't let Edmund have your daughter," the Goldsmith continued, "he will have his revenge."

"Pretty story!" answered Bosswinkel. "What revenge is this little bit of a beggar, who dribbles paints on to canvas, and hasn't a farthing to bless himself with, going to take upon Commissionsrath Melchior Bosswinkel, I should like to know?"

"I'll tell you that in a moment," said the Goldsmith. "Edmund is going to alter your portrait in a way which you thoroughly deserve. The kindly, smiling face he is going to turn into a sour, grumpy one, with lowering brow, bleary eyes, and hanging lips. He will deepen the wrinkles on the brow and cheeks, and he won't omit to indicate, in proper colour, those grey hairs which the powder is intended to hide. Before you, instead of the pleasant news about the lottery prize, he will write, very legibly, the most unpleasant purport of the letter which came to you the day before yesterday, telling you that Campbell and Co. of London had stopped payment, addressed on the envelope to the 'Bankrupt Commissionsrath,' &c., &c. From the torn pockets of your waistcoat he will show ducats, thalers, and treasury bills falling, to indicate the losses you have had, and this picture will be put in the window of the picture dealer next door to the bank in Hunter Street."

"The demon, the blackguard," the Commissionsrath cried; "he shan't do that, I'll send for the police, I'll appeal to the courts for an interim interdict!"

The Goldsmith said, with much tranquillity, "As soon as even fifty people have seen this picture, that is to say, after it has been in the window for a brief quarter of an hour, the tale will be all over the town, with every description of addition and exaggeration. Every thing in the least degree ridiculous which has ever been said about you, or is being said now, will be brought up again, dressed in fresh and more brilliant colours. Every one you meet will laugh in your face, and, what is the worst of all, everybody will talk about your losses in the Campbell bankruptcy, so your credit will be gone."

"Oh, Lord," said Bosswinkel, "but he must let me have the picture back, the scoundrel? Ay; that he must, the first thing in the morning."

"And if he were to agree to do so," the Goldsmith said, ("of which I have great doubts) how much the better would you be? He's making a copper etching of you, as I have just described you. He'll have several hundred copies thrown off, touch them up himself *con amore*, and send them all over the world--to Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, London even."

"Stop, stop," Bosswinkel cried; "go, as fast as you can, to this terrible fellow; offer him fifty, yes, offer him a hundred thalers if he will let this business about my portrait remain in *statu quo*."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Goldsmith; "you forget that Lehsen doesn't care a fiddlestick about money. His people are well off. His grand-aunt, Miss Lehsen, who lives in Broad Street, is going to leave him all her money, £12,000 at the very least."

"What," the Commissionsrath cried, pale with the suddenness of his amazement, "£12,000. I tell you what it is. I believe Albertine is crazy about young

Lehsen, and I'm not a bad-hearted fellow. I am an affectionate father; can't bear crying, and all that sort of thing. When she sets her heart on a thing, I can't refuse her. Besides, I like the fellow; he's a first-rate painter, you know; and where Art is concerned I'm a perfect gaby. There are a great many capital points about Lehsen. £12,000. I'll tell you what it is, Leonhard, just out of mere goodheartedness, I shall let this nice young fellow have my daughter."

"Hm!" said the Goldsmith, "there's something queer, too, which I want to speak to you about. I was at the Thiergarten just before I came here, and I found your old friend and schoolfellow, Tussmann, going to jump into the water because Albertine wouldn't have anything to say to him. I had the greatest difficulty in preventing him from doing it; and it was only by telling him that you would be quite certain to keep your word, and make her marry him, that I did succeed in preventing him. Now, if this is not so, if she doesn't marry him, and if you give her to young Lehsen, there cannot be a doubt that the Clerk of the Privy Chancery will carry out his idea of jumping into that basin. Think what a sensation the suicide of a person of Tussmann's 'respectability' will create. Everybody will consider that you, and no other, are responsible for his death. You will be looked upon with horror and contempt. Nobody will ask you to dinner, and if you go to a café to see what's in the papers, you will be shown to the door, or kicked downstairs; and more than that, Tussmann bears the very highest character in his profession. All his superiors have a very high opinion of him; the Government departments think him a most valuable official. If you are supposed to be answerable for his death, you know that you need never expect to find a single member of the Privy Legation, or of the Upper Chamber of Finance, in when you go to see them. None of the offices which your business affairs require you to be *en rapport* with will have a word to say to you. Your title of Commissionsrath will be taken from you, blow will follow upon blow, your credit will be gone, your income will fall away, things will go from bad to worse, till at last, in poverty, misery and contempt, you will--"

"For God's sake stop!" cried the Commissionsrath, "you are putting me to a regular martyrdom. Who would have thought that Tussmann would have been such a goose at his time of life? But you are quite right; whatever happens, I must keep my word to him, or I'm a ruined man. Yes, it is so ordained, Tussmann must marry Albertine."

"You're forgetting all about Baron Dümmerl," said the Goldsmith, "and Manasseh's terrible curse. In him, if you reject Baron Benjie, you have the most fearful enemy. He will oppose you in all your speculations; will stick at no means of injuring your credit, take every possible opportunity of doing you an ill turn, and never rest till he has brought you to shame and disgrace; till the Dā-lĕs, which he laid upon you along with his curse, has actually taken up its abode in your house; so that, you see, whatever you do with Albertine, to whichsoever of her wooers you give her, you get into trouble, and that is why I said at the beginning, that you are a poor, unfortunate man, an object of pity and commiseration."

Bosswinkel ran up and down the room like a lunatic, crying over and over again, "It's all over with me; I am a miserable man, a ruined Commissionsrath. O Lord, if I only could get the girl off my shoulders; the devil take the whole lot of them, Lehsen, and Benjie, and my old Tussmann into the bargain."

"Now," said the Goldsmith, "there is one way of getting out of all this mess."

"What is it?" said Bosswinkel; "I'll adopt it, whatever it is."

Leonhard said, "Did you ever see the play of 'The Merchant of Venice'?"

"That's the piece," answered Bosswinkel, "where Devrient plays a bloody-minded Jew of the name of Shylock, who wants a pound of a merchant's flesh. Of course I've seen it, but what has that to do with the matter?"

"You will remember," the Goldsmith said, "that there is a certain wealthy young lady in it of the name of Portia, whose father so arranged matters in his will that her hand is made a species of prize in a kind of lottery. Three caskets are set out, of which her wooers have each to choose one, and open it. The one who finds Portia's portrait in the casket which he chooses obtains her hand. Now do you, Commissionsrath, as a living father, do what her dead father did. Tell the three wooers that, inasmuch as one of them is exactly the same to you as another, they must allow chance to decide between them. Set up three caskets for them to choose amongst, and let the one who finds her portrait in his casket be her husband."

"What an extraordinary idea," said the Commissionsrath; "and even if I were to go in for it, do you suppose, dear Mr. Leonhard, that I should be one bit better off? When chance did decide the matter, I should still have to deal with the rage and hatred of the unsuccessful two."

"Wait a moment," the Goldsmith said; "it is just there that the important part of the business lies. I promise that I will order and arrange the affair of the caskets so that it shall turn out happily and satisfactorily for all parties. The two who make mistakes shall find in their caskets, not a scornful dismissal, like the Princes of Morocco and Arragon, but something which shall so greatly please and delight them that they will think no more of marrying Albertine, but will look upon you as the author of unhoped, undreamt of happiness to them."

"Oh, can it be possible!" the Commissionsrath cried.

"Not only is it possible," the Goldsmith answered, "but it will, it must happen, exactly as I have said it will; I give you my word for it."

The Commissionsrath made no further objection, and they arranged that the Goldsmith's plan should be put in execution on the next Sunday at noon. Leonhard undertook to provide the three caskets, all ready.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE CHOOSING OF THE CASKETS, AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE TALE.

As may be imagined, Albertine got into a condition of the most utter despair when her father told her about the wretched lottery in which her hand was to be the prize, and all her prayers and tears were powerless to turn him from this idea, when he had once got it fairly into his head. Then, besides this, Lehsen seemed indifferent and indolent, in a way that nobody who really loved could be, not making any attempt to see her privately, or even to send her a message.

On the Saturday night before the fateful Sunday she was sitting alone in her room, as the twilight was deepening into night, her mind full of the misfortune which was threatening her. She was calculating whether or not it would be better to come to a speedy determination to fly from her father's roof, rather than wait till the most fearful destiny conceivable should accomplish itself, that of marrying either the pedantic old Tussmann, or the insufferable Baron Benjie, and then she remembered the mysterious Goldsmith, and the strange, supernatural way in which he had prevented the Baron from touching her. She felt quite sure that he had been on Edmund's side then; wherefore a hope began to dawn in her heart that it must be on him that she should rely for help at this crisis of her affairs. Above all things she wished that she only could just have a little talk with him then and there; and was quite sure that she shouldn't be at all frightened, really, if he were to appear to her suddenly, in some strange, spectral sort of manner.

So that she really was not in the least frightened when she saw that what she had been thinking was the stove was really Leonhard the Goldsmith, who came up

to her and said, in a gentle, harmonious voice:--

"My dear child, lay aside all grief and anxiety. Edmund Lehsen, whom, at present at all events, you believe you love, is a special *protégé* of mine; and I am helping him with all the power at my command. Let me further tell you that it was I who put the lottery idea into your father's head; that I am going to provide and prepare the caskets, and, of course, you see that no one but Edmund will find your portrait."

Albertine felt inclined to shout for joy. The Goldsmith continued:--

"I could have brought about the giving of your hand to Edmund in other ways; but I particularly wish to make the two rivals, Tussmann and the Baron, completely contented at the same time. So that that is going to be done, and you and your father will be quite sure to have no more trouble on their part."

Albertine poured forth the warmest expressions of gratitude. She almost fell at his feet, she pressed his hand to her heart, she declared that, notwithstanding all the magic tricks he had performed, nay, even after the way he had come into her room, she wasn't in the least afraid of him; and she concluded with the somewhat naive request that he would tell her all about himself, and who he really was.

"My dear child," he answered, "it would not be by any means an easy matter for me to tell you exactly who I am. Like many others, I know much better whom I take other people for than what I really and truly am myself. But I may tell you, my dear, that many think I am none other than that Leonhard Turnhäuser the Goldsmith, who was such a famous character at the court of the Elector Johann Georg, in the year 1580, and who disappeared, none knew how or where, when envy and calumny tried to ruin him; and if the members of the imaginative or romantic school say that I am this Turnhäuser, a spectral being, you may imagine what I have to suffer at the hands of the solid and enlightened portion of the community, the respectable citizens, and the men of business, who think they have something better to do than to bother their heads about poetry and romance. Then, even the aesthetic people want to watch me and dog my steps, just as the doctors and the divines did in Johann Georg's time, and try to embitter and spoil whatever little modicum of an existence I am able to lay claim to, as much as ever they can. My dear girl, I see well enough already, that though I take all this tremendous interest in young Edmund Lehsen and you, and turn up at every corner like a regular *deux ex machina*, there will be plenty of people of the same way of thinking with those of the aesthetic school, who will never be able to swallow me, historically speaking, who will never be able to bring themselves to believe that I ever really existed at all. So that, just that I might manage to get something like a more or less firm footing, I have never ventured to say, in so many words, that I am Leonard Turnhäuser, the Goldsmith of the sixteenth century. The folks in question are quite welcome to say, if they please, that I am a clever conjurer, and find the explanations of every one of my tricks (as they may style the phenomena and the results which I produce) in Wieglieb's 'Natural Magic,' or some book of the kind. I have still one more 'feat,' as they would call it, to perform, which neither Philidor, nor Philadelphia, nor Cagliostro, nor any other conjurer would be able to do, and which, being completely inexplicable, must always remain a stumbling-block to the kind of people in question. But I cannot help performing it, because it is indispensable to the *dénouement* of this Berlinese tale of the Choice of a Bride by three personages, suitors for the hand of Miss Albertine Bosswinkel. So keep up your heart, my dear child, rise to-morrow morning in good time, put on the dress which you like the best, because it is the most becoming you happen to have; do your hair in the way you think suits you best, and then await, as quietly and patiently as you can, what will happen."

He disappeared exactly as he had come.

On the next day--the Sunday--at eleven o'clock--the appointed time--there arrived at the place of rendezvous old Manasseh with his hopeful nephew--Tussmann--and Edmund Lehsen with the Goldsmith. The wooers, not excepting

the Baron, were almost frightened when they saw Albertine, who had never seemed so lovely and taking. I am in a position to assure every lady, married or otherwise, who attaches the proper amount of importance to dress, that the way in which Albertine's was trimmed, and the material of the trimmings, were most elegant; that the frock itself was just the right length to show her pretty little feet in their white satin shoes; that the arms of it (short, of course), and the corsage were bordered with the richest Point; that her white French gloves came up to just the least little bit above her elbows, showing her beautiful arm; that the only thing she had on her head was a lovely gold comb set with jewels; in short, that her dress was quite that of a bride, except that she had no myrtle wreath in her bonny brown hair. But the reason why she was so much more beautiful than she ever had been before was that love and hope beamed in her eyes and bloomed on her cheeks.

Bosswinkel, in a burst of hospitality, had provided a splendid lunch. Old Manasseh glowered at the table laid out for this repast with malignant glances askance, and when the Commissionsrath begged him to fall to, on his countenance could be read the answer of Shylock:--

"Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you."

The Baron was less conscientious, for he ate more beefsteak than was seemly, and talked a great deal of stupid nonsense, as was his wont.

The Commissionsrath behaved wholly contrarily to his nature on this important occasion. Not only did he pour out bumpers of Port and Madeira, regardless of expense, and even told the company that he had some Madeira in his cellar a hundred years old; but when the luncheon was over he explained to the suitors the method in which his daughter's hand was to be disposed of in a speech much better put together than anybody would ever have expected of him. They were given to understand most clearly that the successful one must find her portrait in the casket which he chose.

When twelve o'clock struck the door of the hall opened, and there was seen in the middle of it a table with a rich cover on it, bearing the three caskets.

One was of shining gold, with a circle of glittering ducats on its lid, and the inscription inside them--

"Who chooseth me doth gain that which he much desires."

The second was of silver, richly chased. On its lid were many words and letters of foreign languages, encircling this inscription--

"Who chooseth me doth find more than he hopes."

The third, plainly carved of ivory, was inscribed--

"Who chooseth me doth gain his dreamed-of bliss."

Albertine took her place on a chair behind the table, her father by her side. Manasseh and the Goldsmith drew away into the background.

The lots were drawn, and, Tussmann having the first choice, the Baron and Edmund had to go into the other room.

The Clerk of the Privy Chancery went carefully and considerately up to the table, looked at the caskets with much minuteness of observation, read the inscriptions on them one after another. Soon he found himself irresistibly attracted by the beautiful characters of foreign languages so charmingly intertwined on the cover of the silver casket.

"Good heavens!" he cried, "what beautiful lettering, with what skill those Arabic characters are brought in amongst the Roman letters, and 'Who chooseth me doth gain more than he hopes.' Now have I gone on cherishing the slightest hope that Miss Albertine would be so gracious as to honour me with her hand? wasn't I going to throw myself into the basin? Evidently here is comfort, here is good fortune. Commissionsrath! Miss Albertine! I choose the silver one."

Albertine rose and handed him a little key, with which he opened the casket. Great was his consternation to find, not Albertine's portrait, but a little book bound in parchment, which, when he opened it, appeared to consist of blank white pages. Beside it lay a little scrap of paper, with the words--

"Thy choice was, in a way, amiss,
But those few words do tell thee this--
What thou hast won will never alter,
To use it thou needs't never falter.
What 'tis as yet thou dost not see,
An endless source of joy 'twill be.
Ignorantiam 'twill enlighten,
Sapientiam further brighten."

"Good heavens!" cried Tussmann, "it's a book. Yet, no, it's not a book, and there's nothing in the shape of a portrait. It's merely a lot of paper bound up together; my hopes are dashed to earth, all is over with me now. All I have got to do is to be off to the frog-pond as quickly as I can."

But as he was hurrying away the Goldsmith stopped him, and said--

"Tussmann, you're very foolish; you've got hold of the most priceless treasure you could possibly have come across. Those lines of verse ought to have told you so at once. Do me the favour to put that book which you found in the casket into your pocket."

Tussmann did so.

"Now," said the Goldsmith, "think of some book or other which you would wish that you had in your pocket at this moment."

"Oh, my goodness," said Tussmann, "I went and shied Thomasius's little treatise on 'Diplomatic Acumen' into the frog-pond, like an utter fool as I was."

"Put your hand in your pocket," said the Goldsmith, "and take out the book."

Tussmann did so, and lo, the book which he brought out was none other than Thomasius's treatise!

"Ha!" cried Tussmann, "what is this? Why it is Thomasius's treatise, my beloved Thomasius, rescued from the congregation of frogs in the pond, who would never have learned diplomatic acumen from him."

"Keep yourself calm," the Goldsmith said; "put the book into your pocket again."

Tussmann did so.

"Think of some other rare work," the Goldsmith said: "one which you have never been able to come across in any library."

"Oh, good gracious!" cried Tussmann in melancholy accents. "I have been, you see, in the habit of sometimes going to the opera, so that I have wanted, very much, to ground myself a little in the theory of music, and I have been trying in vain hitherto to get hold of a copy of a certain little treatise which explains the arts of the composer and the performer, in an allegorical form. I mean Johann Beer's 'Musical War,' an account of the contest between composition and

harmony, which are represented under the guise of two heroines, who do battle with each other, and end by being completely reconciled."

"Feel in your pocket," said the Goldsmith; and the Clerk of the Privy Chancery shouted with joy when he found that his paper book now consisted of Johann Beer's 'Musical War.'

"You see now, do you not," said the Goldsmith, "that in the book which you found in the casket you possess the finest and most complete library that anybody ever had? and more than that, you take it about with you in your pocket. For, while you have this remarkable book in your pocket, it will always be whatever book you happen to want to read, as soon as you take it out."

Without wasting a thought on Albertine or the Commissionsrath, Tussmann went and sat down in an armchair in a corner, stuck the book into his pocket, pulled it out again, and it was easy to see, by the delight in his countenance, how completely the Goldsmith's promise had been fulfilled.

It was the Baron's turn next. He came strolling up to the table in his foolish, loutish manner, looked at the caskets through his eyeglass, and murmured out the inscriptions one after the other. But soon a natural, inborn, irresistible instinct drew him to the gold casket, with the shining ducats on its lid. "Who chooseth me doth gain that which he much desires." "Certainly ducats are what I much desire, and Albertine is what I much desire. I don't see much good in bothering over this."

So he grasped the golden casket; took its key from Albertine, opened it, and found a nice little English file! Beside it lay a piece of paper with the words:--

> "Now thou hast the thing thy heart
> Longed for, with the keenest smart.
> All besides is mere parade.
> Onward--never retrograde--
> Moves a truly thriving Trade."

"And what the Devil's the use of this thing?" Benjie cried, surveying the file. "It isn't Albertine's picture, you know; however, I shall hold on to the casket; it'll be a wedding-present to Albertine. Come to me, dearest child!" With which he was making straight for Albertine; but the Goldsmith held him back by the shoulders, saying--

"Stop, my good sir; that's not in the bargain: you must content yourself with the file. And you will be content with it, when you find out what a treasure it is. In fact, the paper tells you, if you can understand it. Have you got a worn ducat in your pocket?"

"Well," said Benjie, angrily, "and what then?"

"Out with it," the Goldsmith said, "and try the file on the edge of it."

The Baron did so, with an amount of skill which told of much previous practice; and the more ducats he filed at--for he tried a good many, one after another--the fresher the edges of them came out.

Up to this point Manasseh had been looking on in silence at what was transpiring; but here he jumped up, with eyes sparkling wildly, and dashed at his nephew, crying, in a hollow, terrible voice--

"God of my Fathers! what do I see? Give me that file!--here with it instantly! It is the piece of magic-work for which I sold my soul more than three hundred years ago. God of my Fathers!--hand it over to me!"

And he made at his nephew to take it from him; but Benjie pushed him back, crying, "Go to the Deuce, you old idiot! It was I who found the file, not you!"

To which Manasseh responded, in fury: "Viper! Worm-eaten fruit of my race!--Here with that file! All the Demons of Hell be upon you, accursed thief!"

Manasseh clutched hold of the Baron, with a torrent of Hebrew curses, and foaming and gnashing his teeth, he exerted all the strength at his command to wrest the file from him. But Benjie fought for it as a lioness does for her cubs, till at length Manasseh was worn out; on which his nephew seized him by the shoulders and threw him out of the door, with such force that all his limbs cracked again. Then, coming back like a flash of lightning, he shoved a small table into a corner, and sitting down there, opposite to the Clerk of the Privy Chancery, took a handful of ducats from his pocket, and set to work to file away at them as hard as he could.

"Now," said the Goldsmith, "we have seen the last of that terrible Manasseh. He is off our hands, for good and all. People say he is a second Ahasuerus, and has been going spooking about since the year 1572. That was the year in which he was put to death for diabolical practices and sorcery, under the name of Lippolt, the Jew-coiner. But the Devil saved his body from death at the price of his immortal soul. Many folk who understand those things say they have seen him in Berlin in a good many forms; so that, if all tales are true, there are a good number of Lippolts at the present time about. However, I, who have a certain amount of experience in those mysterious matters, can assure you that I have given him his quietus."

It would weary you very needlessly, dear reader, were I to waste words in telling you what you know quite well; namely, that Edmund Lehsen chose the ivory casket, inscribed--

"Who chooseth me doth gain his dreamed-of bliss,"

and found in it a beautiful portrait of Albertine, with the lines--

"Yes--thou hast it--read thy chance
In thy darling's loving glance.
What has past returns no more--
Earthly fate so willeth this.
All the joy which lies *before*
Gather from thy sweetheart's kiss."

And Edmund, like Bassanio, followed the counsel of the last line, and pressed his blushing sweetheart to his breast, and kissed her glowing lips; whilst the Commissionsrath greatly rejoiced, and was full of happiness over this happy *dénouement* of this most involved love-affair.

Meanwhile the Baron had been filing at ducats quite as eagerly and absorbedly as the Clerk of the Privy Chancery had been reading, neither of them taking the slightest notice of what had been going on, till the Commissionsrath announced, in a loud voice, that Edmund Lehsen had chosen the casket containing Albertine's portrait, and was, consequently, to be her husband. Tussmann seemed to be quite delighted to hear it, and expressed his satisfaction in his usual manner, by rubbing his hands, jumping a little way up and down for a moment or two, and giving a delicate little laugh. The Baron seemed to feel no further interest about the matter; but he embraced the Commissionsrath; said he was a real "gentleman" and had made him most utterly happy by his present of the file, and told him that he could always count upon him, in all circumstances. With which he took his departure.

Tussmann, too, thanked him, with tears of the most heartfelt emotion, for making him the happiest of men by this most rare and wonderful of all rare and wonderful books; and, after the most profuse expenditure of politeness to Albertine, Edmund, and the old Goldsmith, he followed the Baron as quickly as ever he could.

Benjie ceased to torture the world of letters with literary abortions, as he had

formerly done, preferring to employ his time in filing ducats; and Tussmann no longer made the booksellers' lives a burden to them by pestering them to hunt out old forgotten books for him.

But when a few weeks of rapture and happiness had passed, a great and bitter sorrow took possession of the Commissionsrath's house. For the Goldsmith urged, in the strongest terms, upon Edmund that for his own sake, and for the sake of his art, he was bound to keep his solemn promise and go to Italy.

Edmund, notwithstanding the dreadful parting from Albertine, felt the strongest possible impulse urging him towards the country of the arts; and, although Albertine shed the bitterest tears, she could not help thinking how very nice it would be to be able to take out letters from her lover at Rome, and read them out--or extracts from them--at aesthetic teas of an afternoon.

Edmund has been in Rome now more than a year, and people do say that his correspondence with Albertine languishes, and that the letters are becoming rarer and colder. Who knows whether or not anything will ever come, ultimately, of the engagement between those two people? Certainly Albertine won't be long "in the market" in any case; she is so pretty, and so well off. Just at present, there is young Mr. Gloria (just going to be called to the bar), a very nice young gentleman indeed, with a slim and tightly-girded waist, a couple of waistcoats on at once, and a cravat tied in the English style; and he danced all last season with Albertine, and is to be seen now going continually with her to the Thiergarten, whilst the Commissionsrath trots very complacently after them, looking like a satisfied father. Moreover, Mr. Gloria has passed his second examination at the Supreme Court with flying colours.

"So perhaps he and Albertine may make a match of it, should he get a fairly good appointment. There's no telling. Let us see what happens."

"You have certainly written a wonderfully crack-brained thing in that," Ottmar said, when Lothair had finished. "This 'Tale containing improbable incidents,' as you have called it, appears to me to be a kind of mosaic, composed of all kinds of stones put together at random, which dazzles and confuses one's eyes so that they can't take firm hold of any definite figure."

"As far as I am concerned," Theodore said, "I must confess that I think a great deal of it is exceedingly delightful, and that it might very likely have been a very superior production, if Lothair hadn't, most imprudently, gone and read Hafftitz. The consequence of this was that those two practitioners of the black art, the Goldsmith and the Jew-coiner, had to be brought into the story somehow, willy-nilly; and thus those two unfortunate revenants make their appearance as heterogeneous elements, working, with their sorceries, in an unnaturally constrained manner among the incidents of the tale. It is well your story hasn't been printed, or you would have been hauled over the coals by the critics."

"Wouldn't it do to light up the pages of a Berlin Almanack?" the Author asked, with one of his ironical smiles. "Of course I should still more localize the localities, and add a few names of celebrities, and so gain a little applause from the literary-aesthetic, if from nobody else.[2]

[Footnote 2: "This speech of Lothair's shows what the Author had in his mind at the time. The tale *did* appear in the Berlin Almanack of 1820, with additional localities, and names of celebrities in the Art-World, but the publishers told him he ought to try to keep within the bounds of 'probability,' in future."--(Note of Editor of Collected Works.)]

"However, all the same, my dear friends, did you not laugh heartily enough at times, as I was reading it? and ought that not to deprive your criticism of some of its severity? If you, Ottmar, say my tale is a mosaic, you might admit that it has something of a Kaleidoscope character, in spite of its crackiness, and that its matters, though most adventitiously shaken together, do ultimately form more or less interesting combinations. At all events, you surely admit that there are one or two good characters in my story, and at the head of them, the love-stricken Baron Benjie, that worthy scion of the Jew-coiner race of Lippolts; however, we've had far too much of my piece of patchwork, which was only intended to amuse you for a moment as a *bizarre* jest. What I would have you notice is that I have been faithful to my principle of welding on the Legendary to the every-day life of the present day."

"And," said Theodore, "I am a great adherent of that principle. It used to be supposed to be necessary to localize everything of the legendary kind in the remote East, taking Scheherezade as the model in so doing; and, as soon as we touched upon the manners, the customs, the ways of life of the East, we got into a world which was apparently hovering, adrift, all in a sort of unreality, anchorless, before our eyes, on the point of floating away and disappearing. This is why those tales so often strike coldly on us, and have no power to kindle the inner spirit--the fancy. What I think, and mean, is, that the foot of the heavenly ladder, which we have got to mount in order to reach the higher regions, has to be fixed firmly in every-day life, so that everybody may be able to climb up it along with us. When people then find that they have got climbed up higher and higher into a marvellous, magical world, they will feel that that realm, too, belongs to their ordinary, every-day life, and is, merely, the wonderful and most glorious part thereof. For them it is the beautiful flower-garden beyond the city-wall into which they can go, and in which they can wander and enjoy themselves, if they have but made up their minds to quit the gloomy walls of the city, for a time."

"Don't forget, though, Theodore, my friend," said Ottmar, "that there are quantities of people who won't go up the ladder at all, because it isn't 'proper' or 'becoming.' And many turn giddy by the time they get to the third rung of it. Many never see the ladder at all, though it is facing them in the broad, daily path of their lives, and they pass by it every day. As regards the tales of the 'Thousand and One Nights,' it is remarkable enough that most of those who have tried to imitate them have overlooked that which is just what gives them life and reality--exactly what Lothair's principle is. All the cobblers, tailors, dervishes, merchants, and so forth, who appear as the characters in those tales, are people who are to be met with every day in the streets. And--inasmuch as life is independent of times and manners, but is always the same affair--in its essential conditions (and always must be so), it follows that we feel that all those folks--upon whom, in the middle of their everyday lives, such extraordinary and magical adventures came, and such spells wound themselves--are really the sort of people who are actually walking about amongst us. Such is the marvellous, mighty power of description, characterization, and representation in that immortal book."

As the evening was fast growing colder, it was thought advisable--on account of Theodore's having but half recovered from his late illness--that the friends should go to the great summer-house, and indulge in a cup of refreshing tea, in place of anything more exciting.

And when the urn was on the table, singing its usual little domestic tune, Ottmar said--

"I don't think I could have a better opportunity for reading you a tale which I wrote a long while ago, and which happens to begin with tea-drinking. I mention, to begin with, that it is in Cyprian's style."

Ottmar read--

THE UNCANNY GUEST.

A storm was raging through the heavens, announcing the coming of winter, whirling black clouds on its wings, which dashed down hissing, rattling squall-showers of rain and hail.

"Nobody will come to-night," said Madame von G. to her daughter Angelica, as the clock struck seven. "They would never venture out in such weather. If your father were but home!"

Almost as she was speaking, in came Captain Moritz von E. (a cavalry officer), followed by a young Barrister, whose brilliant and inexhaustible fund of humour and wit was the life and soul of the circle which was accustomed to assemble every Thursday evening in Colonel von G.'s house. So that, as Angelica said, there was little cause to be sorry that the less intimate members of the circle were away, seeing that the more welcome ones had come.

It felt very chilly in the drawing-room. The lady of the house had had a fire lighted, and the tea-table brought.

"I am sure," she said, "that you two gentlemen, who have been so courageous as to come to see us tonight through such a storm, can never be content with our wretched tea. Mademoiselle Marguerite shall make you a brew of that good, northern beverage which can keep any sort of weather out." Marguerite--a young French lady, who was "companion" to Angelica, for the sake of her language, and other lady-like accomplishments, but who was only about her own age, or barely more--came, and performed the duty thus entrusted to her. So the punch steamed, while the fire sparkled and blazed; and the company sate down round the little tea-table.

A shiver suddenly passed through them--through each and all of them; and they felt chilled. Though they had been talking merrily before they sat down, there fell now upon them a momentary silence, during which the strange voices which the storm had called into life in the chimney whistled and howled with marvellous distinctness.

"There can be no doubt," said Dagobert (the young barrister), "that the four ingredients, Autumn, a stormy Wind, a good fire, and a jorum of punch, have, when taken together, a strange power of causing people to experience a curious sense of awesomeness."

"A very pleasant one, though," said Angelica. "At all events, I do not know a more delightful sensation than the sort of strange shiveriness which goes through one when one feels--heaven knows how, or why--as if one were suddenly casting a glance, with one's eyes open, into some strange, mystic dream-world."

"Exactly," said Dagobert; "that delicious shiveriness was exactly what came over all of us just now; and the glance into the dream-world, which we were involuntarily making at that moment, made us all silent. It is well for us that we have got it over, and that we have come back so quickly from the dream-world to this charming reality, which provides us with this grand liquid." He rose, and, bowing politely to Madame von G., emptied the glass before him.

"But," Moritz said, "if you felt all the deliciousness of that species of shudder, and of the dreamy condition accompanying it (as Miss Angelica and I did), why shouldn't you be glad to prolong it?"

"Let me say, my dear friend," Dagobert answered, "that the kind of dreaminess which we have to do with in this instance is not that in which the mind, or spirit, goes losing and sinking itself in all kinds of vague labyrinths of complexity of wondrous, calm enjoyment. The storm-wind, the blazing fire, and the punch are only the predisposing causes of the onsetting of that incomprehensible, mysterious condition--deeply grounded in our human organism--which our minds

strive, in vain, to fight against, and which we ought to take great care not to allow ourselves to yield to over much. What I mean is, the fear of the supernatural. We all know that the uncanny race of ghosts, the haunters, choose the night (and particularly in stormy weather), to arise from their darksome dwellings, and set forth upon their mysterious wanderings. So that we are right in expecting some of those fearsome visitants just at a time like this."

"You do not mean what you say, of course," Madame von G. answered; "and I need not tell you that the sort of superstitious fear which we so often, in a childish way, feel, is not in any degree inherent in our organization as human beings. I am certain that it is chiefly traceable to the foolish stories of ghosts, and so forth, which servants tell us while we are children."

"No, Madame," Dagobert answered; "those tales--which we enjoyed more than any others which we heard as children--would never have raised up such an enduring echo in us if the strings which re-echo them had not existed within us to begin with. There is no denying the existence of the mysterious spirit-world which lies all around us, and often gives us note of its Being in wondrous, mystic sounds, and even in marvellous sights. Most probably the shudder of awe with which we receive those intimations of that spirit-world, and the involuntary fear which they produce in us, are nothing but the result of our being hemmed in--imprisoned--by our human organization. The awe and the fear are merely the modes in which the spirit imprisoned within our bodies expresses its sorrow thereat."

"You are a spirit-seer, a believer in all those things--like all people who have lively imaginations," said Madame von G. "But if I were to go the length of admitting, and believing, that it is permitted that an unknown spirit-world should reveal its existence to us by means of sounds and sights, I should still have to say that I am unable to comprehend why that mysterious realm, and its denizens, should stand in such a relation to us that they bring merely paralyzing fear and horror upon us."

"Perhaps," Dagobert said, "it is the punishment inflicted on us by that mother from whose care and discipline we have run away. I mean, that in that golden age when our race was living in the most perfect union with all nature, no dread or terror disturbed us, for the simple reason that in the profound peace and perfect harmony of all created things, there was nothing hostile that could cause us any such emotion. I was mentioning strange spirit-sounds; but why is it that all the real *nature*-tones--of whose origin and causes we can give the most complete account--sound to us like the most piercing sorrow, and fill our hearts with the profoundest dread? The most remarkable of those nature-tones is the air-music, or, as it is called, the 'devil-voice,' heard in Ceylon and the neighbouring countries, spoken of by Schubert in his 'Glances at the Night-side of Natural Science.' This nature-tone is heard on calm and bright nights, sounding like the wail of some human creature lamenting in the deepest distress. It seems to come sometimes from the most remote distance, and then again to be quite close at hand. It affects the human intelligence so powerfully that the most self-controlled cannot help feeling the deepest terror when they hear it."

"Yes," said Moritz, "it is so. I have never been in Ceylon, certainly, or in any of the neighbouring countries; but I have heard that terrible nature-sound; and not only I, but every one else who heard it, felt just that precise effect which Dagobert alludes to."

"I should be extremely obliged to you," said Dagobert, "and you would probably convince Madame von G. also, if you would not mind telling us what happened."

"You know," Moritz said, "that I served the campaign in Spain under Wellington, with a mixed force of English and Spanish cavalry against the French. The night before the battle of Vittoria I was bivouacking in the open country. Being wearied to death by the long march we had made during the day, I had fallen into a deep sleep of exhaustion, when I was awakened by a piercing cry of distress. I naturally thought--and it was the only idea that came into my mind--that

what I heard was the death-cry of some wounded soldier near me; but the comrades who were lying round me were all snoring, and there was no other sound to be heard. The first gleams of the dawn were breaking through the deep darkness, and I got up and strode away over the bodies of the sleepers, thinking that I might perhaps come across the wounded man, whoever he was, who had uttered that cry. It was a singularly calm night, and only most gradually and imperceptibly did the morning breeze begin to move, and to cause the leaves to tremble. Then a second cry, like the former--a long wail of woe--came ringing through the air, and died away in the remotest distance. It was as though the spirits of the slain were rising up from the battlefield, and wailing their boundless sorrow out into the wide heaven. My breast throbbed, was overwhelmed by an inexpressible awe; all the sorrow which I had ever heard exhaled from all human breasts was nothing in comparison with that heart-piercing wail. Our comrades now awoke from their sleep, and, for the third time, that terrible cry of sorrow arose, and filled the whole air, more fearful and awful than before. We were all smitten with the profoundest fear; even the horses were terrified; they snorted and stamped. Many of the Spaniards fell on their knees and prayed aloud. One of the English officers told us that he had several times met with this phenomenon in southern countries; and that it was of electrical origin, and there would probably be a change in the weather. The Spaniards, with their bent towards the supernatural, heard in it the mighty voices of supernatural beings, announcing great events about to happen. In this they were confirmed when, next day, the battle came thundering in upon them, with all its horrors."

"Is there any occasion." Dagobert said, "to go to Ceylon, or to Spain, to hear these marvellous Nature-tones of sorrow and complaining? Surely the howling of the storm-wind, the rattling of the hail, the groanings and creakings of the vanes are just as capable of filling us with profound terror as are those other Nature-tones we have been speaking of. Listen to that weird music which some hundreds of fearful voices are organing down this chimney; or to the strange little spirit-like ditty which the tea-urn is just beginning to sing."

"Oh! most ingenious indeed!" cried Madame von G. "Even into the very tea-urn Dagobert conjures spirits which render themselves cognisable to us by fearful cries of woe."

"But he is not far wrong, dear mother!" Angelica said. "I could very soon be seriously frightened at the extraordinary way in which that whistling, and rattling, and hissing is going on in the chimney; and the little tune which the tea-urn is singing, in such a tone of profound sorrow, is--to me--so eery and uncomfortable, that I shall go and blow out the spirit lamp, that there may be an end of it at once."

Angelica rose: her handkerchief fell. Moritz quickly picked it up and handed it to her. She allowed a glance, full of soul, from her heavenly eyes to rest upon him; he took her hand, and pressed it fervently to his lips.

At that moment Marguerite shuddered convulsively, as if touched by some electric current, and allowed the glass of punch, which she had just poured out for Dagobert, to drop from her hand. It shattered to atoms on the floor. She cast herself down at Madame von G.'s feet sobbing bitterly--said she was a stupid creature, and implored that she might be allowed to go to her room. She said that what they had been talking about had made her frightened and nervous--although she had not understood it; that she felt frightened still--as if she could not stay in the room--though she could not explain why; that she was feeling unwell, and would like to get to bed. So saying, she kissed Madame von G.'s hands, and bedewed them with the tears she was shedding.

Dagobert felt the painfulness of the incident, and the necessity of giving matters a different turn. He, too, fell at Madame von G.'s feet, and in the most pathetic voice at his command, begged forgiveness for the culprit. As regarded the stain of punch on the floor, he vowed that he would put waxed brushes on his feet in the morning, and go figuring athwart the boards in the most exquisite

tours, and steps that ever inspired the brain of a court dancing-master.

Madame von G., who had at first been looking very grave over Marguerite's mishap, strange as it seemed, and inexplicable, cleared up a little at Dagobert's words. She gave each of them her hand with a smile and said, "Rise, and wipe away your tears. You are forgiven, Marguerite; you have this champion of yours to thank that I do not inflict a very severe punishment upon you. But I can't let you go altogether scot free. If you *are* a little out of sorts, you must try to forget it. I shall ordain you to stay here, be more assiduous than before at filling the gentlemen's glasses with the punch, and, above all things, you must reward your champion and defender with a kiss, in token of your sincere gratitude."

"So that Virtue is its own reward," Dagobert said, with a comic pathos, as he took Marguerite's hand. "All I ask of you, beauteous lady," he continued, "is to believe that the world contains (though you might be sceptical on the subject) legal luminaries of such a heroic sort that they do not hesitate a moment to offer themselves up a sacrifice at the shrine of Innocence and Truth. But we must obey the commands of our fair judge, from whose award there is no appeal." And he impressed a fugitive kiss upon Marguerite's lips, and then led her back to her seat with much solemnity. Marguerite, blushing like a rose, laughed very heartily; but the bright tears still stood in her eyes.

"Stupid fool that I am," she cried in French, "have I not got to do whatever Madame von G. bids me? I will keep perfectly calm. I will go on making their punch. I will listen to their ghost-stories without being in the least afraid."

"Bravo, angelic child," cried Dagobert. "My heroism has infected you, and the sweetness of your lips has inspired *me*. My imagination has unfolded new wings, and I feel ready to serve up the most awful events and mysteries from the 'Regno di Pianto.'"

"I thought we had done with this unpleasant subject," said Madame von G.

"Oh no, mother dear," cried Angelica eagerly; "please to let Dagobert go on! I am exactly like a child about those things. I don't know anything I so delight in as a nice ghost story--something that makes all one's flesh creep."

"Oh, how I *do* like that!" Dagobert cried. "Nothing is so utterly delightful in young ladies as their being tremendously superstitious, and easily frightened; and I should never dream of marrying a woman who was not terribly afraid of ghosts."

"You were saying a little while ago, dear Dagobert," said Moritz, "that we ought to guard ourselves against--or take care how we allow ourselves to get into--that dreamy state of awe which is the commencement of spirit-fear--the dread of the superhuman, the ghostly world. You have still got to explain to us the *why*."

"If there is, at the commencement of it, any real cause for that sense of awesomeness--which is at first so thoroughly blended up with the *dreamily* pleasurable--it by no means remains at that stage. Soon there supervenes a deadly fear--a horror which makes the hair stand on end; so that the said pleasurable feeling at the commencement would seem to be the fascination of temptation with which the Spirit World lures us on and ensnares us. We were talking of certain Nature-tones which are capable of explanation, and of their fearsome effect upon our senses. But we at times hear sounds more extraordinary, of which the origin and cause are indiscoverable by us, and which produce in us the profoundest awe and terror. All reassuring ideas--such as that they proceed from some animal in pain, or are produced by currents of air, or other natural causes--are useless and of no avail. Every one, I presume, has experienced that, in the night, the very faintest sound, if only it occurs at regular intervals with pauses between, completely drives away sleep, and goes on increasingly stirring up one's inward disquiet till it reaches the point of complete disorganization of the faculties. Not very long ago I had to spend a night, on a journey, at an inn, where the landlord put me in a nice, comfortable, lofty, airy

bedroom. In the middle of the night I started up from my sleep, wide awake. The moon was shining brightly in at the window, which was uncurtained, so that I could see every article of the furniture, and even the minutest objects in the room. There was a sound as of water dropping into some metallic dish. I lay and listened. The drops went on falling at regular, measured intervals, drip, drip, drip. My dog, who was lying under the bed, crept out, and went about the room whimpering and crying, scratching on the walls and on the floor. I felt as if streams of icy water were running all through me, and the cold perspiration dripped from my brow. However, I collected myself by a great effort, and--after first of all giving a good loud shout--I got out of bed, and went forward to the middle of the room. There the drops seemed to be falling close in front of me, or rather I should say *right through* me into the metal, of which I heard the reverberation ringing loud and clear as they fell. Then, overcome by terror, I crept back, somehow, to the bed, and covered myself up with the bedclothes. And then it seemed to me that the dropping--still going on at the same regular intervals--grew gradually fainter and fainter, and died away as if in the distance. I fell into a deep sleep, out of which I did not wake till it was bright daylight in the morning. The dog had come and lain down close beside me in bed, and did not move till I got up, when he jumped up too, barking vigorously, as if he had got over his terror of the previous night. It occurred to me that it might only be to me that the (doubtless) natural cause or causes of this strange sound were a mystery, and I told the landlord of my adventure--of which I still felt the terror in all my frame. I ended by saying that he could, no doubt, explain the whole affair to me, but that he ought to have told me of it beforehand. He turned as pale as a sheet, and begged me never to tell any one what had happened to me, as he would risk the loss of his customers. He said many travellers had complained about that sound, which they had heard on bright moonlight nights--that he had examined everything with the utmost care and attention, and even had the floor of that room and the adjoining one taken up, as well as making inquisition into everything in the neighbourhood, without coming upon the faintest trace of anything to account for this awe-inspiring noise. It had not been heard for nearly a year before the night I speak of, and he had been flattering himself that the Principle--whatever it might be--which was haunting the room had ceased its operation. But seeing, to his great alarm, that in this he was mistaken, he determined that he would never, in any circumstances, allow anybody to pass the night there again."

"Oh! how terrible!" cried Angelica, shuddering like one in the cold stage of an ague. "That is really most terrible! Oh! I am sure I should have died if anything like that had happened to me! But I have often woke up from sleep, suddenly, feeling an indescribable, inexplicable alarm and anxiety, as if I had been going through something terrible and alarming; and yet, I had not the slightest idea what it was that I had been going through, nor the very faintest recollection of any fearful dream, or anything of that kind. Rather I seemed to be waking from some condition of complete unconsciousness, like death."

"I know that feeling perfectly well," Dagobert said. "Perhaps it points straight to the effect upon us of psychical influences external to us, to which we are compelled to yield ourselves up, whether we choose or not. Just as the mesmeric subject has no remembrance of the mesmeric sleep, or of anything which happens in it. Perhaps that sense of fear and anxiety which we feel on awaking (as we have said), of which the cause is hidden from us, may be the lingering echo of some mighty spell which has forced us out of ourselves."

"I remember very distinctly," Angelica said, "some four years ago, the night before my fourteenth birthday, awaking in a condition of that kind. I could not shake off the terror of it for several days afterwards. But I strove in vain to remember anything about my dream (if dream it was, that had so terrified me). I knew, and I know quite well, that in the very dream itself I had told several people--my own dear mother amongst them--what the dream was, several times. But all I could remember when I woke was that I had told the dream. I could not recall the slightest trace of what the dream had been."

"This strange psychical phenomenon," Dagobert said, "is closely connected with the magnetic principle."

"Our conversation is getting more and more dreadful," said Madame von G. "We are getting deep, and losing ourselves in matters I can't bear even to think about. Moritz, I must beg you to tell us something entertaining--outrageous even--that we may get away from this terrible region of the supernatural."

"I should be very happy to try," said Moritz, "if you will just allow me to tell one gruesome tale, which has been hovering on my lips for a long time. At this moment all my being is so filled with it that I feel that I could not talk about anything else."

"Discharge yourself, then," said Madame von G., "from the load of awesomeness which so weighs upon you. My husband will be home immediately, and then I should be so delighted to work through some battle or other with you and him, or to hear you talk in your absorbed manner about horses, or anything, to get me out of this overstrained condition into which all this supernatural stuff, I must admit, puts me."

"In my last campaign," said Moritz, "I made the acquaintance of a Russian Lieutenant-Colonel, a Livonian by birth, scarcely thirty, who, as chance willed it that we should be serving together before the enemy for a considerable time, soon became my very intimate friend. Bogislav--that was his Christian name--possessed every quality fitted to gain for him, everywhere, the highest consideration and the most sincere regard. He was tall and fine-looking, with an intellectual face. He possessed masculine beauty, much mental cultivation, and was kindliness itself, while brave as a lion. He could be particularly cheerful and entertaining, especially over a glass of wine; but there would often come over him, and overwhelm him, the thought of something terrible which had happened to him, leaving traces of the most intense horror and terror on his face. When this happened he would lapse into silence, leave the company, and stroll about up and down, alone. In the field, he used to ride all round the outposts at night, from one to another, restlessly, only yielding to sleep when completely exhausted; and as, in addition to this, he would often expose himself to the extremest danger, without any special necessity, and seemed to seek, in battle, death, which fled from him --for in the toughest hand-to-hand engagement never a bullet touched him; no sword-cut came near him--it seemed evident that his life had been marred by some irreparable bereavement, or perhaps some rash deed.

"We stormed, and captured, a fortified castle on the French territory, and remained quartered there for a day or two, to give the men some rest. The rooms where Bogislav was quartered were but a few steps from mine. In the night I was awakened by a gentle knocking at my door. I asked who was there. My name was called out: I recognised Bogislav's voice, and went to let him in. There he stood in his night-dress, with a branched candlestick in his hand, pale as death, with his face distorted, trembling in every limb, unable to utter a word.

"'For heaven's sake! what has happened?--what is the matter, dearest Bogislav?' I cried. I took him to the arm-chair; made him swallow a glass or two of the full-bodied wine which was on the table; held his hand fast in mine, and spoke what comforting words I could, in my ignorance of the cause of his strange condition.

"He recovered himself by degrees, heaved a deep sigh, and then began, in a hollow voice: 'No! no! I shall go mad, unless death takes me; God knows I throw myself with eager longing into his arms. To you, my faithful Moritz, I will confide my fearful secret. I told you once that I was in Naples a good many years ago. There I met the daughter of one of the most distinguished families, and fell deeply in love with her. She returned my affection, and, as her parents gave their approval, I saw the fulfilment of my brightest hopes at hand. The wedding-day was fixed, when there appeared on the scene a Sicilian Count, who came between us with a most eager suit to my beloved and betrothed. I took him to task; he

insulted me; we met, and I sent my sword through his body. I hastened to my love; I found her bathed in tears. She called me the accursed murderer of the man she had adored, and repelled me with every mark of disgust; screamed and wept in inconsolable sorrow; fell down fainting, as if stung by a scorpion, when I touched her hand. Who can describe my amazement! Her parents could not give the slightest explanation of the sudden change in her. She had never given any favourable heed to the Count's attentions.

"'Her father concealed me in his palazzo, and, with the most noble zeal, took care that I should be enabled to leave Naples undiscovered. Driven by all the furies, I pushed on to St. Petersburg without a halt. It is not the faithlessness of my love which plays havoc with my life. No! it is a terrible mystery. Since that unhappy day in Naples I have been dogged and pursued by the terrors of hell itself. Often by day, but still oftener by night, I hear--sometimes as if a long distance away, sometimes as if quite close beside me--a deep death-groan. It is the voice of the Count whom I killed! It makes my inmost soul quiver with horror. I hear that horrible sound distinctly, close to my ear, in the thick of the thunder of the heavy siege-guns, and the rattle of musketry, and all the wild despair of madness awakes within me. This very night----' Bogislav paused; and I, as well as he, was seized with the wildest horror; for there came to our hearing a long-sustained, heart-breaking wail of sorrow, as if proceeding from the stair outside. Then it was as if some one raised himself, groaning and sighing, with difficulty from the ground, and was coming towards us with heavy, uncertain steps.

"At this Bogislav started up from his seat, and, with a wild glow in his eyes, cried out, in a voice of thunder: 'Appear to me, abominable one, if you only will! I am more than a match for you, and all the spirits of hell that are at your disposal!'

"On this there came a tremendous crash, and----"

Just then the door of the drawing-room flew open with a startling noise.

And just as Ottmar read those words, the door of the summer-house in which the friends were sitting flew open, also with a startling noise, and they saw a dark form, wrapped in a mantle, approaching slowly, with noiseless footfalls, as of a spirit. They all gazed at this form, a little startled, holding their breaths.

"Is it right," said Lothair at length, when the full light of the lamps, falling upon his face, displayed their friend Cyprian. "Is it right to try to frighten good folks with foolish playing the ghost? However, I know, Cyprian, that you don't content yourself with studying spirits and all sorts of strange, visionary matters; you would often fain be a spook or ghost yourself. But where have you appeared from so suddenly? How did you find out that we were here?"

"I came back to-day from my journey," Cyprian said. "I went at once to see Theodore, Lothair, and Ottmar, but found none of them at home. In the fullness of my annoyance I ran out here into the open; and chance so willed it that, as I was returning to the town, I struck into the walk which leads past this summer-house. Then I seemed to hear a well-known voice; I peeped in at the window, and saw my worthy Serapion Brethren, and heard Ottmar reading 'The Uncanny Guest.'"

"What," interrupted Ottmar, "you know my tale?"

"You forget," said Cyprian, "that it was from me that you got the ingredients of the tale. It was I who told you of the 'Devil's Voice,' the aerial music of Ceylon, who even gave you the idea of the sudden appearing of the 'Uncanny Guest'; and I am curious to hear how you have worked out this 'Thema' of mine. You see that it was a matter of course that just when Ottmar had made the drawing-room door fly open I had necessarily to do the like, and appear to you myself."

"Not as an uncanny guest, though," said Theodore, "but as a true and faithful Serapion Brother, who, although he frightened me not a little, as I must perforce admit, is a thousand times welcome to me all the same."

"And," said Lothair, "if he insists on being a spirit, he must, at all events, not be an unquiet spirit, but sit down and drink tea, without making too much clattering with his cup, and listen to Ottmar, as to whose tale I am all the more curious, that this time it is a working up of a thema given to him by another."

Theodore, who was still easily excited after his recent illness, had been affected by Cyprian's proceedings rather more than was desirable. He was deadly pale, and it was evident that he had to put some constraint on himself to appear at his ease.

Cyprian saw this, and was not a little concerned at what he had done. "The truth is," he said, "that I had not thought about our friend's having only recently recovered, and hardly that, from a severe illness. I was acting contrarily to my own fundamental principle, which totally prohibits the perpetration of jokes of this description, because it has often happened that the terrible serious reality of the spirit-world has come gripping in into jokes of this kind, resulting in very terrific things. I remember, for instance----"

"Stop! stop!" cried Lothair. "I can't have any more interruptions. Cyprian is on the point of carrying us away, after his manner, into that dark world of spells where he is at home. Please to go on with your story, Ottmar." Ottmar went on reading.

And in came a man, dressed in black from top to toe, with a pallid face, and a set, serious expression. He went up to Madame von G. with the most courtly bearing of a man of the highest rank, and in well-selected terms, begged her to pardon him for having been so long in arriving, though his invitation was of such old standing--but that, to his regret, he had been detained by having to pay an unavoidable visit first. Madame von G., unable to recover all in a moment from the start which his entry had caused her, murmured a few indistinguishable words, which seemed to amount to saying, would the stranger be kind enough to take a seat. He drew a chair close to her, and opposite to Angelica, sat down, and let his eyes pass over every member of the company. Every one felt paralysed; none could utter a word. Then the stranger began to speak, saying that he felt he stood doubly in need of excuses; firstly, for arriving at such a time, and, secondly, for having made his entrance in such a sudden manner, and so startlingly. The latter, however, he was not to blame for, inasmuch as the door had been thrown open in that violent manner by the servant whom he had found in the hall. Madame von G., overcoming with difficulty the eery feeling with which she was seized, inquired whom she had the honour of welcoming. The stranger seemed not to notice this question, his attention being fixed on Marguerite, who had suddenly become changed in all her ways and bearing, kept tripping and dancing close up to the stranger, and telling him, with constant tittering and laughter, and with much volubility, in French, that they had all been in the very thick of the most delightful ghost-stories, and that Captain Moritz had just been saying that some evil spectre ought to make its appearance at the very instant when he had come in. Madame von G., feeling all the awkwardness of having to ask this stranger, who had said he came by invitation, as to his name and so forth, but more distressed and rendered uncomfortable by his presence, did not repeat her question, but reprimanded Marguerite for her behaviour, which almost passed the limits of the "*convenable*." The stranger put a stop to Marguerite's chatter, turning to the others, and leading the conversation to some event of indifference which had happened in the neighbourhood. Madame von G. answered him. Dagobert tried to join in the conversation, which soon dragged painfully along in detached, interrupted sentences; and during this, Marguerite kept trilling couplets of French chansons, and seemed to be trying steps, as if remembering the "tours" of the newest gavotte, while the others were scarcely capable of moving. They all felt their breasts oppressed; the presence of the stranger weighed upon them like the sultry oppressiveness which precedes a thunderstorm. The words died on their lips when they looked at the deathly pale face of this uncanny guest. The markedly foreign accent with which he spoke both French and German indicated that he was neither a German nor a Frenchman.

Madame von G. breathed freely, with an enormous sense of relief, when at length horses were heard drawing up at the door, and the voice of her husband, Colonel von G., was distinguishable.

When the Colonel came in, and saw the stranger, he went up to him quickly, saying, "Heartily welcome to my house, dear Count." Then turning to his wife, he said, "This is Count S., a very dear friend of mine; I made his acquaintance in the north, but met him afterwards in the south."

Madame von G., whose anxiety began to be relieved, assured the Count, with pleasant smiles, that it was only because her husband had omitted to tell her of his visit that he had been received perhaps a little strangely, and not as a welcome friend ought to have been. Then she told the Colonel how the conversation had been running all the evening upon the supernatural; how Moritz had been telling a dreadful story of events which had happened to him and a friend of his, and that, at the very moment when he had been saying, "There came a tremendous crash," the door had flown open, and the Count had come in.

"Very good indeed," said the Colonel, laughing; "they thought you were a ghost, dear Count! I fancy I see traces of alarm and nervousness about Angelica's face still, and Moritz looks as though he had scarcely shaken off the excitement of the story he was telling. Even Dagobert does not seem quite in his ordinary spirits. Really, Count, it is a little too bad to take you for a *revenant*; don't you think so?"

"Perhaps," the Count replied; "I really may have something more or less ghostly about me. A good deal is being said nowadays, about people who, by virtue of some peculiar psychical quality, possess the power of influencing others, so that they experience very remarkable effects. I may be endowed with such a power."

"You are not serious, my dear Count," said Madame von G. "But there is no doubt that people are discovering very wonderful mysteries nowadays."

"People are pampering their curiosity, and weakening their minds over nursery tales and absurd fancies," was the Count's reply. "We ought all to take care not to allow ourselves to be infected by this curious epidemic. However, I interrupted this gentleman at the most interesting point of his story, and as none of his hearers would like to lose the finale, the explanation of the mystery, I would beg him to go on with it."

To Captain Moritz this stranger Count was not only uncomfortable and uncanny, but utterly repugnant, in all the depths of his being. In his words he found--all the more that he gave them out with a most irritating, self-satisfied smile--something indescribably contemptuous and insulting; and he replied, in an irritated tone, and with flashing eyes, that he feared his nursery tales might interfere with the pleasantness--the sense of enjoyment--which the Count had introduced into the circle, so that he would prefer to say no more.

The Count seemed scarcely to notice what Moritz said. Playing with the gold snuff-box which he had taken in his hand, he asked Madame von G---- if the "lively" young lady was French. He meant Marguerite, who kept dancing about the room, trilling. The Colonel went up to her and asked her, half aloud, if she had gone out of her senses. Marguerite slunk, abashed, to the tea-table, and sat down there quite quiet. The Count now took up the conversation, and spoke, in an entertaining manner, of this and the other events which had recently happened. Dagobert was scarcely able to put in a word. Moritz stood, red as fire, with gleaming eyes, as if waiting eagerly for the signal of attack. Angelica appeared to be completely immersed in the piece of feminine "work" at which she had set herself to labour. She did not raise an eyelid. The company separated in complete discomfort.

"You are a fortunate man," Dagobert cried, when he and Moritz were alone together. "Doubt no longer that Angelica is much attached to you. Clearly did I read in her eyes to-day that she is devotedly in love with you. But the devil is

always busy, and sows his poisonous tares amongst the blooming wheat. Marguerite is on fire with an insane passion. She loves you with all the wild, passionate pain which only a fiery temperament is capable of feeling. The senseless way in which she behaved tonight was the effect of an irresistible outbreak of the wildest jealousy. When Angelica let fall the handkerchief--when you took it up and gave it to her--when you kissed her hand--the furies of hell possessed that poor Marguerite. And you are to blame for that. You used formerly to take the greatest pains to pay every kind of attention to that very beautiful French girl. I know well enough that it was only Angelica whom you had in your mind. Still, those falsely directed lightnings struck, and set on fire. And now the misfortune is there; and I do not know how the matter will end without terrible tumult and trouble."

"Marguerite be hanged (if I may use such an expression)," said Moritz. "If Angelica loves me--and ah! I can't believe, quite, that she does--I am the happiest and the most blest of men, and care nothing about all the Marguerites in the world, nor their foolishnesses neither. But another fear has come into my mind. This uncanny, stranger Count, who came in amongst us like some dark, gloomy mystery--doesn't he seem to place himself, somehow, most hostilely between her and me? I feel, I scarce know how, as if some reminiscence came forward out of the dark background--I could almost describe it as a dream--which reminiscence, or dream, whichever it may be, brings this Count to my memory under terrible circumstances of some sort. I feel as though, wherever he makes his appearance, some awful misfortune must come flashing out of the depths of the darkness as a result of his conjurations. Did you notice how often his eyes rested on Angelica, and how, when they did, a feeble flush tinted his pallid cheeks, and disappeared again rapidly? The monster has designs upon my darling; and that is why the words which he addressed to me sounded so insulting. But I will oppose him and resist him to the very death!"

Dagobert said the Count was a supernatural sort of fellow, no doubt, with something very eery and spectral about him, and that it would be as well to keep a sharp look-out on his proceedings, though, perhaps, he thought there was less in, or behind, him than one would suppose; and that the uncanny feelings which everybody had experienced with regard to him were chiefly attributable to the excited state in which they had all been when he made his appearance. "Let us face all this disquieting affair," said Dagobert, "with firm courage and unshakable confidence. No dark power will bend the head which holds itself up with true bravery and indomitable resolution."

A considerable time had elapsed. The Count, whose visits to the Colonel's house increased in frequency, had rendered himself almost indispensable. It was universally agreed, now, that the accusation against him of being uncanny recoiled on those who made it. "He might very well have styled us uncanny people, with our white faces and odd behaviour," as said Madame von G----. Everything he said evinced a store of the most valuable and various information; and although, being an Italian, he spoke with a foreign accent, his command of the German language was most perfect and fluent. His narratives had a fire which bore the hearers irresistibly along, so that even Moritz and Dagobert, hostile as were their feelings to this stranger, forgot their repugnance to him when he talked, and when a pleasant smile broke out over his pale, but handsome and expressive face, and they hung upon his lips, like Angelica and the others.

The Colonel's friendship with him had arisen in a way which proved him to be one of the noblest-minded of men. Chance had brought them together in the far north, and there the Count, in the most unselfish and disinterested manner, came to the Colonel's aid in a difficulty in which he found himself involved, which might have had the most disastrous consequences to his fortune, if not to his good name and honour. Deeply sensible of all that he owed him, the Colonel hung on him with all his soul.

"It is time," the Colonel said to his wife one day when they were alone together,

"that I should tell you the principal reason why the Count is here. You remember that he and I, when we were in P----, four years ago, grew more and more intimate and inseparable, so that at last we occupied two rooms which opened one into the other. He happened to come into my room one morning early, and he saw the little miniature of Angelica, which I had with me, lying on my writing-table. As he looked more and more closely at it, he lost his self-command in a strange way. Not able to answer me, he kept gazing at it. He could not take his eyes from it. He cried out excitedly that he had never seen a more beautiful creature--had never before known what love was--it was now blazing up in the depths of his heart. I jested about the extraordinary effect of the picture on him--called him a second Kalaf, and congratulated him on the fact that my good Angelica was not a Turandot. At last I told him pretty clearly that at his time of life--for, though not exactly elderly, he could not be said to be a very young man--this romantic way of falling in love with a portrait rather astonished me. But he vowed most vehemently--nay, with every mark of that passionate excitement, almost verging on insanity, which belongs to his country--that he loved Angelica inexpressibly, and, if he were not to be dashed into the profoundest depths of despair, I must allow him to gain her affection and her hand. It is for this that the Count has come here to our house. He fancies he is certain that she is not ill-disposed to him, and he yesterday laid his formal proposal before me. What do you think of the affair?"

Madame von G---- could not explain why his latter words shot through her being like some sudden shock. "Good heavens," she cried, "*that* Count for our Angelica! that utter stranger!"

"Stranger!" echoed the Colonel with darkened brow; "the Count a stranger! the man to whom I owe my honour, my freedom, nay, perhaps my life! I know he is not quite so young as he has been, and perhaps is not altogether suited to Angelica in point of age; but he is of high lineage, and rich, very rich."

"And without asking Angelica," said Madame von G----. "Very likely she may not have any such liking for him as he, in his fondness, imagines."

The Colonel started from his chair, and placed himself in front of her with gleaming eyes. "Have I ever given you cause to imagine," he said, "that I am one of those idiotic, tyrannical fathers who force their daughters to marry against their inclinations, in a disgraceful way? Spare me your absurd romanticisms and sentimentalities. Marriages may be made without any such extraordinary, fanciful love at first sight, and so forth. Angelica is all ears when he talks; she looks at him with most kindly favour; she blushes like a rose when he kisses her hand, which she willingly leaves in his. And that is how an innocent girl expresses that inclination which truly blesses a man. There is no occasion for any of that romantic love which so often runs in your sex's heads in such a disturbing fashion."

"I have an idea," said Madame von G----, "that Angelica's heart is not so free as, perhaps, she herself imagines it is."

"Nonsense," cried the Colonel, and was on the point of breaking out in a passion, when the door opened, and Angelica came in, with the loveliest smile of the most ingenuous simplicity. The Colonel, at once losing all his irritation, went to her, took her hand, kissed her on the brow, and sat down close beside her. He spoke of the Count, praising his noble exterior, intellectual superiority, character, and disposition; and then asked her if she thought she could care for him. She answered that at first he had appeared very strange and eery to her, but that now those feelings had quite disappeared, and that she liked him very much.

"Heaven be thanked then!" cried the Colonel. "Thus it was ordained to turn out, for my comfort, for my happiness. Count S--- loves you, my darling child, with all his heart. He asks for your hand, and you won't refuse him." But scarcely had he uttered those words when Angelica, with a deep sigh, sank back as if insensible. Her mother caught her in her arms, casting a significant glance at the Colonel, who gazed speechless at the poor child, who was as pale as death. But she

recovered herself; a burst of tears ran down her cheeks, and she cried, in a heart-breaking voice, "The Count! the terrible Count! oh, no, no; never, never!"

As gently as possible the Colonel asked her why it was that the Count was so terrible to her. Then Angelica told him that at the instant when he had said that the Count loved her, that dream which she dreamt four years before, on the night before her fourteenth birthday--from which she awoke in such deadly terror without being able to remember the images or incidents of it in the very slightest--had come back to her memory quite clearly.

"I thought," she said, "I was walking in a beautiful garden where there were strange bushes and flowers which I had never seen the like of before. Suddenly I found myself close before a wonderful tree with dark leaves, large flowers, and a curious perfume something like that of the elder. Its branches were swaying and making a delicious rustling, and it seemed to be making signs inviting me to rest under its shade. Irresistibly impelled by some invisible power, I sank down on the grass which was under the tree. Then strange tones of complaint or lamenting seemed to come through the air, stirring the tree like the touch of some breeze; and it began to utter sighs and moans. And I was seized by an indescribable pain and sorrow; a deep compassion arose in my heart, I could not tell why. Then, suddenly, a burning beam of light darted into my breast, and seemed to break my heart in two. I tried to cry out, but the cry could not make its way from my heart, oppressed with a nameless anguish--it became a faint sigh. But the beam which had pierced my heart was the gleam of a pair of eyes which were gazing on me from under the shade of the branches. Just then the eyes were quite close to me; and a snow-white hand became visible, describing circles all round me. And those circles kept getting narrower and narrower, winding round me like threads of fire, so that, at last, the web of them was so dense and so close that I could not move. At the same time I felt that the frightful gaze of those terrible eyes was assuming the mastery over my inmost being, and utterly possessing my whole existence and personality. The one idea to which it now clung, as if to a feeble thread, was, to me, a martyrdom of death-anguish. But the tree bent down its blossoms towards me, and out of them spoke the beautiful voice of a youth, which said, 'Angelica! I will save you--I will save you--but----'"

Angelica was interrupted. Captain von P---- was announced. He came to see the Colonel on some matter of duty. As soon as Angelica heard his name she cried out with the bitterest sorrow, in such a voice as bursts only from a breast wounded with the deepest love-anguish--while tears fell down her cheeks--"Moritz! oh, Moritz!"

Captain von P---- heard those words as he came in; he saw Angelica, bathed in tears, stretch out her hands to him. Like a man beside himself he dashed his forage cap to the ground, fell at Angelica's feet, caught her in his arms, as she sank down overwhelmed with rapture and sorrow, and pressed her fervently to his heart.

The Colonel contemplated this little scene in speechless amazement. Madame von G---- said: "I thought this was how it was; but I was not sure!"

"Captain von P----," said the Colonel angrily, "what is there between you and my daughter?"

Moritz, quickly recovering himself, placed Angelica--more dead than alive--gently down on the couch, picked up his cap, advanced to the Colonel with a face red as fire, and eyes fixed on the ground, and declared that he loved Angelica unutterably; but that, upon his honour, until that moment, not a word approaching to a declaration of his feelings had crossed his lips. He had been but too seriously doubtful as to its being possible that Angelica could return his love. He said it was only at this moment--which he could not possibly have anticipated--that the bliss accorded to him by heaven had been fully disclosed to him; and that he trusted he should not be repulsed by the noblest hearted of mankind, the tenderest of fathers, when he implored him to bestow his blessing on a union

sealed by the purest and sincerest affection.

The Colonel gazed at Moritz, and then at Angelica, with looks of gloom; then he paced up and down with folded arms like one who strives to arrive at a resolution. He paused before his wife, who had taken Angelica in her arms and was whispering to her words of consolation.

"What," he inquired, "has this silly dream of yours to do with Count----?"

Angelica threw herself at his feet, kissed his hands, bathed them in her tears, and said, half-audibly, "Oh, father! dearest father! those terrible eyes which mastered my whole being were the Count's eyes. It was his spectral hand which wove round me those meshes of fire. But the voice of comfort which spoke to me out of the perfumed blossoms of the wondrous tree, was the voice of Moritz--my Moritz!"

"Your Moritz!" cried the Colonel, turning so quickly that he nearly threw Angelica down. He continued, speaking to himself in a lower tone: "Thus a father's wise resolve, and the offer of a grand and noble gentleman, are to be cast to the winds, for the sake of childish imaginations, and a clandestine love affair." And he walked up and down as before. At last, addressing Moritz, he said--

"Captain von P----, you know very well what a high opinion of you I have. I could not have wished for a better son-in-law. But I have promised my daughter to Count S----, to whom I am bound by the deepest obligations by which one man can be bound to another. At the same time, please do not suppose that I am going to play the part of the obstinate and tyrannical father. I shall hasten to the Count at once. I shall tell him everything. Your love will be the cause of a cruel difference between me and this gentleman. It may cost me my life. No matter; it can't be helped. Wait here till I come back."

Moritz warmly declared that he would sooner face death a hundred times than that the Colonel should run the very slightest risk; but the Colonel hurried away without reply.

As soon as he had gone, the lovers fell into each other's arms, and vowed unalterable fidelity. Angelica said that it was not until her father told her of the Count's views with regard to her, that she felt, in the depths of her soul, how unspeakably precious and dear Moritz was to her, and that she would rather die than marry any one else. Also that she had felt certain for a long time, that he loved her just as deeply. Then they both bethought themselves of all the occasions when they had given any betrayal of their love for each other; and, in short, were in a condition of the highest enjoyment and blissfulness, like two children, forgetting all about the Colonel and his anger and opposition. Madame von G----, who had long watched the growth of this affection, and approved of Angelica's choice with all her heart, promised, with deep emotion, to leave no stone unturned to prevent the Colonel from entering into an alliance which she abhorred, without precisely knowing why.

When an hour or so had passed, the door opened and, to the surprise of all, Count S---- came in, followed by the Colonel, whose eyes were gleaming. The Count went up to Angelica, took her hand, and looked at her with a smile of bitter pain. Angelica shrank, and murmured almost inaudibly, "Oh! those eyes!"

"You turn pale, Mademoiselle," said the Count, "just as you did when first I came into this house. Do you truly look upon me as a terrible spectre? No, no; do not be afraid of me, Angelica. I do but love you with all the fervour and passion of a younger man. I had no knowledge that you had given away your heart, when I was foolish enough to make an offer for your hand. Even your father's promise does not give me the slightest claim to a happiness which it is yours alone to bestow. You are free, Mademoiselle. Even the sight of me shall no longer remind you of the moments of sadness which I have caused you. Soon, perhaps to-morrow, I shall go back to my own country."

"Moritz! My Moritz!" Angelica cried in the utmost joy and delight, and threw herself on her lover's breast. The Count trembled in every limb; his eyes gleamed with an unwonted fire, his lips twitched convulsively; he uttered a low inarticulate sound. But turning quickly to Madame von G---- with some indifferent question, he succeeded in mastering his emotion.

But the Colonel cried, again and again, "What nobility of mind! What loftiness of character! Who is there like this man of men--my heart's own friend for ever!" Then he pressed Moritz, Angelica, and his own wife, to his heart, and said laughingly, that he did not care to hear another syllable about the wicked plot they had been laying against him, and hoped, too, that Angelica would have no more trouble with spectral eyes.

It being now well on in the day, the Colonel begged Moritz and the Count to remain and have dinner. Dagobert was sent for, and arrived in high spirits.

When they sat down to table, Marguerite was missing. It appeared she had shut herself up in her room, saying she was unwell and unable to join the company. "I do not know," said Madame von G----, "what has been the matter with Marguerite for some time; she has been full of the strangest fancies, laughing and crying without apparent reason. Really, she is at times almost unendurable."

"Your happiness is Marguerite's death," Dagobert whispered to Moritz.

"Spirit-seer!" answered Moritz in the same tone, "do not mar my joy."

The Colonel had never been in better spirits or happier, and Madame von G---- had never been so pleased in the depths of her heart, relieved as she was from anxieties which had often been present with her before. When, in addition to this, Dagobert was revelling in the most brilliant high-spirits, and the Count, forgetting his pain, suffered the stores of his much experienced mind to stream forth in rich abundance. It will be seen that our couple of lovers were encircled by a rich garland of gladness.

Evening was coming on, the noblest wines were pearling in the glasses, toasts to the health of the betrothed pair were drunk enthusiastically; when suddenly the door opened and Marguerite came tottering in, in white night-gear, with her hair down, pale, and distorted, like death itself.

"Marguerite, what extraordinary conduct!" the Colonel cried.

But, paying no heed to him, she dragged herself up to Moritz, placed her ice-cold hand on his breast, laid a gentle kiss on his brow, murmured in a faint, hollow voice, "The kiss of the dying brings luck to the happy bridegroom," and sank on the floor.

"This poor foolish girl is in love with Moritz," Dagobert whispered to the Count, who answered--

"I know. I suppose she has carried her foolishness so far as to take poison."

"Good heavens!" cried Dagobert, starting up and hurrying to the arm-chair where they had placed poor Marguerite. Angelica and her mother were busy besprinkling her and rubbing her forehead with essences. When Dagobert went up she opened her eyes.

"Keep yourself quiet, my dear child," said Madame von G----; "you are not very well, but you will soon be better--you will soon be better!"

Marguerite answered in a feeble, hollow voice, "Yes; it will soon be over. I have taken poison."

Angelica and her mother screamed aloud.

"Thousand devils!" cried the Colonel. "The mad creature! Run for the doctor!

Quick! The first and best that's to be found; bring him here instantly!"

The servants, Dagobert himself, were setting off in all haste.

"Stop!" cried the Count, who had been sitting very quietly hitherto, calmly and leisurely emptying a beaker of his favourite wine--the fiery Syracuse. "If Marguerite has taken poison, there is no need to send for a doctor, for, in this case, I am the very best doctor that could possibly be called in. Leave matters to me."

He went to Marguerite, who was lying profoundly insensible, only giving an occasional convulsive twitch. He bent over her, and was seen to take a small box out of his pocket, from which he took something between his fingers, and this he gently rubbed over Marguerite's neck and the region of her heart. Then coming away from her, he said to the others, "She has taken opium; but she can be saved by means which I can employ."

By the Count's directions Marguerite was taken upstairs to her room, where he remained with her alone. Meanwhile, Madame von G---- had found the phial which had contained the opium-drops prescribed some time previously for herself. The unfortunate girl had taken the whole of the contents of the phial.

"The Count is really a wonderful man," Dagobert said, with a slight touch of irony. "He divines everything. The moment he saw Marguerite he knew she had taken poison, and next he knew exactly the name and colour of it."

In half-an-hour the Count came and assured the company that Marguerite was out of danger, as far as her life was concerned. With a side-glance at Moritz, he added that he hoped to remove all cause of mischief from her mind as well. He desired that a maid should sit up with the patient, whilst he himself would spend the night in the next room, to be at hand in case anything fresh should transpire; but he wished to prepare and strengthen himself for this by a few more glasses of wine; for which end he sat down at table with the other gentlemen, whilst Angelica and her mother, being upset by what had happened, withdrew.

The Colonel was greatly annoyed at this silly trick, as he called it, of Marguerite's, and Moritz and Dagobert felt very eery and uncanny over the whole affair; but the more out of tune they were the more did the Count give the rein to a joviality which had never been seen in him before, and which, in sober truth, had a certain amount of gruesomeness about it.

"This Count," Dagobert said to Moritz, as they walked away, "has a something most eerily repugnant to me about him, in some strange inexplicable way. I cannot help a feeling that there must be something exceedingly mysterious connected with him."

"Ah!" said Moritz, "there is a weight as of lead on my heart. I am filled with a dim foreboding that some dark mischance threatens my love."

That night the Colonel was aroused from sleep by a courier from the Residenz. Next morning he came to his wife, looking rather pale, and constraining himself to a calmness which he was far from feeling, said, "We have to be parted again, dearest child. There's going to be another campaign, after this little bit of a rest. I shall have to march off with the regiment as soon as ever I can, perhaps this evening."

Madame von G---- was greatly startled; she broke out into bitter weeping. The Colonel said, by way of consolation, that he felt sure this campaign would end as gloriously as the last--that he felt in such admirable spirits about it that he was certain nothing could go amiss. "What you had better do," he said, "is, take Angelica with you to the country-house, and stay there till we send the enemy to the rightabout again. I am providing you with a companion who will keep you amused, and prevent your feeling lonely. Count S---- is going with you."

"What!" cried Madame von G----. "Good heavens! the Count to go with us!--Angelica's rejected lover--that deceitful Italian, who is hiding his annoyance in the bottom of his heart, only to bring it out in fullest force at the first proper opportunity; this Count who--I cannot say why--seems more intensely antipathetic to me since yesterday than ever?"

"Good God!" the Colonel cried; "there really is no bearing with the nonsensical ideas--the silly dreams--which your sex gets into its head. The magnanimity of soul of a man of his firmness and fineness of character is too much for you to comprehend. The Count passed the whole night in the room next to Marguerite's, as he said he should do. He was the first person I told the news of the fresh campaign to. It would scarcely be possible for him to go home now. This was very annoying to him, and I gave him the option of going to our country-place and staying there. He accepted my offer, after much hesitation, and gave me his word of honour that he would do everything in his power to take care of you, and make the time of our separation pass as quickly as possible. You know what obligations I am under to him. My country-place is, just now, a real asylum for him; could I refuse him that?"

Madame von G---- could say nothing further. The Colonel did as he had said he would. In the course of the evening the trumpets sounded boot and saddle, and every description of nameless pain and heart-breaking sorrow came upon the loving ones.

A few days after, when Marguerite had recovered, the three ladies went off to the country-house. The Count followed, with a number of servants.

And at first, the Count, showing the utmost delicacy of feeling, was careful never to enter the ladies' presence except when they sent for him specially; at all other times he remained in his own rooms, or went for solitary walks.

At first the campaign seemed to go rather in favour of the enemy, but important successes were soon scored against him, and the Count was always the very first to hear the news of those operations, and particularly the most accurate and minute intelligence of what was happening to the regiment which the Colonel commanded. In the bloodiest engagements neither the Colonel nor Moritz had met with so much as a scratch; and the despatches from headquarters confirmed this.

Thus the Count always appeared to the ladies in the character of a heavenly messenger of victory and good-fortune; besides this, all his behaviour betokened the most deep and sincere attachment to Angelica, which he exhibited to her as the tenderest of fathers might have done, occupied constantly about her happiness. Both she and her mother were compelled to admit to themselves that the Colonel's opinion of this tried friend of his was the correct one, and that all their--and other people's--prejudices against him had been the most preposterous fancies. At the same time Marguerite seemed to be quite cured of her foolish passion, and to have become the same gay, talkative, sprightly French lady whom we saw at an earlier period.

A letter from the Colonel to his wife, enclosing one from Moritz to Angelica, dispelled the last remnant of anxiety. The enemy's capital city was captured, and an armistice established.

Angelica was floating in a sea of blissfulness; and always it was the Count who spoke of the brave deeds of Moritz, and of the happiness which was opening its blossoms for the lovely future bride. After such speeches he would take Angelica's hand, press it to his heart, and ask if he were still as hateful to her as ever. With blushes and tears she would assure him that she had never hated him, but that she had loved Moritz too deeply and exclusively not to dread the idea of any other suitor for her hand. And the Count would say, very solemnly and seriously, "Look on me as your true, sincere, fatherly friend, Angelica," breathing a gentle kiss upon her forehead, which she suffered without ill-will; for it felt much like one of

her father's kisses, which he used to apply about the same place.

It was almost expected that the Colonel would very soon be home again, when a letter from him arrived containing the terrible news that Moritz had been set upon by some armed peasants, as he was passing with his orderly through a village. Those peasants shot him down at the side of the brave trooper, who managed to fight his way through; but the peasants carried Moritz away. Thus the joy with which the house was inspired was suddenly turned into the deepest and most inconsolable sorrow.

The Colonel's household was all in busy movement from roof to ceiling. Servants in gay liveries were hurrying to and fro; carriages filled with guests were rattling into the courtyard, the Colonel in person receiving them with his new order on his breast.

In her room upstairs sate Angelica in wedding-dress, beaming in the full pride of her loveliness: her mother was with her.

"My dearest child," said the latter, "you have of your own free will accepted Count S---- as your husband. Much as jour father desired this, he has never at all insisted on it since poor Moritz's death; indeed, it seems to me as though he had had much of the feeling which (I cannot hide from you) I have had myself; it is utterly incomprehensible to me how you can have forgotten poor Moritz so soon. However, the time has come; you are giving your hand to the Count. Examine your own heart. It is not yet too late. May the remembrance of him whom you have forgotten never fall across your heart like some black shadow."

"Never," cried Angelica, while the tears ran down her cheeks, "never can I forget Moritz. Never; oh! never can I love as I loved *him*! What I feel for the Count is something totally different. I cannot explain how it is that the Count has made me feel this irresistible attachment to him; but feel it I do, in every fibre of my being. It is not that I love him: I do not; I cannot love him in the way I loved Moritz; but I feel as if I could not, and cannot live apart from him--without him--independently of him. That it is only through him that I can think and feel. A spirit voice seems perpetually enjoining me to cleave to him as a wife; telling me that I *must* do so, and that unless I do there is no further, or other life possible for me here below. And I obey this voice, which I believe to be the mysterious prompting of Providence."

The maid here came in to say that Marguerite, who had been missing since the early part of the morning, had not made her appearance yet, but that the Gardener had just brought a little note which she had given him, with instructions to deliver it when he had finished his work and taken the last of the flowers to the Castle. It was as follows:--

"You will never see me more; a dark mystery drives me from your house. I implore you--you, who have been to me as a tender mother--not to have me followed, or brought back by force. My second attempt to kill myself will be more successful than the first. May Angelica enjoy to the full that bliss, the idea of which pierces my heart. Farewell for ever! Forget the unfortunate Marguerite."

"What is this?" cried Madame von G----; "the poor soul seems to have set her whole mind upon destroying our happiness. Must she always come in your way just as you are going to give your hand to the man of your choice? Let her go; the foolish, ungrateful thing, whom I treated and cared for as if she had been my own daughter. I shall certainly never trouble my head about her any more."

Angelica cried bitterly at the loss of her whom she had looked on as a sister; her mother implored her not to waste a thought on the foolish creature at such an important time.

The guests were assembled in the *salon*, ready, as soon as the appointed hour

should come, to go to the little chapel where a catholic priest was to marry the couple. The Colonel led in the bride. Everyone marvelled at her beauty, which was enhanced by the simple richness of her dress. The Count had not arrived. One quarter of an hour succeeded another, and still he did not make his appearance. The Colonel went to the Count's rooms. There he found his valet, who said his master, just when he was fully dressed for the ceremony, had suddenly felt unwell, and had gone out for a turn in the park, hoping the fresh air would revive him, and forbidding him, the valet, to follow him.

The Colonel could not explain to himself why it was that this proceeding of the Count's fell on him with such a weight--why it was that an idea immediately came to him that something terrible had happened. He sent back to the house to say that the Count would come very shortly, and that a celebrated doctor, who was one of the guests, was to be privately told to come out to him as quickly as possible. As soon as he came, he, the Colonel and the valet, went to search for the Count in the park. Striking out of the main alley, they went to an open space surrounded by thick shrubberies, which the Colonel remembered to have been a favourite resort of the Count's; and there they saw him sitting on a mossy bank, dressed all in black, with his star sparkling on his breast, and his hands folded, leaning his back against an elder-tree in full blossom, staring, motionless, before him. They shuddered at the sight, for his hollow, darkly-gleaming eyes were evidently devoid of the faculty of vision.

"Count S----! what has happened?" the Colonel cried; but there was no answer, no movement, not the slightest appearance of respiration. The doctor hurried forward; tore off the Count's coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth, and rubbed his brow: turning then to the Colonel, he said in hollow tones, "Human help is useless here. He is dead!--there has been an attack of apoplexy!"

The valet broke out into loud lamentations. The Colonel, mastering his inward horror with all his soldierly self-control, ordered him to hold his peace, saying, "If we are not careful what we are about, we shall kill Angelica on the spot." He caused the body to be taken up and carried by unfrequented paths to a pavilion at some distance, of which he happened to have the key in his pocket. There he left it under the valet's charge, and, with the doctor, went back to the chateau again. Hovering between one resolve and another, he could not make up his mind whether to conceal the whole matter from Angelica, or tell her, calmly and quietly, the terrible truth.

When he came into the house he found everything in the utmost confusion and consternation. Angelica, in the middle of an animated conversation, had suddenly closed her eyes, and fallen into a state of profound insensibility. She was lying on a sofa in an adjoining room. Her face was not pale, nor in the least distorted; the roses of her cheeks bloomed brighter and fresher than ever, and her face shone with an indescribable expression of happiness and delight. She was as one penetrated with the highest blissfulness. The doctor, after observing her with the minutest carefulness of examination for a long while, declared that there was not the least cause for anxiety in her condition, nor the slightest danger. He said she was (although it was entirely inexplicable *how* she was) in a magnetized condition, and that he would not venture to awaken her from it: she would wake from it of her own accord presently.

Meanwhile mysterious whisperings arose amongst the guests. The sudden death of the Count seemed to have somehow got wind, and they all dispersed in gloomy silence. One could hear the carriages rolling away.

Madame von G----, bending over Angelica, watched her every respiration. She seemed to be whispering words, but none could hear or understand them. The doctor would not allow her to be undressed; even her gloves were not to be taken off; he said it would be hurtful even to touch her.

All at once she opened her eyes, started up from the sofa, and, with a resounding cry of "Here he is!" "Here he is!" went rushing out of the room,

through the ante-chamber and down the stairs.

"She is out of her mind," cried Madame von G----. "Oh, God of Heaven, she is mad!" "No, no," the Doctor said, "this is not madness; there is something altogether unheard of taking place," with which he hastened after her down the steps.

He saw her speeding like an arrow, with her arms lifted up above her head, out of the gate and away along the broad high road, her rich lace-ornamented dress fluttering, and her hair, which had come down, streaming in the wind.

A man on horseback was coming tearing up towards her; when he reached her, he sprang from his horse and clasped her in his arms. Two other riders who were following him drew rein and dismounted.

The Colonel, who had followed the doctor in hot haste, stood gazing on the group in speechless astonishment, rubbing his forehead, as if striving to keep firm hold of his thoughts.

It was Moritz who was holding Angelica fast pressed to his heart; beside him stood Dagobert, and a fine-looking young man in the handsome uniform of a Russian General.

"No," cried Angelica over and over again, as the lovers embraced one another, "I was never untrue to you, my beloved Moritz." And Moritz cried, "Oh, I know that; I know that quite well, my darling angel-child. He enchanted you by his satanic arts."

And he more carried than led her back to the chateau, while the others followed in silence. Not till he came to the castle did the Colonel give a profound sigh, as if it was only then that he came fully to his senses; and, looking round him with questioning glances, said, "What miracles! what extraordinary events!"

"Everything will be explained," said Moritz, presenting the stranger to the Colonel as General Bogislav von Se----n, a Russian officer, his most intimate friend.

As soon as they came into the chateau, Moritz, with a wild look, and unheeding the Colonel's alarmed amazement, cried out, "Where is Count von S----i?"

"Among the dead!" said the Colonel, in a hollow voice, "he was seized with apoplexy an hour ago."

Angelica shrank and shuddered. "Yes," she said, "that I know. At the very instant when he died I felt as though some crystal thing within my being shivered, and broke with a 'kling.' I fell into an extraordinary state. I think I must have gone on carrying that frightful dream (which I told you of) further, because, when I came to look at matters again, I found that those terrible eyes had no more power over me; the web of fire loosened and broke away. Heavenly blissfulness was all about me. I saw Moritz, my own Moritz; he was coming to me. I flew to meet him," and she clasped her arms round him as if she thought he was going to escape from her again.

"Praised be Heaven," said Madame von G----. "Now the weight has gone from my heart which was stifling it. I am freed from that inexpressible anxiety and alarm which came upon me at the instant when Angelica promised to marry that terrible Count. I always felt as though she were betrothing herself to mysterious, unholy powers with her betrothal ring."

General von Se----n expressed a desire to see the Count's remains, and when the body was uncovered and he saw the pale countenance now fixed in death, he cried, "By Heaven, it is he! It is none other than himself."

Angelica had fallen into a gentle sleep in Moritz's arms, and had been carried

to her bed, the doctor thinking that nothing more beneficial could have happened to her than this slumber, which would rest the life-spirits, overstrained as they had been. He considered that in this manner a threatening illness would be naturally dispelled.

"Now," said the Colonel, "it is time to solve all those riddles and explain all those miraculous events. Tell us, Moritz, what angel of Heaven has called you back to life?"

"You know," said Moritz, "all about the murderous and treacherous attack which was made upon me near S----, though the armistice had been proclaimed. I was struck by a bullet, and fell from my horse. How long I lay in that deathlike state I cannot tell. When I first awoke to a dim consciousness, I was being moved somewhere, travelling. It was dark night; several voices were whispering near me. They were speaking French. Thus I knew that I was badly wounded and in the hands of the enemy. This thought came upon me with all its horror, and I sank again into a deep fainting fit. After that came a condition which has only left me the recollection of a few hours of violent headache; but at last, one morning, I awoke to complete consciousness. I found myself in a comfortable, almost sumptuous bed, with silk curtains and great cords and tassels. The room was lofty, and had silken hangings and richly-gilt tables and chairs, in the old French style. A strange man was bending over me and looking closely into my face. He hurried to a bell-rope and pulled at it hard. Presently the doors opened, and two men came in, the elder of whom had on an old-fashioned embroidered coat, and the cross of Saint Louis. The younger came to me, felt my pulse, and said to the elder, in French, 'All danger is over; he is saved.' The elder gentleman now introduced himself to me as the Chevalier de T----. The house was his in which I found myself. He said he had chanced, on a journey, to be passing through the village at the very moment when the treacherous attack was made upon me, and the peasants were going to plunder me. He succeeded in rescuing me, had me put into a conveyance, and brought to his chateau, which was quite out of the way of the military routes of communication. Here his own body-surgeon had applied himself to the arduous task of curing me of my very serious wound in the head. He said, in conclusion, that he loved my nation, which had shown him kindness in the stormy revolutionary times, and was delighted to be able to be of service to me. Everything in his chateau which could conduce to my comfort or amusement was freely at my disposal, and he would not, on any pretence, allow me to leave him until all risk, whether from my wound or the insecurity of the routes, should be over. All that he regretted was the impossibility of communicating with my friends for the moment, so as to let them know where I was.

"The Chevalier was a widower, and his sons were not with him, so that there were no other occupants of the chateau but himself, the surgeon, and a great retinue of servants. It would only weary you were I to tell you at length how I grew better and better under the care of the exceedingly able surgeon, and how the Chevalier did everything he possibly could to make my hermit's life agreeable to me. His conversation was more intellectual, and his views less shallow, than is usually the case with his countrymen. He talked on arts and sciences, but avoided the more novel and recent developments of them as much as possible. I need not tell you that my sole thought was Angelica, that it burned my soul to know that she was plunged in sorrow for my death. I constantly urged the Chevalier to get letters conveyed to our headquarters. He always declined to do so, on account of the uncertainty of the attempt, as it seemed as good as certain that fighting was going on again; but he consoled me by promising that as soon as I was quite convalescent he would have me sent home safe and sound, happen what might. From what he said I was led to suppose that the campaign was going on again, and to the advantage of the allies, and that he was avoiding telling me so in words from a wish to spare my feelings. But I need only mention one or two little incidents to justify the strange conjectures which Dagobert has formed in his mind. I was nearly free from fever, when one night I suddenly fell into an incomprehensible condition of dreaminess, the recollection of which makes me shudder, though that recollection is of the dimmest and most shadowy kind. I saw

Angelica, but her form seemed to be dissolving away indistinctly in a trembling radiance, and I strove in vain to hold it fast before me. Another being pressed in between us, laid herself on my breast, and grasped my heart within me, in the depths of my entity; and while I was perishing in the most glowing torment, I was at the same time penetrated with a strange miraculous sense of bliss. Next morning my eyes fell on a picture hanging near the bed, which I had never seen there before. I shuddered, for it was Marguerite beaming on me with her black brilliant eyes. I asked the servant whose picture it was, and where it came from. He said it was the Chevalier's niece, the Marquise de T----, and had always been where it was now, only I had not noticed it; it had been freshly dusted the day before. The Chevalier said the same. So that, whilst--waking or dreaming--my sole desire was to see Angelica, what was continually before me was Marguerite. It seemed to me that I was alienated, estranged, from myself. Some exterior foreign power seemed to have possession of me, ruling me, taking supreme command of me. I felt that I could not get away from Marguerite. Never shall I forget the torture of that condition.

"One morning, as I was lying in a window seat, refreshing my whole being by drinking in the perfume and the freshness which the morning breeze was wafting to me, I heard trumpets in the distance, and recognized a cheery march-tune of Russian cavalry. My heart throbbed with rapture and delight. It was as if friendly spirits were coming to me, wafted on the wings of the wind, speaking to me in lovely voices of comfort, as if a newly-won life was stretching out hands to me to lift me from the coffin in which some hostile power had nailed me up. One or two horsemen came up with lightning speed, right into the castle enclosure. I looked down, and saw Bogislav. In the excess of my joy I shouted out his name; the Chevalier came in, pale and annoyed, stammering out something about an unexpected billeting, and all sorts of trouble and annoyance. Without attending to him, I ran downstairs and threw myself into Bogislav's embrace.

"To my astonishment, I now learned that peace had been proclaimed a long time before, and that the greater part of the troops were on their homeward march. All this the Chevalier had concealed from me, keeping me on in the chateau as his prisoner. Neither Bogislav nor I knew anything in the shape of a motive for this conduct. But each of us dimly felt that there must be something in the nature of foul play about it. The Chevalier was quite a different man from that moment, sulky and peevish. Even to lack of good breeding, he wearied us with continual exhibitions of self-will, and naggling about trifles. Nay, when, in the purest gratitude, I spoke enthusiastically of his having saved my life, he smiled malignantly; and, in fact, his whole conduct was that of an incomprehensible eccentric.

"After a halt of eight-and-forty hours for rest, Bogislav marched off again, and I went with him. We were delighted when we turned our backs on the strange old-world place, which now looked to me like some gloomy, uncanny prison-house. But now, Dagobert, do you go on, for it is quite your turn to continue the account of the rest of the strange adventures which we have met with."

"How," began Dagobert, "can we doubt, and hesitate to believe in, the marvellous power of foreboding, and fore-knowing, events which lie so deep in man's nature? I never believed that my friend was dead. That Spirit or Intelligence (call it whatever you choose) which speaks to us, comprehensibly, from out our own selves, in our dreams, told me that Moritz was alive, and that, somehow and somewhere, he was being held fast in bonds of some most mysterious nature. Angelica's relations with the Count cut me to the heart; and when, some little time ago, I came here and found her in a peculiar condition, which, I am obliged to say, caused me an inward horror (because I seemed to see, as in a magic mirror, some terrible mysterious secret), there ripened in me a resolve that I would go on a pilgrimage, by land and water, until I should find my friend Moritz. I say not a word of my delight when I found him, on German ground, at A----, and in the company of General von S----en.

"All the furies of hell awoke in his breast when he heard of Angelica's betrothal to the Count; but all his execrations and heart-breaking lamentations at her unfaithfulness to him were silenced when I told him of certain ideas which I had formed, and assured him that it was in his power to set the whole matter straight in a moment. General von Se----en shuddered when I mentioned the Count's name to him, and when, at his desire, I described his face, figure, and appearance, he cried, 'Yes, there can be no further doubt. He is the very man!'"

"You will be surprised," here interrupted the General, "to hear me say that this Count S----i, many years ago, in Naples, carried away from me, by means of diabolical arts, a lady whom I deeply and fondly loved. At the very instant when I ran my sword through his body, both she and I were seized upon by a hellish illusion which parted us for ever. I have long known that the wounds which I gave him were not dangerous in the slightest degree, that he became a suitor for the lady's hand, and, alas! that on the very day when she was to have been married to him, she fell down dead, stricken by what was said to be an attack of apoplexy."

"Good Heavens!" cried Madame von G----. "No doubt a similar fate was hanging over my darling child! But how is it that I feel this is so?"

"The voice of the boding Spirit tells you so, Madame," said Dagobert.

"And then," said Madame von G----, "that terrible apparition which Moritz was telling us of that evening when the Count came in in such a mysterious way?"

"As I was telling you then," said Moritz, "there fell a crashing blow. An ice-cold deathly air blew upon me, and it seemed to me that a pale indistinct form went hovering and rustling across the room, in wavering, scarcely distinguishable outlines. I mastered my terror with all the might of my reason. All I seemed to be conscious of was that Bogislav was lying stiff, cold, and rigid, like a man dead. When he had been brought back to consciousness, with great pains and trouble, by the doctor who was summoned, he feebly reached out his hand to me, and said, 'Soon, to-morrow at latest, all my sorrows will be over.' And it really happened as he said, though it was the will of Providence that it should come about in quite a different way to that which we anticipated. In the thick of the fighting, next morning, a spent ball struck him on the breast and knocked him out of his saddle. This kindly ball shattered the portrait of his false love, which he wore next to his heart, into a thousand splinters. His contusion soon healed, and since that moment Bogislav has been quite free from everything of an uncanny nature."

"It is as he says," said the General, "and the very memory of her who is lost to me does no more than produce in me that gentle sadness which is so soothing to the heart. But I hope our friend Dagobert will go on to tell you what happened to us further."

"We made all haste away from A----," Dagobert resumed, "and this morning, just as day was breaking, we reached the little town of P---, about six miles from this place, meaning to rest there for an hour or two, and then come on here. Imagine the feelings of Moritz and me when, from one of the rooms in the inn, we saw Marguerite come bursting out upon us, with insanity clearly written on her pallid face. She fell at Moritz's feet and embraced his knees, weeping bitterly, calling herself the blackest of criminals, worthy a thousand deaths. She implored him to end her life on the spot. Moritz repulsed her with the deepest abhorrence, and rushed away from the house."

"Yes," said Moritz, "when I saw Marguerite at my feet, all the torments of that terrible condition in which I had been at the Chevalier's came back upon me, goading me into a state of fury such as I had never known before. I could scarcely help running my sword through her heart; but I succeeded in mastering myself, and I made my escape after a mighty effort."

"I lifted Marguerite up from the floor," Dagobert continued, "and helped her to her room. I succeeded in calming her, and heard her tell me, in broken sentences,

exactly what I had expected and anticipated. She gave me a letter from the Count, which had reached her the previous midnight. I have it here."

He produced it, and read it as follows:--

"Fly, Marguerite! All is lost! The detested one is coming quickly. All my science, knowledge, and skill are of no avail to me as against the dark fate and destiny about to overtake me at the very culminating point of my career.

"Marguerite, I have initiated you into mysteries which would have annihilated any ordinary woman had she endeavoured to comprehend them. But you, with your exceptional mental powers, and firm, strong will and resolution, have been a worthy pupil to the deeply experienced master. Your help has been most precious to me. It was through you that I controlled Angelica's mind, and all her inner being. And, to reward you, it was my desire to prepare for you the bliss of your life, according to the manner in which your heart conceived it; and I dared to enter within circles the most mysterious, the most perilous. I undertook operations which often terrified even myself. In vain. Fly, or your destruction is certain. Until the supreme moment comes I shall battle bravely on against the hostile powers. But I know well that that supreme moment brings to me instant death. But I will die all alone. When the supreme moment comes I shall go to that mysterious tree, under whose shadow I have so often spoken to you of the wondrous secrets which were known to me, and at my command.

"Marguerite, keep aloof from those secrets for evermore. Nature, terrible mother, angry when her precocious children prematurely pry into her secrets and pluck at the veil which covers her mysteries, throws to them some glittering toy which lures them on until its destroying power is directed against them. I myself once caused the death of a woman, who perished at the very moment when I thought I was going to take her to my heart with the most fervid affection; and this paralysed my powers. Yet, dolt that I was, I still thought I should find bliss here on earth. Farewell, Marguerite, farewell. Go back to your own country. Go to S----. The Chevalier de T---- will charge himself with your welfare and happiness. Farewell."

As Dagobert read this letter, all the auditors felt an inward shudder, and Madame von G---- said, "I shall be compelled to believe in things which my whole heart and soul refuse to credit. However, I certainly never could understand now it was that Angelica forgot Moritz so quickly and devoted herself to the Count. At the same time I cannot but remember that she was all the time in an extraordinary, unnatural condition of excitement, and that was a circumstance which filled me with the most torturing anxiety. I remember that her inclination for the Count showed itself at first in a very strange way. She told me she used to have the most vivid and delightful dreams of him nearly every night."

"Exactly," said Dagobert. "Marguerite told me that, by the Count's directions, she used to sit whole nights by Angelica's bedside, breathing the Count's name into her ear very, very softly. And the Count would very often come into the room about midnight, fix a steadfast gaze on Angelica for several minutes together, and then go away again. But now that I have read you the Count's letter, is there any need of commentary? His aim was to operate psychically upon the Inner Principle by various mysterious processes and arts, and in this he succeeded, by virtue of special qualifications of his nature. There were most intimate relations between him and the Chevalier de T----, both of them being members of that secret society or 'school' which has a certain number of representatives in France and Italy, and is supposed to be descended from, or a continuation of, the celebrated P---- school. It was at the Count's instigation that the Chevalier kept Moritz so long shut up in his chateau, and practised all sorts of love-spells on him. I myself could go deeper into this subject, and say more about the mysterious means by which the Count could influence the Psychic Principle of others, as Marguerite divulged some of them to me. I could explain many matters by a science which is not altogether unknown to me, though I prefer not to call it by its name, for fear of being misunderstood. However, I had rather avoid all those subjects, to-day at all

events."

"Oh, pray avoid them for ever," cried Madame von G----. "No more reference to the dark, unknown realm, the abode of fear and horror. I thank the Eternal Power, which has rescued my beloved child, and freed us from the uncanny guest who brought us such terrible trouble."

It was arranged that they should go back to town the following day, except the Colonel and Dagobert, who stayed behind to see to the burial of the Count's remains.

When Angelica had long been Moritz's happy wife, it chanced that one stormy November evening the family, and Dagobert, were sitting round the fire in the very room into which Count S---- had made his entry in such a spectral fashion. Just as then, mysterious voices were piping, awakened by the storm-wind in the chimney.

"Do you remember?" said Madame von G----.

"Come, come," cried the Colonel; "no ghost stories, I beg." But Angelica and Moritz spoke of what their feelings had been on that evening long ago; of their having been so devotedly in love with each other, and unable to help attaching the most overweening importance to every little incident which occurred: how the pure beam of that love of theirs had been reflected by everything, and even the sweet bond of alarm wove itself out of loving, longing hearts--and how the Uncanny Guest, heralded by all the spectral voices of ill-omen, had brought terror upon them. "Does it not seem to you, dearest Moritz," said Angelica, "that the strange tones of the storm-wind, as we hear them now, are speaking to us, only of our love, in the kindliest possible tones?"

"Yes! yes!" said Dagobert, "and the singing of the kettle sounds to-night to *me* much more like a little cradle song than anything eerie."

Angelica hid her blushing face on Moritz's breast. And *he*--for his part--clasped his arm round his beautiful wife, and softly whispered, "Is there, here below, a higher bliss than this?"

"I see very plainly," said Ottmar, when he had finished, and the friends still sat in gloomy silence, "that my little story has not pleased you particularly, so we had better not say much more about it, but consign it to oblivion."

"The very best thing we could do," said Lothair.

"And yet," Cyprian said, "I must take up the cudgels for my friend. Of course you will say that I am to some extent mixed up in the matter--that Ottmar has taken a good many of the germs of the story from me, and on this occasion has been cooking in my kitchen, so that you won't be disposed to allow me to be a judge in the case. Yet, unless you mean to condemn everything without the slightest remorse, like so many Rhadamanthuses--you must admit, yourselves, that there is much in Ottmar's story which must be allowed to pass as genuinely Serapiontic; the beginning, for instance."

"Quite right," said Theodore; "the party round the tea-table may pass as from the life, as well as many other points during the course of the tale. But, to speak candidly, we have had a very large assortment of spectral characters such as the stranger Count, and it will soon be a difficult matter to go on giving them novelty and originality. He is too much like Alban in 'The Magnetizer.' You know the tale I mean, and indeed that story and Ottmar's have both the same *motif*. Wherefore I wish I might beg our Ottmar and you, Cyprian, to leave monsters of that sort out of the game in future. For Ottmar this will be possible, but for you, Cyprian, I am not so sure that it will. So that we shall have to allow *you* to serve us up a 'Spook' of the kind now and then, I suppose, only stipulating that it shall be truly

Serapiontic, *i.e.* come out of the very inmost depths of your imagination. Moreover 'The Magnetizer' *seems* rhapsodical, but the 'Uncanny Guest' is rhapsodical in very truth."

"I must take up the cudgels for my friend in this respect too," said Cyprian, "and tell you that, in the very neighbourhood of this place where we are at this moment, there actually happened an event, not very long ago, by no means unlike the incidents of this story. Into a quiet happy group of friends, just when supernatural matters were forming the subject of conversation, there suddenly came a stranger, who struck every one as being uncanny and terrifying, notwithstanding his apparent everydayness, and seeming belonging to the common level. By his arrival this stranger not only spoiled the enjoyment of the evening in question, but subsequently destroyed the peace and happiness of the family for a long period. Even at this day deadly shudders seize a happy wife when she thinks of the crafty wickedness with which this person tried to entangle her in his nets. I told this at the time to Ottmar, and nothing made a greater impression on him than the moment when the stranger made his spectral entry, and the sense of the propinquity of the hostile Spiritual Principle seized upon every one present with a sudden terror. This moment came vividly to Ottmar's mind, and formed the groundwork of his tale."

"But," said Ottmar, "as a single incident is far from being a complete story--which ought to spring perfect and complete from its author's brain, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter--my tale is of course not worth much as a whole, and it is little to my credit, I suppose, that I took advantage of two or three incidents which really happened, weaving them--not without some little success perhaps--into a network of the imaginary."

"Yes," said Lothair, "you are right, my friend. A single striking incident is far from being a tale, just as one well-imagined theatrical situation is a long way from constituting a play. This reminds me of the way in which a certain playwright (who no longer walks this world, and whose terrible death certainly atoned for any shortcomings of his during his life, and reconciled his worst enemies to him) used to construct his pieces. In a company where I was present, he said, without any concealment, that he selected some one's good dramatic situation which occurred to him, and then, solely for the sake of that, hung a canvas round it and painted away upon it 'just whatever came in his head,' or 'as best he could,' to use his own expressions. This gave me a complete explanation of, and threw a dazzling flood of light upon, the whole character and inner being of that writer's pieces, particularly those of his later period. None of them is without some very happily devised central situation, but all round this the scenes, which he made up out of commonplace material, are woven like a loosely knitted web, although the hand of that weaver, skilled as it is in *technique*, is never to be mistaken."

"Never, say you?" remarked Theodore. "I have been always waiting and looking out for the points where that writer would abandon his commonplaces, and rise into the region of romance and true poetry. The most striking and melancholy instance of what I mean is the so-called Romantic Drama, 'Deodata'; a strange nondescript production, on which a clever composer ought not to have wasted capital music. There can be no more striking proof of the utter want of infelt poetry, of any conception of the higher dramatic life, than where the author of 'Deodata,' in his preface, finds fault with Opera because it is unnatural that people should sing on the stage, and next goes on to explain that he has been at pains to introduce the singing, which is incidental to it, always in a natural manner."

"*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*," said Cyprian, "let the dead repose in peace."

"And all the more," said Lothair, "that I see midnight is close at hand, and he might avail himself of that circumstance to give us a box or two on the ear (as he is said to have done to his critics in life) with his invisible fist."

Just then the carriage which Lothair had sent for on account of Theodore's still

invalid condition, came rolling up, and the friends went back in it to town.

SECTION SIXTH.

It so happened that some irresistible psychic force had impelled Sylvester back to town, although, as a rule, nothing in the world would induce him to leave the country at the time of year when the weather was at its pleasantest. A little theatrical piece which he had written was going to be produced, and it seems an impossibility for an author to miss a first performance of one of his pieces, even though he may have to contend with a world of trouble and anxiety in connection with it. Moreover, Vincent, too, had emerged from the crowd, so that, for the time at least, the Serapion Brotherhood was fairly reestablished; they held their meeting in the same pleasant public-garden where they had last assembled.

Sylvester was not like the same man; he was in better spirits and more talkative than when he was last seen, and taking him all over, like one who had experienced some piece of great good fortune.

"Was it not well," said Lothair, "that we put off our meeting until our friend's piece had been produced? otherwise we should have found our good brother preoccupied, uninterested in our conversation, oppressed as with a heavy burden. His piece would have been haunting him like some distressful spectre, but now that it has burst its chrysalis and fluttered away like a beautiful butterfly into the empyrean, and has not sued for universal favour in vain, everything is clear and bright within him. He stands glorified in the radiance of deserved applause which has fallen so richly to his share, and we won't, for a moment, take it ill of him that he looks down upon us with the least bit of pardonable pride, seeing that not one of us can boast of having done what he has; namely, electrified some six or eight hundred people with one spark; but let everybody have his due. Your piece is good, Sylvester; but you must admit that the admirable rendering was what gave it its wings. You must really have been greatly satisfied with the actors, were you not?"

"I certainly was," said Sylvester, "although at the same time it is very difficult to please the author of a play with the performance of it. You see, he is himself each of the characters of the piece; and all their most intimate peculiarities, with all their necessary conditions, have taken their origin in his own brain; and it seems impossible to him that any other person shall so appropriate, and make his own, those intimate thoughts of his which are peculiar to and innate in the character as to be able to bring them forth into actual life. The author, however, insists in his own mind upon this being done; and the more vividly he has conceived the character, the more is he discontented with the very slightest shortcoming, or alteration in it, which he can discover in the actor's rendering of it. Certain is it that the author suffers an anxiety which destroys all his pleasure in the representation, and it is only when he can manage to soar above this anxiousness, and see his character, the character -which he has invented, portrayed before his eyes, just as he saw it rise before his mental vision, that he is able to enjoy, to some extent, seeing his piece represented."

"Still," said Ottmar, "any annoyance which a playwright may feel, when he sees other characters, quite dissimilar from his own, represented instead of them, is richly compensated for by the applause of the public, to which no author can, or should, be indifferent."

"No doubt," said Sylvester; "and as it is to the actor who is playing the part that the applause is, in the first instance, given, the author, who from his distant seat is looking on with trembling and anxiety, yea, often with anger and disgust, at last

becomes convinced that the character (not at all his character) which is speaking the speeches of his one on the stage, is, at all events, not so very bad after all as might have been. Also it is quite true, and no reasonable author, who is not entirely shut up in himself, will deny it, that many a clever actor, who has formed a vivid conception of a character, develops features in that character which he himself did not think of, at least not distinctly, and which he must nevertheless admit to be good and appropriate. The author sees a character which was born in his own most inmost elements, appearing before him in a shape new and strange to him. Yet this shape is by no means foreign to the elements of the genesis of the character, nay it does not seem now possible that it could have assumed a different form; and he feels a glad astonishment over this thing, which is really his own, although it seems so different; just as if he had suddenly come upon a treasure in his garret, whose existence he had not dreamt of."

"There," said Ottmar, "spoke my dear kind-hearted Sylvester, who does not know the meaning of the word 'vanity,' that vanity which has stifled many a great and true talent. There is one writer for the stage who once said, without the slightest hesitation, that there are no actors capable of understanding the soul which dwells within him, or of representing the characters which he creates. How wholly otherwise was it with our grand and glorious Schiller, who once got into that state of delighted surprise of which Sylvester speaks, when he saw his Wallenstein performed, and declared that it was then, for the first time, that he had seen his hero visibly in flesh and blood before his eyes. It was Fleck, the for ever unforgettable hero of our stage, who played Wallenstein then."

"On the whole," said Lothair, "I am convinced, and the instance which Ottmar has given confirms me, that the writer on whom, in the depths of his soul, the true recognition and comprehension of art, and with them, that worship which they give to the creating formative spirit of the universe, have arisen in light, cannot lower himself to the degraded idol-cult, which worships only its own self as being the Fetish that created all things. It is very easy for a great talent to be mistaken for real genius. But time dispels every illusion: talent succumbs to the attacks of time, but they have no effect on true genius, which lives on in invulnerable strength and beauty. But, to return to our Sylvester, and his theatre-piece, I must declare to you that I cannot understand how any one can come to the heroic decision to permit a work, for which he is indebted to his imagination, and to fortunate creative impulses, to be acted before him on the slippery, risky, uncertain boards of the stage."

The friends laughed, thinking that Lothair was, after his wont, going to utter some quaint, out-of-the-way opinion.

"Am I," asked he, "really a strange being who often thinks things which other people are not very apt to think? Well, be that as it may; I say again that when a fairly good writer, who has genuine talent, such as our Sylvester, puts a piece upon the stage, it feels to me very much as if he made up his mind to jump out of a third-floor window, and take his chance of what might happen to him. I am going to make a confession; when I told you I did not go to the theatre on the first night of Sylvester's piece, I told you a lie. Of course I went; and sat on a back seat, a second Sylvester, a second author of the piece, for it is impossible that he can have felt the strain of anxiety, the strange feeling compounded of pleasure and its opposite, the restlessness amounting to real pain, in any greater degree than I did myself. Every word of the players, every gesture of theirs, took my breath away, and I kept saying to myself, 'Oh, gracious heavens, is it possible that that will do, that it will go down with the audience? and is the author responsible whether it does or not?'"

"You make the thing worse than it is," said Sylvester. "I feel a disagreeable oppression of the breath, particularly at the beginning; but if matters are going on pretty well, and the public expresses itself favourably, this gradually goes off, and makes room for a very pleasant sensation, in which I think selfish satisfaction with one's own production occupies the principal place."

"Oh! you theatre-writers," cried out Vincent, "you are the most conceited of all. The applause of the multitude is, to you, the very honey of Hybla, and you sip and swallow it with the daintiest of faces and the sweetest of smiles. But I am going to take up the role of devil's advocate, and add that you are as little to be found fault with, for your anxiousness and eagerness (which many folks think are nothing but the pangs of your vanity), as anybody else who is playing a great and risky game. You are staking yourselves; winning means applause, but losing means not only deserved blame, but (if this amounts to a distinct public expression of it) that besmirching of the ludicrous which is the bitterest and (as the French think) the most fearful and damnable condemnation which a man can' experience here below. A virtuous Frenchman would, therefore, much rather be considered a vile reprobate than be laughed at, and it is quite certain that a ban of being ludicrous always falls on any playwright who has been (theatrically speaking) 'damned'; and he never shakes it off in all his lifetime. Even future success is a most questionable affair, and many a man who has had this misfortune happen to him, has fled in his despair to the doleful wilderness of those productions which possess the outward appearance of theatrical pieces, but, as their authors solemnly assure us, are not meant for representation."

"I," said Theodore, "can corroborate you both most thoroughly from my own experience, that it is a most hazardous matter to put a work on to the stage. What it really amounts to is, that you are committing a property of yours to the mercy of the winds and the waves. When one remembers how many thousand accidental contingencies the effect of a work depends upon, how very often the deeply considered and carefully contrived effect of some passage is shipwrecked by the blunder, the unskilfulness, or the mistake of a singer or instrumentalist; how often--"

++++++line 5644--can corroborate you both most thoroughly from my

Vincent here interrupted with a vigourous cry of "hear! hear!"

"I cry 'hear! hear!'" he explained, "as the noble lords in the English Parliament do when one of them is just going to let the cat out of the bag. Theodore's head is full of nothing but the opera which he put upon the stage a few years ago. At the time, he said, 'When I had attended a dozen rehearsals which were more or less useless and pretty much burked, and when the last one came, and the conductor evidently had very little real idea of my score, or about the piece as a whole, I gave things up, and felt quite calm in my mind as to the very dubious destiny which was hanging over my production like a most threatening thunder-cloud.' I said, 'If it is failure, a failure let it be; I am far away aloft above all an author's anxieties and uneasinesses.' With other pretty speeches of a like nature. But when I saw my friend on the day of the performance, and when it came to be time to go to the theatre, he suddenly turned as white as a sheet (though he smiled and laughed a great deal, nobody quite knew at what), and gave us the most eager assurances that he had almost forgotten that that was the night when his opera was to be given--tried, when putting on his greatcoat, to stick his right arm into the left sleeve, so that I had to help him on with it--and then ran off across the street like one possessed, without a word. And, as the first chords of his overture sounded just as he was getting into his box, he tumbled into the arms of the terrified boxkeeper. Then--"

"There, there!" cried Theodore, "that's enough about my opera, and the execution of it. I shall be very glad to tell you as much as you please about them any time when we happen to be having a regular talk about music; but not another word to-night."

"We have said enough, and more than enough," said Lothair, "on this particular subject, and by way of winding it up, I may just say that there is a little anecdote of Voltaire which pleases me greatly. Once, when one of his tragedies--I think it was Zaire--was going to be given for the first time, he was in such a terror of anxiety about its fate, that he did not dare to be present himself; but all the way between his house and the theatre he had people posted to send him messages

every two or three minutes, by a code of signals, bow the piece was going; so that he was able to suffer all the torments of the Author comfortably, *en robe de chambre*, in his own room."

"Now," cried Sylvester, "wouldn't that make a capital scene on the stage? and what a splendid part it would be for a character actor. Think of Voltaire on the boards. News comes that 'The public is disturbed, uneasy.' 'Ha!' he cries, 'frivolous race! can any one awaken your sympathy?' Next comes a message that 'the public is applauding--shouting in delight.' 'Oh! great, grand, noble Frenchmen,' he cries, 'you comprehend your Voltaire--you are worthy of him.' 'The public is hissing, and there are one or two catcalls audible.' 'Ah! traitors! this to me--to me!'"

"Enough, enough," said Ottmar. "Sylvester is so inspired by his success that he is favouring us with a scene of a comedy instead of--like a proper Serapion Brother--reading us a tale, the most interesting subject of which he told me of, in writing, and which I know he has finished and brought with him."

"Our having been talking of Voltaire," said Sylvester, "may lead us to think of his 'Siècle de Louis XIV.,' and of that period itself, in which I have laid the scenes of the story which I now venture, with all modesty, to submit, hoping for your favourable opinion."

He read:--

MADEMOISELLE SCUDERI:

A Tale Of The Times Of Louis The Fourteenth.

Magdaleine Scuderi, so famous for her charming poetical and other writings, lived in a small mansion in the Rue St. Honoré, by favour of Louis the 14th and Madame Maintenon.

Late one night--about midnight--in the autumn of the year 1680, there came a knocking at the door of this house, so loud and violent that it shook the very ground. Baptiste, who filled the offices of cook, butler, and doorkeeper in the lady's modest establishment, had gone, by her leave, to the country to his sister's wedding, so that La Martinière, the *femme de chambre*, was the only person still awake in the house. She heard this knocking, which went on without ceasing almost, and she remembered that, as Baptiste was away, she and her mistress were alone and unprotected. She thought of the housebreakings, robberies, and murders which were so frequent in Paris at that time, and felt convinced that some of the numerous bands of malefactors, knowing the defenceless state of the house that night, were raising this alarum at the door, and would commit some outrage if it was opened; so she remained in her room, trembling and terrified, anathematizing Baptiste, and his sister's marriage into the bargain.

Meantime the thundering knocking went on at the door, and she thought she heard a voice calling in the intervals, "Open, for the love of Christ! Open!--open!" At last, her alarm increasing, she took her candle and ran out on to the landing, where she distinctly heard the voice crying, "Open the door, for the love of Christ!"

"After all," she said to herself, "one knows that a robber would not be crying out in that way. Perhaps it is somebody who is being pursued and is come to my lady for refuge. She is known to be always ready to do a kind action--but we must be very careful!"

She opened a window, and called down into the street, asking who it was who was making such a tremendous thundering at the door at that time of the night, rousing everybody from their sleep. This she did in a voice which she tried to

make as like a man's as she could. By the glimmer of the moon, which was beginning to break through dark clouds, she could make out a tall figure, in a long grey cloak, with a broad hat drawn down over the forehead. Then she cried, in a loud voice, so that this person in the street should hear, "Baptiste! Claude! Pierre! Get up, and see who this rascal is who is trying to get in at this time of night." But a gentle, entreating voice spake from beneath, saying, "Ah, La Martinière, I know it is you, you kind soul, though you are trying to alter your voice; and I know well enough that Baptiste is away in the country, and that there is nobody in the house but your mistress and yourself. Let me in. I *must* speak with your lady this instant."

"Do you imagine," asked La Martinière, "that my lady is going to speak to you in the middle of the night? Can't you understand that she has been in bed ever so long, and that it is as much as my place is worth to awaken her out of her first sweet sleep, which is so precious to a person at her time of life?"

"I know," answered the person beneath, "that she has just this moment put away the manuscript of the novel 'Clelia,' at which she is working so hard, and is writing some verses which she means to read to-morrow at Madame de Maintenon's. I implore you, Madame La Martinière, be so compassionate as to open the door. Upon your doing so depends the escape of an unfortunate creature from destruction. Nay, honour, freedom, a human life, depend on this moment in which I *must* speak with your lady. Remember, her anger will rest upon you for ever when she comes to know that it was you who cruelly drove away from her door the unfortunate wretch who came to beg for her help."

"But why should you come for her help at such an extraordinary time of the night?" asked La Martinière. "Come back in the morning at a reasonable hour." But the reply came up, "Does destiny, when it strikes like the destroying lightning, consider hours and times? When there is but one moment when rescue is possible, is help to be put off? Open me the door. Have no fear of a wretched being who is without defence, hunted, under the pressure of a terrible fate, and flies to your lady for succour from the most imminent peril."

La Martinière heard the stranger moaning and groaning as he uttered those words in the deepest sorrow, and the tone of his voice was that of a youth, soft and gentle, and going profoundly to the heart. She was deeply touched, and without much more hesitation she went and fetched the key.

As soon as she opened the door, the form shrouded in the mantle burst violently in, and passing La Martinière, cried in a wild voice, "Take me to your lady!" La Martinière held up the light which she was carrying, and the glimmer fell on the face of a very young man, distorted and frightfully drawn, and as pale as death. She almost fell down on the landing for terror when he opened his cloak and showed the glittering hilt of a stiletto sticking in his doublet. He flashed his gleaming eyes at her, and cried, more wildly than before, "Take me to your lady, I tell you."

La Martinière saw that her mistress was in the utmost danger. All her affection for her, who was to her as the kindest of mothers, flamed up and created a courage which she herself would scarcely have thought herself capable of. She quickly closed the door of her room, moved rapidly in front of it, and said, in a brave, firm voice, "Your furious behaviour, now that you have got into the house, is very different to what might have been expected from the way you spoke down in the street. I see now that I had pity on you a little too easily. My lady you shall not see or speak with at this hour. If you have no bad designs, and are not afraid to show yourself in daylight, come and tell her your business to-morrow; but take yourself off out of this house now."

He heaved a hollow sigh, glared at La Martinière with a terrible expression, and grasped his dagger. She silently commended her soul to God, but stood firm and looked him straight in the face, pressing herself more firmly against the door through which he would have to pass in order to reach her mistress.

"Let me get to your lady, I tell you!" he cried once more.

"Do what you will," said La Martinière, "I shall not move from this spot. Finish the crime which you have begun to commit. A shameful death on the Place de Grève will overtake you, as it has your accursed comrades in wickedness."

"Ha! you are right, La Martinière," he cried. "I am armed, and I look as if I were an accursed robber and murderer. But my comrades are not executed--are not executed," and he drew his dagger, advancing with poisonous looks towards the terrified woman.

"Jesus!" she cried, expecting her death-wound; but at that moment there came up from the street below the clatter and the ring of arms, and the hoof-tread of horses.

"La Marechaussée! La Marechaussée! Help! help!" she cried.

"Wretched woman, you will be my destruction," he cried. "All is over now--all over! Here, take it; take it. Give this to your lady now, or to-morrow if you like it better." As he said this in a whisper, he took the candelabra from her, blew out the tapers, and placed a casket in her hands. "As you prize your eternal salvation," he cried, "give this to your lady." He dashed out of the door, and was gone.

La Martinière had sunk to the floor. She raised herself with difficulty, and groped her way back in the darkness to her room, where, wholly overcome and unable to utter a sound, she fell into an arm-chair. Presently she heard the bolts rattle, which she had left unfastened when she closed the house door. The house was therefore now shut up, and soft unsteady steps were approaching her room. Like one under a spell, unable to move, she was preparing for the very worst, when, to her inexpressible joy, the door opened, and by the pale light of the night-lamp she saw it was Baptiste. He was deadly pale, and much upset. "For the love of all the saints," he exclaimed, "tell me what has happened! Oh, what a state I am in! Something--I don't know what it was--told me to come away from the wedding yesterday--forced me to come away. So when I got to this street, I thought, Madame Martinière isn't a heavy sleeper; she'll hear me if I knock quietly at the door, and let me in. Then up came a strong patrol meeting me, horsemen and foot, armed to the teeth. They stopped me, and wouldn't let me go. Luckily Desgrais was there, the lieutenant of the Marechaussée. He knows me, and as they were holding their lanterns under my nose, he said, 'Ho, Baptiste! How come you here in the streets at this time of the night? You ought to be at home, taking care of the house. This is not a very safe spot just at this moment. We're expecting to make a fine haul, an important arrest, to-night.' You can't think, Madame La Martinière, how I felt when he said that. And when I got to the door, lo! and behold! a man in a cloak comes bursting out with a drawn dagger in his hand, runs round me, and makes off. The door was open, the keys in the lock. What, in the name of all that's holy, is the meaning of it all?"

La Martinière, relieved from her alarm, told him all that had happened, and both she and he went back to the hall, where they found the candelabra on the floor, where the stranger had thrown it on taking his flight. "There can't be the slightest doubt that our mistress was within an ace of being robbed, and murdered too, very likely," Baptiste said. "According to what you say, the scoundrel knew well enough that there was nobody in the house but her and you, and even that she was still sitting up at her writing. Of course he was one of those infernal blackguards who pry into folks' houses and spy out everything that can be of use to them in their devilish designs. And the little casket, Madame Martinière, that, I think, we'll throw into the Seine where it's deepest. Who shall be our warrant that some monster or other isn't lying in wait for our mistress's life? Very likely, if she opens the casket, she may tumble down dead, as the old Marquis de Tournay did when he opened a letter which came to him, he didn't know where from."

After a long consultation, they came to the conclusion that they would, next morning, tell their lady everything that had happened, and even hand her the mysterious casket, which might, perhaps, be opened if proper precautions were taken. On carefully weighing all the circumstances connected with the apparition of the stranger, they thought that there must be some special secret or mystery involved in the affair, which they were not in a position to unravel, but must leave to be elucidated by their superiors.

There were good grounds for Baptiste's fears. Paris, at the time in question, was the scene of atrocious deeds of violence, and that just at a period when the most diabolical inventions of hell provided the most facile means for their execution.

Glaser, a German apothecary, the most learned chemist of his day, occupied himself--as people who cultivate his science often do--with alchemical researches and experiments. He had set himself the task of discovering the philosopher's stone. An Italian of the name of Exili associated himself with him; but to him the art of goldmaking formed a mere pretext. What he aimed at mastering was the blending, preparation, and sublimation of the various poisonous substances which Glaser hoped would give him the results he was in search of, and at length Exili discovered how to prepare that delicate poison which has no odour nor taste, and which, killing either slowly or in a moment, leaves not the slightest trace in the human organism, and baffles the utmost skill of the physician, who, not suspecting poison as the means of death, ascribes it to natural causes. But cautiously as Exili went about this, he fell under suspicion of dealing with poisons, and was thrown into the Bastille. In the same cell with him there was presently quartered an officer of the name of Godwin de Sainte-Croix, who had long lived in relations with the Marquise de Brinvilliers which brought shame upon all her family; and at length, as her husband cared nothing about her conduct, her father (Dreux d'Aubray, Civil Lieutenant of Paris) had to part the guilty pair by means of a *lettre de cachet* against Sainte-Croix. The latter, being a man of passionate nature, characterless, affecting sanctity, but addicted from his youth to every vice, jealous, envious even to fury, nothing could be more welcome to him than Exili's devilish secret, which gave him the power of destroying all his enemies. He became Exili's assiduous pupil, and soon equalled his instructor, so that when he was released from prison he was in a position to carry on operations by himself on his own account.

La Brinvilliers was a depraved woman, and Sainte-Croix made her a monster. She managed, by degrees, to poison, first, her own father (with whom she was living, on the hypocritical pretence of taking care of him in his declining years), next her two brothers, and then her sister; the father out of revenge, and the others for their fortunes. The histories of more than one poisoner bear terrible evidence that this description of crime assumes the form of an irresistible passion. Just as a chemist makes experiments for the pleasure and the interest of watching them, poisoners have often, without the smallest ulterior object, killed persons whose living or dying was to them a matter of complete indifference. The sudden deaths of a number of paupers, patients at the Hôtel Dieu, a little time after the events just alluded to, led to suspicion that the bread which La Brinvilliers was in the habit of giving them every week (by way of an example of piety and benevolence) was poisoned. And it is certain that she poisoned pigeon pasties which were served up to guests whom she had invited. The Chevalier du Guet, and many more, were the victims of those diabolical entertainments. Sainte-Croix, his accomplice La Chaussée, and La Brinvilliers, managed to hide their crimes for a long while under a veil of impenetrable secrecy. But, however the wicked may brazen matters out, there comes a time when the Eternal Power of Heaven punishes the criminal, even here on earth. The poisons which Sainte-Croix prepared were so marvellously delicate that if the powder (which the Parisians appositely named "*poudre de succession*") was uncovered while being made, a single inhalation of it was sufficient to cause immediate death. Therefore

Sainte-Croix always wore a glass mask when at work. This mask fell off one day just as he was shaking a finished powder into a phial, and, having inhaled some of the powder, he fell dead in an instant. As he had no heirs, the law courts at once placed his property under seal, when the whole diabolical arsenal of poison-murder which had been at the villain's disposal was discovered, and also the letters of Madame de Brinvilliers, which left no doubt as to her crimes. She fled to a convent at Liège. Desgrais, an officer of the Marechaussée, was sent after her. Disguised as a priest, he got admitted into the convent, and succeeded in involving the terrible woman in a love-affair, and in getting her to grant him a clandestine meeting in a sequestered garden outside the town. When she arrived there she found herself surrounded by Desgrais' myrmidons; and her ecclesiastical gallant speedily transformed himself into the officer of the Marechaussée, and compelled her to get into the carriage which was waiting outside the garden, and drove straight away to Paris, surrounded by an ample guard. La Chaussée had been beheaded previously to this, and La Brinvilliers suffered the same death. Her body was burnt, and its ashes scattered to the winds.

The Parisians breathed freely again when the world was freed from the presence of this monster, who had so long wielded, with impunity, unpunished, the weapon of secret murder against friend and foe. But it soon became bruited abroad that the terrible art of the accursed La Croix had been, somehow, handed down to a successor, who was carrying it on triumphantly. Murder came gliding like an invisible, capricious spectre into the narrowest and most intimate circles of relationship, love, and friendship, pouncing securely and swiftly upon its unhappy victims. Men who, to-day, were seen in robust health, were tottering about on the morrow feeble and sick; and no skill of physicians could restore them. Wealth, a good appointment or office, a nice-looking wife, perhaps a little too young for her husband, were ample reasons for a man's being dogged to death. The most frightful mistrust snapped the most sacred ties. The husband trembled before his wife; the father dreaded the son; the sister the brother. When your friend asked you to dinner, you carefully avoided tasting the dishes and wines which he set before you; and where joy and merriment used to reign, there were now nothing but wild looks watching to detect the secret murderer. Fathers of families were to be seen with anxious looks, buying supplies of food in out-of-the-way places where they were not known, and cooking them themselves in dirty cook-shops, for dread of treason in their own homes. And yet often the most careful and ingenious precautions were unavailing.

For the repression of this ever-increasing disorder the King constituted a fresh tribunal, to which he entrusted the special investigation and punishment of those secret crimes. This was the Chambre Ardente, which held its sittings near the Bastille. La Regnie was its president. For a considerable time La Regnie's efforts, assiduous as they were, were unsuccessful, and it was the lot of the much overworked Desgrais to discover the most secret lurking-hole of the crime. In the Faubourg Saint-Germain there lived an old woman, named La Voisin, who followed the calling of a teller of fortunes and a summoner of spirits, and, assisted by her accomplices Le Sage and Le Vigoureux, managed to alarm and astonish people who were by no means to be considered weak or superstitious. But she did more than this. She was a pupil of Exili's, like La Croix, and, like him, prepared the delicate, traceless poison, which helped wicked sons to speedy inheritance and unprincipled wives to other, younger husbands. Desgrais fathomed her secrets; she made full confession; the Chambre Ardente sentenced her to be burned, and the sentence was carried out on the Place de Grève. Amongst her effects was found a list of those who had availed themselves of her services; whence it followed, not only that execution succeeded execution, but that strong suspicion fell on persons of high consideration. Thus it was believed that Cardinal Bonzy had obtained from La Voisin the means of disembarrassing himself of all the persons to whom, in his capacity of Archbishop of Narbonne, he was bound to pay pensions. Similarly, the Duchess de Bouillon and the Countess de Soissons (their names having been found in La Voisin's list) were accused of having had relations with her; and even Francis Henri de Montmorency, Boudebelle, Duke of

Luxemburg, Peer and Marshal of the realm, did not escape arraignment before the Chambre Ardente. He surrendered himself to imprisonment in the Bastille, where the hatred of Louvois and La Regnie immured him in a cell only six feet long. Months elapsed before it was proved that his offences did not deserve so severe a punishment. He had once gone to La Voisin to have his horoscope drawn.

What is certain is that an excess of inconsiderate zeal led President La Regnie into violently illegal and barbarous measures. His Court assumed the character of the Inquisition. The very slightest suspicion rendered any one liable to severe imprisonment, and the establishment of the innocence of a person tried for his life was often only a matter of the merest chance. Besides, Regnie was repulsive to behold, and of malicious disposition, so that he excited the hatred of those whose avenger or protector he was called upon to be. When he asked the Duchess de Bouillon if she had ever seen the devil, she answered, "I think I see him at this moment."

Whilst now, on the Place de Grève, the blood of the guilty and of the merely suspected was flowing in streams, and secret deaths by poison were, at last, becoming more and more rare, a trouble of another description showed itself, spreading abroad fresh consternation. It seemed that a gang of robbers had made up their minds to possess themselves of all the jewels in the city. Whenever a valuable set of ornaments was bought, it disappeared in an inexplicable manner, however carefully preserved and protected. And everybody who dared to wear precious stones in the evening was certain to be robbed, either in the public streets or in the dark passages of houses. Very often they were not only robbed, but murdered. Such of them as escaped with their lives said they had been felled by the blow of a clenched fist on the head, which came on them like a thunderbolt. And when they recovered their senses they found that they had been robbed, and were in a totally different place from that where they had been knocked down. Those who were murdered--and they were found nearly every morning lying in the streets or in houses--had all the selfsame mortal wound--a dagger-thrust, right through the heart, which the surgeons said must have been delivered with such swiftness and certainty that the victim must have fallen dead without the power of uttering a sound. Now who, in all the luxurious Court of Louis Quatorze, was there who was not implicated in some secret love-affair, and, consequently, often gliding about the streets late at night with valuable presents in his pockets? Just as if this robber-gang were in intercourse with spirits, they always knew perfectly well when anything of this kind was going on. Often the fortunate lover wouldn't reach the house where his lady was expecting him; often he would fall at her threshold, at her very door, where, to her horror, she would discover his bleeding body lying.

It was in vain that Argenson, the Minister of Police, arrested every individual, in all Paris, who seemed to be touched by the very faintest suspicion; in vain La Regnie raged, striving to compel confession; in vain guards and patrols were reinforced. Not a trace of the perpetrators of those outrages was to be discovered. The only thing which was of a certain degree of use was to go about armed to the teeth, and have a light carried before you; and yet there were cases in which the servant who carried the light had his attention occupied by having stones thrown at him, whilst at that very instant his master was being robbed and murdered.

It was a remarkable feature of this business that, notwithstanding all search and investigation in every quarter where there seemed to be any chance of dealing in jewels going on, not a trace of even the smallest of the plundered precious stones ever came to light. Desgrais foamed in fury that even his acumen and skill were powerless to prevent the escape of those scoundrels. Whatever part of the town he happened to be in for the time was let alone, whilst in some other quarter, robbery and murder were lying in wait for their rich prey.

Desgrais hit upon the clever idea of setting several facsimiles of himself on foot--various Desgrais, exactly alike in gait, speech, figure, face, &c.; so that his

own men could not tell the one of them from the other, or say which was the real Desgrais. Meanwhile he, at the risk of his life, watched alone in the most secret hiding-places, and followed, at a distance, this or the other person who seemed, by the looks of him, to be likely to have jewels about him. But those whom he was watching were unharmed, so that this artifice of his was as well known, to the culprits as everything else seemed to be. Desgrais was in utter despair.

One morning he came to President La Regnie, pale, distorted, almost out of his mind.

"What is it--what news? Have you come upon the clue?" the President cried to him as he came in.

"Ah, Monsieur!" cried Desgrais, stammering in fury, "last night, near the Louvre, the Marquis de la Fare was set upon under my very nose!"

"Heaven and earth!" cried La Regnie, overjoyed, "we have got them!"

"Wait a moment, listen," said Desgrais, with a bitter smile. "I was standing near the Louvre, watching and waiting, with hell itself in my heart, for those devils who have been baffling me for such a length of time. There came a figure close by me--not seeing me--with careful uncertain steps, always looking behind it. By the moonlight I recognised the Marquis de la Fare. I expected that he would be passing. I knew where he was gliding to. Scarcely had he got ten or twelve paces beyond me, when, out of the ground apparently, springs a figure, dashes the Marquis to the ground, falls down upon him. Losing my self-command at this occurrence, which seemed to be likely to deliver the murderer into my hands, I cried out aloud, and meant to spring from my hiding-place with a great jump and seize hold of him. But I tripped up in my cloak and fell down. I saw the fellow flee away as if on the wings of the wind; I picked myself up, and made off after him as fast as I could. As I ran, I sounded my horn. Out of the distance the whistles of my men answered me. Things grew lively--clatter of arms, tramp of horses on all sides. 'Here!--come to me!--Desgrais!' I cried, till the streets re-echoed. All the time I saw the man before me in the bright moonlight, turning off right--left--to get away from me. We came to the Rue Nicaise. There his strength seemed to begin to fail. I gathered mine up. He was not more than fifteen paces ahead of me."

"You got hold of him!--your men came up!" cried La Regnie, with flashing eyes, grasping Desgrais by the arm as if he were the fleeing murderer himself.

"Fifteen paces ahead of me," said Desgrais, in a hollow voice, and drawing his breath hard, "this fellow, before my eyes, dodged to one side, and vanished through the wall."

"Vanished!--through the wall! Are you out of your senses?" La Regnie cried, stepping three steps backwards, and striking his hands together.

"Call me as great a madman as you please, Monsieur," said Desgrais, rubbing his forehead like one tortured by evil thoughts. "Call me a madman, or a silly spirit-seer; but what I have told you is the literal truth. I stood staring at the wall, while several of my men came up out of breath, and with them the Marquis de la Fare (who had picked himself up), with his drawn sword in his hand. We lighted torches, we examined the wall all over. There was not the trace of a door, a window, any opening. It is a strong stone wall of a courtyard, belonging to a house, in which people are living--against whom there is not the slightest suspicion. I have looked into the whole thing again this morning in broad daylight. It must be the very devil himself who is at work befooling us in the matter."

This story got bruited abroad through Paris, where all heads were full of the witch-business, spirit conjuration, devil-covenants of La Voisin, Vigoureux, and the wicked priest Le Sage; and as it does lie in our eternal nature that the bent towards the supernatural and the marvellous overpasses all reason, people soon

believed nothing less than that which Desgrais had only said in his impatience--namely, that the very devil himself must protect those rascals, and that they had sold their souls to him. We can readily understand that Desgrais's story soon received many absurd embellishments. It was printed, and hawked about the town, with a woodcut at the top representing a horrible devil-form sinking into the ground before the terrified Desgrais. Quite enough to frighten the people, and so terrify Desgrais's men that they lost all courage, and went about the streets behung with amulets, and sprinkled with holy water.

Argenson, seeing that the Chambre Ardente was unsuccessful, applied to the King to constitute--with special reference to this novel description of crime--a tribunal armed with greater powers for tracking and punishing offenders. The King, thinking he had already given powers too ample to the Chambre Ardente, and shocked at the horrors of the numberless executions, carried out by the bloodthirsty La Regnie, refused.

Then another method of influencing His Majesty was devised.

In the apartments of Madame de Maintenon,--where the King was in the habit of spending much of his time in the afternoons,--and also, very often, would be at work with his Ministers till late at night--a poetical petition was laid before him, on the part of the "Endangered Lovers," who complained that when "galanterie" rendered it incumbent on them to be the bearers of some valuable present to the ladies of their hearts, they had always to do it at the risk of their lives. They said, that, of course, it was honour and delight to pour out their blood for the lady of their heart, in knightly encounter, but that the treacherous attack of the assassin, against which it was impossible to guard, was quite a different matter. They expressed their hope that Louis, the bright pole-star of love and gallantry, might deign--arising and shining in fullest splendour--to dispel the darkness of night, and thus reveal the black mysteries hidden thereby; that the God-like hero, who had hurled his foes to the dust, would now once more wave his flashing faulchion, and, as did Hercules in the case of the Lærnean Hydra, and Theseus in that of the Minotaur, vanquish the threatening monster who was eating up all love-delight, and darkening all joy into deep sorrow and inconsolable mourning.

Serious as the subject was, this poem was not deficient in most wittily-turned phrases, particularly where it described the state of watchful anxiety in which lovers had to glide to their lady-loves, and how this mental strain necessarily destroyed all love-happiness, and nipped all adventures of "galanterie" in the very bud. And, as it wound up with a high-flown panegyric of Louis XIV., the King could not but read it with visible satisfaction. When he perused it, he turned to Madame de Maintenon--without taking his eyes from it--read it again--aloud this time--and then asked, with a pleased smile, what she thought of the petition of the 'Endangered Lovers.' Madame de Maintenon, faithful to her serious turn, and ever wearing the garb of a certain piousness, answered that hidden and forbidden ways did not deserve much in the form of protection, but that the criminals probably did require special laws for their punishment. The King, not satisfied with this answer, folded the paper up, and was going back to the Secretary of State, who was at work in the ante-room, when, happening to glance sideways, his eyes rested on Mademoiselle Scuderi, who was present, seated in a little arm-chair. He went straight to her; and the pleased smile which had at first been playing about his mouth and cheeks--but had disappeared--resumed the ascendency again. Standing close before her, with his face unwrinkling itself, he said--

"The Marquise does not know, and has no desire to learn, anything about the 'galanteries' of our enamoured gentlemen, and evades the subject in ways which are nothing less than forbidden. But, Mademoiselle, what do *you* think of this poetical petition?"

Mademoiselle Scuderi rose from her chair; a transient blush, like the purple of the evening sky, passed across her pale cheeks, and, gently bending forward, she answered, with downcast eyes--

"Un amant qui craint les voleurs.
N'est point digne d'amour."

The King, surprised, and struck by admiration at the chivalrous spirit of those few words--which completely took the wind out of the sails of the poem, with all its ell-long tirades--cried, with flashing eyes--

"By Saint Denis, you are right, Mademoiselle! No blind laws, touching the innocent and the guilty alike, shall shelter cowardice. Argenson and La Regnie must do their best."

Next morning La Martinière enlarged upon the terrors of the time, painting them in glowing colours to her lady, when she told her all that had happened the previous night, and handed her the mysterious casket, with much fear and trembling. Both she and Baptiste (who stood in the corner as white as a sheet, kneading his cap in his hand from agitation and anxiety) implored her, in the name of all the saints, to take the greatest precautions in opening it. She, weighing and examining the unopened mystery in her hand, said with a smile, "You are a couple of bogies! The wicked scoundrels outside, who, as you say yourselves, spy out all that goes on in every house, know, no doubt, quite as well as you and I do, that I am not rich, and that there are no treasures in this house worth committing a murder for. Is my life in danger, do you think? Who could have any interest in the death of an old woman of seventy-three, who never persecuted any evil-doers except those in her own novels; who writes mediocre poetry, incapable of exciting any one's envy; who has nothing to leave behind her but the belongings of an old maid, who sometimes goes to Court, and two or three dozen handsomely-bound books with gilt edges. And, alarming as your account is, La Martinière, of the apparition of this man, I cannot believe that he meant me any harm, so----"

La Martinière sprang three paces backwards, and Baptiste fell on one knee with a hollow, "Ah!" as Mademoiselle Scuderi pressed a projecting steel knob, and the lid of the casket flew open with a certain amount of noise.

Great was her surprise to see that it contained a pair of bracelets, and a necklace richly set in jewels. She took them out and as she spoke in admiration of the marvellous workmanship of the necklace, La Martinière cast glances of wonder at the bracelets, and cried, again and again, that Madame Montespan herself did not possess such jewelry.

"But why is it brought to me?" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi. "What can this mean?" She saw, however, a little folded note at the bottom of the casket, and in this she rightly thought she would find the key to the mystery. When she had read what was written in the note, it fell from her trembling hands; she raised an appealing look to heaven, and then sank down half fainting in her chair. Baptiste and La Martinière hurried to her, in alarm. "Oh!" she cried, in a voice stifled by tears, "the mortification! The deep humiliation! Has it been reserved for me to undergo this in my old age? Have I ever been frivolous, like some of the foolish young creatures? Are words, spoken half in jest, to be found capable of such a terrible interpretation? Am I, who have been faithful to all that is pure and good from my childhood, to be made virtually an accomplice in the crimes of this terrible confederation?"

She held her handkerchief to her eyes, so that Baptiste and La Martinière, altogether at sea in their anxious conjectures, felt powerless to set about helping her, who was so dear to them, as the best and kindest of mistresses, in her bitter affliction.

La Martinière picked up the paper from the floor. On it was written--

"Un amant qui craint les voleurs
N'est point digne d'amour."

"Your brilliant intellect, most honoured lady, has delivered us, who exercise, on weakness and cowardice, the rights of the stronger, and possess ourselves of treasures which would otherwise be unworthily wasted, from much bitter persecution. As a proof of our gratitude, be pleased to kindly accept this set of ornaments. It is the most valuable that we have been enabled to lay hands on for many a day. Although far more beautiful and precious jewels ought to adorn you, yet we pray you not to deprive us of your future protection and remembrance.--THE INVISIBLES."

"Is it possible," cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, when she had partially recovered herself, "that shameless wickedness and abandoned insult can be carried further by human beings?" The sun was shining brightly through the window curtains of crimson silk, and consequently the brilliants, which were lying on the table beside the open casket, were flashing a rosy radiance. Looking at them, Mademoiselle Scuderi covered her face in horror, and ordered La Martinière instantly to take those terrible jewels away, steeped, as they seemed to be, in the blood of the murdered. La Martinière, having at once put the necklace and bracelets back into their case, thought the best thing to do would be to give them to the Minister of Police, and tell him all that had happened.

Mademoiselle Scuderi rose, and walked up and down slowly and in silence, as if considering what it was best to do. Then she told Baptiste to bring a sedan chair, and La Martinière to dress her, as she was going straight to the Marquise de Maintenon.

She repaired thither at the hour when she knew Madame de Maintenon would be alone, taking the casket and jewels with her.

Madame de Maintenon might well wonder to see this dear old lady (who was always kindness, sweetness and amiability personified), pale, distressed, upset, coming in with uncertain steps. "In heaven's name, what has happened to you?" she cried to her visitor, who was scarcely able to stand upright, striving to reach the chair which the Marquise drew forward for her. At last, when she could find words, she told her what a deep, irremediable insult and outrage the thoughtless speech which she had made in reply to the King had brought upon her.

Madame de Maintenon, when she had heard the whole affair properly related, thought Mademoiselle Scuderi was taking it far too much to heart, strange as the occurrence was--that the insult of a pack of wretched rabble could not hurt an upright, noble heart: and finally begged that she might see the ornaments.

Mademoiselle Scuderi handed her the open casket, and when she saw the splendid and valuable stones, and the workmanship of them, she could not repress a loud expression of admiration. She took the bracelets and necklace to the window, letting the sunlight play on the jewels, and holding the beautiful goldsmith's work close to her eyes, so as to see with what wonderful skill each little link of the chains was formed.

She turned suddenly to Mademoiselle Scuderi, and cried, "Do you know, there is only one man who can have done this work--and that is René Cardillac."

René Cardillac was then the cleverest worker in gold in all Paris, one of the most artistic, and at the same time extraordinary men of his day. Short, rather than tall, but broad-shouldered, and of strong and muscular build, Cardillac, now over fifty, had still the strength and activity of a youth. To this vigour, which was to be called unusual, testified also his thick, curling, reddish hair, and his massive, shining face. Had he not been known to be the most upright and honourable of men, unselfish, open, without reserve, always ready to help, his altogether peculiar glance out of his grimly sparkling eyes might have brought him under suspicion of being secretly ill-tempered and wicked. In his art he was the most skilful worker, not only in Paris, but probably in the world at that time. Intimately acquainted with every kind of precious stones, versed in all their special peculiarities, he could so handle and treat them that ornaments which at a

first glance promised to be poor and insignificant, came from his workshop brilliant and splendid. He accepted every commission with burning eagerness, and charged prices so moderate as to seem out of all proportion to the work. And the work left him no rest. Day and night he was to be heard hammering in his shop; and often, when a job was nearly finished, he would suddenly be dissatisfied with the form--would have doubts whether some of the settings were tender enough; some little link would not be quite to his mind--in fine, the whole affair would be thrown into the melting-pot, and begun all over again. Thus every one of his works was a real, unsurpassable *chef-d'œuvre*, which set the person who had ordered it into amazement. But then, it was hardly possible to get the finished work out of his hands. He would put the customer off from one week to another, by a thousand excuses, ay, from month to month. He might be offered twice the price he had agreed upon, but it was useless; he would take no more; and when, ultimately, he was obliged to yield to the customer's remonstrances, and deliver the work, he could not conceal the vexation--nay, the rage--which seethed within him. If he had to deliver some specially valuable and unusually rich piece of workmanship, worth perhaps several thousand francs, he would get into such a condition that he ran up and down like one demented, cursing himself, his work, and every thing and person about him; but should, then, some one come running up behind him, crying, "René Cardillac, would you be so kind as to make me a beautiful necklace for the lady I am going to marry?" or "a pair of bracelets for my girl?" or the like, he would stop in a moment, flash his small eyes upon the speaker, and say, "Let me see what you have got." The latter would take out a little case, and say, "Here are jewels; they are not worth much; only every-day affairs; but in your hands----." Cardillac would interrupt him, snatch the casket from his hands, take out the stones (really not very valuable), hold them up to the light, and cry, "Ho! ho! common stones you say! Nothing of the kind!--very fine, splendid stones! Just see what I shall make of them; and if a handful of Louis are no object to you, I will put two or three others along with them which will shine in your eyes like the sun himself!" The customer would say: "I leave the matter entirely in your hands, Master René; make what charge you please." Whether the customer were a rich burgher or a gallant of quality, Cardillac would then throw himself violently on his neck, embrace him and kiss him, and say he was perfectly happy again, and that the work would be ready in eight days' time. Then he would run home as fast as he could to his work-shop, where he would set to work hammering away; and in eight days' time there would be a masterpiece ready. But as soon as the customer would arrive, glad to pay the moderate price demanded, and take away his prize, Cardillac would become morose, ill-tempered, rude, and insolent. "But consider, Master Cardillac," the customer would say, "to-morrow is my wedding-day." "What do I care?" Cardillac would answer; "what is your wedding-day to me? Come back in a fortnight." "But it is finished!--here is the money; I must have it." "And I tell you that there are many alterations which I must make before I let it leave my hands, and I am not going to let you have it to-day." "And I tell you, that if you don't give me my jewels--which I am ready to pay you for--quietly, you will see me come back with a file of D'Argenson's men." "Now, may the devil seize you with a hundred red-hot pincers, and hang three hundredweight on to the necklace, that it may throttle your bride!" With which he would cram the work into the customer's breast-pocket, seize him by the arm, push him out of the door, so that he would go stumbling all the way downstairs, and laugh like a fiend, out of window, when he saw the poor wretch go limping out, holding his handkerchief to his bleeding nose. It was not easy of explanation neither that Cardillac, when he had undertaken a commission with alacrity and enthusiasm, would sometimes suddenly implore the customer, with every sign of the deepest emotion--with the most moving adjurations, even with sobs and tears--not to ask him to go on with it. Many persons, amongst those most highly considered by the King and nation, had in vain offered large sums for the smallest specimen of Cardillac's work. He threw himself at the King's feet, and supplicated that, of his mercy, he would not command him to work for him; and he declined all orders of Madame de Maintenon's: once, when she wished him to make a little ring, with emblems of the arts on it, which she wanted to give to Racine, he refused with expressions of abhorrence and terror.

"I would wager," said Madame de Maintenon, "therefore, that even if I were to send for Cardillac, to find out, at least, for whom he had made those ornaments, he would somehow evade coming, for fear that I should give him an order; nothing will induce him to work for me. Yet he does seem to have been rather less obstinate of late, for I hear he is working more than ever, and allows his customers to take away their jewelry at once, though he does so with deep annoyance, and turns away his face when he hands them over."

Mademoiselle Scuderi, who was exceedingly anxious that the jewels which came into her possession in such an extraordinary manner should be restored to their owner as speedily as possible, thought that this wondrous René Cardillac should be informed at once that no work was required of him, but simply his opinion as to certain stones. The Marquise agreed to this; he was sent for, and he came into the room in a very brief space, almost as if he had been on the way when sent for.

When he saw Mademoiselle Scuderi, he appeared perplexed, like one confronted with the unexpected, who, for the time, loses sight of the calls of courtesy; he first of all made a profound reverence to her, and then turned, in the second place, to the Marquise. Madame de Maintenon impetuously asked him if the jewelled ornaments--to which she pointed as they lay sparkling on the dark-green cover of the table--were his workmanship. Cardillac scarcely glanced at them, and, fixedly staring in her face, he hastily packed the necklace and bracelets into their case, and shoved them away with some violence. Then he said, with an evil smile gleaming on his red face, "The truth is, Madame la Marquise, that one must know René Cardillac's handiwork very little to suppose, even for a moment, that any other goldsmith in the world made those. Of course, I made them." "Then," continued the Marquise, "say whom you made them for." "For myself alone," he answered. "You may think this strange," he continued, as they both gazed at him with amazement, Madame de Maintenon incredulous, and Mademoiselle Scuderi all anxiety as to how the matter was going to turn out, "but I tell you the truth, Madame la Marquise. Merely for the sake of the beauty of the work, I collected some of my finest stones together, and worked for the enjoyment of so doing, more carefully and diligently than usual. Those ornaments disappeared from my workshop a short time since, in an incomprehensible manner." "Heaven be thanked!" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, her eyes sparkling with joy. With a smile she sprang up from her seat, and going up to Cardillac quickly and actively as a young girl, she laid her hands on his shoulder, saying, "Take back your treasure, Master René, which the villains have robbed you of!" And she circumstantially related how the ornaments had come into her possession.

Cardillac listened in silence, with downcast eyes, merely from time to time uttering a scarcely audible "Hm! Indeed! Ah! Ho, ho!" sometimes placing his hands behind his back, again stroking his chin and cheeks. When she had ended, he appeared to be struggling with strange thoughts which had come to him during her story, and seemed unable to come to any decision satisfactory to himself. He rubbed his brow, sighed, passed his hand over his eyes--perhaps to keep back tears. At last he seized the casket (which Mademoiselle Scuderi had been holding out to him), sunk slowly on one knee, and said: "Esteemed lady! Fate destined this casket for you; and I now feel, for the first time, that I was thinking of you when I was at work upon it--nay, was making it expressly for you. Do not disdain to accept this work, and to wear it; it is the best I have done for a very long time." "Ah! Master René," said Mademoiselle Scuderi, jesting pleasantly, "how think you it would become me at my age to bedeck myself with those beautiful jewels?--and what should put it in your mind to make me such a valuable present? Come, come! If I were as beautiful and as rich as the Marquise de Fontange, I should certainly not let them out of my hands; but what have my withered arms, and my wrinkled neck, to do with all that splendour?"

Cardillac had risen, and said, with wild looks, like a man beside himself, still holding the casket out towards her, "Do me the mercy to take it, Mademoiselle!

You have no notion how profound is the reverence which I bear in my heart for your excellences, your high deserts. Do but accept my little offering, as an attempt, on my part, to prove to you the warmth of my regard."

As Mademoiselle Scuderi was still hesitating, Madame de Maintenon took the casket from Cardillac's hands, saying, "Now, by heaven, Mademoiselle, you are always talking of your great age. What have you and I to do with years and their burden? You are like some bashful young thing who would fain long for forbidden fruit, if she could gather it without hands or fingers. Do not hesitate to accept this good Master René's present, which thousands of others could not obtain for money or entreaty."

As she spoke she continued to press the casket on Mademoiselle Scuderi; and now Cardillac sank again on his knees, kissed her dress, her hands, sighed, wept, sobbed, sprang up, and ran off in frantic haste, upsetting chairs and tables, so that the glass and porcelain crashed and clattered together.

In much alarm, Mademoiselle Scuderi cried, "In the name of all the saints, what is the matter with the man?" But the Marquise, in particularly happy temper, laughed aloud, saying, "What it is, Mademoiselle; that Master René is over head and ears in love with you, and, according to the laws of *la galanterie*, begins to lay siege to your heart with a valuable present." She carried this jest further, begging Mademoiselle Scuderi not to be too obdurate towards this despairing lover of hers; and Mademoiselle Scuderi, in her turn, borne away on a current of merry fancies, said, "If things were so, she would not be able to refrain from delighting the world with the unprecedented spectacle of a goldsmith's bride of three-and-seventy summers, and unexceptionable descent." Madame de Maintenon offered to twine the bridal wreath herself, and give her a few hints as to the duties of a housewife, a subject on which such a poor inexperienced little chit could not be expected to know very much.

But, notwithstanding all the jesting and the laughter, when Mademoiselle Scuderi rose to depart, she became very grave again when her hand rested upon the jewel casket. "Whatever happens," she said, "I shall never be able to bring myself to wear these ornaments. They have, at all events, been in the hands of one of those diabolical men, who rob and slay with the audacity of the evil one himself, and are very probably in league with him. I shudder at the thought of the blood which seems to cling to those glittering stones--and even Cardillac's behaviour had something about it which struck me as being singularly wild and eery. I cannot drive away from me a gloomy foreboding that there is some terrible and frightful mystery hidden behind all this; and yet, when I bring the whole affair, with all the circumstances of it, as clearly as I can before my mental vision, I cannot form the slightest idea what that mystery can be--and, above all, how the good, honourable Master René--the very model of what a good, well-behaved citizen ought to be--can have anything to do with what is wicked or condemnable. But, at all events, I distinctly feel that I never can wear those jewels."

The Marquise considered that this was carrying scruples rather too far; yet, when Mademoiselle Scuderi asked her to say, on her honour, what she would do in her place, she replied, firmly and earnestly, "Far rather throw them into the Seine than ever put them on."

The scene with Master René inspired Mademoiselle Scuderi to write some pleasant verses, which she read to the King the following evening, at Madame de Maintenon's. Perhaps, for the sake of the picturing of Master René carrying off a bride of seventy-three--of unimpeachable quarterings--it was that she succeeded in conquering her feelings of the imminence of something mysterious and uncanny; but at all events she did so, completely--and the King laughed with all his heart, and vowed that Boileau Despreaux had met with his master. So La Scuderi's poem was reckoned the very wittiest that ever was written.

Several months had elapsed, when chance so willed it that Mlle. Scuderi was crossing the Pont Neuf in the glass coach of the Duchesse de Montpensier. The

invention of those delightful glass coaches was then so recent that the people came together in crowds whenever one of them made its appearance in the streets, consequently, a gaping crowd gathered about the Duchesse's carriage on the Pont Neuf, so that the horses could hardly make their way along. Suddenly Mlle. Scuderi heard a sound of quarrelling and curses, and saw a man making a way for himself through the crowd, by means of fisticuffs and blows in the ribs, and as he came near they were struck by the piercing eyes of a young face, deadly pale, and drawn by sorrow. This young man, gazing fixedly upon them, vigorously fought his way to them by help of fists and elbows, till he reached the carriage-door, threw it open with much violence, and flung a note into Mademoiselle Scuderi's lap; after which, he disappeared as he had come, distributing and receiving blows and fisticuffs. La Martinière, who was with her mistress, fell back fainting in the carriage with a shriek of terror as soon as she saw the young man. In vain Mademoiselle Scuderi pulled the string, and called out to the driver. He, as if urged by the foul fiend, kept lashing his horses till, scattering the foam from their nostrils, they kicked, plunged, and reared, finally thundering over the bridge at a rapid trot. Mademoiselle Scuderi emptied the contents of her smelling-bottle out over the fainting La Martinière, who at last opened her eyes, and, shuddering and quaking, clinging convulsively to her mistress, with fear and horror in her pale face, groaned out with difficulty, "For the love of the Virgin, what did that terrible man want? It was he who brought you the jewels on that awful night." Mademoiselle Scuderi calmed her, pointing out that nothing very dreadful had happened after all, and that the immediate business in hand was to ascertain the contents of the letter. She opened it, and read as follows:--

"A dark and cruel fatality, which *you* could dispel, is driving me into an abyss. I conjure you--as a son would a mother, in the glow of filial affection--to send the necklace and bracelets to Master René Cardillac, on some pretence or other--say, to have something altered, or improved. Your welfare---your very life--depend on your doing this. If you do not comply before the day after to-morrow, I will force my way into your house, and kill myself before your eyes."

"Thus much is certain, at all events," said Mademoiselle Scuderi, when she had read this letter, "that, whether this mysterious man belongs to the band of robbers and murderers, or not, he has no very evil designs against me. If he had been able to see me and speak to me on that night, who knows what strange events, what dark concatenation of circumstances would have been made known to me, of which, at present, I seek, in my soul, the very faintest inkling in vain. But, be the matter as it may, that which I am enjoined in this letter to do, I certainly *shall* do, were it for nothing else than to be rid of those fatal jewels, which seem to me as if they must be some diabolical talisman of the Prince of Darkness's very own. Cardillac is not very likely to let them out of his hands again, if once he gets hold of them."

She intended to take them to him next day; but it seemed as if all the *beaux esprits* of Paris had entered into a league to assail and besiege her with verses, dramas, and anecdotes. Scarce had La Chapelle finished reading the scenes of a tragedy, and declared that he considered he had now vanquished Racine, when the latter himself came in, and discomfited him with the pathetic speech of one of his kings, until Boileau sent some of his fireballs soaring up into the dark sky of the tragedies, by way of changing the subject from that eternal one of the colonnade of the Louvre, to which the architectural Dr. Perrault was shackling him.

When high noon arrived, Mademoiselle Scuderi had to go to Madame Montansier, so the visit to René Cardillac had to be put off till the following day. But the young man was always present to her mind, and a species of dim remembrance seemed to be trying to arise in the depths of her being that she had, somehow and somewhen, seen that face and features before. Troubled dreams disturbed her broken slumbers. It seemed to her that she had acted thoughtlessly, and delayed culpably to take hold of the hands which the unfortunate man was holding out to her for help--in fact, as if it had depended on

her to prevent some atrocious crime. As soon as it was fairly light, she had herself dressed, and set off to the goldsmith's with the jewels in her hand.

A crowd was streaming towards the Rue Nicaise (where Cardillac lived), trooping together at the door, shouting, raging, surging, striving to storm into the house, kept back with difficulty by the Marechaussée, who were guarding the place. Amid the wild distracted uproar, voices were heard crying, "Tear him in pieces! Drag him limb from limb, the accursed murderer!" At length Desgrais came up with a number of his men, and formed a lane through the thickest of the crowd. The door flew open, and a man, loaded with irons, was brought out, and marched off amid the most frightful imprecations of the raging populace. At the moment when Mademoiselle Scuderi, half dead with terror and gloomy foreboding, caught sight of him, a piercing shriek of lamentation struck upon her ears. "Go forward!" she cried to the coachman, and he, with a clever, rapid turn of his horses, scattered the thick masses of the crowd aside, and pulled up close to René Cardillac's door. Desgrais was there, and at his feet a young girl, beautiful as the day, half-dressed, with dishevelled hair, and wild grief, inconsolable despair in her face, holding his knees embraced, and crying in tones of the bitterest and profoundest anguish, "He is innocent! he is innocent!" Desgrais and his men tried in vain to shake her off, and raise her from the ground, till at length a rough, powerful fellow, gripping her arms with his strong hands, dragged her away from Desgrais by sheer force. Stumbling awkwardly, he let the girl go, and she went rolling down the stone steps, and lay like one dead on the pavement.

Mademoiselle Scuderi could contain herself no longer. "In Christ's name!" she cried, "what has happened? What is going forward here?" She hastily opened the carriage-door and stepped out. The crowd made way for her deferentially; and when she saw that one or two compassionate women had lifted up the girl, laid her on the steps, and were rubbing her brow with strong waters, she went up to Desgrais, and with eagerness repeated her question.

"A terrible thing has happened," said Desgrais. "René Cardillac was found, this morning, killed by a dagger-thrust. His journeyman, Olivier, is the murderer, and has just been taken to prison."

"And the girl----" "Is Madelon," interrupted Desgrais, "Cardillac's daughter. The wretched culprit was her sweetheart, and now she is crying and howling, and screaming over and over again that Olivier is innocent--quite innocent; but she knows all about this crime, and I must have her taken to prison too." As he spoke he cast one of his baleful, malignant looks at the girl, which made Mademoiselle Scuderi shudder. The girl was now beginning to revive, and breathe again faintly, though still incapable of speech or motion. There she lay with closed eyes, and people did not know what to do, whether to take her indoors, or leave her where she was a little longer till she recovered. Mademoiselle Scuderi looked upon this innocent creature deeply moved, with tears in her eyes. She felt a horror of Desgrais and his men. Presently heavy footsteps came downstairs, those of the men bearing Cardillac's body. Coming to a rapid decision, Mademoiselle Scuderi cried out, "I shall take this girl home with me; the rest of the affair concerns you, Desgrais." A murmur of approval ran through the crowd. The women raised the girl; every one crowded up; a hundred hands were proffered to help, and she was borne to the carriage like one hovering in air, whilst from every lip broke blessings on the kind lady who had saved her from arrest and criminal trial.

Madelon lay for many hours in deep unconsciousness, but at length the efforts of Seron---then the most celebrated physician in Paris--were successful in restoring her. Mademoiselle Scuderi completed what Seron had commenced, by letting many a gentle ray of hope stream into the girl's heart, till at length a violent flood of tears, which started to her eyes, brought her relief, and she was able to tell what had befallen, with only occasional interruptions, when the overmastering might of her sorrow turned her words into sobbing.

She had been awakened at midnight by a soft knocking at her door, and had recognised the voice of Olivier, imploring her to get up at once, as her father lay

dying. She sprung up, terrified, and opened the door. Olivier, pale and distorted, bathed in perspiration, led the way, with tottering steps, to the workshop; she followed. There her father was lying with his eyes set, and the deathrattle in his throat. She threw herself upon him, weeping wildly, and then observed that his shirt was covered with blood. Olivier gently lifted her away, and then busied himself in bathing a wound (which was on her father's left breast) with wound-balsam, and in washing it. As he was so doing her father's consciousness came back; the rattle in his throat ceased, and, looking first on her, and then on Olivier with most expressive glances, he took her hand and placed it in Olivier's, pressing them both together. She and Olivier then knelt down beside her father's bed; he raised himself with a piercing cry, immediately fell back again, and with a deep inspiration, departed this life. On this they both wept and lamented. Olivier told her how her father had been murdered in his presence during an expedition on which he had accompanied him that night by his order, and how he had with the utmost difficulty carried him home, not supposing him to be mortally wounded. As soon as it was day, the people of the house--who had heard the sounds of the footsteps, and of the weeping and lamenting during the night--came up, and found them still kneeling, inconsolable by the father's body. Then an uproar commenced, the Marechaussée broke in and Olivier was taken to prison as her father's murderer. Madelon added the most touching account of Olivier's virtues, goodness, piety, and sincerity, telling how he had honoured his master as if he had been his own father, and how the latter returned his affection in the fullest measure, choosing him for his son-in-law in spite of his poverty, because his skill and fidelity were equal to the nobleness of his heart. All this Madelon spoke right out of the fullness of her heart, and added that if Olivier had thrust a dagger into her father's heart before her very eyes, she would rather have thought it a delusion of Satan's than have believed that Olivier was capable of such a terrible and awful crime.

Mademoiselle Scuderi, most deeply touched by Madelon's nameless sufferings, and quite disposed to believe in poor Olivier's innocence, made inquiries, and found everything confirmed which Madelon had said as to the domestic relations between the master and his workman. The people of the house and the neighbours all gave Olivier the character of being the very model of good, steady, exemplary behaviour. No one knew anything whatever against him, and yet, when the crime was alluded to, every one shrugged his shoulders, and thought there was something incomprehensible about that.

Olivier, brought before the Chambre Ardente, denied--as Mademoiselle Scuderi learned--with the utmost steadfastness the crime of which he was accused, and maintained that his master had been attacked in the street in his presence, and borne down, and that he had carried him home still alive, although he did not long survive. This agreed with Madelon's statement.

Over and over again Mademoiselle Scuderi had the very minutest circumstances of the awful event related to her. She specially inquired if there had ever been any quarrel between Olivier and the father, whether Olivier was altogether exempt from that propensity to hastiness which often attacks the best tempered people like a blind madness, and leads them to commit deeds which seem to exclude all voluntariness of action; but the more enthusiastically Madelon spoke of the peaceful home-life which the three had led together, united in the most sincere affection, the more did every vestige of suspicion against Olivier disappear from her mind. Closely examining and considering everything, starting from the assumption that, notwithstanding all that spoke so loudly for his innocence, Olivier yet *had* been Cardillac's murderer, Mademoiselle Scuderi could find, in all the realm of possibility, no motive for the terrible deed, which, in any case, was bound to destroy his happiness. Poor, though skilful, he succeeds in gaining the good will of the most renowned of masters; he loves the daughter--his master favours his love. Happiness, good fortune for the rest of his life are laid open before him. Supposing, then, that--God knows on what impulse--overpowered by anger, he should have made this murderous attack on his master, what diabolical hyprocrisy it required to conduct himself after the deed as he had

done. With the firmest conviction of his innocence, Mademoiselle Scuderi came to the resolution to save Olivier at whatever cost.

It seemed to her most advisable, before perhaps appealing to the King in person, to go to the President, La Regnie, point out for his consideration all the circumstances which made for Olivier's innocence, and so, perhaps, kindle in his mind a conviction favourable to the accused which might communicate itself beneficially to the judges.

La Regnie received her with all the consideration which was the due of a lady of her worth, held in high esteem by His Majesty himself. He listened in silence to all she had to say concerning Olivier's circumstances, relationships, and character; and also concerning the crime itself. A delicate, almost malignant, smile, however, was all the token which he gave that the adjurations, the reminders (accompanied by plentiful tears) that every judge ought to be, not the enemy of the accused, but ready to attend, too, to whatever spoke in his favour were not gliding by ears which were perfectly deaf. When at length Mademoiselle Scuderi, quite exhausted and wiping the tears from her cheeks, was silent, La Regnie began, saying:--

"It is quite characteristic of your excellent heart, Mademoiselle, that, moved by the tears of a young girl who is in love, you should credit all she says; nay, be incapable of grasping the idea of a fearful crime such as this. But it is otherwise with the Judge, who is accustomed to tear off the mask from vile and unblushing hyprocrisy and deception. It is, of course, not incumbent on me to disclose the course of a criminal process to every one who chooses to inquire. I do my duty, Mademoiselle! The world's opinion troubles me not at all. Evil-doers should tremble before the Chambre Ardente, which knows no punishments save blood and fire. But by you, Mademoiselle, I would not be looked upon as a monster of severity and barbarity; therefore, permit me to place before your eyes in few words the bloodguilt of this young criminal, upon whom, Heaven be thanked, vengeance has fallen. Your acute intelligence will then despise the generous feeling and kindliness which do honour to you, but in me would be out of place. Eh bien! this morning René Cardillac is found murdered by a dagger-thrust, no one is by him except his workman, Olivier Brusson and the daughter. In Olivier's room there is found, amongst other things, a dagger covered with fresh blood which exactly fits into the wound. Olivier says, 'Cardillac was attacked in the street before my eyes.' 'Was the intention to rob him?' 'I do not know.' 'You were walking with him and you could not drive off the murderer or detain him?' 'My master was walking fifteen or perhaps sixteen paces in front of me; I was following him.' 'Why, in all the world, so far behind?' 'My master wished it so.' 'And what had Master Cardillac to do in the streets so late?' 'That I cannot say.' 'But he was never in the habit of being out after nine o'clock at other times, was he?' At this Olivier hesitates, becomes confused, sighs, shed tears, vows by all that is sacred that Cardillac *did* go out that night, and met with his death. Now observe, Mademoiselle, it is proved to the most absolute certainty that Cardillac did *not* leave the house that night, consequently Olivier's assertion that he went with him is a barefaced falsehood. The street door of the house fastens with a heavy lock, which makes a penetrating noise in opening and closing, also the door itself creaks and groans on its hinges, so that, as experiments have proved, the noise is heard quite distinctly in the upper stories of the house. Now, there lives in the lower story, that is to say, close to the street door, old Maitre Claude Patru with his housekeeper, a person of nearly eighty years of age, but still hale and active. Both of them heard Cardillac, according to his usual custom, come down stairs at nine o'clock exactly, close and bolt the door with a great deal of noise, go upstairs again, read evening prayer, and then (as was to be presumed by the shutting of the door) go into his bedroom. Maitre Claude suffers from sleeplessness like many other old people; and on the night in question he could not close an eye, therefore, about half past nine the housekeeper struck a light in the kitchen, which she reached by crossing the passage, and sat down at the table beside her master with an old chronicle-book, from which she read aloud, whilst the old man, fixing his thoughts on the reading, sometimes sat in his arm-chair,

sometimes walked slowly up and down the room to try and bring on sleepiness. All was silence in the house till nearly midnight; but then they heard overhead rapid footsteps, a heavy fall, as of something on to the floor, and immediately after that a hollow groaning. They both were struck by a peculiar alarm and anxiety, the horror of the terrible deed which had just been committed seemed to sweep past them. When day came what had been done in the darkness was brought clearly to light."

"But, in the name of all the Saints," cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, "considering all the circumstances which I have told you at such length, can you think of any *motive* for this diabolical deed?"

"Hm!" answered La Regnie. "Cardillac was anything but a poor man. He had valuable jewels in his possession." "But all he had would go to the daughter! You forget that Olivier was to be Cardillac's son-in-law." "Perhaps he was compelled to share with others," said La Regnie, "or to do the deed wholly for them!" "Share!--murder for others!" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, in utter amaze.

"You must learn, Mademoiselle," continued La Regnie, "that Olivier's blood would have been flowing on the Place de Grève before this time, but that his crime is connected with that deeply-hidden mystery which has so long brooded over Paris. It is clear that Olivier belongs to that formidable band which, setting at defiance every attempt at observation or discovery, carries on its nefarious practices with perfect immunity. Through him everything will, must be discovered. Cardillac's wound is precisely the same as all those of the persons who have been robbed and murdered in the streets and houses; and most conclusive of all, since Olivier's arrest, the robberies and murders have ceased; the streets are as safe by night as by day. Proof enough that Olivier was most probably the chief of the band. As yet he will not confess; but there are means of making him speak against his will."

"And Madelon!" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, "that truthful, innocent creature."

"Ah!" cried La Regnie, with one of his venomous smiles, "who answers to me that *she* is not in the plot, too? She does not care so very much about her father. Her tears are all for the murderer boy."

"What?" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, "not for her father?--that girl--impossible!" "Oh!" continued La Regnie, "remember the Brinvilliers! You must pardon me, if by-and-by I have to carry off your *protégée*, and put her in the Conciergerie."

Mademoiselle Scuderi shuddered at this grizly notion. It seemed to her that no truth or virtue could endure before this terrible man; as if he spied out murder and bloodguilt in the deepest and most hidden thoughts of people's hearts. She rose. "Be human!" was all that in her state of anxiety and oppression she was able, with difficulty, to say. As she was just going to descend the stairs, to which the President had attended her with ceremonious courtesy, a strange idea came to her--she knew not how. "Might I be allowed to see this unfortunate Olivier Brusson?" she inquired, turning round sharply. He scrutinised her face with thoughtful looks, and then his face distorted itself into the repulsive smile which was characteristic of him. "Doubtless, Mademoiselle," he said, "your idea is that, trusting your own feelings--the inward voice--more than that which happened before our eyes, you would like to examine into Olivier's guilt or innocence for yourself. If you do not fear that gloomy abode of crime--if it is not hateful to you to see those types of depravity in all their gradations--the doors of the Conciergerie shall be opened to you in two hours time. Olivier, whose fate excites your sympathy, shall be brought to you."

In truth, Mademoiselle Scuderi could not bring herself to believe in Olivier's guilt. Everything spoke against him. Indeed, no judge in the world would have thought otherwise than La Regnie, in the face of what had happened. But the picture of domestic happiness which Madelon had placed before her eyes in such

vivid colours, outweighed and outshone all suspicion, so that she preferred to adopt the hypothesis of some inscrutable mystery rather than believe what her whole nature revolted against.

She thought she would hear Olivier's narrative of the events of that night of mystery, and in this manner, possibly, penetrate further into a secret which the judges, perhaps, did not see into, because they thought it unworthy of investigation.

Arrived at the Conciergerie, she was taken into a large, well-lighted room. Presently she heard the ring of fetters. Olivier Brusson was brought in; but as soon as she saw him she fell down fainting. When she recovered, he was gone. She demanded with impetuosity to be taken to her carriage; she would not remain another moment in that place of crime and wickedness. Alas! at the first glance she recognised in Olivier Brusson the young man who had thrown the letter into her carriage on the Pont Neuf, and who had brought her the casket with the jewels. Now all doubt was gone, La Regnie's terrible suspicions completely justified. Olivier belonged to the atrocious band, and had, doubtless, murdered his master! And Madelon! Never before so bitterly deceived by her kind feelings, Mademoiselle Scuderi, under this deadly attack upon her by the power of the evil one here below--in whose very existence she had not believed--doubted if there was such a thing as truth. She gave admittance to the fearful suspicion that Madelon, too, was forsworn, and might have a hand in the bloody deed. And as it is the nature of the human mind that, when an idea has dawned upon it, it eagerly seeks, and finds, colours in which to paint that idea more and more vividly, she, as she weighed and considered all the circumstances of the crime along with Madelon's behaviour, found a very great deal to nourish suspicion. Many things which had hitherto been considered proofs of innocence and purity, now became evidences of studied hypocrisy and deep, corrupt wickedness. Those heartrending cries of sorrow, and the bitter tears, might well have been pressed from her by the deadly dread of her lover's bleeding--nay, of her own falling into the executioner's hands. With a resolve at once to cast away the serpent she had been cherishing, Mademoiselle Scuderi alighted from her carriage. Madelon threw herself at her feet. Her heavenly eyes--(no Angel of God's has them more truthful)--raised to her, her hands pressed to her heaving breast, she wept, imploring help and consolation. Mademoiselle Scuderi, controlling herself with difficulty, giving to the tone of her voice as much calmness and gravity as she could, said, "Go! go!--be thankful that the murderer awaits the just punishment of his crime. May the Holy Virgin grant that blood-guiltiness does not weigh heavily on your own head also." With a bitter cry of "Alas! then all is over!" Madelon fell fainting to the ground. Mademoiselle Scuderi left her to the care of La Martinière, and went to another room.

Much distressed, and at variance with all earthly things, she longed to depart from a world filled with diabolical treachery and falsehood. She complained of the destiny which had granted her so many years in which to strengthen her belief in truth and virtue, only to shatter in her old days the beautiful fancies which had illumined her path.

She heard Madelon, as La Martinière was leading her away, murmur in broken accents, "*Her*, too, have the terrible men deceived. Ah! wretched me!--miserable Olivier!" The tones of the voice went to her heart, and again there dawned within her the belief in the existence of some mystery, in Olivier's innocence. Torn by the most contradictory feelings, she cried, "What spirit of the pit has mixed *me* up in this terrible story, which will be my very death!"

At this moment Baptiste came in pale and terrified, to say that Desgrais was at the door. Since the dreadful La Voisin trial the appearance of Desgrais in a house was the sure precursor of some criminal accusation. Hence Baptiste's terror, as to which his mistress asked him with a gentle smile, "What is the matter, Baptiste? Has the name of Scuderi been found in La Voisin's lists?" "Ah! For Christ's sake," cried Baptiste, trembling in every limb, "how can you say such a thing; but

Desgrais--the horrible Desgrais--is looking so mysterious, and presses in so--he seems hardly able to wait till he can see you." "Well, Baptiste," she said, "bring him in at once, this gentleman who is so frightful to you, and who to *me*, at all events, can cause no anxiety."

"President La Regnie sends me to you, Mademoiselle," said Desgrais, when he entered, "with a request which he scarce would dare to make if he did not know your goodness and bravery, and if the last hope of bringing to light an atrocious deed of blood did not lie in your hands, had you not already taken such interest (as well as bearing a part), in this case, which is keeping the Chambre Ardente, and all of us, in a state of such breathless eagerness. Olivier Brusson, since he saw you, has been almost out of his mind. He still swears by all that is sacred, that he is completely innocent of René Cardillac's death, though he is ready to suffer the punishment he has deserved. Observe, Mademoiselle, that the latter admission clearly refers to other crimes of which he has been guilty. But all attempts to get him to utter anything further have been vain. He begs and implores to be allowed to have an interview with you. To you alone will he divulge everything. Vouchsafe then, Mademoiselle, to listen to Brusson's confession."

"What?" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, in indignation, "*I* become an organ of the criminal court, and abuse the confidence of this unfortunate fellow to bring him to the scaffold! No! Desgrais. Ruffian and murderer though he may be, I could never deceive and betray him thus villainously. I will have nothing to do with his avowal. If I did, it would be locked up in my heart, as if made to a priest under the seal of the confessional."

"Perhaps, Mademoiselle," said Desgrais, with a subtle smile, "you might alter your opinion after hearing Brusson. Did you not beg the President to be human? This he is, in yielding to Brusson's foolish desire, and thus trying one more expedient--the last--before resorting to the rack, for which Brusson is long since ripe."

Mademoiselle Scuderi shuddered involuntarily.

"Understand, Mademoiselle," he continued, "you would by no means be expected to go again into those gloomy dungeons, which inspired you with such horror and loathing. Olivier would be brought to your own house, in the night, like a free man; what he should say would not be listened to, though, of course, there would be a proper guard with him. He could thus tell you freely and unconstrainedly all he had to say. As regards any risk which you might run in seeing the wretched being, my life shall answer for that. He speaks of you with the deepest veneration; he vows that it is the dark mystery which prevented his seeing you earlier which has brought him to destruction. Moreover, it would rest with you entirely to repeat as much or as little as you pleased of what Brusson confessed to you. How could you be constrained to more?"

Mademoiselle Scuderi sat with eyes fixed on the ground, in deep reflection. It seemed to her that she could not but obey that Higher Power which demanded of her the clearing up of this mystery--as if there were no escape for her from the wondrous meshes in which she had become inwound without her will. Coming to a rapid decision, she said with solemnity, "God will give me self-command and firm resolution. Bring Brusson here; I will see him."

As on the night when the jewel-casket had been brought, so now, at midnight, there came a knocking at the door. Baptiste, properly instructed, opened. Mademoiselle Scuderi's blood ran cold when she heard the heavy tread of the guard party which had brought Brusson stationing themselves about the passages.

At length the door opened, Desgrais came in, and after him, Olivier Brusson, without irons, and respectably dressed.

"Here is Brusson, Mademoiselle," said Desgrais, bowing courteously; he then

departed at once.

Brusson sank down on both knees before Mademoiselle Scuderi. The pure, clear expression of a most truthful soul beamed from his face, though it was drawn and distorted by terror and bitter pain. The longer she looked at him, the more vivid became a remembrance of some well-loved person--she could not say whom. When the first feeling of shuddering left her, she forgot that Cardillac's murderer was kneeling before her, and, speaking in the pleasant tone of quiet goodwill which was natural to her, said--

"Now, Brusson, what have you to say to me?"

He--still on his knees--sighed deeply, from profound sorrow, and then said--

"Oh, Mademoiselle, you whom I so honour and worship, is there no trace of recollection of me left in your mind?"

She, still looking at him attentively, answered that she had certainly traced in his face a likeness to some one whom she had held in affection, and it was to this that he owed it that she had overcome her profound horror of a murderer so far as to be able to listen to him quietly. Brusson, much pained by her words, rose quickly, and stepped backwards a pace, with his gloomy glance fixed on the ground. Then, in a hollow voice, he said--

"Have you quite forgotten Anne Guiot? Her son, Olivier, the boy whom you used to dandle on your knee, is he who is now before you."

"Oh! For the love of all the Saints!" she cried, as, covering her face with both hands, she sank back in her chair. She had reason for being thus horrified. Anne Guiot, the daughter of a citizen who had fallen into poverty, had lived with Mademoiselle Scuderi from her childhood; she had brought her up like a daughter, with all affection and care. When she grew up, a handsome, well-conducted young man, named Claude Brusson, fell in love with her. Being a first-rate workman at his trade of a watchmaker, sure to make a capital living in Paris, and Anne being very fond of him, Mademoiselle Scuderi saw no reason to object to their marrying. They set up house accordingly, lived a most quiet and happy domestic life, and the bond between them was knitted more closely still by the birth of a most beautiful boy, the image of his pretty mother.

Mademoiselle Scuderi made an idol of little Olivier, whom she would take away from his mother for hours and days, to pet him and kiss him. Hence he attached himself to her, and was as pleased to be with her as with his mother. When three years passed, the depressed state of Brusson's trade brought it about that job-work was scarcer every day, so that at last it was all he could do to get bread to eat. In addition to this came home-sickness for his beautiful native Geneva; so the little household went there, spite of Mademoiselle Scuderi's dissuasions and promises of all needful assistance. Anne wrote once or twice to her foster-mother, and then ceased; so that Mademoiselle Scuderi thought she was forgotten in the happiness of the Brusson's life.

It was now just three and twenty years since the Brusson's had left Paris for Geneva.

"Horrible!" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, when she had to some extent recovered herself. "You, Olivier! the son of my Anne! And now!----"

"Mademoiselle!" said Olivier, quietly and composedly, "doubtless you never thought that the boy whom you cherished like the tenderest of mothers, whom you dandled on your knee, and to whom you gave sweetmeats, would, when grown to manhood, stand before you accused of a terrible murder. I am completely innocent! The Chambre Ardente charges me with a crime; but, as I hope to die a Christian's death, though it may be by the executioner's hand--I am free from all blood-guiltiness. Not by my hand--not by any crime of my committing, was it that the unfortunate Cardillac came to his end."

As he said this, Olivier began to tremble and shake so, that Mademoiselle Scuderi motioned him to a little seat which was near him.

"I have had sufficient time," he went on, "to prepare myself for this interview with you--which I look upon as the last favour of a reconciled Heaven--and to acquire as much calmness and self-control as are necessary to tell you the story of my terrible, unheard-of misfortunes. Be so compassionate as to listen to me calmly, whatever may be your horror at the disclosure of a mystery of which you certainly have not the smallest inkling. Ah! would to Heaven my poor father had never left Paris! As far as my recollections of Geneva carry me, I remember myself as being always bedewed with tears by my inconsolable parents, and weeping, myself, at their lamentations, which I did not understand. Later, there came to me a clear sense--a full comprehension--of the bitterest and most grinding poverty, want, and privation in which they were living. My father was deceived in all his expectations; bowed down and broken with sorrow, he died, just when he had managed to place me as apprentice with a goldsmith. My mother spoke much of you; she longed to tell you all her misfortunes, but the despondency which springs from poverty prevented her. That, and also, no doubt, false modesty, which often gnaws at a mortally wounded heart, kept her from carrying out her idea. She followed my father to the grave a few months after his death."

"Poor Anne! Poor Anne!" said Mademoiselle Scuderi, overwhelmed by sorrow.

"I thank and praise the eternal power that she has gone where she cannot see her beloved son fall, branded with disgrace, by the hand of the executioner," cried Olivier, loudly, raising a wild and terrible glance to the skies. Outside, things became unrestful; a sound of people moving about made itself heard. "Ho, ho!" said he, with a bitter laugh, "Desgrais is waking up his people, as if I could possibly escape. But, let me go on. I was harshly treated by my master, though I was very soon one of the best of workmen, and, indeed, much better than himself. Once a stranger came to our workshop to buy some of our work. When he saw a necklace of my making, he patted my shoulder in a kind way, and said, looking with admiration at the necklace, 'Ah, ha! my young friend, this is really first-class work, I don't know anybody who could beat it but René Cardillac, who, of course, is the greatest of all goldsmiths. You ought to go to him; he would be delighted to get hold of you, for there's nobody but yourself who would be of such use to him; and again, there's nobody but he who can teach you anything.' The words of this stranger sunk deep into my heart. There was no more peace for me in Geneva. I was powerfully impelled to leave it, and at length I succeeded in getting free from my master. I came to Paris, where René Cardillac received me coldly and harshly. But I stuck to my point. He was obliged to give me something to try my hand at, however trifling. So I got a ring to finish. When I took it back to him, finished, he gazed at me with those sparkling eyes of his, as if he would look me through and through. Then he said: 'You are a first-rate man--a splendid fellow; you may come and work with me. I'll pay you well; you'll be satisfied with me.' And he kept his word. I had been several weeks with him before I saw Madelon, who, I think, had been visiting an aunt of his in the country. At last she came home. O eternal power of Heaven, how was it with me when I saw that angelic creature! Has ever a man so loved as I! And now! Oh! Madelon!"

Olivier could speak no more for sorrow. He held both hands over his face, and sobbed violently. At last he conquered the wild pain with a mighty effort, and went on--

"Madelon looked on me with favour, and came oftener and oftener into the workshop. Her father watched closely, but many a stolen hand-clasp marked our covenant. Cardillac did not seem to notice. My idea was, that if I could gain his good-will, and attain Master's rank, I should ask his consent to our marriage. One morning, when I was going in to begin work, he came to me with anger and contempt in his face. 'I don't want any more of your work,' he said. 'Get out of this house, and don't let my eyes ever rest on you again. I have no need to tell you the

reason. The dainty fruit you are trying to gather is beyond the reach of a beggar like you!' I tried to speak, but he seized me and pitched me out of the door with such violence that I fell, and hurt my head and my arm. Furious, and smarting with the pain, I went off, and at last found a kind-hearted acquaintance in the Faubourg St. Germain, who gave me quarters in his garret. I had no peace nor rest. At night I wandered round Cardillac's house, hoping that Madelon would hear my sighs and lamentings, and perhaps manage to speak to me at the window undiscovered. All sorts of desperate plans, to which I thought I might persuade her, jostled each other in my brain. Cardillac's house in the Rue Nicaise abuts on to a high wall with niches, containing old, partly-broken statues. One night I was standing close to one of those figures, looking up at the windows of the house which open on the courtyard which the wall encloses. Suddenly I saw light in Cardillac's workshop. It was midnight, and he never was awake at that time, as he always went to bed exactly at nine. My heart beat anxiously: I thought something might be going on which would let me get into the Louse. But the light disappeared again immediately. I pressed myself closely into the niche, and against the statue; but I started back in alarm, feeling a return of my pressure, as if the statue had come to life. In the faint moonlight I saw that the stone was slowly turning, and behind it appeared a dark form, which crept softly out, and went down the street with stealthy tread. I sprang to the statue: it was standing close to the wall again, as before. Involuntarily, as if impelled by some power within me, I followed the receding dark figure. In passing an image of the Virgin, this figure looked round, the light of the lamp before the image falling upon his face. It was Cardillac! an indescribable alarm fell upon me; an eery shudder came over me. As if driven by some spell, I felt I must follow this spectre-like sleep-walker--for that was what I thought my master was, though it was not full-moon, the time when that kind of impulse falls upon sleepers. At length Cardillac disappeared in a deep shadow; but, by a certain easily distinguishable sound, I knew that he had gone into the entry of a house. What was the meaning of this? I asked myself in amazement; what was he going to be about? I pressed myself close to the wall. Presently there came up a gentleman, trilling and singing, with a white plume distinct in the darkness, and clanking spurs. Cardillac darted out upon him from the darkness, like a tiger on his prey; he fell to the ground gasping. I rushed up with a cry of terror. Cardillac was leaning over him as he lay on the ground. 'Master Cardillac, what are you about?' I cried aloud. 'Curses upon you!' he cried, and, running by me with lightning speed, disappeared. Quite beyond myself--scarcely able to walk a step--I went up to the gentleman on the ground, and knelt down beside him, thinking it might still be possible to save him. But there was no trace of life left in him. In my alarm I scarcely noticed that the Marechaussée had come up and surrounded me. 'Another one laid low by the demons!' they cried, all speaking at once. 'Ah, ha! youngster! what are you doing here?--are *you* one of the band?' and they seized me. I stammered out in the best way I could that I was incapable of such a terrible deed, and that they must let me go. Then one of them held a lantern to my face, and said, with a laugh: 'This is Olivier Brusson; the goldsmith who works with our worthy Master René Cardillac. *He* murder folks in the street!--very likely story! Who ever heard of a murderer lamenting over the body, and letting himself be nabbed? Tell us all about it, my lad; out with it straight.' 'Right before my eyes,' I said, 'a man sprang out upon this one; stabbed him, and ran off like lightning. I cried as loud as I could. I wanted to see if he could be saved.' 'No, my son,' cried one of those who had lifted up the body, 'he's done for!--the dagger-stab right through his heart, as usual.' 'The deuce!' said another; 'just too late again, as we were the day before yesterday.' And they went away with the body.

"What *I* thought of all this I really cannot tell you. I pinched myself, to see if I were not in some horrible dream. I felt as if I must wake up directly, and marvel at the absurdity of what I had been dreaming. Cardillac--my Madelon's father--an atrocious murderer! I had sunk down powerless on the stone steps of a house; the daylight was growing brighter and brighter. An officer's hat with a fine plume was lying before me on the pavement. Cardillac's deed of blood, committed on the spot, came clearly back to my mental vision. I ran away in horror.

"With my mind in a whirl, almost unconscious, I was sitting in my garret, when the door opened, and René Cardillac came in. 'For Christ's sake! what do you want?' I cried. He, paying no heed to this, came up to me, smiling at me with a calmness and urbanity which increased my inward horror. He drew forward an old rickety stool, and sat down beside me; for I was unable to rise from my straw bed, where I had thrown myself. 'Well, Olivier,' he began, 'how is it with you, my poor boy? I really was too hasty in turning you out of doors. I miss you at every turn. Just now I have a job in hand which I shall never be able to finish without you; won't you come back and work with me? You don't answer. Yes, I know very well I insulted you. I don't hide from you that I was angry about your little bit of love-business with my Madelon; but I have been thinking matters well over, and I see that I couldn't have a better son-in-law than you, with your abilities, your skilfulness, diligence, trustworthiness. Come back with me, and see how soon you and Madelon can make a match of it.'

"His words pierced my heart; I shuddered at his wickedness; I could not utter a syllable. 'You hesitate,' he said, in an acrid tone, while his sparkling eyes transfixed me. 'Perhaps you can't come to-day. You have other things to do. Perhaps you want to go and see Desgrais, or have an interview with D'Argenson or La Regnie. Take care, my boy, that the talons which you are thinking of drawing out to clutch others, don't mangle yourself.' At this my deeply-tried spirit found vent. 'Those,' I said, 'who are conscious of horrible crimes may dread those names which you have mentioned, but I do not. I have nothing to do with them.' 'Remember, Olivier,' he resumed, 'that it is an honour to you to work with me--the most renowned Master of his time, everywhere highly esteemed for his truth and goodness; any foul calumny would fall back on the head of its originator. As to Madelon, I must tell you that it is her alone whom you have to thank for my yielding. She loves you with a devotion that I should never have given her credit for being capable of. As soon as you were gone, she fell at my feet, clasped my knees, and vowed, with a thousand tears, that she could never live without you. I thought this was mere imagination, for those young things always think they're going to die of love whenever a young wheyface looks at them a little kindly. But my Madelon really did fall quite sick and ill; and when I tried to talk her out of the silly nonsense, she called out your name a thousand times. Last evening I told her I gave in and agreed to everything, and would go to-day to fetch you; so this morning she is blooming again like any rose, and waiting for you, quite beyond herself with love-longing.' May the eternal power of Heaven forgive me, but--I don't know how it came about--I suddenly found myself in Cardillac's house, where Madelon, with loud cries of 'Olivier!--my Olivier!--my beloved! my husband!' clasped both her arms about me, and pressed me to her heart; whilst I, in the plenitude of the supremest bliss, swore by the Virgin and all the Saints never, never to leave her."

Overcome by the remembrance of this decisive moment, Olivier was obliged to pause. Mademoiselle Scuderi, horrified at the crime of a man whom she had looked on as the incarnation of probity and goodness, cried--

"Dreadful!--René Cardillac a member of that band of murderers who have so long made Paris into a robber's den!" "A member of the band, do you say, Mademoiselle?" said Olivier. "There never was any band; it was René Cardillac alone, who sought and found his victims with such an amount of diabolical ingenuity and activity. It was in the fact of his being alone that his impunity lay--the practical impossibility of coming upon the murderer's track. But let me go on. What is coming will clear up the mystery, and reveal the secrets of the most wicked, and at the same time most wretched of all mankind. You at once see the position in which I now stood towards my master. The step was taken, and I could not go back. At times it seemed to me that I had rendered myself Cardillac's accomplice in murder, and it was only in Madelon's love that I forgot for a time the inward pain which tortured me; only in her society could I drive away all outward traces of the nameless horror. When I was at work with the old man in the workshop, I could not look him in the face--could scarcely speak a word--for the horror which pervaded me in the presence of this terrible being, who fulfilled

all the duties of the tender father and the good citizen, while the night shrouded his atrocities. Madelon, pure and pious as an angel, hung upon him with the most idolatrous affection. It pierced my heart when I thought that, if ever vengeance should overtake this masked criminal, she would be the victim of the most terrible despair. That, of itself, closed my lips, though the consequence of my silence should be a criminal's death for myself. Although much was to be gathered from what the Marechaussée had said, still Cardillac's crimes, their motive, and the manner in which he carried them out, were a riddle to me. The solution of it soon came. One day Cardillac--who usually excited my horror by laughing and jesting during our work, in the highest of spirits--was very grave and thoughtful. Suddenly he threw the piece of work he was engaged on aside, so that the pearls and other stones rolled about the floor, started to his feet, and said: 'Olivier! things cannot go on between us like this; the situation is unendurable. What the ablest and most ingenious efforts of Desgrais and his myrmidons failed to find out, chance has played into your hands. You saw me at my nocturnal work, to which my Evil Star compels me, so that no resistance is possible for me; and it was your own Evil Star, moreover, which led you to follow me; wrapped and hid you in an impenetrable mantle; gave that lightness to your foot-fall which enabled you to move along with the noiselessness of the smaller animals, so that I--who see clear by night, as doth the tiger, and hear the smallest sound, the humming of the gnat, streets away--did not observe you. Your Evil Star brought you to me, my comrade--my accomplice! You see, now, that you can't betray me; therefore you shall know all.'

"I would have cried out, 'Never, never shall I be your comrade, your accomplice, you atrocious miscreant.' But the inward horror which I felt at his words paralysed my tongue. Instead of words I could only utter an unintelligible noise. Cardillac sat down in his working chair again, wiped the perspiration from his brow, and seemed to find it difficult to pull himself together, hard beset by the recollection of the past. At length he began: 'Wise men have much to say of the strange impulses which come to women when they are *enceinte*, and the strange influence which those vivid, involuntary impulses exercise upon the child. A wonderful tale is told of *my* mother. When she was a month gone with me she was looking on, with other women, at a court pageant at the Trianon, and saw a certain cavalier in Spanish dress, with a glittering chain of jewels about his neck, from which she could not remove her eyes. Her whole being was longing for those sparkling stones, which seemed to her more than earthly. This same cavalier had at a previous time, before my mother was married, had designs on her virtue, which she rejected with indignation. She recognized him, but now, irradiated by the light of the gems, he seemed to her a creature of a higher sphere, the very incarnation of beauty. The cavalier noticed the longing, fiery looks which she was bending on him, and thought he was in better luck now than of old. He managed to get near her, and to separate her from her companions, and entice her to a lonely place. There he clasped her eagerly in his arms. My mother grasped at the beautiful chain; but at that moment he fell down, dragging her with him. Whether it was apoplexy, or what, I do not know; but he was dead. My mother struggled in vain to free herself from the clasp of the arms, stiffened as they were in death. With the hollow eyes, whence vision had departed, fixed on her, the corpse rolled with her to the ground. Her shrieks at length reached people who were passing at some distance; they hastened to her, and rescued her from the embrace of this gruesome lover. Her fright laid her on a bed of dangerous sickness. Her life was despaired of as well as mine; but she recovered, and her confinement was more prosperous than had been thought possible. But the terrors of that awful moment had set their mark on *me*. My Evil Star had risen, and darted into me those rays which kindled in me one of the strangest and most fatal of passions. Even in my earliest childhood I thought there was nothing to compare with glittering diamonds with gold settings. This was looked upon as a childish fancy; but it was otherwise, for as a boy I stole gold and jewels wherever I could lay hands on them, and I knew the difference between good ones and bad, instinctively, like the most accomplished connoisseur. Only the pure and valuable attracted me; I would not touch alloyed or coined gold. Those inborn cravings were kept in check by my father's severe chastisements; but, so that I might always have to do with gold

and precious stones, I took up the goldsmith's calling. I worked at it with passion, and soon became the first living master of that art. Then began a period when the natural bent within me, so long restrained, shot forth in power, and waxed with might, bearing everything away before it. As soon as I finished a piece of work and delivered it, I fell into a state of restlessness and disconsolateness which prevented my sleeping, ruined my health, and left me no enjoyment in my life. The person for whom I made the work haunted me day and night like a spectre--I saw that person continually before my mental vision, with my beautiful jewels on, and a voice kept whispering to me: 'They belong to you! take them; what's the use of diamonds to the dead?' At last I betook myself to thieving. I had access to the houses of the great; I took advantage quickly of every opportunity. No locks withstood my skill, and I soon had my work back in my hands again. But this was not enough to calm my unrest. That mysterious voice made itself heard again, jeering at me, and saying, 'Ho, ho! one of the dead is wearing your jewels.' I did not know whence it came, but I had an indescribable hatred for all those for whom I made jewelry. More than that, in the depths of my heart I began to long to kill them; this frightened me. Just then I bought this house. I had concluded the bargain with the owner: here in this very room we were sitting, drinking a bottle of wine in honour of the transaction. Night had come on, he was going to leave when he said to me: 'Look here, Maitre René, before I go I must let you into a secret about this house.' He opened that cupboard, which is let into the wall there, and pushed the back of it in; this let him into a little closet, where he bowed down and raised a trap-door. This showed us a steep, narrow stair, which we went down, and at the bottom of it was a little narrow door, which let us out into the open courtyard. There he went up to the wall, pushed a piece of iron which projected a very little, and immediately a piece of the wall turned round, so that a person could get out through the opening into the street. You must see this contrivance sometime, Olivier; the sly old monks of the convent, which this house once was, must have had it made so as to be able to slip out and in secretly. It is wood but covered with lime and mortar on the outside, and to the outer side of it is fitted a statue, also of wood, though *looking* exactly like stone, which turns on wooden hinges. When I saw this arrangement, dark ideas surged up in my mind; it seemed to me that deeds, as yet mysterious to myself, were here pre-arranged for. I had just finished a splendid set of ornaments for a gentleman of the court who, I knew, was going to give them to an opera dancer. My death-torture soon was on me; the spectre dogged my steps, the whispering devil was at my ear. I went back into the house, bathed in a sweat of agony; I rolled about on my bed, sleepless. In my mind's eye I saw the man gliding to his dancer with *my* beautiful jewels. Full of fury I sprang up, threw my cloak round me, went down the secret stair, out through the wall into the Rue Nicaise. He came, I fell upon him, he cried out; but, seizing him from behind, I plunged my dagger into his heart. The jewels were mine. When this was done, I felt a peace, a contentment within me which I had never known before. The spectre had vanished--the voice of the demon was still. *Now* I knew what was the behest of my Evil Star, which I had to obey, or perish. You know all now, Olivier. Don't think that, because I must do that which I cannot avoid, I have clean renounced all sense of that mercy or kindly feeling which are the portion of all humanity, and inherent in man's nature. You know how hard I find it to let any of my work go out of my hands, that there are many whom I would not have to die for whom nothing will induce me to work; indeed, that in cases when I feel that, next day, my spectre will have to be exorcised with blood, that day I settle the business by a swashing blow, which lays the holder of my jewels on the ground, so that I get them back into my own hands.' Having said all this, Cardillac took me into his secret strong-room and showed me his collection of jewels; the King does not possess such an one. To each ornament was fastened a small label stating for whom it had been made, and when taken back--by theft, robbery, or murder.

"'On your wedding day, Olivier,' he said, in a solemn tone, 'you will swear me a solemn oath, with your hand on the crucifix, that as soon as I am dead you will at once convert all those treasures into dust, by a process which I will tell you of. I will not have any human being, least of all Madelon and you, come into possession of those blood-bought stones.'

"Shut up in this labyrinth of crime, torn in twain by love and abhorrence, I was like one of the damned to whom a glorified angel points, with gentle smile, the upward way, whilst Satan holds him down with red-hot talons, and the angel's loving smile, reflecting all the bliss of paradise, becomes, to him, the very keenest of his tortures. I thought of flight, even of suicide, but Madelon! Blame me, blame me, Mademoiselle, for having been too weak to overcome a passion which fettered me to my destruction. I am going to atone for my weakness by a shameful death. One day Cardillac came in in unusually fine spirits, he kissed and caressed Madelon, cast most affectionate looks at me, drank, at table, a bottle of good wine, which he only did on high-days and holidays, sang, and made merry. Madelon had left us, and I was going to the workshop 'Sit still, lad,' cried Cardillac, 'no more work to-day; let's drink the health of the most worthy and charming lady in all Paris.' When we had clinked our glasses, and he had emptied a bumper, he said: 'Tell me, Olivier, how do you like those lines?

'Un amant qui craint les voleurs
N'est point digne d'amour.'

And he told me what had happened between you and the King in Madam de Maintenon's salon, adding that he had always worshipped you more than any other human being, and that his reverence and esteem for your qualities was such that his Evil Star paled before you, and he would have no fear that, were you to wear the finest piece of his work that ever he made, the spectre would ever prompt him to thoughts of murder. 'Listen, Olivier,' he said, 'to what I am going to do. A considerable time ago I had to make a necklace and bracelets for Henrietta of England, supplying the stones myself. I made of this the best piece of work that ever I turned out, and it broke my heart to part with those ornaments, which had become the very treasures of my soul. You know of her unfortunate death by assassination. The things remained with me, and now I shall send them to Mademoiselle Scuderi, in the name of the dreaded band, as a token of respect and gratitude. Besides its being an unmistakable mark of her triumph, it will be a richly deserved sign of my contempt for Desgrais and his men. You shall take her the jewels.' When he mentioned your name, Mademoiselle, dark veils seemed to be taken away, revealing the bright image of my happy early childhood, rising again in glowing colours before me. A wonderful comfort came into my soul, a ray of hope, driving the dark shadows away. Cardillac saw the effect his words had produced upon me, and gave it his own interpretation. 'My idea seems to please you,' he said. 'I must declare that a deep inward voice, very unlike that which cries for blood like a raving wild beast, commanded me to do this thing. Many times I feel the strangest ideas come into my mind--an inward fear, the dread of something terrible, the awe whereof seems to come breathing into this present time from some distant other world, seizes powerfully upon me. I even feel, at such times, that the deeds which my Evil Star has committed by means of me, may be charged to the account of my immortal soul, though it has no part in them. In one of those moods I determined that I would make a beautiful diamond crown for the Virgin in the Church of St. Eustache. But the indescribable dread always came upon me, stronger than ever, when I set to work at it, so that I left it off altogether. Now it seems to me that, in presenting Mademoiselle Scuderi with the finest work I have ever turned out, I am offering a humble sacrifice to goodness and virtue personified, and imploring their powerful intercession.' Cardillac, well acquainted with all the minutiæ of your manner of life, told me the how and the when to take the ornaments to you. My whole Being rejoiced, for Heaven seemed to be showing me, through the atrocious Cardillac, the way to escape from the hell in which I was being tortured. Quite contrarily to Cardillac's wish, I resolved that I would get access to you and speak with you. As Anne Brusson's son, and your former pet, I thought I would throw myself at your feet and tell you everything. Out of consideration for the nameless misery which a disclosure of the secret would bring upon Madelon, I knew that you would keep it, but that your grand and brilliant intellect would have been sure to find means to put an end to Cardillac's wickedness without disclosing it. Do not ask me what those means were to have been; I cannot tell. But that you would rescue Madelon and me I believed as firmly as I do in the intercession of the Holy Virgin. You know,

Mademoiselle, that my intention was frustrated that night; but I did not lose hope of being more fortunate another time. By-and-by Cardillac suddenly lost all his good spirits; he crept moodily about, uttered unintelligible words, and worked his arms as if warding off something hostile. His mind seemed full of evil thoughts. For a whole morning he had been going on in this way. At last he sat down at the work-table, sprang up again angrily, looked out of window, and then said, gravely and gloomily, 'I wish Henrietta of England had had my jewels.' Those words filled me with terror. I knew that his diseased mind was possessed again by the terrible murder-spectre, that the voice of the demon was loud again in his ears. I saw your life threatened by the horrible murder-demon. If Cardillac could get his jewels back again into his hands, you were safe. The danger grew greater every instant. I met you on the Pont Neuf, made my way to your carriage, threw you the note which implored you to give the jewels back to Cardillac immediately. You did not come. My fear became despair, when, next day, Cardillac spoke of nothing but the priceless jewels he had seen before him in his dreams. I could only suppose that this referred to *your* jewels, and I felt sure he was brooding over some murderous attack, which he had determined to carry out that night. Save you I must, should it cost Cardillac's life. When, after the evening prayer, he had shut himself up in his room as usual, I got into the courtyard through a window, slipped out through the opening of the wall, and stationed myself close at hand, in the deepest shadow. Very soon Cardillac came out, and went gliding softly down the street. I followed him. He took the direction of the Rue St. Honoré. My heart beat fast. All at once he disappeared from me. I determined to place myself at your door. Just as fate had ordered matters on the first occasion of my witnessing one of his crimes, there came along past me an officer, trilling and singing; he did not see me. Instantly a dark form sprang out and attacked him. Cardillac! I determined to prevent this murder. I gave a loud shout, and was on the spot in a couple of paces. Not the officer, but Cardillac, fell gasping to the ground, mortally wounded. The officer let his dagger fall, drew his sword, and stood on the defensive, thinking I was the murderer's accomplice. But he hastened away when he saw that, instead of concerning myself about *him*, I was examining the fallen man. Cardillac was still alive. I took up the dagger dropped by the officer, stuck it in my belt, and, lifting Cardillac on to my shoulders, carried him, with difficulty, to the house, and up the secret stair to the workshop. The rest you know. You perceive, Mademoiselle, that my only crime was that I refrained from giving Madelon's father up to justice, thereby making an end of his crimes. I am innocent of bloodguilt. No torture will draw from me the secret of Cardillac's iniquities. Not through any action of mine shall that Eternal Power, which hid from Madelon the gruesome bloodguilt of her father all this time, break in upon her now, to her destruction, nor shall earthly vengeance drag the corpse of Cardillac out of the soil which covers it, and brand the mouldering bones with infamy. No; the beloved of my soul shall mourn me as an innocent victim. Time will mitigate her sorrow for me, but her grief for her father's terrible crimes nothing would ever assuage."

Olivier ceased, and then a torrent of tears fell down his cheeks. He threw himself at Mademoiselle Scuderi's feet, saying imploringly, "You are convinced that I am innocent; I know you are. Be merciful to me. Tell me how Madelon is faring." Mademoiselle Scuderi summoned La Martinière, and in a few minutes Madelon was clinging to Olivier's neck. "Now that you are here, all is well. I knew that this noble-hearted lady would save you," Madelon cried over and over; and Olivier forgot his fate, and all that threatened him. He was free and happy. They bewailed, in the most touching manner, what each had suffered for the other, and embraced afresh, and wept for joy at being together again.

Had Mademoiselle Scuderi not been convinced of Olivier's innocence before, she must have been so when she saw those two lovers forgetting, in the rapture of the time, the world, their sufferings, and their indescribable sorrows. "None but a guiltless heart," she cried, "would be capable of such blissful forgetfulness."

The morning light came breaking into the room, and Desgrais knocked gently at the door, reminding them that it was time to take Olivier away, as it could not be done later without attracting attention. The lovers had to part.

The dim anticipations which Mademoiselle Scuderi had felt when Olivier first came in had now embodied themselves in actual life--in a terrible fashion. The son of her much-loved Anne was, though innocent, implicated in a manner which apparently made it impossible to save him from a shameful death. She admired his heroism, which led him to prefer death loaded with the imputation of guilt to the betrayal of a secret which would kill Madelon. In the whole realm of possibility, she could see no mode of saving the unfortunate lad from the gruesome prison and the dreadful trial. Yet it was firmly impressed on her mind that she must not shrink from any sacrifice to prevent this most crying injustice.

She tortured herself with all kinds of plans and projects, which were chiefly of the most impracticable and impossible kind--rejected as soon as formed. Every glimmer of hope grew fainter and fainter, and she well-nigh despaired. But Madelon's pious, absolute, childlike confidence, the inspired manner in which she spoke of her lover, soon to be free, and to take her to his heart as his wife, restored Mademoiselle Scuderi's hopes to some extent.

By way of beginning to do something, she wrote to La Regnie a long letter, in which she said that Olivier Brusson had proved to her in the most credible manner his entire innocence of Cardillac's murder, and that nothing but a heroic resolution to carry to the grave with him a secret, the disclosure of which would bring destruction upon an innocent and virtuous person, withheld him from laying a statement before the Court which would completely clear him from all guilt, and show that he never belonged to the band at all. She said everything she could think of, with the best eloquence at her command, which might be expected to soften La Regnie's hard heart.

He replied to this in a few hours, saying he was very glad that Olivier had so thoroughly justified himself in the eyes of his kind patron and protector; but, as regarded his heroic resolution to carry to the grave with him a secret relating to the crime with which he was charged, he regretted that the Chambre Ardente could feel no admiration for heroism of that description, but must endeavour to dispel it by powerful means. In three days time he had little doubt he would be in possession of the wondrous secret, which would probably bring many strange matters to light.

Mademoiselle Scuderi knew well what the terrible La Regnie meant by the "powerful means," which were to break down Olivier's heroism. It was but too clear that the unfortunate wretch was threatened with the torture. In her mortal anxiety it at last occurred to her that, were it only to gain time, the advice of a lawyer would be of some service. Pierre Arnaud d'Andilly was at that time the most celebrated advocate in Paris. His goodness of heart, and his highly honourable character were on a par with his professional skill and his comprehensive mind. To him she repaired, and told him the whole tale, as far as it was possible to do so without divulging Olivier's secret. She expected that d'Andilly would warmly espouse the cause of this innocent man, but in this she was wofully disappointed. He listened silently to what she had to say, and then, with a quiet smile, answered in the words of Boileau, "Le vrai peut quelquefois n'etre point vraisemblable." He showed her that there were the most grave and marked suspicions against Olivier. That La Regnie's action was by no means severe or premature, but wholly regular; indeed, that to do otherwise would be to neglect his duty as a Judge. He did not believe that he--d'Andilly--could save Brusson from the rack, by the very ablest of pleading. Nobody could do that but Brusson himself, either by making the fullest confession, or by accurately relating the circumstances of Cardillac's murder, which might lead to further discoveries.

"Then I will throw myself at the King's feet and sue for mercy," cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, her voice choked by weeping.

"For Heaven's sake, do not do that," cried d'Andilly. "Keep it in reserve for the last extremity. If it fails you once, it is lost for ever. The King will not pardon a criminal such as Brusson; the people would justly complain of the danger to them. Possibly Brusson, by revealing his secret, or otherwise, may manage to dispel the

suspicion which is on him at present. Then would be the time to resort to the King, who would not ask what was legally proved, but be guided by his own conviction."

Mademoiselle Scuderi could not but agree with what d'Andilly's great experience dictated. She was sitting in her room, pondering as to what--in the name of the Virgin and all the saints--she should try next to do, when La Martinière came to say that the Count de Miossens, Colonel of the King's Body Guard, was most anxious to speak with her.

"Pardon me, Mademoiselle," said the Colonel, bowing with a soldier's courtesy, "for disturbing you, and breaking in upon you at such an hour. Two words will be sufficient excuse for me. I come about Olivier Brusson."

"Olivier Brusson," cried Mademoiselle Scuderi, all excitement as to what she was going to hear, "that most unfortunate of men! What have you to say of him?"

"I knew," said Miossens, laughing again, "that your *protégé's* name would ensure me a favourable hearing. Everybody is convinced of Brusson's guilt. I know you think otherwise, and, it is said, your opinion rests on what he himself has told you. With me the case is different. Nobody can be more certain than I that Brusson is innocent of Cardillac's death."

"Speak! Oh, speak!" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi.

"I was the man who stabbed the old goldsmith, in the Rue St. Honoré, close to your door," said the Colonel.

"*You--you!*" cried Mademoiselle Scuderi. "In the name of all the Saints, how?"

"And I vow to you, Mademoiselle, that I am very proud of my achievement. Cardillac, I must tell you, was a most abandoned old hypocritical ruffian, who went about at night robbing and murdering people, and was never suspected of anything of the kind. I don't, myself, know from whence it came, that I felt a suspicion of the old scoundrel when he seemed so distressed at handing me over some work which I had got him to do for me, when he carefully wormed out of me for whom I designed it, and cross-questioned my valet as to the times when I was in the habit of going to see a certain lady. It struck me long ago, that all the people who were murdered by the unknown hands, had the self-same wound, and I saw quite clearly, that the murderer had practised to the utmost perfection of certainty that particular thrust, which must kill instantaneously--and that he reckoned upon it; so that, if it were to fail, the fight would be fair. This led me to employ a precaution so very simple and obvious, that I cannot imagine how somebody else did not think of it long ago. I wore a light breastplate of steel under my dress. Cardillac set upon me from behind. He grasped me with the strength of a giant, but his finely directed thrust glided off the steel breast-plate. I then freed myself from his clutch, and planted my dagger into his heart."

"And you have said nothing?" said Mademoiselle Scuderi. "You have not told the authorities anything about this?"

"Allow me to point out to you, Mademoiselle," said he, "that to have done that would have involved me in a most terrible legal investigation, probably ending in my ruin. La Regnie, who scents out crime everywhere, would not have been at all likely to believe me at once, when I accused the good, respectable, exemplary Cardillac of being an habitual murderer. The sword of Justice would, most probably, have turned its point against me."

"Impossible," said Mademoiselle Scuderi. "Your rank--your position----"

"Oh!" interrupted Miossens, "remember the Marechal de Luxemburg; he took it into his head to have his horoscope cast by Le Sage, and was suspected of poisoning, and put in the Bastille. No; by Saint Dyonys! not one moment of freedom--not the tip of one of my ears, would I trust to that raging La Regnie, who

would be delighted to put his knife to all our throats."

"But this brings an innocent man to the scaffold," said Mademoiselle Scuderi.

"Innocent, Mademoiselle!" cried Miossens. "Do you call Cardillac's accomplice an innocent man? He who assisted him in his crimes, and has deserved death a hundred times? No, in verity; *he* suffers justly; although I told you the true state of the case in the hope that you might somehow make use of it in the interests of your *protégé*, without bringing me into the clutches of the Chambre Ardente."

Mademoiselle Scuderi, delighted at having her conviction of Olivier's innocence confirmed in such a decided manner, had no hesitation in telling the Count the whole affair, since he already knew all about Cardillac's crimes, and in begging him to go with her to d'Andilly, to whom everything should be communicated under the seal of secrecy, and who should advise what was next to be done.

D'Andilly, when Mademoiselle Scuderi had told him at full length all the circumstances, inquired again into the very minutest particulars. He asked Count Miossens if he was quite positive as to its having been Cardillac who attacked him, and if he would recognise Olivier as the person who carried away the body.

"Not only," said Miossens, "was the moon shining brightly, so that I recognised the old goldsmith perfectly well, but this morning, at La Regnie's, I saw the dagger with which he was stabbed. It is mine; I know it by the ornamentation of the handle. And as I was within a pace of the young man, I saw his face quite distinctly, all the more because his hat had fallen off. As a matter of course I should know him in a moment."

D'Andilly looked before him in meditation for a few moments, and said: "There is no way of getting Brusson out of the hands of justice by any ordinary means. On Madelon's account, nothing will induce him to admit that Cardillac was a robber and a murderer. And even were he to do so, and succeed in proving the truth of it by pointing out the secret entrance and the collection of the stolen jewels, death would be his own lot, as an accomplice. The same consequence would follow if Count Miossens related to the judges the adventure with Cardillac. Delay is what we must aim at. Let Count Miossens go to the Conciergerie, be confronted with Olivier, and recognise him as the person who carried off Cardillac's body; let him then go to La Regnie, and say, 'I saw a man stabbed in the Rue St. Honoré, and was close to the body when another man darted up, bent down over it, and finding life still in it, took it on his shoulders and carried it away. I recognise Olivier Brusson as that man.' This will lead to a further examination of Brusson, to his being confronted with Count Miossens; the torture will be postponed, and further investigations made. Then will be the time to have recourse to the King. Your brilliant intellect, Mademoiselle, will point out the most fitting way to do this. I think it would be best to tell His Majesty the whole story. Count Miossen's statement will support Olivier's. Perhaps, too, an examination of Cardillac's house would help matters. The King might then follow the bent of his own judgment--of his kind heart, which might pardon where justice could only punish." Count Miossens closely followed D'Andilly's advice, and everything fell out just as he had said it would.

It was now time to repair to the King; and this was the chief difficulty of all, as he had such an intense horror of Brusson--whom he believed to be the man who had for so long kept Paris in a state of terror--that the least allusion to him threw him at once into the most violent anger. Madame de Maintenon, faithful to her system of never mentioning unpleasant subjects to him, declined all intermediation; so that Brusson's fate was entirely in Mademoiselle Scuderi's hands. After long reflection, she hit upon a scheme which she put in execution at once. She put on a heavy black silk dress, with Cardillac's jewels, and a long black veil, and appeared at Madame de Maintenon's at the time when she knew the King would be there. Her noble figure in this mourning garb excited the reverential respect even of those frivolous persons who pass their days in Court antechambers. They all made way for her, and when she came into the presence,

the King himself rose, astonished, and came forward to meet her. The splendid diamonds of the necklace and bracelets flashed in his eyes, and he cried: "By Heavens! Cardillac's work!" Then, turning to Madame de Maintenon, he said, with a pleasant smile, "See, Madame la Marquise, how our fair lady mourns for her affianced husband." "Ah, Sire!" said Mademoiselle Scuderi, as if keeping up the jest, "it would ill become a mourning bride to wear such bravery. No; I have done with the goldsmith; nor would I remember him, but that the gruesome spectacle of his corpse carried close by me before my eyes keeps coming back to my memory." "What!" said the King, "did you actually see him, poor fellow?" She then told him in few words (not introducing Brusson into the business at all) how chance had brought her to Cardillac's door just when the murder had been discovered. She described Madelon's wild terror and sorrow; the impression made upon her by the beautiful girl; how she had taken her out of Desgrais's hands, and away with her, amid the applause of the crowd. The scenes with La Regnie, with Desgrais, with Olivier Brusson himself, now followed, the interest constantly increasing. The King, carried away by the vividness with which Mademoiselle Scuderi told the tale, did not notice that the Brusson case, which he so abominated, was in question, listened breathlessly, occasionally expressing his interest by an ejaculation. And ere he was well aware, still amazed by the marvels which he was hearing, not yet able to arrange them all in his mind, behold! Mademoiselle Scuderi was at his feet, imploring mercy for Olivier Brusson.

"What are you doing?" broke out the King, taking both her hands and making her sit down. "You take us by storm in a marvellous fashion. It is a most terrible story! Who is to answer for the truth of Brusson's extraordinary tale?" "Miossen's deposition proves it," she cried; "the searching of Cardillac's house; my own firm conviction, and, ah! Madelon's pure heart, which recognises equal purity in poor Brusson." The King, about to say something, was interrupted by a noise in the direction of the door. Louvois, who was at work in the next room, put his head in with an anxious expression. The King rose, and followed him out. Both Madame de Maintenon and Mademoiselle Scuderi thought this interruption of evil augury; for, though once surprised into interest, the King might take care not to fall into the snare a second time. But he came back in a few minutes, walked up and down the room two or three times, quickly, and then, pausing with his hands behind his back before Mademoiselle Scuderi, he said, in a half-whisper, without looking at her: "I should like to see this Madelon of yours." On this Mademoiselle Scuderi said: "Oh! gracious Sire! what a marvellous honour you vouchsafe to the poor unfortunate child. She will be at your feet in an instant." She tripped to the door as quickly as her heavy dress allowed, and called to those in the anteroom that the King wished to see Madelon Cardillac. She came back weeping and sobbing with delight and emotion. Having expected this, she had brought Madelon with her, leaving her to wait with the Marquise's maid, with a short petition in her hand drawn up by D'Andilly. In a few moments she had prostrated herself, speechless, at the King's feet. Awe, confusion, shyness, love, and sorrow sent the blood coursing faster and faster through her veins; her cheeks glowed, her eyes sparkled with the bright tear-drops, which now and again fell from her silken lashes down to her beautiful lily breast. The King was moved by the wonderful beauty of the girl. He raised her gently, and stooped down as if about to kiss her hand, which he had taken in his; but he let the hand go, and gazed at her with tears in his eyes, evincing deep emotion. Madame de Maintenon whispered to Mademoiselle Scuderi: "Is she not exactly like La Valliére, the little thing? The King is sunk in the sweetest souvenirs: you have gained the day." Though she spoke softly, the King seemed to hear. A blush came to his cheek; he scanned Madame de Maintenon with a glance, and then said, gently and kindly: "I am quite sure that you, my dear child, think your lover is innocent; but we must hear what the Chambre Ardente has to say." A gentle wave of his hand dismissed Madelon, bathed in tears. Mademoiselle Scuderi saw, to her alarm, that the resemblance to La Valliére, advantageous as it had seemed to be at first, had nevertheless changed the King's intention as soon as Madame de Maintenon had spoken of it. Perhaps he felt himself somewhat ungently reminded that he was going to sacrifice strict justice to beauty; or he may have been like a dreamer who, when loudly addressed by his name, finds that the beautiful magic visions by

which he thought he was surrounded vanish away. Perhaps he no longer saw his La Valliére before him, but thought only of Sœur Louise de la Misericorde--La Valliére's cloister name among the Carmelite nuns--paining him with her piety and repentance. There was nothing for it now but to patiently wait for the King's decision.

Meanwhile Count Miossen's statement before the Chambre Ardente had become known; and, as often happens, popular opinion soon flew from one extreme to the other, so that the person whom it had stigmatized as the most atrocious of murderers, and would fain have torn in pieces before he reached the scaffold, was now bewailed as the innocent victim of a barbarous sacrifice. His old neighbours only now remembered his admirable character and behaviour, his love for Madelon, and the faithfulness and devotion of soul and body with which he had served his master. Crowds of people, in threatening temper, often collected before La Regnie's Palais, crying, "Give us out Olivier Brusson!--he is innocent!" even throwing stones at the windows, so that La Regnie had to seek the protection of the Marechaussée.

Many days elapsed without Mademoiselle Scuderi's hearing anything on the subject of Olivier Brusson. In her disconsolateness she went to Madame de Maintenon, who said the King was keeping silence on the subject, and it was not advisable to remind him of it. When she then, with a peculiar smile, asked after the "little La Valliére," Mademoiselle Scuderi saw that this proud lady felt, in the depths of her heart, some slight annoyance at a matter which had the power of drawing the mobile King into a province whose charm was beyond her own sphere. Consequently nothing was to be hoped from Madame de Maintenon.

At length Mademoiselle Scuderi managed to find out, with D'Andilly's help, that the King had had a long interview with Count Miossens; further, that Bontems, the King's confidential groom of the chamber and secret agent, had been to the Conciergerie, and spoken with Brusson; that, finally, the said Bontems, with several other persons, had paid a long visit to Cardillac's house. Claude Patru, who lived in the lower story, said he had heard banging noises above his head in the night, and that he had recognised Olivier's voice amongst others. So far it was certain that the King was, himself, causing the matter to be investigated; but what was puzzling was the long delay in coming to a decision. La Regnie was most probably trying all in his power to prevent his prey from slipping through his fingers; and this nipped all hope in the bud.

Nearly a month had elapsed, when Madame de Maintenon sent to tell Mademoiselle Scuderi that the King wished to see her that evening in her salon.

Her heart beat fast. She knew that Olivier's fate would be decided that night. She told Madelon so, and the latter prayed to the Virgin and all the Saints that Mademoiselle Scuderi might succeed in convincing the King of her lover's innocence.

And yet it appeared as if he had forgotten the whole affair, for he passed the time in chatting pleasantly with Madame de Maintenon and Mademoiselle Scuderi, without a single word of poor Olivier Brusson. At length Bontems appeared, approached the King, and spoke a few words so softly that the ladies could not hear them. Mademoiselle Scuderi trembled; but the King rose, went up to her, and said, with beaming eyes, "I congratulate you, Mademoiselle. Your protégé, Olivier Brusson, is free." Mademoiselle Scuderi, with tears streaming down her cheeks, unable to utter a word, would have cast herself at the King's feet; but he prevented her, saying, "Va! Va! Mademoiselle, you ought to be my Attorney-General and plead my causes, for nobody on earth can resist your eloquence and powers of persuasion." He added, more gravely, "He who is shielded by virtue may snap his fingers at every accusation, by the Chambre Ardente, or any other tribunal on earth."

Mademoiselle Scuderi, now finding words, poured forth a most glowing tribute of gratitude. But the King interrupted her, saying there were warmer thanks

awaiting her at home than any he could expect from her, as at that moment doubtless Olivier was embracing his Madelon. "Bontems," added His Majesty, "will hand you 1000 Louis, which you will give the little one from me as a wedding portion. Let her marry her Brusson, who does not deserve such a treasure, and then they must both leave Paris. This is my will."

La Martinière came to meet her mistress with eager steps, followed by Baptiste, their faces beaming with joy, and both crying out, "He is here! he is free! Oh, the dear young couple!" The happy pair fell at Mademoiselle Scuderi's feet, and Madelon cried, "Ah! I knew that you, and you only, would save my husband." "Mother," cried Olivier, "my belief in you never wavered." They kissed her hands, and shed many tears; and then they embraced again, and vowed that the super-earthly bliss of the present time was worth all the nameless sufferings of the days that were past.

In a few days the priest pronounced his blessing upon them. Even had it not been the King's command that they were to leave Paris, Brusson could not have remained there, where everything reminded him of the dreadful epoch of Cardillac's atrocities, and where any accident might have disclosed the evil secret, already known to several persons, destroying the peace of his life for ever. Immediately after the wedding he started with his young wife for Geneva, sped on his way by Mademoiselle Scuderi's blessings. Handsomely provided with Madelon's portion, his own skill at his calling, and every civic virtue, he there led a happy life, without a care. The hopes, whose frustration had sent the father to his grave, were fulfilled to the son.

A year after Brusson left Paris, a public proclamation, signed by Harloy de Chauvalon, Archbishop of Paris, and by Pierre Arnaud d'Andilly, Advocate of the Parliament, appeared, stating that a repentant sinner had, under seal of confession, made over to the Church a valuable stolen treasure of gold and jewels. All those who, up to about the end of the year 1680, had been robbed of property of this description, particularly if by murderous attack in the street, were directed to apply to d'Andilly, when they would receive it back, provided that anything in the said collection agreed with the description to be by them given, and providing that there was no doubt of the genuineness of the application. Many whose names occurred in Cardillac's list as having been merely stunned, not murdered, came from time to time to d'Andilly to reclaim their property, and received it back, to their no small surprise. The remainder became the property of the Church of St. Eustache."

Sylvester's tale was received by the Brethren with their full approval. It was held to be truly Serapiontic, because, whilst founded on historical fact, it yet soared into the region of the imaginative.

Lothair said: "Our Sylvester has got very well out of a somewhat risky undertaking, for that, I consider, was the representing of a literary old maid who kept a sort of *bureau d'esprit* in the Rue St. Honoré, which he lets us have a peep into. Our own authoresses (and if they chance to be advanced in years, I hope they may all be genial, kind, and dignified as the old lady in the black dress) would be much delighted with you, my Sylvester, if they heard your story, and forgive you your somewhat gruesome and terrible Cardillac, whom, I suppose, you have altogether to thank your own imagination for."

"At the same time," said Ottmar, "I remember having read, somewhere or other, of an old shoemaker in Venice, whom the whole town looked upon as a good, exemplary, industrious man, though he really was the most atrocious robber and murderer. Just like Cardillac, he used to slip out in the night-time and get into the palazzi of the great, where, in the depths of darkness, his surely-dealt dagger-thrust pierced the hearts of those whom he wanted to rob, so that they dropped down on the spot without a cry. Every effort of the most clever and observant police to detect this murderer, who kept all Venice in terror, was

useless, until a circumstance led to the shoemaker's being suspected. He fell sick, and, strange to say, as long as he was confined to his bed there were no murders. They began again as soon as he was well. On some pretext he was put in prison, and, just as was expected, so long as he was shut up the palaces were in security; but the moment he got out (there being no proof of anything against him) the victims fell just as before. Finally the rack extracted his secret, and he was executed. A strange thing was that he had made no use whatever of the stolen property; it was all found stowed away under the flooring of his room. He said, in the naïvest manner, that he had made a vow to St. Rochus, the patron of his craft, that he would get together a certain, pretty considerable, sum by robbery, and then stop; and complained of the hardship of having been apprehended before the said sum was arrived at."

"I never heard of the Venetian shoemaker," said Sylvester; "but if I am truly to tell you the source from whence I drew, I must inform you that the words spoken by Mademoiselle Scuderi, 'Un amant qui craint les voleurs,' &c., were really made use of by her, in almost similar circumstances to those of my story. Also the affair of the offering from the band of robbers is by no means a creature of the brain of the felicitously inspired writer. The account of that you will find in a book where you certainly would not look for it, Wagenseil's 'Nuernberg Chronicle.' The old gentleman speaks of a visit he made to Mademoiselle Scuderi in Paris, and if I have succeeded in representing her as charming and delightful, I am indebted solely to the distinguished *courtoisie* with which Wagenseil mentions her."

"Verily," said Theodore, laughing, "to stumble upon Mademoiselle Scuderi in the 'Nuernberg Chronicle' requires an author's lucky hand, such as Sylvester is specially gifted with. In fact, he shines on us to-night in his double capacity of playwright and story-teller, like the constellation of the Dioscuri."

"That is just where he seems to me so vain," said Vincenz. "A man who writes a good play ought not to set to work to tell a good tale as well."

"Yet it is strange," said Cyprian, "that authors who can tell a story well, who manage their characters and situations cleverly, often fail altogether in drama for the stage."

"But," said Lothair, "are not the conditions of drama and of narrative so essentially different in their fundamental elements, that the attempt to turn a story into a play is very often a complete failure? You understand that I am speaking of true narrative, not of the novel, so much, because that has often in it germs from which the drama can grow up like a glorious, beautiful tree."

"What do you think," asked Vincenz, "of the admirable idea of making a story out of a play? Some years ago I read Iffland's 'Jaeger' turned into a story, and you can't believe how delightful and touching little Anton with the couteau de chasse, and Riekchen with the lost shoe, were in this shape. It was delightful, too, that the author, or adapter, preserved whole scenes unchanged, merely putting in the 'said he,' and 'answered she,' between the speeches. I assure you I did not wholly realise the truly poetic imagination, and the deep sublimity which there is in Iffland's 'Jaeger,' until I read it in this form. Moreover, the scientific side of it struck me then, and I saw how properly it was classed in a certain library under the head 'Science of Forestry.'"

"Cease your funning," said Lothair, "and lend, with us, an attentive ear to the worthy Serapion Brother who, as I perceive, has just pulled a manuscript out of his pocket."

"This time," said Theodore, "I have trespassed upon another's ground. However, there is a real incident at the basis of my story, not taken from any book, but told to me by another."

He read:--

GAMBLERS' FORTUNE.

In the summer of 18-- Pyrmont was more than usually frequented, and the influx of visitors, rich and great, increased from day to day, exciting the eager emulation of the various speculators and purveyors of their wants. Particularly did the faro-table keepers heap up piles of gold in unusual quantity, for the attraction of the noble game, which, like experienced sportsmen, they set themselves to decoy. As we all know, at watering-places especially--where people resolve to give themselves up, at their own sweet will, to whatever amusements may be most to their taste, to get through the time---the attractions of the play-table are not easy to resist. We see people who never touch a card at other times, absorbed at those tables; and, in fact, among the upper classes, at all events, it is thought only a proper thing to stake something every evening.

There was but one exception to this otherwise universal rule, in the person of a young German Baron, whom we shall call Siegfried. When everybody else rushed to the tables, and there was no way left to him to amuse himself in what he considered a rational manner, he preferred taking a lonely walk, yielding to the play of his fancy, or would stay at home, amusing himself with a book, or sometimes writing something himself.

He was young, independent, good-looking, well off, pleasant in manners, so of course he was very popular, and his success with the other sex was distinguished. But besides all this, there appeared to be a special lucky star watching over everything he undertook. People talked of many love-affairs, comprising risky adventures of which he had been the hero, which, though certain to have proved disastrous to most men, he had got out of with marvellous ease and facility. Old gentlemen who knew him would speak, particularly, of the affair of a certain watch, which had happened in his very early days. It chanced, before he came to his majority, that, on a journey, he unexpectedly found himself in such a strait for money that, to get on at all, he had to sell his watch, a beautiful gold one set with brilliants. Seeing no alternative, he had made up his mind to part with it much under its value; but it so happened that, in the hotel where he was living, there was a young prince who was on the look-out for just such a watch; so that he got more for it than it was worth. Rather more than a year afterwards--having come to his majority in the meantime--he read in the newspaper, at another place where he was, that a watch was going to be raffled. He took a ticket, costing only a trifle, and won the very watch set in brilliants which he had sold. Soon afterwards, he swopped this watch away for a valuable ring. Presently, having been for a time in the service of the Prince of G----, as he was leaving, the Prince gave him, as a souvenir, the self-same watch which he had twice got rid of--and a handsome chain into the bargain.

Then, people went on to talk about Siegfried's fancy of never touching a card--which, considering his extraordinary luck, he ought to be just the man to do; and everybody came to the conclusion that, in spite of all his delightful qualities, the Baron was a screw; far too canny to risk a little of his cash. That his whole conduct completely excluded the idea of his being avaricious, didn't matter. People are always anxious, and delighted to fasten an objectionable "but" on to a man of gifts, and to find out this "but" wherever they can, be it only in their own imaginations. So everybody was quite satisfied with this explanation of Siegfried's hatred of the play-table.

He very soon found out what he was accused of; and, being large-minded and liberal--hating nothing so much as avarice--he determined to show his calumniators how much they were mistaken, and--much as he detested play--sacrifice a hundred Louis d'Ors or so--more if necessary--to prove to them their error. He went to the faro-table with the firm resolution to lose the rather considerable sum which he had in his pocket. But the luck which accompanied him in everything he set about was true to him here too. Everything he staked on

won. His luck shipwrecked the cabalistic calculations of the old, deeply experienced gamblers. It was all the same whether he exchanged his cards, or stuck to them; he always won. He furnished a unique instance of a *ponteur* wild with disgust because the cards favoured him. The by-standers, watching him, shook their heads significantly at each other, implying that the Baron might come to lose his head, carried along by this concatenation of the unusual. For indeed, a man who was furious because he was lucky, must surely be a *little* off his head.

The very circumstance that he had won a considerable sum necessitated him to go on playing; and as this gain must, in all probability, be followed by a still greater loss, he felt bound to carry out his original plan. However, he found it not so easy; his extraordinary luck continued to stick to him.

Without his exactly noticing it himself, a love for the game of Faro arose within him, and grew. In its very simpleness, Faro is, in truth, the most mysterious of all games.

He was not annoyed at being lucky *now*. The game fettered his attention, and kept him absorbed in it, night after night, till morning. As it was not the winning which interested him, but the game itself, he was forced to admit the existence of that extraordinary *spell* connected with it which his friends had spoken of to him, but which he had refused to believe in.

One night when the banker had just finished a "taille," on looking up he saw an elderly man, who had placed himself opposite to him, and was keeping a grave, melancholy gaze fixed upon him. And every time Siegfried looked up from his game, he found this grave, melancholy gaze still fixed upon him, so that he could not divest himself of a strong, rather eery sensation. The Stranger did not go away till the playing was over for the night. Next evening he was there again, in his old place opposite the Baron, gazing at him continually, with his gloomy, spectral eves. The Baron restrained himself; but when, on the third night, the Stranger was there again, gazing at him with eyes of devouring fire, Siegfried broke out: "I must really beg you, sir, to select some other place. You are interfering with my play."

The stranger bowed, with a pained smile, and, without a word, left the table, and the room.

But the following night he was standing in his old place, opposite to Siegfried, transfixing him with his gloomy, glowing eyes. The Baron broke out more angrily than on the previous night. "If it is any entertainment to you, sir, to glare at me in that sort of manner, I must beg you to select another place and another time. But--for the present"--a motion of the hand in the direction of the door took the place of the hard words which the Baron had on the tip of his tongue.

And, as on the previous night, the Stranger, bowing with the same pained smile, left the room. Excited by the game, by the wine he had taken, and by the encounter with the Stranger, Siegfried could not sleep. When morning broke, the whole appearance of the Stranger rose to his memory. He saw the expressive face, the well-cut features, marked with sorrow, the hollow gloomy eyes which had gazed at him. He noticed that though he was poorly dressed, his refined manners and bearing spoke of good birth and up-bringing. And then the way in which he had received the hard words with quiet resignation, and gone away, swallowing the bitterness of his feelings with a power over himself. "Oh!" said Siegfried, "I was wrong--I did him great injustice. Is it like me to fly into a passion, and insult people without rhyme or reason, like a foolish boy?" He came to the conclusion that the man had been gazing at him with a bitter sense of the tremendous contrast between them. At the moment when he--perhaps--was in the depths of distress, the Baron was heaping gold on the top of gold, and carrying all before him. He determined that the first thing in the morning he would go and find out the Stranger, and do something to remedy his condition.

And, as fate would have it, the Stranger was the first person he met, as he was

taking a walk down the Alleé.

The Baron addressed him, apologised for his behaviour on the previous night, and formally asked him to forgive him. The Stranger said there was nothing to forgive. People who were much interested in their game must have every consideration, and he quite deserved to be reminded that he was obstinately planting himself in a place where he could not but put the Baron out in his play.

The Baron went further. He spoke of the circumstance that in life temporary difficulties often come upon people of education in the most trying manner, and he gave him pretty clearly to understand that he was ready to pay him back the money he had won from him, or more, if necessary, should that be likely to be of any assistance to him.

"My dear sir," said the Stranger, "you suppose that I am pressed for money. Strictly speaking, I am not. Although I am rather a poor man than a rich, I have enough for my little requirements. And you will see in a moment, if you consider, that if you should suppose you could atone for an insult to me by offering me a sum of money, I could not accept it, even as a mere ordinary man of honour. And I am a Chevalier."

"I think I understand you," said the Baron; "I am quite ready to give you satisfaction in the way you mean."

"Oh, good heavens!" the Stranger said; "what a very unequal affair a fight would be between us. I feel sure that, like myself, you do not look upon the duel as a mere piece of childish fanfaronade, nor consider that a drop or two of blood--perhaps from a scratched finger--can wash a stained honour white again. No, no! there are plenty of causes which render it impossible for two men to go on existing on this earth at the same time. Although one of them may be on the Caucasus and the other on the Tiber, there is no separation between them so long as the notion of the existence of the hated one subsists. In a case like that the duel, which is to decide the question which of those two is to make way on this earth for the other, is a positive necessity. But between *us* a duel, as I said, would be one-sided, since my life is nothing like as valuable as yours. If I killed you I should destroy a whole world of the fairest hopes. But if I fell, you would end a miserable existence, marred by the most bitter and painful memories. However, the chief point is that I do not consider myself in the smallest degree offended. You told me to go, and I went."

He spoke the latter words in a tone which betrayed his inward mortification, which was sufficient reason for the Baron to apologise to him once more, laying special weight on the circumstance that the Stranger's gaze seemed somehow (he could not tell why) to go penetrating into him to such an extent that he could bear it no longer.

"If my gaze penetrated you, as you say it did," said the Stranger, "would to God it had carried with it the conviction of the threatening peril in which you stand. In your gladness of heart, with all your youthful unknowingness, you are hovering on the very brink of a terrible abyss. One single impulse, and into it you fall, without the possibility of rescue. In one word, you are on the point of becoming a passionate gambler, and of going to perdition."

The Baron assured him that he was completely mistaken. He explained to him how it was that he had been led at first to go to the tables, and that the true love of play was completely absent from him--that all he desired was to lose a few hundred louis, and, having accomplished that, he would play no more; but that, up to this time, he had had the most extraordinary luck.

"Alas!" cried the Stranger, "it is just that very luck which is the most terrible, mocking temptation of the Infernal Power. Just this very luck of yours, Baron, the whole way in which you have been led on to play, the whole style of your playing, and everything connected with the matter, show but too plainly how your interest

in it keeps on increasing and increasing. Everything about it reminds me only too clearly of the fate of an unfortunate fellow who begun exactly as you have done. This was why I could not take my eyes from you, why I could scarce refrain from telling you in words what my eyes intended to say to you, namely, 'For heaven's sake look at the fiends that are stretching out their talons to drag you down to perdition;' that is what I longed to cry out to you. I wished to make your acquaintance, and in that I have succeeded. Let me tell you the story of the unfortunate man to whom I have referred, and then perhaps you will see that it is no idle cobweb of my brain which makes me see you to be in the most imminent peril, and that I give you fair warning."

They sate down on a seat which was in a lonely place, and the Stranger commenced as follows. "The same brilliant gifts which distinguish you, Baron, procured for the Chevalier Menars the respect and admiration of men, and rendered him the beloved of women. Only as far as wealth was concerned fortune had not been so kind to him as to you. He was on the confines of penury, and nothing but the most scrupulous economy enabled him to keep up the decent appearance which his position as the descendant of a family of condition demanded of him. Since the very smallest loss of money would have been of much consequence to him, upsetting all his course of life, he was precluded from everything in the shape of play. But he had not the smallest inclination for it, so that his avoidance of it involved not the slightest sacrifice on his part. He was excessively lucky in whatever he undertook, so that his good fortune became a species of proverb.

"Contrarily to his habit he allowed himself to be persuaded one night to go to a gambling-house, where the friends who were with him were soon deep in the game.

"Taking no interest in the game, with his mind fully occupied about something else, he strolled up and down the room, just now and then casting a glance at the table, where the gold was streaming in upon the banquier from every side. All at once an elderly Colonel observed him, and cried out, 'Oh, the devil! here's the Chevalier Menars, with his luck, and none of us can win because he hasn't taken a side. This won't do. He must stake for me instantly.'

"The Chevalier tried his utmost to excuse himself, saying he knew nothing about the game. But nothing would serve the Colonel but that he must to the table willy nilly.

"It happened to him exactly as it did to you, Baron. He won on every card, so that he soon had hauled in a considerable sum for the Colonel, who could not congratulate himself enough on the great idea he had been inspired with of availing himself of the celebrated luck of the Chevalier Menars.

"On the Chevalier himself his luck, which so astonished all the others, made not the slightest impression. Nay, he did not himself quite understand how it came about that his detestation of play, if possible, increased, so that the next morning, when he felt the languor and listlessness consequent on having sat up so late, and gone through the excitement, he made a firm resolution that nothing would ever induce him to enter a gambling-house again.

"This resolution was strengthened by the conduct of the old Colonel, who had the most extraordinary ill-luck as soon as he took a card in his hand, and attributed this, in the most absurd way, to the Chevalier. And he insisted, in the most importunate manner, that Menars should either play his cards for him, or at all events be at his side when he played himself, by way of exorcising the demon who placed in his hand the losing cards. We know that nowhere is there such absurd superstition as amongst gamblers. It was only with the utmost difficulty that Menars managed to shake the Colonel off. He had even to go the length of telling him he would rather fight him than stake for him; and the Colonel was by no means fond of fighting. The Chevalier cursed himself for ever having yielded to the old ass at all.

"Of course the story of the Chevalier's luck could not but be passed on from one to another, with all sorts of mysterious, inexplicable additions added on to it, representing him as a man in league with supernatural powers. But that one who had his luck should go on abstaining from touching cards was a thing which could not but give the highest idea of the firmness of his character, and much increase the consideration in which he was held.

"A year after this the Chevalier found himself in the most pressing and distressing embarrassment in consequence of the non-payment to him of the trifling sum on which he managed by a struggle to live. He was obliged to confide this to his most intimate friend, who, without a moment's hesitation, helped him to what he required, at the same time telling him he was the most extraordinary, eccentric individual the world had ever probably contained.

"'Destiny,' he said, 'gives us hints, indications of the direction in which we have to seek and find our welfare, and it is only our indolence which is to blame when we neglect those hints and fail to understand them. The Power which rules over us has very distinctly whispered into your ear, "If thou wouldest have money and possessions, go and play; otherwise thou wilt for ever remain poor, needy, dependent."'

"Then, for the first time, the thought of the wonderful luck he had had at the faro table rose vividly before his mind's eye, and, waking and dreaming, he saw cards before him, and heard the monotonous *gagne-perd* of the banquier, and the clink of the gold pieces.

"'It is true,' he said to himself, 'a single night like that one would raise me out of poverty, and free me from the terrible necessity of being a burden on my friends. It is simply a duty to follow the promptings of Destiny.'

"The same friend who advised him to take to playing went with him to the table, and, to make him easy in his mind, presented him with twenty louis d'or.

"If his game had been an extraordinary one when he was staking for the old Colonel, it was doubly so now. He drew out his cards by chance, by accident, and staked on them, whatever they happened to be. And the unseen hand of that higher Power, which is in league with that which we term 'Chance'--nay, which *is* that Chance--directed his play. When the game was done he had won 1000 louis d'or.

"Next morning he felt in a sort of stupor on awaking. The money was lying on the table by his bed, just as he had shaken it out of his pockets. At first he thought he was dreaming. He rubbed his eyes and drew the table nearer to him. But as he gradually recollected what had happened--when he sunk his hands well into the heap of gold money, and counted the coins delightedly over and over again--suddenly there awoke in him, and passed through his being like a poisoned breath, the love of the vile mammon. The pureness of mind which had so long been his was gone.

"He could scarcely wait till evening came to get back to the play-table. His luck continued to attend him, so that in a few weeks, during which he played every night, he had won a very large sum.

"There are two sorts of gamblers. To many the game in itself presents an indescribable, mysterious joy, quite without any reference to winning. The wonderful enchainments of the chances alternate in the most marvellous variety; the influence of the Powers which govern the issue displays itself, so that, inspired by this, our spirits stretch their wings in an attempt to reach that darksome realm, that mysterious laboratory, where the Power in question works, and there see it working. I knew a man once who used to sit alone in his room for days and nights keeping banque, and staking against himself. That man, I consider, was a proper player. Others have only the gain in view, and look upon the game as a means of winning money quickly. The Chevalier belonged to the

latter class, thereby proving the theory that the true passion for play must exist in a person's nature, and be born with him.

"For this reason the circle within which the mere ponteur is restricted soon became too narrow for him. With the very large sum he had now won he started a banque of his own; and here, too, fortune favoured him, so that in a very short time his was the richest banque in Paris. As lies in the nature of things, to him, as the luckiest, richest banquier, resorted the greatest number of players.

"The wild rugged life of a gambler soon blotted out in him all those mental and bodily superiorities which had formerly brought him love and consideration. He ceased to be a faithful friend, an open-hearted pleasant companion, a chivalric and gallant honourer of ladies. His love for art and science was extinguished, as well as all his wish to make progress in knowledge of the desirable sort. In his deathly pale countenance and gloomy eyes, sparkling with darksome fire, was imprinted the plain expression of that devouring passion which held him fast in its bands. It was not the love of play, it was the most detestable avarice, the craving for money, which the Devil himself had kindled within him. In one word, he was the most thorough specimen of a banquier ever seen.

"One night--though he had not, so to speak, lost very much--he found that fortune had not been quite so favourable to him as usual. And just at this juncture there came up to the table a little old weazened man, in poverty-stricken clothes, and altogether of almost disgustingly repulsive appearance. He drew a card, with shaking hand, and staked a piece of gold on it. Several of those at the table looked at him with deep amazement, and immediately behaved towards him with conspicuous despite; but he took not the slightest notice, not even by a look, far less by a word.

"He lost--lost one piece of gold after another, and the more he lost the better the other players were pleased. And when the old man, who kept on doubling his stakes, at last staked five hundred louis on a card, and lost it in a moment, one of them cried out, laughing loud, 'Well done, Signor Vertua; keep it up! Don't give in; keep up your game! You seem to me as if you would certainly break the bank, your luck is so splendid!'

"The old man darted a basilisk look at him, and ran off out of the room as quickly as he could; but only to come back in half an hour, with his pockets crammed with gold. When the final *taille* came he could not go on, as he had lost all the money he brought with him the second time.

"The Chevalier, who, notwithstanding all the atrocity of his ongoings, still insisted on there being a certain observance of ordinary *convenance* amongst the frequenters of his establishment, had been in the highest degree displeased at the derision and contempt with which the old man had been treated, which was sufficient reason for his talking very seriously, when the evening's play was over, to the man who had jeered at him, and to one or two others whose contemptuous behaviour to him had been the most striking, and whom the Chevalier had begged to remain behind on purpose.

"'That fellow,' one of them cried out. 'You don't know old Francesco Vertua, Chevalier, or you wouldn't find fault with us for what we did. You would rather thank us. This Vertua, by birth a Neapolitan, has been for fifteen years here, in Paris, the most vile, foul, wicked miser and usurer that could exist. He is lost to every feeling of humanity. If his own brother were to drag himself to his door, writhing in the death agony, and curl round about his feet, he wouldn't give a louis d'or to help him. The curses and execrations of heaps of people, whole families, whom he has driven to ruin by his infernal machinations, lie heavy on him. There is nobody who does not pray that vengeance for what he has done, and is always doing, may overtake him and finish his sin-spotted life. He has never played, at all events since he has been in Paris, and you need not be astonished at our surprise when we saw the old skinflint come to the table. Of course we were just as delighted at his losing, for it would have been altogether too bad if fortune

had favoured the scoundrel. The wealth of your banque has dazzled the old noodle. He thought he was going to pluck you, but he has lost his own feathers. But the thing I can't understand is how he can have made up his miserly mind to play so high.'

"This, however, did not prove well founded, for the next night Vertua made his appearance, and staked and lost a great deal more than on the night before. He was quite impassible all the time; in fact, he now and then smiled with a bitter irony, as one who knew how utterly differently everything would soon turn. But his losses swelled like a mountain avalanche on each of the succeeding nights, so that at last it was calculated that he had lost to the banque well on to thirty thousand louis d'or. After this, he came one night, long after the play had begun, pale as death, with his face all drawn, and stationed himself at some distance from the table, with his eyes fixed on the cards which the Chevalier was dealing. At last, when the Chevalier had shuffled, had the cards cut, and was going to begin the deal, the old man cried out, in a screaming voice, 'Stop!' Every one looked round, almost terrified. The old man elbowed his way through the crowd close up to the Chevalier, and whispered into his ear, 'Chevalier, my house in the Rue St. Honoré, with all its contents, in furniture, gold, silver, and jewels, is valued at eighty thousand francs. I stake it! Do you accept?'

"'Yes,' said the Chevalier calmly, without looking at him, and began to deal.

"'Queen!' said the old man, and the queen lost. The old man fell back, and leaned against the wall, motionless as a stone image. Nobody troubled himself further about him. When the game was over for the night, and the Chevalier and his croupiers were packing away the won money in the strong box, Vertua came wavering like a spectre forward out of his corner. In a hollow, faint voice, he said, 'One word, Chevalier; one single word.'

"'Well, what is it?' said the Chevalier, taking the key from the box and putting it in his pocket, as he surveyed the old man contemptuously from head to foot.

"'I have lost all I possessed in the world to your banque, Chevalier. I have nothing left--nothing. I don't know where I shall lay my head to-morrow, or how I shall appease my hunger. I betake myself to you. Lend me the tenth part of the sum you have won from me, that I may recommence my business, and raise myself from the depths of poverty.'

"'How can you be so absurd, Signor Vertua,' said the Chevalier. 'Don't you know that a banquier never lends his winnings? It would be against all the rules, and I abide by them.'

"'You are right, Chevalier,' said Vertua. 'What I asked was absurd, extravagant. Not a tenth part--lend me a twentieth part.'

"'What I tell you is,' said the Chevalier, 'that I never lend any of my winnings.'

"'Quite right,' said Vertua, his face growing paler and paler, and his looks more fixed and staring. 'Of course you can't lend. I never used to do it myself. But give an alms to a beggar. Let him have one hundred louis d'or out of the fortune which blind Chance threw to you tonight.'

"'Well, really, Signor Vertua, you understand how to bother,' was the Chevalier's answer. 'I tell you that not one hundred, nor fifty, nor twenty, nor one single louis d'or will you get out of me. I should be a lunatic to give you any help towards recommencing your shameful trade. Fate has dashed you down into the dust like a venomous reptile, and it would be a crime to lift you up. Be off with you, and die, as you deserve to do.'

"Vertua sank down, with both his hands before his face. The Chevalier ordered his servants to take the Strong box down to the carriage, and then cried out, in a domineering way, 'When are you going to make over your house and effects to me, Signor Vertua?'

"Vertua raised himself from the ground, saying, in a firm voice, 'At once. This very moment, Chevalier. Come with me.'

"'Good,' said the Chevalier, 'you may drive there with me. To-morrow you must leave it for good and all.'

"On the way neither of them spoke. When they came to the house in the Rue St. Honoré Vertua rang at the door, and a little old woman opened, and cried, when she saw him, 'Oh, saviour of the world, is it you at last, signor? Angela has been nearly dead with anxiety about you.'

"'Hush!' said Vertua. 'Heaven grant that Angela has not heard the unlucky bell. I don't want her to know that I have come.' He took the candle-holder from the amazed old woman's hand, and lighted the Chevalier up the staircase to the salon.

"'I am ready for everything,' said Vertua. 'You detest me and despise me. You ruin me for the gratification of yourself and others. But you do not know me. I will tell you, then, that I was once a gambler like yourself; that capricious fortune was as kind to me as to you; that I travelled over the half of Europe, stopping wherever high play and the expectation of large winnings attracted me to remain; that the gold in the banque which I kept was heaped up as mountain high as in your own. I had a devoted and beautiful wife, whom I neglected, who was miserable in the midst of the most marvellous wealth. It happened once, in Genoa, when I had started my banque there, that a young Roman lost all his great fortune to me. As I begged of you to-day, he begged of me that I would lend him as much money as would, at all events, take him to Rome. I refused, with scornful laughter, and in his despair he thrust his stiletto deep into my breast. The surgeons managed to cure me with difficulty, and my illness was long and painful. My wife nursed me, comforted me, supported me when I would have given in with the pain. And with returning health there dawned within me, and grew stronger and stronger, a feeling which I had never known before. The gambler is a stranger to all the ordinary emotions of humanity, so that till then I had no knowledge of love, and the faithful devotion of a wife. The debt which my ungrateful heart owed to my wife burned in the depths of my soul, as well as the sense of the wickedness of the occupation to which I had sacrificed her. Like torturing spirits of vengeance appeared to me all those whose happiness, whose very existence, I had ruined, reproaching me, in hoarse and hollow voices, with the guilt and crime of which *I* had planted the germs. None but my wife could dispel the nameless sorrow, the terror, which then took possession of me. I made a solemn vow that I would never touch a card again. I tore myself away. I burst the bonds which had held me. I withstood the enticements of my croupiers, who could not get on when my luck was gone from the enterprise. I had bought a small country house near Rome, and there I fled with my wife as soon as I had recovered. Alas! for only one single year was it that I was vouchsafed a peace, a happiness, a contentment, such as I had never dreamt of. My wife bore me a daughter, and died a few weeks afterwards. I was in despair. I accused heaven, and then turned round and cursed myself and my sinful career, punished in this way by the eternal power, by taking my wife from me, who saved me from destruction--the only creature on earth who gave me comfort and hope. Like the criminal whom the dreadfulness of solitude terrifies, I fled from my country place to Paris. Angela blossomed up, the lovely counterpart of her mother. My whole heart hung upon her. For her sake I made it my business not only to keep a considerable fortune together, but to increase it. It is true that I lent money at high rates of interest. But it is a shameful calumny when I am accused of being a fraudulent usurer. Who are my accusers? Light-minded creatures, who torture and tease me till I lend them money, which they waste and squander as if it were of no value, and then are furious when I get it back from them with infallible strictness--the money which is not mine but my daughter's, whose steward I consider myself to be. Not long ago I rescued a young man from ruin and disgrace by lending him a considerable sum. I knew he was very poor, and I said nothing about repayment till I knew he had succeeded to a fortune. Then I asked him to pay me. Would you credit it, Chevalier, this light-minded scoundrel, who was indebted to me for his very existence, wanted to deny his

liability, and, when the law obliged him to pay me, he called me a vile skinflint. I could tell you of plenty similar cases, which have made me hard and unfeeling when I have been met with ingratitude and baseness. More than that, I could tell you of many bitter tears which I have wiped away, of many a prayer which has gone up to heaven for me and my Angela; but you would look upon that as boasting, and besides, as you are a gambler, you would care nothing about it. I hoped and believed that the eternal power was appeased. All delusion, for Satan was freely empowered to blind and deceive me in a more terrible manner than ever. I heard of your luck, Chevalier. Every day I was told of this one and the other having beggared himself at your banque. Then it came to me that I was destined to pit my luck, which had never failed me, against yours--that I was destined to put an end to your career. And this idea, which nothing but madness of the most extraordinary kind could have suggested to me, left me no further peace or rest. Thus I came to your banque. Thus my terrible folly did not leave me until my fortune--no, my Angela's fortune--was all yours. But you will let my daughter take her clothes away with her, will you not?'

"'I have nothing to do with your daughter's clothes,' answered the Chevalier; 'and you may take away the beds and the ordinary household things for cooking and so forth. What do I care for rubbish of that sort? But take care that nothing of any value of that which is now my property goes away amongst them.'

"Old Vertua stared speechlessly at the Chevalier for a few seconds, then a stream of tears burst from his eyes. Like a man annihilated, all sorrow and despair, he sank down before the Chevalier with hands uplifted.

"'Have you any human feeling left in your heart?' he cried. 'Have some mercy! Remember it is not me whom you are dashing into ruin and misery, but my unoffending angel child--my Angela! Oh, have mercy upon her! Lend her the twentieth part of the fortune you have robbed her of. I know you will allow yourself to be implored. Oh! Angela, my daughter!'

"And the old man moaned, sobbed, and called out the name of his child in heart-breaking tones.

"'I really don't think I can stand much more of this stage business of yours,' the Chevalier said indifferently, and in a bored manner. But the door opened, and a girl in a white night dress, with her hair undone, and death in her face, rushed up to old Vertua, raised him, took him in her arms, and cried, 'Oh, father, I have heard it all--I know it all! Have you lost everything?--everything? You have still your Angela. What would be the use of money if you had not Angela to take care of you. Oh, father! don't humiliate yourself more before this despicable, inhuman creature. It is not we, it is he who is poor and miserable in all his despicable riches, for he stands there in the most gruesome, comfortless loneliness. There is not one loving heart in the wide world to cling to his breast, to open to him when he is like to despair of life--of himself. Come, father, away from this house with me; let us go as quickly as we can, that the horrible creature may not gloat over our sorrow.'

"Vertua sank half senseless into a chair, whilst Angela knelt down before him, took his hands, kissed them and stroked them, and told over, with childlike prolixity, all the accomplishments and acquirements which she possessed, with which she would be able to support him comfortably, imploring him with the warmest tears to have no fear, inasmuch as life would, for the first time in her experience, begin to possess a real value and delightsomeness for her when--not for the enjoying of it, but for her father--she should stitch, sew, sing, play the guitar.

"What obdurate sinner could have remained indifferent at the sight of Angela beaming in the fulness of her heavenly beauty, comforting her old father with sweet, delicious words, the deepest affection, and the most childlike purity and goodness streaming from the depths of her heart?

"Things were very different with the Chevalier. An entire pandemonium of torture and pangs of conscience awoke within him. Angela seemed to him to be the punishing angel of God, before whose shining glory the cloud-shroud of sinful deception which had surrounded him vanished away, so that with terror he clearly saw himself in all his repulsive nakedness.

"And through the midst of those hell-flames, which were consuming and raging in his heart, there came piercing a heavenly, pure beam of radiance, whose light was the sweetest bliss and the very joy of heaven, though the brightness of this ray had the effect of rendering the inexpressible torture more terrible.

"The Chevalier had never known love before; and the instant he saw Angela he was seized by the most passionate affection for her, and, at the same time, with the destroying pain of complete hopelessness, for surely there could be no hope for one who had appeared to her in the light in which he had.

"He longed to say something, but his tongue seemed to be paralysed. At length he so far mastered himself as to say, stammering, and in a trembling voice, 'Signor Vertua, listen. I have not won anything from you--nothing of the kind. There is my strong box; take it, it is yours. Yes; and I have to pay you more than that. I am in your debt. Take it, take it!'

"'Oh, my girl!' cried Vertua. But Angela went up to the Chevalier, beamed a proud look upon him, and said, gravely and calmly, 'Learn, Chevalier, that there are higher things than money and possessions--things which you have no knowledge of--which, while filling our souls with the happiness of heaven, make us spurn your gifts with compassion and contempt. Keep the mammon upon which lies the curse which pursues you, heartless, accursed gambler.'

"'Yes!' cried the Chevalier wildly; 'cursed, cursed in verity may I be, if ever this hand of mine touches a card again. And if you repel me, Angela, it will be you who will bring inevitable destruction upon me. Oh, you don't understand me. You must think me mad; but you will know it all when I lie before you with my skull shivered into fragments. Angela, it is life or death with me. Adieu!'

"With this he dashed away in utter desperation. Vertua thoroughly understood him; he saw what had been passing in his heart, and tried to make the lovely Angela comprehend how certain eventualities might arise which would render it necessary to accept the Chevalier's offers. Angela was afraid to allow herself to understand her father; she did not think it would ever be possible to regard the Chevalier otherwise than with contempt; but that mysterious chain of events which often forms itself within the profundities of the human heart, without our cognisance, brought to pass that which seemed unimagined--undreamt of.

"The Chevalier felt as if suddenly awakened from a horrible dream. He saw himself standing on the brink of the abyss of hell, stretching his arms out in vain to the shining form of light which had appeared to him, not to save him, but to tell him of his damnation.

"To the surprise of all Paris his banque opened no more, and he himself was no more seen, so that the most marvellous tales concerning him became current, each of them a greater falsehood than the others. He avoided all society; his love took the form of the profoundest, most unconquerable melancholy. One day he met old Vertua and his daughter in one of the lonely, shady walks of the garden at Malmaison.

"Angela, who had believed she would never be able to look upon the Chevalier again but with horror and contempt, felt strangely moved when she saw him so pale and distressed, scarce able to lift his eyes to her in the excess of his reverence for her. She knew that, since that eventful night, he had given play up entirely, and completely altered his mode of life, and that she--she alone--was the cause of this. She had saved him from destruction; could anything flatter a woman more?

"When old Vertua had exchanged the ordinary civilities with him, she spoke to him in a tone of gentle pity, saying, 'What is the matter, Chevalier? You look ill and unhappy. You ought to go and consult a doctor.'

"We can understand that her words filled him with comfort and hope. He was a different man in a moment. He lifted his head, and managed to talk once more in the manner which, when it welled from his very heart in former days, used to attract and endear him to all who knew him. Vertua reminded him that he had not come to take possession of the house he had won.

"'Very well, I will come,' he answered, with an inspiration breaking upon him. 'I will come to-morrow; but we must discuss all the conditions at proper length and leisure, even if it should take months.'

"'So be it, Chevalier,' said Vertua, with a smile. 'Perhaps we may come to discuss matters which we do not quite see into at present.'

"The Chevalier, inwardly comforted, resumed all the charm of manner and all the delightful qualities which had distinguished him before he was carried away by his devouring passion. His visits at Vertua's became more and more frequent, and Angela grew more and more disposed towards the man whose guardian angel she had been, till at last she believed she loved him with all her heart, and promised him her hand, to the great joy of old Vertua, who saw in this the settlement of his losses.

"One day Angela, now the happy betrothed of the Chevalier Menars, was sitting at a window, lost in all the sweet dreams and happy fancies which young ladies in her position are believed to be wont to entertain, when a regiment of Jaegers came marching along, with trumpets sounding bravely, on their way to join in the Spanish campaign. She was looking with pitiful sympathy at the men thus going to face death in this war, when a very young officer, who was reining his horse quickly to one side, looked up at her, and she fell back fainting in her seat.

"Alas! This young Jaeger, marching off to face death in the field, was no other than young Duvernet, the son of a neighbour, with whom she had grown up, who had been nearly daily in the house, and had only kept out of the way since the Chevalier had made his appearance. In the look of bitter reproach which the lad cast at her--and the bitterness of death itself was in it--she now, for the first time, read not only how unspeakably he loved her, but how boundlessly she loved him, without having been aware, whilst dazzled by the Chevalier's brilliance. Now. for the first time, she understood Duvernet's anxious sighs?--his silent, unassuming, unobtrusive attentions; now, and now only, she read her own embarrassed heart--what moved her disquiet breast when Duvernet came, when she heard his voice.

"'Too late! he is lost to me!' cried the voice in her heart. She had the resolution to beat down and conquer the hopeless pain which would have torn her heart; and just because she had this resolution she was successful.

"The Chevalier was too observant not to see that something had been occurring to disturb her; but, tenderly enough, he refrained from trying to unriddle a mystery which she thought herself bound to conceal from him. He contented himself, by way of clearing anything hostile out of the path, with hastening on the wedding. The arrangements connected with it he ordered with such admirable consideration and such delicate tact, that from his very care in this respect for her state of mind, she could not but form a higher opinion of his amiability than even before.

"His conduct to her was marked with such observance of the most trifling of her wishes, with the sincere courtesy which springs from the truest and purest affection, that the remembrance of Duvernet naturally faded more and more from her memory. So that the first cloud-shadow which fell upon the brightness of their life was the illness and death of old Vertua.

"Since the night when he had lost all he possessed to the Chevalier, he had never touched a card. But in the closing moments of his life all his faculties seemed to be engrossed with the game. Whilst the priest, who had come to administer the consolations of the Church to him on his departure from this life, spoke to him of spiritual things, he lay with closed eyes, murmuring between his teeth, '*Perd!--Gagne*,' and making, with hands quivering in the spasms of death, the motions of dealing and playing out cards. Angela and the Chevalier, bending over him, called him by the tenderest names. He did not seem to hear them, or to know they were there. With a faint sigh of '*Gagne!*' he gave up the ghost.

"In her deep sorrow, Angela could not help an eery shudder at the manner of his departure. The remembrance of that night, when she had first seen the Chevalier as the most hardened reprobate of a gambler, came vividly to her mind, and the thought came into her soul that he might some day throw off his angel's mask and, jeering at her in his pristine devilishness, begin his old life again.

"This fearful presentiment was to come but too true.

"Deeply shocked as the Chevalier was at the notion of old Francesco Vertua's having gone into the next world heedless of the consolations of the Church, and unable to leave off thinking of the former sinful life, still, somehow--he could not tell why--it brought the memory of the game back to his mind again, so that every night in his dreams he was presiding at the banque once more, heaping up fresh treasures.

"Since, Angela, impressed by the remembrance how her husband had appeared to her at first, found it impossible to maintain the trustful affection of her earlier wedded days, mistrust, at the same time, came into his soul of her, and he attributed her embarrassment to that secret which at once disturbed her peace, and remained unrevealed to him. This suspicion produced in him misery and annoyance, which he expressed in utterances which pained Angela. By a natural psychical reflex action, the remembrance of the unfortunate Duvernet revived in her mind, and with it the miserable sense that the love which had blossomed forth in her young heart was lost and bidden adieu to for ever. The discord grew greater and greater, till it reached such a pitch that the Chevalier came to the conclusion that the life of retirement which he was leading was a complete mistake, and longed with all his heart to be out into the world again.

"In fact, his evil star began to get into the ascendant. And that which inward dissatisfaction commenced, was completed by a wicked fellow who had formerly been a croupier at his banque, and who, by various crafty speeches, brought matters to such a point that the Chevalier came to consider his present mode of existence childish and ridiculous, and could not comprehend how, for the sake of a woman, he should be abandoning a life which appeared to him the only one worth living.

"So very soon the Chevalier's banque, with its heaps of gold, was going on again more brilliantly than ever. His luck had not forsaken him; victim after victim fell a prey, and money was amassed. But Angela's happiness was a thing of the past--destroyed, in a terrible fashion, like a brief, bright dream. The Chevalier treated her with indifference--more than that, with contempt. Often she did not see him for weeks and months. An old house-steward looked after the household matters; the servants were changed according to the Chevalier's caprice; so that Angela, a stranger in her own home, found no comfort anywhere. Often, in sleepless nights, when she heard the Chevalier's carriage draw up at the door, the heavy money-chest brought up the stairs, and he himself come up, cursing and swearing in monosyllables, and shut the door of his distant room with a bang, a torrent of tears would burst from her eyes, and in the deepest, most heartbreaking tones of misery, she would call a hundred times on the name Duvernet, and implore the Eternal Power to make an end of her wretched existence.

"One night a young gentleman of good family, after losing all he possessed at

the Chevalier's banque, sent a bullet through his head in the gaming-house--and indeed in the very room where the banque was established--so that the blood and brains besprinkled the players, who scattered out of the way in alarm. The only person unaffected by this was the Chevalier, who, when every one was about to leave the room, asked whether it was according to rule and custom to leave the game because a young fool had chosen to commit an absurdity, before the regular time for closing.

"This incident excited much comment. The most experienced, most hardened gamblers were indignant at the Chevalier's unexampled behaviour. Every one took part against him. The police ordered his banque to be closed. He was accused of unfair play; and his extraordinary luck spoke for the truth of this accusation. He was unable to clear himself, and the fine inflicted on him ran away with a considerable slice of his fortune. Finding himself robbed of his good name, and despised by all, he betook himself back to the arms of the wife whom he had ill-treated, who gladly welcomed him in his repentance. The recollection that her father, too, had renounced the miserable life of a gambler, allowed a gleam of hope to dawn upon her mind that perhaps, as the Chevalier was advancing somewhat in years, his alteration of life might be lasting.

"He left Paris with her, and they went to Genoa, her birth-place. Here, at first, he lived a sedate life; but it was impossible to re-establish the old, peaceful, domestic existence with Angola which his evil angel had destroyed. Very soon his inward restlessness and disquiet awoke and drove him out, away from his house, in unsettled restlessness. His ill-repute had followed him from Paris. He dared not establish a banque, though he felt impelled to do so with the most irresistible force.

"About this time a French Colonel, obliged, by serious wounds, to retire from active service, was keeping the most important banque in Genoa. The Chevalier went to this banque, with envy and deep hatred in his heart, expecting his usual luck to stand by him soon, so that he might be the ruin of this rival. The Colonel hailed the Chevalier with a merry humour (not at other times characteristic of him), saying that now, when the Chevalier de Menars had appeared in the field, the game was worth winning at last, since there was something in the nature of a real contest to give some interest to the issues.

"And, in fact, during the first few deals, the cards fell to the Chevalier with just his old luck. But when, trusting to his invincible fortune, he at last called out: 'Va, Banque!' he lost a very considerable sum of money at one stroke.

"The Colonel was, ordinarily, completely cool and impassive, whether lucky or unlucky; but, this time, he drew in his winnings with the liveliest marks of the utmost delight.

"From that moment luck turned away from the Chevalier, utterly and completely. He played every night, and lost every night, till he had nothing left but two or three thousand ducats, in paper.

"He had been on foot all day, converting this paper into cash, and only went home to his house late in the evening. When night was coming on, he was going out with his last gold coins in his pocket, when Angela came to him (suspecting the truth, no doubt), threw herself at his feet with a stream of tears, imploring him, by the Virgin and all the saints, to abandon his evil courses, and not leave her in need and poverty.

"The Chevalier raised her, pressed her, with painful fervour, to his heart, and said, in a hollow voice: 'Angela!--my sweet, beloved Angela!--there is no help for it. I must do it. I cannot help it. But to-morrow--to-morrow, all your cares will be over. For, by the Eternal Destiny which is above us, I swear that I play this night for the very last time. Do not distress yourself, my darling child. Go to sleep! Dream of happy days!--of a better life which is coming speedily. That will bring me luck.'

"He kissed her, and ran off, not to be stopped.

"In two deals he had lost everything--all that he possessed. He remained standing motionless near the Colonel, staring, in a dazed manner, at the gaming table.

"'Won't you go on, Chevalier?' asked the Colonel, shuffling the cards for the next deal.

"'I have lost my all,' the Chevalier answered, powerfully constraining himself to be calm.

"'Do you mean to say you have nothing left?' the Colonel asked at the next deal.

"'I am a beggar,' the Chevalier cried, in a voice quivering with fury and pain, as he continued to stare at the gaming table. He did not notice that those who were staking were getting more and more the better of the banquier.

"The Colonel calmly continued the game.

"As he shuffled the cards for the third deal, he said to the Chevalier (without looking on him), 'You have a beautiful wife, you know!'

"'What do you mean?' cried the Chevalier angrily. The Colonel turned away a little without answering him.

"'Ten thousand ducats--or Angela!' he said, half averting his face, as the cards were being cut.

"'You are out of your senses!' cried the Chevalier, who had, however, now regained his composure a good deal, and began to observe that the Colonel was losing at every deal.

"'Twenty thousand ducats, or Angela!' the Colonel said almost in a whisper, as he paused for a moment during the shuffling of the cards. The Chevalier said not a word. The Colonel played again, and nearly all the cards were in favour of the players--against him.

"'Done!' the Chevalier whispered in the Colonel's ear when the next deal began; and he threw the Queen on the table.

"The Queen lost.

"The Chevalier drew back, grinding his teeth, and leaned at the window with despair and death in his white face.

"The game ended, and, with a jeering 'Well! what next?' the Colonel came up to the Chevalier.

"'Oh, God!' cried the Chevalier, quite beside himself. 'You have made me a beggar, but you must be a madman if you think you have won my wife! Are we in the West Indies? Is my wife a slave--a chattel in her husband's power, so that he can sell her, or gamble her away at faro? It is true, of course, that you would have had to pay me twenty thousand ducats if the Queen had won, so that I have lost the right to make any objection if my wife chooses to leave me and go away with you. Come home with me, and despair when my wife repulses with horror the man whom she would have to follow as a dishonoured mistress.'

"'Despair yourself, Chevalier!' said the Colonel with a scornful laugh, 'when Angela turns from you with horror---from you, the miserable wretch who has brought her to beggary--and throws herself into my arms with eager rapture; despair yourself, when you find that the Church's benediction unites us--that fate crowns our most eager desires. You say I must be mad!--Ha, ha! All I wanted was to gain power of veto. I knew of a certainty that your wife belonged to me. Ho, ho, Chevalier! Let me tell you that your wife loves me--me--unutterably, to my certain

knowledge. Let me tell you that I am that Duvernet, the neighbour's son, brought up with Angela, united to her in the warmest affection, which you, with your devilish artifices, dispelled. Alas! it was not till I had to depart on field service that Angela knew what I was to her. I know the whole matter. It was too late then. But the dark spirit told me that I should succeed in ruining you at play--that was why I devoted myself to it and followed you to Genoa. And I have done it!--come now to your wife!'

"The Chevalier stood like one annihilated, stricken by a thousand burning lightnings. The mystery so long sealed to him was explained. Now, for the first time, he saw the full extent of the misfortunes which he had brought upon poor Angela.

"'My wife shall make her decision,' he said in a hollow tone, and followed the Colonel, who stormed away.

"When they came to the house, and the Colonel seized the handle of Angela's door, the Chevalier thrust him back, saying, 'My wife is in a sweet sleep; would you awaken her?'

"'Ha!' said the Colonel. 'Has Angela ever been in a sweet sleep since you brought nameless misery upon her?'

"He was about to enter the room, but the Chevalier prostrated himself at his feet, and cried, in utter despair, 'Have some mercy! You have made me a beggar! Leave me my wife!'

"'So lay old Vertua at *your* feet, unfeeling monster that you were, and could not move your stony heart. Therefore, may the vengeance of Heaven be upon you!'

"So saying, the Colonel again turned towards Angela's room.

"The Chevalier sprang to the door, burst it open, dashed up to the bed where his wife was lying, drew the curtains aside, cried 'Angela! Angela!'--bent over her--took her hand--shuddered like one convulsed in the death agony, and cried out in a terrible voice--

"'See here! What you have won from me is my wife's corpse!'

"The Colonel hurried to the bedside in terror. There was no trace of life. Angela was dead.

"The Colonel raised his clenched hands to heaven, and rushed away with a hollow cry. He was no more seen."

It was thus that the stranger finished his narrative, and having done so, he went quickly away, before the Baron, much moved by it, was able to utter any word.

A day or two afterwards the stranger was found insensible in his room, stricken by apoplexy. He was speechless till his death, which happened in a few hours. His papers showed that, though he was known by the name of Baudasson, he really was none other than the unfortunate Chevalier Menars.

The Baron recognized the warning of Heaven which had brought the Chevalier Menars to him just when he was nearing the abyss, and he took a solemn vow that he would resist all the temptations of the deceptive Gambler's Fortune. Hitherto he has kept his vow.

"Would one not suppose," said Lothair, when Theodore had ended, "that you were a man who knew all about gambling, and were great at all those games yourself, though perhaps your conscience might now and then give you a slap in the face? and yet I know very well that you never touch a card."

"That is quite the case," said Theodore. "And yet I derived much assistance, in my story, from a strange experience which I had myself once."

"It would be the best *finale* to your tale," said Ottmar, "to tell us this said experience of yours."

"You know," said Theodore, "that when I was finishing my education I lived for some time with an old uncle of mine in G----. There was a certain friend of this uncle's who, though our ages were very different, took a great pleasure in my society, chiefly, perhaps, because at that time I was always filled with a brilliant vein of humour, sometimes amounting to the mischievous. This gentleman was, I can assure you, one of the most extraordinary characters I ever came across. Mean in all the relationships of life, ill-tempered, grumbling, sulky, with a great tendency to miserliness, he had the utmost appreciation for everything in the shape of fun and amusement. To use a French expression, he was in the highest degree *amusable*, but not in the least *amusant*. At the same time he was excessively vain, and one form of his vanity was that he was always dressed in the utmost extremity of the prevailing fashion, almost to a ludicrous extent. And there was a similar absurdity about his manner of hunting after every species of enjoyment in the very sweat of his brow, so to speak--striving, with a comic eagerness, to gulp down as much of it as he possibly could grasp. I remember so well three particular instances of this vanity and struggle for enjoyment of his that I must tell them to you. Picture to yourselves this man, being at a place among the hills, and invited by some people (ladies being among them), to go on a walking expedition to see some waterfalls in the neighbourhood, dressing himself for the occasion in a bran new silk coat, never worn before, with beautiful shining steel buttons, and white silk stockings, shoes with steel buckles, and his finest rings on his fingers. In the thickest part of the pine forest which had to be passed through, a tremendous thunderstorm came on; the rain fell in torrents, the brooks, swollen by the rain, came rushing over the paths. You can well imagine the state my poor friend found himself in very soon.

"It chanced that the tower of the Dominican Church at G---- was one night struck by lightning. My friend was in raptures with the grand fire-pillar which arose in the darkness, magically illuminating all the country round; but he soon came to the conclusion that to get the real picturesque effect of it in all its perfection, it would be the right thing to go and look at it from a certain rising ground just outside the town. So he set off as quickly as his carefulness in such matters would permit him, not forgetting to put a packet of macaroons and a flask of wine into certain of his pockets, or to carry a beautiful bouquet of flowers in his hand, and a camp stool under his arm. Thus equipped, he paced calmly out of the city gate and up on to the eminence, where he sat himself down to enjoy the spectacle, smelling at his bouquet, munching a macaroon, washing that down with a mouthful of wine, in the most complete, beatific, quiescent state of enjoyment. Really this fellow was--taking him all round----"

"Stop! stop!" cried Lothair, "you were going to tell us the adventure of your own which helped you in writing your 'Gamester's Fortune,' and you cannot get away from a fellow who seems to have been as ludicrous as repulsive to every ordinarily constituted person's feelings."

"You must not blame me," said Theodore, "for lingering over this personage who was so intimately brought into connection with my life. But, to business!--this man whom I have been describing to you invited me to make a trip with him to a certain watering place, and, although I saw quite clearly that I was to play the *rôle* of soother, calmer, tranquilizer, and *maítre-de-plaisírs* to him, I was quite satisfied to make this charming excursion amongst the mountains at his expense. At the watering-place there was some high play going on--a bank of several thousand thalers. My companion eyed the heaps of gold with greedy simpers, paced up and down the room, circled nearer and nearer to the play table, dived into his pockets, brought out a Friedrich-d'or between his finger and thumb, dropped it back again--in a word, lusted for money. Only too glad would he have

been to pocket a little haul from that heaped-up treasure, but he had no belief in his star. At last he put an end to this droll contest between his longings and his fears, which brought the perspiration in drops on to his forehead, by begging me to stake for him, to which end he put five or six Friedrichs-d'or into my hand. However, I would have nothing to do with the arrangement until he assured me that he had not the least belief that he would have any luck whatever, but looked upon the sum which he staked as so much lost cash. What happened was what I did not in the least degree expect. To me, the unpractised, inexperienced player, fortune was propitious. I won for my friend in a very short time something like thirty Friedrichs-d'or, which he put in his pocket with much glee. Next evening he wanted me to play for him again, but to this hour I cannot explain how the idea came into my head that I should then play on my own account. I had not had the slightest intention of playing any more, nay, rather, I was on the very point of going away, out of the room, to take a walk outside, when my friend came up to me with his request. When I had plainly told him in set terms that I meant to play on my own account (but not till then), I walked calmly up to the table and pulled out of my little waistcoat pocket two Friedrichs-d'or, the only two which I possessed. If fortune had been propitious to me the night before, this time it seemed as if some Spirit of Might, at whose command luck stood, was in covenant with me. Whatever I did, whatever I staked upon, everything turned up in my favour---in fact, just as I said in my story, what happened at first to Baron Siegfried happened to me. My brain reeled! When a fresh haul of money was handed over to me I often felt as if I were in a dream, and should be sure to wake up just as I was pocketing my winnings. When the clock struck two the game came to an end as usual.

"Just as I was leaving the room, an old officer took me by the shoulder, and said, transfixing me with a grave, powerful eye:

"'Young man, if you had known what you were about, you would have broken the banque. But if ever you do know about it, no doubt you will go to the devil, like all the rest.' He left me, without waiting for my answer.

"The day was breaking when I got to my room, and emptied the money out of all my pockets on to the table. Picture to yourselves the feelings of a mere boy, entirely dependent on his relatives, restricted to a miserable mite of an allowance of weekly pocket-money, who suddenly, as if at the wave of a magic wand, finds himself in possession of a sum which is, at all events, considerable enough to appear, in his eyes, a fortune! But, as I gazed at the heaps of coin, all my mind was suddenly filled with an anxiety, a strange, alarmed uneasiness, which put me into a cold perspiration. The words of the old officer came back to me, as they had not struck me before, in the most terrible significance. I felt as though the coin which was blinking at me there on the table was the earnest money of a bargain whereby I had sold my soul to the powers of darkness, so that there was no escape more for it possible, and it was destroyed for evermore. The blossoms of my life seemed to be gnawed upon by a hidden worm, and I sank into inconsolable despair. The morning dawn was flaming up behind the eastern hills. I lay down in the window-seat. I gazed, with the most intense longing, for the rising of the sun which should drive away the darksome spirits of night; and when the woods and plains shone forth in his golden glory, it was day in my soul once more, and there came to me the most inspiriting sense of a power to resist all temptation, and shield my life from that demoniacal impulse, which was full of the power of--somehow and somewhere--impelling it to utter destruction. I made then a most sacred vow that I would never touch a card again, and that vow I have kept most strictly. And the first use I made of my money was to part from my friend, to his immense surprise, and set out on that excursion to Dresden, Prague, and Vienna, of which I have told you."

"I can well imagine," said Sylvester, "the impression which your unexpected, equivocal, most questionable luck must have made upon you. It was greatly to your credit that you resisted the temptation, and that you recognized how it was that the threatening danger lay in the very luck itself. But, allow me to say, your

own tale, the manner in which you have, with such accuracy, characterized the real gambler in it, must make it plain to yourself that you never had within you the true love of gambling, and that, if you had, the courage which you displayed would have been very difficult, perhaps impossible. Vincent, who, I believe, knows a great deal more about such matters than the rest of us, will agree with me here, I think."

"As for me," said Vincent, "I was scarcely attending to Theodore's account of his luck at the faro-table, because my mind was so full of that delicious fellow who walked about the hills in silk stockings, and admired burning buildings as if they were so many pictures, enjoying his wine, his macaroons, and his bouquets all the time. In fact, it was a pleasure and satisfaction to me to see one entertaining character at last emerging out of the dark, dreadful background of the stories of this evening, and I should have liked to have seen him as the hero of some comic drama."

"Ought not the mere suggestion of him to have been enough for us?" said Lothair. "We Serapion Brethren ought always to remember that it is our duty to set up, for each other's entertainment and refreshment, unique characters which we may have come across in life, as a means of refreshing us after the tales which may have strained our attention."

"A good idea," said Vincent, "and I thoroughly agree with it. Rough sketches of that description ought to serve as studies for more finished pictures, which whoever chooses may elaborate after his liking. Also, they may be considered as being charitable contributions to the general fund of Serapionish fantasy. And to show that I am in earnest, I shall at once proceed to describe to you a very great 'Curio' of a man whom I came across in the south of Germany. One day, in B----, I chanced to be walking in a wood near the town, when I came upon a number of countrymen hard at work in cutting down a quantity of thick underwood, and snipping off the branches from the trees on either side of it. I do not know what made me inquire of them if they were making a new road, or what. They laughed, and told me that, if I went on my way, I should find, outside the trees, upon a little rising ground, a little gentleman who would answer my questions, and, accordingly, I came there upon a little elderly gentleman, of pale complexion, in a great-coat, and with a travelling-cap on his head and a game-bag at his back, who was gazing fixedly through a telescope in the direction of the men who were cutting down the trees. When he saw me he shut up his telescope in a hurry, and said, eagerly, 'You have come through the wood, sir? Have you observed how the work is getting on?' I told him what I had seen. 'That's right, that's right,' he said; 'I've been here ever since three in the morning, and I was beginning to be afraid that those asses (and I pay them well, too) were leaving me in the lurch. But I have some hopes, now, that the view will come into sight at the expected time.' He drew out his telescope again, and gazed through it towards the wood. After a few minutes, some large branches came rustling down, and, as at the stroke of a magic wand, there opened up a prospect of distant mountains, a beautiful prospect, with the ruins of an old castle glowing in the beams of the setting sun. The gentleman gave expression to his extreme delight and gratification in one or two detached broken phrases; but when he had enjoyed the prospect for a good quarter of an hour, he put away his telescope and set off as fast as he could, without bidding me goodbye or taking the slightest notice of me. I afterwards heard that he was the Baron von B----, one of the most extraordinary fellows in existence, who, like the well-known Baron Grotthus, has been on a continual walking tour for several years, and has a mania for hunting after beautiful views. When he arrives at a place where, to get at a view, he thinks it is necessary to have trees cut down, or openings made in woodlands, he spares no cost to arrange matters with the proprietors, or to employ labourers. In fact, it is said that he once tried his utmost to have a set of farm buildings burned down, because he thought they interfered with the beauty of a prospect, and interrupted the view of the distance. He did not succeed in this particular undertaking. But whenever he did attain his object, he would gaze at his newly-arranged view for half an hour or so, at the outside, and then set off at such a pace that nothing

could stop him, never coming back to the place again."

The friends were of one mind in the opinion that there is no possibility of imagining anything more marvellous or out of the common than that which comes before us in actual life, of its own accord.

"I am wonderfully delighted," said Cyprian, "that it chances to be in my power to add to your two oddities a third character, of whom I was told a short time ago by a well-known violinist, whom we all of us know very well. This third character of mine is none other than the Baron von B----, a man who lived in Berlin about the years 1789 and 1790, and was acknowledged to be one of the most extraordinary phenomenons ever met with in the world of music. For the sake of greater vividness, I will tell you the tale in the first person, as if I were the violinist concerned in it, and I hope my worthy Serapion brother Theodore won't take it amiss that I encroach, on this occasion, into his peculiar province.

"At the time when the Baron was living in Berlin," the violinist said, "I was a very young fellow, scarcely sixteen, and absorbed in the most zealous study of my instrument, to which I was devoted with all the powers and faculties of my body and soul. My worthy master, Concert-Meister Haak, who was excessively strict with me, was much content with my progress. He lauded the finish of my bowing, the correctness of my intonation, and he allowed me to play in the orchestra of the opera, and even in the King's chamber-concerts. On those occasions I often heard Haak talking with young Duport, with Ritter, and other great artists belonging to the orchestra, about the musical evenings which Baron von B---- was in the habit of having in his house. Such was the research and the taste connected with those evenings that the King himself often deigned to take part in them. Mention was made of magnificent works of the old, nearly forgotten masters, which were nowhere else to be heard than at the Baron's, who, as regarded music for stringed instruments, possessed, probably, the most complete collection from the most ancient times down to the present day, in existence. Then they spoke of the marvellous hospitality which the Baron extended to artists, and they were all unanimous in concluding that he was the most bright and shining star which had ever risen in the musical horizon of Berlin.

"All this excited my curiosity, and made my teeth water; and all the more that, during these conversations, the artists drew their heads nearer together, and I gathered, from mysterious whispers and detached words and phrases, that there was talk of tuition in music, of giving of lessons. I fancied that, on Duport's face especially, there appeared a sarcastic smile, and that they all attacked Concert-Meister Haak with some piece of chaff, and that he, for his part, only feebly defending himself, could scarcely suppress a smile, until at last, turning quickly away, and taking up his violin to tune, he cried out, 'All the same, he is a first-rate fellow!'

"All this was more than I could withstand, and although I was told, in a pretty decided manner, to mind my own business, I begged Haak to allow me, if in any manner possible, to go with him to the Baron's and play in his concerts.

"Haak surveyed me with great eyes, and I feared that a little thunderstorm was going to burst out upon me. But his seriousness melted into a strange smile, and he said:

"'Well, well; perhaps you're right. There's a great deal to be picked up at the Baron's. I'll talk to him about you, and I think it very likely that he will accord you *les entrées*. He is very much interested in young musicians.'

"A short time afterwards, I had been playing some very difficult duetts with Haak. As he laid his fiddle down, he said, 'Now, Carl, put your Sunday coat on to-night, and your silk stockings. We will go together to the Baron's. There won't be many there, and it will be a good opportunity to introduce you to him.'

"My heart throbbed with delight, for I expected to meet with things unheard-of

and extraordinary, though I did not know why this was my expectation.

"We arrived there. The Baron, a rather small gentleman, advanced in age, wearing an old Frankish embroidered gala dress, came to meet us as we entered the room, and shook my master cordially by the hand. Never had I felt, at the sight of a man of rank, more sincere reverence, a more infelt, sincere, pleasant attraction. His face expressed the most genuine kindliness, whilst from his eyes flashed that darksome fire which so often indicates the artist who is, in verity, penetrated by his art. All that diffidence with which I, as an inexperienced neophyte, would otherwise have had to contend, fled from me instantly.

"'How are you, my dear Haak?' the Baron said. 'How are you getting on? Have you been having a right good study at my concerto? Good, good; we shall hear tomorrow. Oh, I suppose this is the young virtuoso you were telling me about?'

"I cast my eyes down bashfully. I felt that I blushed over and over again.

"Haak mentioned my name, praised my natural talent, and lauded the rapid progress which I had made in a short time.

"'And so you have chosen the violin as your instrument,' said the Baron. 'Have you considered, my son, that the violin is the most difficult of all instruments ever invented, and that it is one which, whilst it seems, in its extreme simplicity, to comprehend in itself the most luxuriant richness of music, is, in reality, an extraordinary mystery, which only discloses itself to a rare few, specially organized by nature to comprehend it? Do you know of a certainty, does your spirit tell you with distinctness, that you will be the master of that marvellous mystery? Many a one has thought this, and has remained a miserable bungler all his days. I should not wish, my son, that you should swell the ranks of those wretched creatures. However, at all events, you can play me something, and then I will tell you what you are like, what state you are in as regards this matter, and you will follow my counsel. Perhaps it is with you as it was with Carl Staunitz, who thought he was going to turn out a marvellous virtuoso. When I opened his eyes, he threw his fiddle behind the stove, and took to the Tenor and Viol d'Amour, and a very good job he made of them. On them he could stamp about with those broad stretching fingers of his, and play quite fairly well. But, however, just now I want to hear *you*, my little son.'

"This first somewhat extraordinary speech of the Baron's to me was calculated to render me somewhat anxious and abashed. What he said went deep into my soul, and I felt, not without inward sorrow, that in devoting my life to the most difficult of all instruments I had, perhaps undertaken a task beyond my powers.

"Just then, four of the artists then present sat down to play the last three quartettes of Haydn, which had just appeared in print. My master took his violin out of its case; but scarcely had he passed his bow over the strings, in tuning, when the Baron, stopping his ears with both hands, cried out, like a man possessed, 'Haak, Haak, tell me, for God's sake! how can you annihilate all your skill in playing by making use of a miserable screaking, caterwauling fiddle like that?'

"Now it happened that my master's violin was one of the most splendid and glorious ever to be met with. It was a genuine Antonio Stradivari, and nothing could enrage him more than when any one failed to render due homage to this darling of his. However, knowing pretty well what was going to happen, he put it back into its case with a smile.

"Just as he was taking the key out of the lock of his fiddle-case, the Baron, who had left the room for a moment, came in, bearing in both arms (as if it had been a babe going to be baptized) a violin-case, covered with scarlet velvet, and bound with gold cords.

"'I wish to do you an honour, Haak,' he said; 'tonight you shall play on my

oldest, most precious violin. This is a genuine Granuelo. Your Stradivarius, his pupil, is only a bungler in comparison with him. Tartini would never put his fingers on any violin but a Granuelo. So please to collect yourself, and pull yourself together, so that the Granuelo may be pleased to allow itself to unfold all the gloriousness which dwells within it.'

"The Baron opened the violin-case, and I beheld an instrument whose build bore witness to its immense antiquity. Beside it lay a most marvellous-looking bow, whose exaggerated curvature seemed to indicate rather that it was intended for shooting arrows from than for bringing tone out of violin strings. With solemn carefulness the Baron took the instrument out of its case and handed it to my master, who received it with equal solemnity.

"'I'm not going to give you the bow,' said the Baron, tapping my master on the shoulder with a pleasant smile, 'you haven't the slightest idea how to manage it; and that is why you will never, in all your life, attain to a proper style of bowing.

"'This was the sort of bow,' continued the Baron, taking it from the case, and contemplating it with a gleaming glance of inspiration, 'which the grand, immortal Tartini made use of; and now that he is gone there are only two of his pupils left in the whole wide world who were fortunate enough to possess themselves of the secret of his magnificent, marrowy, toneful manner of bowing, which affects the whole being of people, and can only be accomplished with a bow of this kind. One of those pupils is Narbini, who is now an old man of seventy, capable only of inward music; and the other, as I think, gentlemen, you are aware, is myself. Consequently, I am now the sole individual in whom the true art of violin-playing survives; and my zealous endeavours will, I trust and believe, not fail to perpetuate that art which found its creator in Tartini. However, let us set to work, gentlemen.'

"The Haydn quartettes were then played through, and with a degree of perfection which, it need not be said, left nothing to be desired. The Baron sat with closed eyes, swaying backwards and forwards; occasionally he would get up from his chair, go closer to the players, peer at the music with wrinkled brow, and then go very gently back to his seat, lean his head on his hand, sigh, groan--

"'Stop, stop!' he cried suddenly at a melodious passage in one of the adagios, 'by all the gods! that was Tartini-ish melody, or I know nothing about it. Play it again, please.'

"And the masters, smiling, repeated the passage, with a more sostenuto and cantabile effect of bowing, while the Baron wept and sobbed like a child.

"When the quartettes were ended, the Baron said, 'A heavenly fellow, this Haydn; he knows how to touch the heart; but he has not an idea of writing for the violin. Perhaps he does not wish to do it; for if he did, and wrote in the only true manner, as Tartini did, you would never be able to play it.'

"It was now my turn to play some variations which Haak had written for me.

"The Baron stood close behind me, looking at the notes. You may imagine the agitation with which I commenced, having this severe critic at my elbow. Presently, however, a stirring allegro movement carried me away. I forgot all about the Baron, and managed to move about with all freedom within the sphere of skill and power which stood then at my command.

"When I had finished, the Baron patted me on the shoulder, and said, 'You may stick to the violin, my son; but as yet you have not an idea of bowing or expression, probably because, up to this time, you haven't had a proper master.'

"We then sat down to table, in another room, where there was a repast laid out and served, which, especially as regarded the rare and marvellous wines, was to be characterized as very extravagant. The musicians dipped deeply into everything set before them. The talk, which waxed more and more animated, was

almost entirely on the subject of music. The Baron emitted complete treasures of the most marvellous information. His opinions and views, most keen and penetrating, proved him to be not only the most instructed of connoisseurs, but also the most accomplished, talented, and tasteful of artists. What was specially striking to me was a sort of portrait gallery of violinists which he went through to us in description. So much of it as I remember I will tell you.

"'Corelli,' said the Baron, 'was the first to break out the path. His compositions can only be played in the real Tartini manner, and that is sufficient to prove how well he knew the true art of violin-playing. Pugnani is a passable player. He has tone, and plenty of brains, but, although he has a tolerable amount of appogiamento, his bowing is too feeble altogether. What have not people told me of Geminiani! and yet, when I heard him last, some thirty years ago in Paris, he played like a somnambulist striding about in a dream, and one felt as if one were in a dream one's self. It was all mere tempo rubato; no sort of style or delivery. That infernal tempo rubato is the ruin of the very best players; they neglect their bowing over it. I played him my sonatas; he saw his error, and asked me to give him some lessons, which I was very glad to do. But he was too far sunk into his old method. He had grown too old in it--he was ninety-one. May God forgive Giardini, and not punish him for it in eternity; but he it was who first ate the apple of the tree of knowledge, and brought sin upon all subsequent players. He was the first of your tremolandoists and flourishers. All he thinks about is his left hand, and those fingers of his that have the power of jumping hither and thither. He has no idea of the important fact that it is in the *right* hand that the soul of melody lies--that from every throb of its pulses stream forth the powers that awaken the feelings of the heart. Oh! that every one of those "flourishers" had a stout old Jomelli at his elbow to rouse him out of his craziness by a good sound box on the ear--as Jomelli actually did--when Giardini, in his presence, spoilt a glorious passage of melody by jumps, trills, and "mordenti." Lulli, too, conducts himself in a preposterous way. He is one of your damnable perpetrators of jumps. An adagio he can't play, and his sole quality is that for which ignoramuses, without sense or understanding, admire him with their stupid mouths agape. I say it again: with Narbini and me will die the true art of the violinist. Young Viotti is a fine fellow, full of promise. He is indebted to me for what he knows, for he was a most industrious pupil of mine. But what does it all amount to? No endurance! No patience! He wouldn't go on studying with me. Now, Kreutzer I still hope to get hold of and make something of. He has availed himself assiduously of my lessons, and will again, when I get back to Paris. That concerto of mine which you are studying, Haak, he played not at all badly a short time since. But he hasn't the hand, yet, to wield my bow. Giarnovichi shall never cross my doorstep again. There's a stupid coxcomb for you! A fellow who has the effrontery to turn up his nose at the grand Tartini--master of all masters--and despises my lessons. What I should like to know is, what that boy Rhode will turn out after he has had lessons from me? He promises well, and I have an idea that he will master my bow.'

"The Baron turned to me, saying, 'He is about your age, little son, but of a more serious, deep-thoughted nature. You appear to me--don't take it ill if I say so--to be a little bit of a--well, I mean, you lack purpose. However, no matter. Now you, dear Haak, I have great hopes of. Since I have been teaching you you have become quite another man. Keep up your unresting zeal and industry. Never waste a single hour. You know that is what distresses me.'

"I was turned to stone with amazement and admiration at what I heard. I could not wait the necessary time to ask the concert-meister if it was all true---if the Baron was, really, the greatest violinist of the day--if he, my master himself, did actually take lessons from him.

"'Undoubtedly,' Haak said, 'he had no hesitation in accepting the profitable instruction which the Baron placed at his disposal; and he told me that I should do well if I went, some morning, to him myself, and asked him to let me have some lessons from him too.'

"To all the questions which I then put to him concerning the Baron and his artistic talent, Haak would give me no direct reply, but kept on telling me that I ought to do as he advised me, and I should then find out all about it myself.

"The peculiar smile which passed over Haak's face as he said this did not escape me. I did not understand the meaning of it, and it excited my curiosity to the highest point.

"When I bashfully made my request to the Baron, assuring him that the most unbounded zeal, the most glowing enthusiasm for my art inspired me, he looked at me seriously and fixedly. But soon his face put on an expression of the most benevolent kindliness. 'Little son! little son!' he said, 'that you have betaken yourself to me--the only real violin-player now living--proves that you possess the true artistic spirit, and that the ideal of the genuine violin-player has come into existence within you. I should be delighted to give you lessons; but the time--the time! where to find it? Haak occupies me a great deal, and then I have got this young man Durand here just now, he wants to be heard in public, and knows that he need not try that till he has had a good course of lessons from me. However, wait a moment, between breakfast and lunch, or at lunch time--yes. I have still an hour at liberty then. Little son, come to me at twelve exactly every day, and I will fiddle with you for an hour until one; then Durand comes.'

"You can imagine how I hastened, with a throbbing heart, to the Baron's the next forenoon at the appointed hour.

"He would not let me play a single note on my own violin, which I had brought with me, but placed in my hands a very old instrument by Antonio Amati. Never had I had any experience of a violin like this. The celestial tone which streamed from its strings altogether inspired me. I let myself go, and abandoned myself to a stream of ingenious 'passages,' suffering the river of music to surge and swell, higher and higher, in mighty waves and billows of sound, and then die down and expire in murmuring whispers. My own belief is that I was playing exceedingly well; much better than I often did afterwards.

"When I had done, the Baron shook his head impatiently, and said: 'My little son! my little son! you must forget all that. In the first place, you hold your bow most abominably,' and he showed to me, practically, how the bow ought to be held, according to the manner of Tartini. I thought I should never be able to bring out a single tone whilst so holding it; but great was my astonishment when I found that, on repeating my 'passages' at the Baron's desire, the amazing advantage of holding the bow as he told me to hold it was strikingly manifest, after two or three seconds.

"'Good!' said the Baron. 'Little son, let us begin the lesson. Commence upon the note G, above the line, and hold out that note as long as you can possibly hold it. Economize your bow; make the very utmost of it that you possibly can. What the breath is to the singer, the bow is to the violinist.'

"I did as I was directed, and was greatly delighted to find that, in this manner of dealing with matters, I was enabled to bring out a tone of exceptional powerfulness; to swell it out to a marvellous fortissimo, and make it die down to a very soft pianissimo, with an excessively long stroke of the bow.

"'You see, do you not, little son?' cried the Baron. 'You can play all kinds of "passages," jumps, and new-fangled nonsense of that sort, but you can't properly sustain a note as it ought to be done.'

"He took the instrument from my hands, and laid the bow across the strings, near the bridge--and the simple truth is, that words completely fail me to describe to you what then came to pass.

"Laying that trembling bow of his close to the bridge, he went sliding with it up and down on the strings, as it quivered in his hands, jarringly, whistlingly,

squeakingly, mewingly; the tone he produced was to be likened to that of some old woman, with spectacles on nose, vainly attempting to hit the tune of a hymn.

"And all the time he raised enraptured eyes to heaven, like a man lost in the most celestial blissfulness; and when at length he left off scraping with his bow up and down between the bridge and the finger-board, and laid the violin down, his eyes were shining, and he said, in deep emotion: 'That is tone! that is tone!'

"I felt in a most extraordinary condition: although the inward impulse to laugh was present with me, it was killed by the aspect of that venerable man, glorified by his inspiration. At the same time the whole affair had a most eery effect upon me, and I felt very much affected by it, and could not utter a syllable.

"'Don't you find, little son,' asked the Baron, 'that that goes to your heart? Had you ever any idea that such magic could be conjured out of that little thing there, with its four simple strings? Well, well! take a glass of wine, little son.' He poured me out a glass of Madeira. I had to drink it, and also to take some of the pastry and cakes which were upon the table. Just then the clock struck one.

"'This will have to do for to-day,' said the Baron. 'Go, go, little son! Here, here! put that in your pocket.'

"And he placed in my hand a little paper packet, in which I found a beautiful, shining ducat.

"In my amazement I ran to the concert-meister and told him all that had happened. He, however, laughed aloud, and said: 'Now you know all about our Baron and his violin lessons. He looks upon you as a mere beginner, so that you only get a ducat per lesson; but as the mastership, in his opinion, increases, so does the pay. He gives me a Louis, and I think Durand gets a couple of ducats.'

"I could not help expressing my opinion that it was anything but an honourable style of going to work, to mystify this kind gentleman in such a fashion, and pocket his money into the bargain.

"'You ought to be told,' said Haak, 'that his whole enjoyment consists in giving lessons--in the way which you now comprehend; and that if I and the other artists were to show any symptoms of under-valuing him or his lessons, he would proclaim to the whole artistic world, in which he is looked upon as a most competent and valuable critic, that we were nothing but a set of wretched scrapers; that, in fact, apart from his craze of being a marvellous player, the Baron is a man whose vast knowledge of music, and most cultivated judgment thereon, are matters from which even a master can derive great benefit. So judge for yourself whether I am to be blamed if I hold on to him, and now and then pocket a few of his Louis. I advise you to go to him as often as you can. Don't listen to the cracky nonsense he talks about his own execution; but do listen to, and profit by, what this man--who is most exceptionally versed in the musical art, and has immense and valuable experience in it--has to say about it. It will be greatly to your advantage to do so.'

"I took his advice; but it was often hard to repress laughter when the Baron would tap about with his fingers upon the belly of the fiddle instead of on the finger-board, stroking his bow diagonally over the strings the while, and asseverating that he was playing the most beautiful of all Tartini's solos, and that he was the only person in the world who could play it.

"But soon he would lay the violin down, and pour forth sayings which enriched me with the profoundest knowledge, and enflamed my heart towards the most glorious of all arts.

"If I then played something from one of his concertos with my utmost *verve*, and happened to interpret this or the other passage of it better than usual, the Baron would look round with a smile of complacence, or of pride, and say: 'The boy has to thank me for that; me, pupil of the great Tartini!'

"Thus, you perceive, I derived both profit and pleasure from the Baron's lessons; and from his ducats into the bargain."

"Well, really," said Theodore, laughing, "I should think that the greater part of the virtuosos of the present day--although they do consider themselves far beyond any description of instruction or advice--would be glad enough to have a few lessons such as the Baron von S---- was in the habit of giving."

"I render thanks to Heaven," said Vincenz, "that this meeting of our Club has ended so happily. I never dared to hope that it would; and I would fain entreat my worthy Serapion Brethren to see that proper measures are taken, in future, that there be a due alternation between the terrifying and the entertaining, which on this occasion has by no means been the case."

"This admonition of yours," Ottmar said, "is right and proper; but it rested with yourself to rectify the error into which we have fallen to-night by contributing something of your own, in your special style of humour."

"The truth is," said Lothair, "that you, my very fine fellow--and at the same time my very lazy-as-to-writing fellow--have never yet paid your entrance-money into the Serapion Guild, and the only mode of payment is a Serapiontic story."

"Hush!" cried Vincenz. "You don't know what has come glowing forth from my heart, and is nestling in this breast-pocket of mine here; a quite remarkable little creature of a story, which I specially commend to the favour of our Lothair. I should have read it to you to-night. But don't you see the landlord's pale face peeping in at the window every now and then, just in the style in which the uncle Kuehleborn, in Fouqué's 'Undine,' used to 'keek' in at the window of the fisherman's hut. Haven't you noticed the irritated 'Oh, Jemini!' countenance of the waiter? Was there not written on his forehead, legibly and distinctly (when he snuffed the candles), 'Are you going to sit here for ever? Are you never going to let an honest man get to his well-earned bed?' Those people are right. It is past twelve: our parting hour has struck some time ago."

The friends agreed to have another Serapiontic meeting at an early date, and dispersed.

SECTION VII.

The dreary late autumn had arrived, and Theodore was sitting in his room beside the crackling fire, waiting for the worthy Serapion Brethren, who came dropping in, one by one, at the appointed hour.

"What diabolical weather!" cried Cyprian, entering the last. "In spite of my cloak I am nearly wet through, and a gust of wind all but carried away my hat."

"And it won't be better very soon," said Ottmar; "for our meteorologist, who lives in the same street with me, has prognosticated very fine weather at the end of this autumn."

"Right; you are perfectly right, my friend Ottmar," Vincenz said. "Whenever our great prophet consoles his neighbours with the announcement that the winter is not going to be at all severe, but principally of a southerly character, everybody rushes away in alarm, and buys all the wood he can cram into his cellar. The weather-prophet is a wise and highly-gifted man, whom we can thoroughly trust, so long as we expect the exact reverse of what he predicts."

"Those autumnal storms always make me thoroughly wretched," said Sylvester; "I always feel depressed and ill whilst they are going on; and I think you feel the

same, Theodore."

"Oh, indeed I do," answered Theodore; "this sort of weather always makes----"

"Splendid!--delightful beginning of a meeting of the Serapion Club!" intercalated Lothair. "We set to work to discuss the weather, like a parcel of old women round the coffee-table."

"I don't see," said Ottmar, "why we should not talk about the weather; the only reason you can object to it is that talking about it seems to be an observance of a kind of rather slovenly old custom, which has resulted from a necessity to say something or other when there happens to be nothing else in people's minds to talk about. What I think is that a few words about the weather and the wind make a very good beginning of a conversation, whatsoever its nature may turn out to be, and that the very universality of the applicability of this as the beginning of a conversation prove how natural it really is."

"As far as I am concerned," said Theodore, "I don't think it matters a farthing how a conversation commences. But there is one thing certain--that, if one wants to make some very striking and clever beginning, that is enough to kill all the freedom and unconstraint which may be termed the very soul of conversation. I know a young man--I think he is known to you all, as well--who is by no means deficient in that mobility of intellect which is absolutely necessary for good conversation; but he is so tormented, particularly when ladies are present, by that kind of eagerness to burst out with something brilliant and striking at the very outset of a talk, that he walks restlessly about the room; makes the most extraordinary faces in the keenness of his inward torment; opens his lips, and--cannot manage to utter a syllable."

"Cease, cease, base wretch!" Cyprian cried, with comic pathos, "do not, with murderous hand, tear open wounds which are barely healed. He is speaking of me," he continued, laughing, "and he doesn't know that, a few weeks ago, when I insisted on restraining that tendency of mine, which I see the absurdity of, and falling into a conversation in the ordinary style of other people, I had to pay for it by complete annihilation. I prefer telling you all about this myself to letting Ottmar do it, and add witty comments of his own. At a tea-party where Ottmar and I were, there was present a certain pretty and clever lady, as to whom you are in the habit of maintaining that she interests me more than is right and proper. I went to talk to her, and I admit that I was a little at a loss how exactly to begin, and she was wicked enough to gaze at me with questioning eyes. I burst out with 'The new moon has brought a nice change of weather.' She answered, very quietly: 'Oh, are you writing the Almanac this season?'"

The friends laughed heartily.

"On the other hand," said Ottmar, "I know another young man--and you all know him--who, particularly with ladies, is never at a loss for the first word of a talk; in fact, my belief is that he has severely thought out, in private, a regular system, of the most comprehensive kind, as to conversation with ladies, which is by no means likely ever to find him left in the lurch. For instance, one of his dodges is to go to the prettiest--one who scarce ventures to dip a sweet biscuit in her tea; who, at the utmost, whispers into the ear of her who is sitting next to her: 'It is very warm, dear;' to which the latter answers with equal softness into her ear: 'Dreadfully, my love;' whose communication goeth not beyond 'Yea, yea,' and 'Nay, nay,'--to go up to such an one, I say, and, in an artful manner, startle her out of her wits, and thereby so utterly revolutionize her very being, in such a sudden manner, that she seems to herself to be no longer the same person: 'Good heavens! how very pale you are looking!' he cried out, recently, to a pretty creature, as silent as a church, just in the act of beginning a stitch of silver thread at a purse which she was working. The young lady let her work fall on her lap in terror, said she was feeling a little feverish that day. Feverish!--my friend was thoroughly at home on that subject; could talk upon it in the most interesting way, like a man who knows his ground; inquired minutely into all the symptoms; gave

advice, gave warnings,--and behold! there was a delightful, interesting, confidential conversation spun out in a few minutes."

"I am much obliged to you," said Theodore, "for having so carefully observed that talent of mine, and given it its due meed of approval."

The friends laughed again at this.

"There is no doubt," said Sylvester, "that society talk is, altogether, a rather curious thing. The French say that a certain heaviness in our nature always prevents us from hitting the precise tact and tone necessary for it; and they may be right, to a certain extent, but I must declare that the much-belauded *légèreté* and lightsomeness of French Society puts me out of temper, and makes me feel stupid and uncomfortable, and that I cannot look upon those *bon mots* and *calembours* of theirs, which are continually being fired off in all directions, as coming under the class of that 'Society wit' which gives out constantly fresh sparks of new life of conversation. Moreover, that peculiar style of wit to which the genuine French 'wit' belongs is, to me, in the highest degree disagreeable."

"That opinion," said Cyprian, "comes from the very depths of your quiet, friendly spirit, my dearest Sylvester: but you are forgetting that, besides the (generally utterly empty and insipid) *bon mots*, the 'Society wit' of the French is, in a great degree, founded on a mutual contempt of, and jeering and scoffing at, each other (such as at the present time we call 'chaff,' although it is less good-humoured than that), which soon passes the bounds of what we consider courtesy and consideration, and consequently would speedily deprive our intercourse of all pleasure. Then the French have not the very slightest comprehension of that wit whose basis is real humour, and it is almost incomprehensible how often the point of some not very profound, but superficially funny, little story escapes them."

"Don't forget," said Ottmar, "that the point of a story is very often completely untranslatable."

"Or is badly translated," said Vincenz. "It so happens that I just think of a very amusing thing which happened quite recently, and which I will tell you, if you care to hear it."

"Tell us, tell us! delightful fabulist! valued anecdotist!" cried the friends.

"A young man," related Vincenz, "whom nature had endowed with a splendid bass voice, and who had gone upon the operatic stage, was making his first appearance as Sarastro, in the 'Magic Flute.' As he was mounting the car, in which he first comes on, he was seized with such a terrible attack of stage-fright that he trembled and shook--nay, when the car got into motion to come forward, he shrunk into himself, and all the manager's efforts to induce him to reassure himself, and, at all events, stand upright, were useless. Just then it happened that one of the wheels got entangled in the long mantle which Sarastro wears, so that the further he got on to the stage, the more this mantle dragged him backwards; whilst he, struggling against this, and keeping his feet firm, appeared in the centre of the stage with the nether portion of his body projecting forwards, and his head and shoulders held tremendously far back. The audience were immensely pleased at this most regal attitude and appearance of the inexperienced neophyte, and the manager offered him, and concluded with him, an engagement on very liberal terms. Now, this simple little story was being told, lately, in a company where there was a French lady who did not understand a word of German. When everybody laughed, at the end of the story, she wanted to know what the laughter was about, and our worthy D. (who, when he speaks French, gives a most admirable, and very close, imitation of the tones and actions of French people, but is continually at a loss for the words) undertook to translate the story to her. When he came to the wheel which had got entangled with Sarastro's cloak, constraining him to his regal attitude, he called it 'Le rat,' instead of 'La roue.' The French lady's brow clouded, her eyebrows drew together, and in her face was plainly to be read the terror which the story had

produced in her, whereto conduced the circumstance that D. had 'let on' upon his face the full power of tragi-comic muscular play which it was capable of. When, at the end, we all laughed more than before at this amusing misunderstanding (which we all took good care not to explain), she murmured to herself, 'Ah! les barbares!' The good lady not unnaturally looked upon us as barbarians for thinking it so amusing that an abominable rat should have frightened the poor young man almost to death, at the very commencement of his stage-career, by holding on to his cloak."

When the friends had done laughing, Vincenz said: "Suppose we now bid adieu to the subject of French conversation, with all its *bon mots*, *calembours*, and other ingredients, and come to the conclusion that it really is an immense pleasure when, amongst intellectual Germans, a conversation, inspired by their humour, rushes up skyward like a coruscating firework, in a thousand hissing light-balls, crackling serpents, and lightning-like rockets."

"But it must be remembered," said Theodore, "that this pleasure is possible only when the friends in question, besides being intellectual and endowed with humour, possess the talent not only of talking, but of listening, the principal ingredient of real conversation."

"Of course," said Lothair; "those people who constitute themselves 'spokesmen' destroy all conversation--and so, in a lesser degree, do the 'witty' folk, who go from one company to another with anecdotes, crammed full of all sorts of shallow sayings; a kind of self-constituted 'Society clowns.' I knew a man who, being clever and witty, and at the same time a terribly talkative fellow, was invited everywhere to amuse the company; so that, the moment he came into a room, everybody looked in his face, waiting till he came out with something witty. The wretch was compelled to put himself to the torture, in order to fulfil the expectations entertained of him as well as he could, so that he could not avoid soon becoming flat and commonplace; and then he was thrown aside by every one, like a used-up utensil. He now creeps about, spiritless and sad, and seems to be like that dandy in Abener's 'Dream of Departed Souls,' who, brilliant as he was in this life, is sorrowful and valueless in the other, because, on his sudden and unexpected departure, he left behind him his snuff-box of Spanish snuff, which was an integral part of him."

"Then, too," said Ottmar, "there are certain extraordinary people who, when entertaining company, keep up an unceasing stream of talk; not from conceit in themselves, but from a strange, mistaken well-meaningness, for fear that people shouldn't be enjoying themselves; and keep asking if people are not 'finding it dull,' and so forth, thereby nipping every description of enjoyment in the bud in a moment."'

"That is the very surest way to weary people," said Theodore, "and I once saw it employed with the most brilliant success by my old humourist of an uncle, who, I think, from what I have told you of him, you know pretty intimately by this time. An old schoolfellow of his had turned up--a man who was utterly tedious and unendurably wearisome in all his works and ways--and he came to my uncle's house every forenoon, disturbed him at his work, worried him to death, and then sat down to dinner without being invited. My uncle was grumpy, snappish, silent, giving his visitor most unmistakably to understand that his calls were anything but a pleasure to him; but it was all of no use. Once, when the old gentleman was complaining to me (in strong enough language, as his manner was) on the subject of this schoolfellow, I said I thought he should simply show him the door and have done with it. 'That wouldn't do, boy,' said my uncle, puckering his face into a rather pleased smile. 'You see, he is an old schoolfellow of mine, after all; but there is another way of getting rid of him which I shall try; and that will do it.' I was not a little surprised when, the next morning, my uncle received the schoolfellow with open arms and talked to him unceasingly, saying how delighted he was to see him, and go back over the old days with him. All the old school-day stories which the schoolfellow was incessantly in the habit of repeating, and re-

repeating, till they became intolerable to listen to, now poured from my uncle's lips in a resistless cataract, no that the visitor could not escape them. And all the while my uncle kept asking him, 'What is the matter with you to-day? You don't seem happy. You are so monosyllabic. Do be jolly! Let us have a regular feast of old stories to-day.' But the moment the schoolfellow opened his lips to speak my uncle would cut him short with some interminable tale. At last the affair became so unendurable to him that he wanted to cut and run. But my uncle so pressed him to stay to lunch and dinner, that, unable to resist the temptation of the good dishes, and better wine, he did stay. But scarce had he swallowed a mouthful of soup when my uncle, in extreme indignation, cried, 'What in the devil's name is this infernal mess? Don't touch any more of it, brother, I beg you; there's something better to come. Take those plates away, John!' Like a flash of lightning the plate was swept away from under the school-friend's nose. It was the same thing with all the dishes and courses, though they were of a nature sufficiently to excite the appetite, till the 'something better to come' resolved itself into Cheshire cheese, which of all cheeses the school-friend hated the most, although he disliked all cheese. From an apparently ardent endeavour to set before him an unusually good dinner he had not been suffered to swallow two mouthfuls; and it was much the same with the wine. Scarce had he put a glass to his lips when my uncle cried, 'Old fellow, you're making a wry face. Quite right, that isn't wine, it's vinegar. John, a better tap!' And one kind after another came, French wines, Rhine wines, and still the cry was, 'You don't care about that wine,' &c., till, when the Cheshire cheese put the finishing stroke on things, the school-friend jumped up from his chair in a fury. 'Dear old friend!' said my uncle in the kindliest of tones, 'you are not at all like your usual self. Come, as we are together here, let us crack a bottle of the real old "care-killer."' The school-friend plumped into his chair again. The hundred years' old Rhine wine pearled glorious and clear in the two glasses which my uncle filled to the brim. 'The devil,' he cried, holding his glass to the light, 'this wine has got muddy, on my hands. Don't you see? No, no; I can't set that before anybody,' and he swallowed the contents of both glasses himself, with evident delight. The school-friend popped up again, and plumped into his chair once more on my uncle's crying, 'John, Tokay!' The Tokay was brought, my uncle poured it out, and handed the schoolfellow a glass, saying, 'There, my boy, you shall be satisfied at last, in good earnest. That is nectar!' But scarce had the school-friend set the glass to his lips when my uncle cried, 'Thunder! there's been a cockroach at this bottle.' At this the school-friend, in utter fury, dashed the glass into a thousand pieces against the wall, ran out of the house like one possessed, and never showed his face across the threshold again."

"With all respect for your uncle's grim humour," said Sylvester, "I think there was rather a systematic perseverance in the course of mystification involved in such a process of getting rid of a troublesome person. I should have much preferred to show him the door and have done with it; though I admit that it was quite according to your uncle's peculiar vein of humour to prearrange a theatrical scene of this sort in place of the perhaps troublesome and unpleasant consequences which might have arisen if he had kicked him out. I can vividly picture to myself the old parasite as he suffered the torments of Tantalus, as your uncle kept continually awakening fresh hopes in his mind and instantly dashing them to the ground; and how, at last, utter desperation took possession of him."

"You can introduce the scene into your next comedy," said Theodore.

"It reminds me," said Vincenz, "of that delightful meal in Katzenberger's *Badereise*, and of the poor exciseman who has almost to choke himself with the bites of food which are slid to him over the 'Trumpeter's muscle,' the Buccinator, although that scene would not be of much service to Sylvester for a new piece."

"The great Kazenberger," said Theodore, "whom women do not like on account of the robustness of his cynicism, I formerly knew very well. He was intimate with my uncle, and I could, at some future time, tell you many delightful things concerning him."

Cyprian had been sitting in profound thought, and seemed to have been scarcely attending to what the others had been saying. Theodore tried to arouse his attention and direct it to the hot punch which he had brewed as the best corrective of the evil influence of the weather.

"Beyond a doubt," said Cyprian, "this is the germ of insanity, if it is not actually insanity itself."

The friends looked questionably at each other.

"Ha!" cried Cyprian, getting up from his chair and looking round him with a smile, "I find I have spoken out, aloud, the conclusion of the mental process which has been going on within me in silence. After I have emptied this glass of punch and duly lauded Theodore's art of preparing that liquid after its mystic proportions, and due relations of the hot, strong and sweet, I will simply point out that there is a certain amount of insanity, a certain dose of crackiness, so deeply rooted in human nature, that there is no better mode of getting at the knowledge of it than by carefully studying it in those madmen and eccentrics whom we by no means have to go to madhouses to come across, but whom we may meet with every hour of the day in our daily course; and, in fact, best of all in the study of our own selves, in each of whom these is present a sufficient quantum of that 'precipitate resulting from the chemical process of life.'"

"What has brought you back to the subject of insanity and the insane?" asked Lothair, in a tone of vexation.

"Do not lose your temper, dear Lothair," said Cyprian, "we were talking on the subject of society conversation; and then I thought of two mutually antagonistic classes of characters which are often fatal to social talking. There are people who find it impossible to get away from ideas which have come to occupy their minds; who go on repeating the same things over and over again, for hours, no matter what turn the conversation may have taken. All efforts to carry them along with the stream of the conversation are vain; when one at last flatters oneself that one has got them into the current of the talk, lo and behold, they return *à leurs moutons* again, just as before, and consequently dam up the beautiful, rushing stream of conversation. In contradistinction to them are those who forget one second what they said in the immediately preceding one; who ask a question, and, without waiting for an answer, introduce something completely irrelevant and heterogeneous; to whom everything suggests everything else, and consequently nothing which has any connection with the subject of the talk--who, in a few words, throw together a many-tinted lumber of ideas in which nothing that can be called distinct is discoverable. Those latter destroy everything like agreeable conversation and drive us to a state of despair, and the former produce intolerable tedium and annoyance. But, don't you think there lies in those people the germ of real insanity in the one case, and in the other of *folie*, whose character is very much, if not exactly, what the psychological doctors term 'looseness' or 'incoherence' of ideas?"

"There is no doubt," said Theodore, "that I should like to say a great deal concerning the art of *relating* in society, for there is much which is mysterious about it, depending, as it does, on place, time, and individual relationships, and difficult to be ranged under special heads. But it seems to me that this matter might carry us too far, and be opposed to the real tendency of the Serapion Club."

"Most certainly," said Lothair. "We want to tranquillise ourselves with the thought that we--neither madmen nor fools--are, on the contrary, the most delightful companions to each other; who not only can talk, but can listen; more than that, each of us can listen quite patiently when another reads aloud, and that is saying a good deal. Friend Ottmar told me a day or two ago that he had written a story in which the celebrated poet-painter Salvator Rosa played a leading part. I hope he will read it to us now."

"I am a little afraid," said Ottmar, as he took the manuscript from his pocket,

"that you won't think my story Serapiontic. I had it in mind to imitate that ease and genial liberty of breadth which predominates in the 'Novelli' of the old Italians, particularly of Boccaccio; and over this endeavour I acknowledge that I have grown prolix. Also you will say, with justice, that it is only here and there that I have hit upon the true 'Novella' tone--perhaps only in the headings of the chapters. After this noble and candid confession I am sure you will not deal too hardly with me, but think chiefly of anything which you may find entertaining and lively."

"What prefaces!" cried Lothair. "An unnecessary *Capitatio Benevolentiae*; read us your Novella, my good friend Ottmar, and if you succeed in vividly portraying to us your Salvator Rosa in verisimilitude before our eyes, we will recognise you as a true Serapion brother, and leave everything else to the grumbling, fault-finding critics. Shall it not be so, my eminent Serapion Brethren?"

The friends acquiesced, and Ottmar began.

SIGNOR FORMICA.

A NOVELLA.

The renowned painter, Salvator Rosa, comes to Rome, and is attacked by a dangerous malady.--What happened to him during this malady.

People of renown generally have much evil spoken of them, whether truthfully or otherwise, and this was the case with the doughty painter Salvator Rosa, whose vivid, living pictures you, dear reader, have certainly never looked upon without a most special and heartfelt enjoyment.

When his fame had pervaded and resounded through Rome, Naples, Tuscany, nay, all Italy; when other painters, if they would please, were obliged to imitate his peculiar style--just then, malignant men, envious of him, invented all sorts of wicked reports concerning him, with the view of casting foul spots of shadow upon the shining auriole of his artistic fame. Salvator, they said, had, at an earlier time of his life, belonged to a band of robbers, and it was to his experiences at that time that he was indebted for all the wild, gloomy, strangely-attired figures which he introduced into his pictures, just as he copied into his landscape those darksome deserts, compounded of lonesomeness, mystery, and terror--the *Selve Selvagge* of Dante--where he had been driven to lurk. The worst accusation brought against him was that he had been involved in that terrible, bloody conspiracy which "Mas' Aniello" of evil fame had set afoot in Naples. People told all about that, with the minutest details.

Aniello Falcone, the battle-painter (as he was called), blazed up in fury and bloodthirsty revenge when the Spanish soldiers killed one of his relations in a skirmish. On the spot he collected together a crowd of desperate and foolhardy young men, principally painters, provided them with arms, and styled them "the death-company"; and, in verity, this band spread abroad a full measure of the terror and alarm which its name indicated. Those young men pervaded Naples, in troop form, all day long, killing every Spaniard they came across. More than this, they stormed their way into all the sacred places of sanctuary, and there, without compunction, murdered their wretched enemies who had taken refuge there, driven by fear of death. At night they betook themselves to their chief, the mad, bloodthirsty Mas' Aniello, and they painted pictures of him by torchlight, so that in a short time hundreds of those pictures of him were spread about Naples and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Now it was said that Salvator Rosa had been a member of this band, robbing and murdering all day, but painting with equal assiduity all night. What a celebrated art-critic--Taillasson, I think--said of our master is true: "His works

bear the impress of a wild haughtiness and arrogance, of a bizarre energy, of the ideas and of their execution. Nature displays herself to him not in the lovely peacefulness of green meadows, flowery fields, perfumed groves, murmuring streams, but in the awfulness of mighty up-towering cliffs, or sea-coasts, and wild, inhospitable forests; the voice to which he listens is not the whispering of the evening breeze, or the rustling of the leaves, but the roar of the hurricane, the thunder of the cataract. When we look at his deserts and the people of strange, wild appearance, who, sometimes singly, sometimes in troops, prowl about them, the weirdest fancies come to us of their own accord. Here there happened a terrible murder, there the bleeding corpse was thrown hurriedly over the cliff, &c., &c."

Now this may all be the case, and although Taillasson may not be far wrong when he says that Salvator's "Plato," and even his "St. John in the Wilderness announcing the Birth of the Saviour," look just the least little bit like brigands, still it is unfair to base any conclusions drawn from the works upon the painter himself, and to suppose that, though he represents the wild and the terrible in such perfection, he must have been a wild and terrible person himself. He who talks most of the sword often wields it the worst; he who so feels in his heart the terror of bloody deeds that he is able to call them into existence with palette, pencil or pen, may be the least capable of practising them. Enough! of all the wicked calumnies which would represent the doughty Salvator to have been a remorseless robber and murderer, I do not believe a single word, and I hope you, dear reader, maybe of the same opinion, or I should have to cherish a certain amount of doubt whether you would quite believe what I am going to tell you about him.

For--as I hope--my Salvator will appear to you as a man burning and coruscating with life and fire, but also endowed with the most charming and delightful nature, and often capable of controlling that bitter irony which--in him, as in all men of depth of character--takes form of itself from observation of life. Moreover, it is known that Salvator was as good a poet and musician as a painter, his inward genius displaying itself in rays thrown in various directions. I repeat that I have no belief in his having had anything to do with the crimes of Mas' Aniello; I rather hold to the opinion that he was driven from Naples to Rome by the terror of the time, and arrived there as a fugitive at the very time of Mas' Aniello's fall.

There was nothing very remarkable about his dress, and, with a little purse containing a few zecchini in his pocket, he slipped in at the gate just as night was falling. Without exactly knowing how, he came to the Piazza Navoni, where, in happier days, he had formerly lived in a fine house close to the Palazzo Pamphili. Looking up at the great shining windows, glittering and sparkling in the moonbeams, he cried, with some humour, "Ha! it will cost many a canvass ere I can establish my studio there again." Just as he said so he suddenly felt as if paralysed in all his limbs, and, at the same time, feeble and powerless in a manner which he had never before experienced in all his life. As he sank down on the stone steps of the portico of the house he murmured between his teeth, "Shall I ever want canvasses? It seems to me that *I* have done with them."

A cold, cutting night-wind was blowing through the streets; Salvator felt he must try and get a shelter. He rose with difficulty, tottered painfully forward, reached the Corso, and turned into Strada Vergognona. There he stopped before a small house, only two windows wide, where lived a widow with two daughters. They had taken him as a lodger for a small sum when first he came to Rome, known and cared for by nobody, and he hoped he would find a lodging with them now suited to his reduced circumstances.

He knocked familiarly at the door, and called his name in at it time after time. At last he heard the old woman rousing herself with difficulty from sleep. She came, dragging along her slippers, to the window, scolding violently at the scoundrel who was disturbing her in the middle of the night--her house not being

an inn, &c. Then it took a deal of up and down talking ere she recognised her former lodger by his voice; and on Salvator's complaining that he had been obliged to flee from Naples and could find no roof to cover him in Rome, she cried out, "Ah! Christ and all the saints! Is it you, Signor Salvator? Your room upstairs, looking upon the courtyard, is empty still, and the old fig-tree has stretched its leaves and branches right into the window, so that you can sit and work as if you were in a beautiful cool arbour. Ah! how delighted my girls will be that you are here again, Signor Salvator. But I must tell you Margerita has grown a big girl, and a very *pretty* girl--it won't do to take her on your knee now! Your cat, only fancy, died three months ago--a fish bone stuck in its throat. Aye, aye, poor thing! the grave is the common lot. And what do you think? Our fat neighbour woman--she whom you so often laughed at and drew the funny caricatures of--she has gone and got married to that young lad, Signor Luigi. Well, well! *Nozze e magistrati sono da dio destinati!* Marriages are made in heaven, they say."

"But, Signora Caterina," interrupted Salvator, "I implore you by all the saints let me in to begin with, and then tell all about your fig-tree, your daughters, the kitten, and the fat woman. I am dying of cold and weariness."

"Now, just see how impatient he is!" cried the old woman. "*Chi va piano va sano; chi va presto muore lesto.* The more haste the less speed, is what I always say. But you're tired, you're shivering; so quick with the key, quick with the key."

Before getting hold of the key, however, she had to awaken her daughters, and then slowly, slowly strike a light. Ultimately she opened the door to the exhausted Salvator; but as soon as he crossed the threshold he fell down like a dead man, overcome by exhaustion and illness. Fortunately the widow's son, who lived at Tivoli, happened to have just come home, and he was at once turned out of his bed, which he willingly gave up to this sick family friend.

The old lady had a great fondness for Salvator, rated him, as regarded his art, above all the painters in the world, and had the utmost delight in everything he did. Therefore she was much distressed at his deplorable condition, and wanted to run off at once to the neighbouring monastery and bring her own Father Confessor, that he might do battle with the powers of evil at once, with consecrated tapers, or some powerful amulet or other. But the son thought it would be better almost to send for a good doctor, and he set off on the instant to the Piazza di Spagna, where he knew the celebrated doctor, Splendiano Accoramboni, lived. As soon as he heard that the great painter Salvator Rosa was lying sick in Strada Vergognona, he prepared to pay him a professional visit. Salvator was lying unconscious in the most violent fever. The old woman had hung up one or two images of saints over his bed, and was praying fervently. The daughters, bathed in tears, were trying to get him now and then to swallow a few drops of the cooling lemonade which they had made, whilst the son, who had taken his station at the bed-head, wiped the cold perspiration from his brow. In these circumstances the morning had come, when the door opened with much noise, and the celebrated doctor, Signor Splendiano Accoramboni, entered.

If it had not been for the great heart-sorrow over Salvator's mortal sickness, the two girls, petulant and merry as they were, would have laughed loud and long at the doctor's marvellous appearance. As it was, they drew away into corners, frightened and shy. It is worth while to describe the aspect of this extraordinary little fellow as he came into Dame Caterina's in the grey of the morning. Although he had, apparently, given early promise of reaching a most distinguished stature, Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni had not managed to get beyond the altitude of four feet. At the same time he had, in his early years, been of most delicate formation as regarded his members--and, before the head (which had always been somewhat shapeless) had acquired too much increment of matter in the shape of his fat cheeks and his stately double chin--ere the nose had assumed too much of a lateral development, in consequence of being stuffed with Spanish snuff--ere the stomach had assumed too great a rotundity by dint of maccaroni fodder--the dress of an Abbate, which he had worn in those early days, became him very well. He

had a right to be styled a nice little fellow, and the Roman ladies accordingly did speak of him as their *caro puppazetto*.

But now those days were over, and a German painter, who saw him crossing the Piazza di Spagna, said of him, not without reason, that he looked as if some stalwart fellow of six feet high had run away from his own head and it had fallen on to the shoulders of a little marionette Pulcinello, who had now to go about with it as his own. This strange little figure had thrust itself into a great mass of Venetian damask, all over great flowers, made into a dressing-gown, and girt itself about, right under the breast, with a broad leather girdle, in which was stuck a rapier three ells long; and above his snow-white periwig there clung a high-peaked head-dress, not much unlike the obelisk in the Piazza San Pietro. As the periwig went meandering like a tangled web, thick and broad, over his back and shoulders, it might well have been taken for the cocoon out of which the beautiful insect had issued.

The worthy Splendiano Accoramboni glared through his spectacles, first at the sick Salvator, and then on Dame Caterina, whom he drew to one side. "There," he said, in a scarce audible whisper, "lies the great painter Salvator Rosa sick unto death in your house, Dame Caterina, and nothing but my skill can save him! Tell me, though, how long it is since he came to you? Has he plenty of grand, beautiful pictures with him?"

"Ah! dear Signor Dottore," answered the old woman, "this dear boy of mine only came to-night, and, as concerns the pictures, I know nothing about them as yet. But there's a large box downstairs, which he told me, before he got to be unconscious as he is now, to take the greatest care of. I should suppose there is a grand picture in it which he has painted in Naples."

Now this was a fib which Dame Caterina told; but we shall soon see what good reason she had for telling it to the doctor.

"Ah, ah! Yes, yes!" said the doctor, stroking his beard. Then he solemnly strode up as close to the patient as his long rapier, which banged against and entangled itself with the chairs and tables, admitted of his doing, took his hand and felt his pulse, sighing and groaning as he did so in a manner which sounded wonderful enough in the deep silence of reverential awe which prevailed. He then named a hundred and twenty diseases, in Latin and Greek, which Salvator had not, then about the same number which he might possibly have contracted, and ended by saying that although he could not just at that moment exactly name the malady which Salvator was suffering from, he would hit upon a name for it in a short time, and also the proper remedies and treatment for its cure. He then took his departure with the same amount of solemnity with which he had entered, leaving all hands in the due condition of anxiety and alarm. He asked to see Salvator's box downstairs, and Dame Caterina showed him a box, in which were some old clothes of her deceased husband's, and some old boots and shoes. He tapped the box with his hand here and there, saying, with a smile, "We shall see! We shall see!" In an hour or two he came back with a very grand name for what was the matter with Salvator, and several large bottles of a potion with an evil smell, which he directed that the patient should keep on swallowing. That was not such an easy matter, for the patient resisted with might and main, and expressed, as well as he could, his utter abhorrence of this stuff, which seemed to be a brew from the very pit of Acheron. But whether it was that the malady, now that it had got a name, exerted itself more powerfully, or that Splendiano and medicine were working too energetically--enough, with every day and nearly every hour, one might say, Salvator grew weaker and weaker, so that, although Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni asseverated that, the processes of life having come to a complete standstill, he had given the machine an impetus towards renewed activity (as if it had been the pendulum of a clock), all the by-standers doubted of Salvator's recovery, and were disposed to think that the Signor Dottore might, perhaps, have given the pendulum such a rough impulse that it was put out of gear.

But one day it happened that Salvator, who seemed scarcely able to move a

muscle, suddenly got into a paroxysm of tremendous fever, and, regaining strength in an instant, jumped out of bed, seized all the bottles of medicine, and in a fury sent the whole collection flying out of the window. Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni was just in the act to come into the house to pay a visit, and, as Fate would have it, two or three of the phials hit him on the head, and breaking, sent the brown liquid within them flowing in dark streams over his face, his periwig, and his neckerchief. The doctor sprang nimbly into the house, and cried, like a man possessed, "Signor Salvator is off his head! Delirium has evidently set in--nothing can save him. He'll be a dead man in ten minutes. Here with the picture, Dame Caterina; it belongs to me--all I shall get for my services! Here with the picture, I tell you."

But when Dame Caterina opened the box, and Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni saw the old cloaks and the burst and tattered boots and shoes which it contained, his eyes rolled in his head like fire wheels, he gnashed his teeth, stamped with his feet, devoted Salvator, the widow, and all the inmates of the house, to the demons of hell, and bolted out of the door as if discharged from a cannon.

When the paroxysm of excitement was over, Salvator again fell into a deathlike condition, and Dame Caterina thought his last hour was certainly come. So she ran as quickly as she could to the convent, and brought Father Bonifazio to administer the sacraments to the dying man. When Father Bonifazio came, he looked at the patient, said he very well knew the peculiar signs which death imprints upon the face of one whom he is going to carry off; but there was nothing of the sort to be seen on the face of the unconscious Salvator in his faint, and that help was still possible, and he himself would procure or bestow; only Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni, with his Greek names and diabolical phials, must never cross the doorstep again. The good father set to work, and we shall find that he kept his word.

Salvator came to his senses, and it seemed to him that he was lying in a delightful, sweet-smelling arbour, for green branches and leaves were stretching over him. He felt a delightful salutary warmth of life permeating him, only, apparently, his left arm was fettered.

"Where am I?" he cried, in a faint voice. Then a young man of handsome appearance, whom he had not observed before, though he was standing by his bed, fell down on his knees, seized Salvator's right hand, bathing it in tears, and cried over and over again, "Oh, my beloved Signor, my grand master! all is well now! You are saved; you will recover!"

"Well," began Salvator, "but tell me----"

The young man interrupted him, begging him not to talk in his weak condition, and promising to tell him all that had been happening. "You must know, my dear and great master, that you must have been exceedingly ill when you arrived in Naples here; but your condition was not probably very dangerous, and moderate measures, considering the strength of your constitution, would doubtless have set you on your legs again in a short time, if it had not happened, through Carlo's well-meant mischance--as he ran for the nearest doctor at once--that you fell into the clutches of the abominable Pyramid Doctor, who did his very best to put you under the sod."

"The Pyramid Doctor?" said Salvator, laughing most heartily, weak as he was. "Yes, yes; ill as I was, I saw him well enough, the little damasky creature, who condemned me to swallow all that diabolical stuff--hell broth as it was--and had the obelisk of the Piazza San Pietro on the top of his head, which is the reason you call him the Pyramid Doctor."

"Oh, heavens!" cried the young man, laughing loudly too. "Yes, it was Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni who appeared to you in that mysterious high-pointed nightcap of his, in which he gleams out of his window in the Piazza di Spagna every morning like some meteor of evil omen. But it is not on account of the cap

that he is called the Pyramid Doctor; there is a very different reason for that. Doctor Splendiano is very fond of pictures, and has a very fine collection, which he has got together through a peculiar piece of technical practice. He keeps a close and watchful eye upon painters and their illnesses, and particularly he manages to throw his nets over stranger masters. Suppose they have swallowed a little too much macaroni, or taken a cup or two more syracuse than is good for them, he succeeds in throwing his noose over them, and labels them with this or that disease, which he christens by some monstrous name, and then sets to work to cure. As fee he makes them promise him a picture, which, as it is only the strongest constitutions which can resist the powerful drugs he administers, he generally selects from the effects of the deceased, deposited at the Pyramid of Cestius. He takes the best of them, and others into the bargain. The refuse heap at the Pyramid of Cestius is the seedfield of Doctor Splendiano Accoramboni, and he cultivates, dresses, and manures it most assiduously. And that is why he is called the Pyramid Doctor. Now Dame Caterina, with the best intentions, had given the doctor to understand that you had brought a fine picture with you, and you can imagine the ardour with which he set to work to brew potions for you. It was lucky for you that in your paroxysm of fever you threw the stuff at his head, that he left you in a fury, that Dame Caterina sent for Father Bonifazio to administer the sacraments, believing you at death's door. Father Bonifazio knows a great deal about doctoring; he formed a correct opinion as to your condition, sent for me, and----"

"Then you are a doctor too," said Salvator, in a faint, melancholy tone.

"No," answered the young gentleman, while a bright colour came to his cheek, "my dear, renowned master, I am not a doctor like Signor Splendiano Accoramboni; I am a surgeon. I thought I should have sunk into the ground with terror--with joy--when Father Bonifazio told me Salvator Rosa was lying sick to death in Strada Vergognona and requiring my assistance. I hastened here, opened a vein in your left arm, and you were saved. We brought you here to this cool, airy room, where you used to live before. Look around you; there is the easel which you left behind you; there are one or two sketches still, preserved, like holy relics, by Dame Caterina. Your illness has had its back broken. Simple remedies, which Father Bonifazio will give you, and careful nursing will set you on your legs again. And now, permit me once more to kiss this creative hand, which calls forth, as by magic, the most hidden secrets of nature. Permit the poor Antonio Scacciati to allow all his heart to stream forth in delight and fervent gratitude that heaven vouchsafed to him the good fortune to save the life of the glorious and renowned master, Salvator Rosa."

He again knelt, seized Salvator's hand, kissed it, and bedewed it with hot tears as before.

"I cannot tell, dear Antonio," said Salvator, raising himself up a little, "what strange spirit inspires you to exhibit such a profound veneration for me. You say you are a surgeon, and that is a calling which does not usually pair itself readily with art."

"When you have got some strength back, dear master," answered Antonio, "there are many matters lying heavy at my heart which I will tell you of."

"Do so," said Salvator; "place full confidence in me--you may, for I do not know when a man's face went more truly to my very heart than does yours. The more I look at you the more clear it becomes to me that there is a great likeness in your face to that of the heavenly, godlike lad--I mean the Sanzio." Antonio's eyes glowed with flashing fire; he seemed to strive in vain to find words.

Just then Dame Caterina came in with Father Bonifazio, bringing a draught which he had skilfully compounded, and which the sick man took, and relished better than the Acherontic liquids of the Pyramid Doctor, Splendiano Accoramboni.

Antonio Scacciati comes to high honour through the intervention of Salvator Rosa.--He confides to Salvator the causes of his continual sorrowfulness, and Salvator comforts him, and promises him help.

What Antonio promised came to pass. The simple, healing medicines of Father Bonifazio, the careful nursing of Dame Caterina and her daughters, the mild season of the year which just then came on, had such a speedy effect on Salvator's strong constitution, that he soon felt well enough to begin thinking of his art, and, as a beginning, made some magnificent sketches for pictures which he intended to paint at a future time.

Antonio scarcely left Salvator's room. He was all eye when the master was sketching, and his opinions on many matters showed him to be initiated in the mysteries of art himself.

"Antonio," said Salvator, one day, "you know so much about art that I believe you have not only looked on at a great deal with correct understanding, but have even wielded the pencil yourself!"

"Remember, dear master," answered Antonio, "that when you were recovering from unconsciousness, I told you there were many things lying heavy on my heart. Perhaps it is time, now, for me to divulge my secrets to you fully. Although I am the surgeon who opened a vein for you, I belong to Art with all my heart and soul. I intend now to devote myself to it altogether, and throw the hateful handicraft entirely to the winds."

"Ho, ho, Antonio!" said Salvator, "bethink you what you are going to do. You are a clever surgeon, and perhaps will never be more than a bungler at painting. Young as you are in years, you are too old to begin with the crayon. A man's whole life is scarcely enough in which to attain to one single perception of the True, still less to the power of representing it poetically."

"Ah, my dear master," said Antonio, smiling gently, "how should I entertain the mad idea of beginning now to turn myself to the difficult art of painting, had I not worked at it as hard as I could ever since I was a child, had not heaven so willed it that, though I was kept away from art, and everything in the shape of it, by my father's obstinacy and folly, I made the acquaintance, and enjoyed the society, of masters of renown. Even the great Annibale interested himself in the neglected boy, and I have the happiness to be able to say I am a pupil of Guido Reni."

"Well, good Antonio," said Salvator, a little sharply, as his manner sometimes was. "If that is so, you have had great teachers; so, no doubt, in spite of your surgical skill, you may be a great pupil of theirs too. Only what I do not understand is, how you, as a pupil of the gentle and tender Guido (whom, perhaps, as pupils in their enthusiasm sometimes do--you even outdo in tenderness, in your work), how you can hold me to be a master in my art at all."

Antonio coloured at those words of Salvator's; in fact, they had about them a ring of jeering irony.

Antonio answered: "Let me lay aside all bashfulness, which might close my lips. Let me speak freely out exactly what is in my mind. Salvator, I have never revered a master so wholly from out the very depths of my being as I do you. It is the often superhuman grandeur of the ideas which I admire in your works. You see, and comprehend, and grasp the profoundest secrets of Nature. You read, and understand, the marvellous hieroglyphs of her rocks, her trees, her waterfalls; you hear her mighty voices; you interpret her language, and can transcribe what she says to you. Yes, transcription is what I would call your bold and vivid style of working. Man, with his doings, contents you not; you look at him only as being in the lap of Nature, and in so far as his inmost being is conditioned by her phenomena. Therefore, Salvator, it is in marvellous combinations of landscape with figure that you are so wondrous great. Historical painting places limits which hem your flight, to your disadvantage."

"You tell me this, Antonio," said Salvator, "as the envious historical painters do, who throw landscape to me by way of a *bonne-bouche*, that I may occupy myself in chewing it, and abstain from tearing their flesh. Do I not know the human figure, and everything appertaining to it? However, all those silly slanders, echoed from others----"

"Do not be indignant, dear master," answered Antonio. "I do not repeat things blindly after other folks, and least of all should I pay any attention to the opinions of our masters here in Rome just now. Who could help admiring the daring drawing, the marvellous expression, and particularly the lively action, of your figures! One sees that you do not work from the stiff, awkward model, or from the dead lay figure, but that you are, yourself, your own living model, and that you draw and paint the figure which you place on the canvas in front of a great mirror."

"Heyday, Antonio!" cried Salvator, laughing. "I believe you must have been peeping into my studio without my knowledge, to know so well what goes on there."

"Might not that have been?" said Antonio. "But let me go on. The pictures which your mighty genius inspires I should by no means narrow into one class so strictly as the pedantic masters try to do. In fact, the term 'landscape,' as generally understood, applies badly to your paintings, which I should prefer to call 'historical representations.' In a deeper sense, it often seems that this or the other rock, that or the other tree, gazes on us with an earnest look: and that this and the other group of strangely-attired people is like some wonderful crag which has come to life. All Nature, moving in marvellous unity, speaks out the sublime thought which glowed within you. This is how I have looked at your pictures, and this is how I am indebted to you, my great and glorious master, for a profound understanding of art. But do not suppose that, on this account, I have fallen into a childishness of imitation. Greatly as I wish I possessed your freedom and daring of brush, I must confess that the colouring of Nature seems to me to be different from what I see represented in your pictures. I hold that, even for the sake of practice, it is helpful to a learner to imitate the style of this or that master: but still, when once he stands on his own feet, to a certain extent, he should strive to represent Nature as he sees it himself. This true seeing, this being at unity with oneself, is the only thing which can produce character and truth. Guido was of this opinion, and the unresting Preti, whom, as you know, they call the Calabrese, a painter who certainly reflected on his art more than any other, warned me in the same way against slavish imitation. And now you know, Salvator, why I reverence you more than all the others, without being in the slightest degree your imitator, in any way."

Salvator had been gazing fixedly into the young man's eyes as he spoke, and he now clasped him stormily to his breast.

"Antonio," he said, "you have spoken very wise words of deep significance. Young as you are in years, you surpass, in knowledge of art, many of our old, much belauded masters, who talk a great deal of nonsense about their art, and never get to the bottom of the matter. Truly, when you spoke of my pictures, it seemed that I was, for the first time, beginning to come to a clear understanding of myself, and I prize you very highly just because you do not imitate my style--that you don't, like so many others, take a pot of black paint, lay on staring high lights, make a few crippled-looking figures, in horrible costumes, peep out of the dirty-looking ground, and then think 'There's a Salvator.' You have found in me the truest of friends, and I devote myself to you with all my soul."

Antonio was beyond himself with joy at the good will which the master thus charmingly displayed to him. Salvator expressed a strong desire to see Antonio's pictures, and Antonio took him at once to his studio.

Salvator had formed no small expectations of this youth who spoke so understandingly about art, and in whom there seemed to be a peculiar genius at

work; and yet the master was most agreeably astonished by Antonio's wealth of pictures. He found everywhere boldness of idea, correctness of drawing; and the fresh colouring, the great tastefulness of the breadth of the flow of folds, the unusual delicacy of the extremities, and the high beauty of the heads evidenced the worthy pupil of the great Reni; although Antonio's striving was not, like that of his master (who was overapt to do this), to sacrifice expression to beauty, often too visibly. One saw that Antonio aimed at Annibale's strength, without, as yet, being able to attain to it.

In his first silence Salvator had examined each of Antonio's pictures for a long time. At length he said: "Listen, Antonio, there is not the slightest doubt about it, you are born for the noble painter's art. For not only has Nature given you the creative spirit, from which the most glorious ideas flame forth in inexhaustible wealth, but she has further endowed you with the rare talent, which, in a brief time, overcomes the difficulties of technical practice. I should be a lying flatterer if I said you had as yet equalled your teachers, that you had attained to Guido's marvellous delightsomeness, or Annibale's power; but it is certain that you far surpass our masters who give themselves such airs here in the Academy of San Luca, your Tiarini, Gessi, Sementa, and whatever they may call themselves, not excepting Lanfranco, who can only draw in chalk; and yet, Antonio, were I in your place I should consider long before I threw away the lancet altogether, and took up the brush. This sounds strange; but hear me further. Just at present an evil time for art has begun; or rather, the devil seems to be busy amongst our masters, stirring them up pretty freely. If you have not made up your mind to meet with mortifications and vexations of every kind, to suffer the more hatred and contempt the higher you soar in art, as your fame increases everywhere to meet with villains, who will press round you with friendly mien, to destroy you all the more surely--if, I say, you have not made up your mind for all this, keep aloof from painting! Think of the fate of your teacher, the great Annibale, whom a knavish crew of fellow-painters in Naples persecuted so that he could not get a single great work to undertake, but was everywhere shown the door with despite, which brought him to his untimely grave. Think what happened to our Domenichino, when he was painting the cupola of the chapel of St. Januarius. Didn't the villains of painters there (I shall not mention any of their names, not even that scoundrel Belisario's or Ribera's), did not they bribe Domenichino's servant to put ashes into the lime, so that the plastering would not bind? The painting could thus have no permanence. Think on all those things, and prove yourself well, whether your spirit is strong enough to withstand the like; for otherwise your power will be broken, and when the firm courage to make is gone, the power to do it is gone along with it."

"Ah, Salvator," said Antonio, "it is scarcely possible that, had I once devoted myself entirely to painting, I should have to undergo more despite and contempt than I have had to suffer already, being still a surgeon. You have found pleasure in my pictures, and you have said, doubtless from inner conviction, that I have it in me to do better things than many of our San Luca men. And yet it is just they who turn up their noses at all that I have, with much industry, achieved, and say, contemptuously, 'Ho, ho, the surgeon thinks he can paint a picture!' But, for that very reason my decision is firmly come to, to get clear of a calling which is more and more hateful to me every day. It is on you, master, that I pin all my hopes. Your word is worth much. If you chose to speak for me you could at once dash my envious persecutors to the dust, and put me in the place which is mine by right."

"You have great confidence in me," said Salvator; "but now that we have so thoroughly understood each other as to our art, and now that I have seen your works, I do not know any one for whom I should take up the cudgels, and that with all my might, so readily as I should for you."

Salvator once more examined Antonio's pictures, and paused before one representing a Magdalone at the Saviour's feet, which he specially commended.

"You have departed," he said, "from the style in which people generally

represent this Magdalene. Your Magdalene is not an earnest woman, but rather an ingenuous, charming child, and such a wondrous one as nobody else (except Guido) could have painted. There is a peculiar charm about the beautiful creature. You have painted her with enthusiasm, and, if I am not deceived, the original of this Magdalene is in life, and here in Rome. Confess, Antonio, you are in love."

Antonio cast his eyes down and said, softly and bashfully: "Nothing escapes those sharp eyes of yours, my dear master. It may be as you say, but don't blame me. I prize this picture most of all, and I have kept it concealed from every one's sight, like a holy mystery."

"What!" cried Salvator, "have none of the painters seen this picture?"

"That is so," said Antonio.

"Then," said Salvator, his eyes shining with joy, "be assured, Antonio, that I will overthrow your envious, puffed-up enemies, and bring you to merited honour. Entrust your picture to me--send it secretly in the night to my lodgings, and leave the rest to me. Will you?"

"A thousand times yes, with gladness," answered Antonio. "Ah! I should like to tell you, at once, the troubles connected with my love-affair, but somehow it seems to me that I do not dare, to-day, just when our hearts have opened to one another in art; but some day I shall probably ask you to advise and help me in that direction too."

"Both my advice and my help shall be at your service wherever and whenever they may be necessary," Salvator answered. As he was leaving he turned round and said with a smile: "Antonio, when you told me you were a painter, I was sorry I had mentioned your likeness to the Sanzio. I thought you might be silly enough, as many of our young fellows are, if they chance to have a passing likeness in the face to this or that great master, they take to wearing their hair and beard as he does, and find it necessary to imitate his style in art as well, though it may be quite contrary to their character. We have neither of us named the name of Raphael; but, believe me, in your pictures I find distinct traces of the extent to which the whole heaven of godlike ideas in the works of the greatest master of our time has been revealed to you. You understand Raphael. You will not reply to me as did Velasquez, whom I asked, the other day, what he thought of the Sanzio. He said Titian was the greater master; Raphael knew nothing about flesh colour. In that Spaniard is the Flesh, not the Word; yet they laud him to the skies in San Luca, because he once painted cherries which the birds came and tried to peck."

A few days after the above conversation, it happened that the Academists of San Luca assembled in their church to judge the pictures of the painters who had applied for admission to the Academy. Salvator had sent Scacciati's beautiful Magdalene picture. The painters were amazed by the charm and the power of the work, and the most unstinted praise resounded from every lip when Salvator explained that he had brought the picture with him from Naples--the work of a young painter, prematurely snatched away by death.

In a very short time all Rome streamed to see and admire this work of the young, unknown, dead master. Every one was unanimously of opinion that no such picture had been painted since Guido Reni's time, and, indeed, people carried their enthusiasm so far as to declare that this work was even to be ranked above Guido Reni's creations of the same kind. Among the crowd of people who were always collected before Scacciati's picture, Salvator one day observed a man, who, besides being of very remarkable exterior, was conducting himself like a madman. He was advanced in years, tall, lean as a spindle, pale of face, with a long, pointed nose, and an equally long chin, which increased its pointedness by being tipped with a little beard, and green, flashing eyes. Upon his thick, extremely fair peruke he had stuck a tall hat with a fine feather. He had on a short, dark-red cloak with many shining buttons, a sky-blue Spanish-slashed doublet, great gauntlets trimmed with silver fringe, a long sword by his side, light

grey hose drawn over his bony knees, and bound with yellow ribbons, and bows of the same ribbon on his shoes. This strange figure was standing, as if enraptured, before the picture. He would stand up on his tiptoes, then bob himself quite low down; then hop up, with both legs at once, sigh, groan, close his eyes so tightly that the tears streamed from them, and then open them as wide as they would go; gaze incessantly at the beautiful Magdalene, sigh afresh, and lisp out in his mournful, *castrato* voice, "Ah, Carissima! Benedetissima! Ah, Marianna! Marianna! Belissima!" &c.

Salvator, always greedy after figures of this sort, got as near to him as he could, and tried to enter into conversation with him about Scacciati's picture, which seemed to delight him so much; but, without taking much heed of Salvator, the old fellow cursed his poverty, which would not allow him to buy this picture for a million, and so prevent any one else from fixing his devilish glances upon it. And then he hopped up and down again, and thanked the Virgin and all the saints that the infernal painter who had painted this heavenly picture, which drove him to madness and despair, was dead and gone.

Salvator came to the conclusion that the man must be either a maniac, or some Academician of San Luca whom he did not know.

All Rome rang with the fame of Scacciati's wonderful picture. Scarce anything else was talked of, and this ought to have been enough to show its superiority. When the painters held their next meeting in San Luca to decide as to the reception of sundry applicants for admission, Salvator Rosa made a sudden inquiry whether the painter of the Magdalene at the Saviour's feet would not have been worthy to be admitted. All the members of the Academy, not excepting the excessively critical Cavaliere Josepin, declared, with one voice, that such a great master would have been an ornament to the Academy, and, in the most studied forms of speech, expressed their regret that he was dead (though in their hearts they thanked heaven that he was). Not only this, but in their enthusiasm for art, they decided to elect this marvellous young painter an Academician, notwithstanding that he had been withdrawn from art by a premature death; directing masses to be said for the repose of his soul in the church of San Luca. Wherefore they requested Salvator to acquaint them with the full names of the deceased, as well as the year and place of his birth, &c., &c.

On this Salvator rose up and said: "Signori, the honours which you fain would pay to a man in his grave are due to, and had better be bestowed on, a living painter, who is walking to and fro in our midst. Know ye that the Magdalene at the Saviour's feet--the picture which you have such a high opinion of justly, and esteem so highly above anything which living painters have produced--is not the work of a Neapolitan painter no longer in life, as I pretended it was, that your verdict might be unbiassed. This picture, this masterpiece, which all Rome admires at this moment, is by the hand of Antonio Scacciati, the surgeon."

The painters glared dumb and motionless at Salvator, like men struck by lightning. Salvator enjoyed their consternation for a short time, and then went on to say: "Well, gentlemen, you would not allow Antonio to come amongst you because he is a surgeon; but I think the Academy of San Luca is in very great need of a surgeon to mend and set the crippled arms and legs of the figures which come from the studios of many of its members. However, I presume you will not longer delay to do what you ought to have done long ago; that is, to admit this admirable painter, Antonio Scacciati, a member of your Academy."

The Academicians swallowed Salvator's bitter pill; they said they were much overjoyed that Antonio had displayed his talent in such a striking and decided manner, and they elected him a member of the Academy with much ceremony. As soon as it was known in Rome that Antonio was the painter of the wonderful picture, there streamed in upon him from all sides congratulations, and commissions to undertake great and important works. Thus was this young painter--thanks to Salvator's method of setting to work--brought, in a moment, out of obscurity, and raised to high honour, at the very juncture when he had made up

his mind to start upon his career as an artist.

Floating and hovering, as he was, in an atmosphere of happiness and bliss, it all the more surprised Salvator one day when Antonio came to him, pale and upset, full of anger and despair. "Ah, Salvator," he cried, "what does it avail me that you have set me up on a pinnacle, where I could never have dreamt of being, that I am overwhelmed with praise and honour, that the prospect of the most delightful and glorious artistic career opens before me, when I am inexpressibly unhappy, when the very picture, to which, next to yourself, dear master, I am indebted for my victory, is the express cause of irremediable misfortune to me?"

"Silence!" cried Salvator. "Do not commit a sin against your art and your picture. I don't believe a word as to your irremediable misfortune. You are in love, and perhaps things are not going in all respects exactly as you wish; but that is all, no doubt. Lovers are like children, they cry and yell the moment anybody touches their toy. Leave off lamenting, I beg of you; it is a thing which I cannot endure. Sit down there, and tell me quietly how matters stand as regards your beautiful Magdalene and your love-affair altogether, and where the stumbling-blocks are which we must get out of the way, for I promise you, to commence with, that I will help you. The more difficult and arduous and adventurous the things are that we have to set about, the better I shall be pleased, for the blood is running quick in my veins again, and the state of my health calls upon me to set to work and play a wild trick or two; so tell me all about it, Antonio, and, as aforesaid, none of your 'Ohs' and your 'Ahs.'"

Antonio sat down in the chair which Salvator had placed for him near the easel where he was at work, and commenced as follows:--

"In Strada Ripetta, in the lofty house whose projecting balcony you see as soon as you go through the Porta del Popolo, lives the greatest ass and most idiotic donkey in all Rome. An old bachelor, with all the faults of his class--vain, trying to be young, in love, and a coxcomb. He is tall, thin as a whip-stalk, dresses in party-coloured Spanish costume, with a blonde periwig, a steeple-crowned hat, gauntlets, and long sword at his side----"

"Stop, stop! wait a moment, Antonio," cried Salvator, and, turning round the picture he was working at, he took a crayon, and, on the reverse side of it, drew, in a few bold touches, the curious old fellow who had been going on so absurdly in front of Antonio's picture.

"By all the saints!" cried Antonio, jumping up from his chair, and laughing loud and clear in spite of his despair, "that is the very man--that is Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, of whom I am speaking, to the very life."

"There, you see," said Salvator quietly, "I know the gentleman who is probably your bitter rival. But go on with your story."

"Signor Pasquale Capuzzi," continued Antonio, "is as rich as Crœsus, but, as I think I was telling you, a terrible miser, as well as a perfect ass. His best quality is that he is devoted to the arts, particularly to music and painting. But there is so much idiotic absurdity mixed up with this, that, even in those directions, it is impossible to put up with him. He believes himself to be the greatest composer in the world, and a singer the like of whom is not to be found in the Papal Chapel. Therefore he looks askance at our old Frescobaldi, and when the Romans talk of the marvellous charm and spell which Ceccarelli's voice possesses, he thinks Ceccarelli knows as much about singing as an old slipper, and that he--Capuzzi--is the person to enchant the world. But as the Pope's principal singer bears the proud name of Edoardo Ceccarelli di Merania, our Capuzzi likes to be styled 'Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senegaglia,' for his mother bore him in that place, and, in fact, people say, in a fishing-boat, from sudden terror at the rising of a sea-calf, and there is, consequently, a great deal of the sea-calf in his nature. In early life he put an opera on the stage, and it was hissed off it in the completest manner possible; but that did not cure him of his craze for writing diabolical

music. On the other hand, when he heard Francesco Cavalli's opera, 'Le Nozze di Teti e di Peleo,' he said the Capellmeister had borrowed the most sublime ideas from his own immortal works; for saying which he had a narrow escape of cudgellings, or even of knife-thrusts. He is still possessed with the idea of singing arias, accompanying himself by torturing a wretched guitar, which has to groan and sigh in support of his mewing and caterwauling. His faithful Pylades is a broken-down, dwarfish Castrato, whom the Romans call Pitichinaccio; and guess who completes the trio. Well, none other than the Pyramid Doctor, who emits sounds like a melancholy jackass, and is under the impression that he sings a magnificent bass, as good as Martinelli's, of the Papal Chapel. Those three worthies meet together of evenings, and sit on the balcony, singing motetts of Carissimi's till all the dogs and cats in the neighbourhood yell and howl, and the human beings within earshot devote the hellish trio to all the thousand devils.

"My father," Antonio continued, "was in the habit of going in and out of the house of this incomparable idiot, Signor Pasquale Capuzzi (whom you know sufficiently well from my description), because he used to dress his wig and his beard. When he died, I undertook those offices, and Capuzzi was greatly pleased with me, firstly, because he considered that I was able to give his moustaches a bold upward twist in a manner which nobody else could, and further, doubtless, because I was satisfied with the two or three quattrinos which he gave me for my trouble. But he thought he was over-paying me, inasmuch as, every time I dressed his beard he would croak out to me, with closed eyes, an aria of his own composing, which flayed the skin off my ears, although the remarkable antics of this creature afforded me much entertainment--which was the reason I continued to go back to him. I on one occasion walked gently up the stairs, knocked at the door, and opened it, when there met me a girl--an angel of light! You know my Magdalene!--it was she. I stood rooted to the spot. No, no, Salvator, I won't treat you to any 'Ohs' or 'Ahs.' I need but say that on the instant, when I saw the loveliest of all ladies, I fell into the deepest, fondest affection for her. The old fellow said, with simpers, that she was the daughter of his brother Pietro, who had died in Senegaglia, that her name was Marianna, and that, as she had no mother, and neither brothers nor sisters, he had taken her into his house. You may imagine that from that time forth Capuzzi's dwelling was my paradise. But, scheme as I might, I could never be alone with Marianna for a single instant; yet her eyes, as well as many a stolen sigh, and even many a pressure of the hand, left me in no doubt of my happiness. The old man found this out, and it was not a very difficult matter. He told me that he was by no means pleased with my behaviour to his niece, and asked me what I meant by it. I candidly confessed that I loved her with all my soul, and could imagine no more perfect bliss on earth than to make her my wife. On this, Capuzzi eyed me up and down, broke into sneering laughter, and said that he could not have imagined that ideas of the kind could have haunted the brain of a wretched hairdresser. My blood got up: I said he knew very well that I was by no means a mere wretched hairdresser, but a skilled surgeon, and, more than that, as concerned the glorious art of painting, a faithful scholar and pupil of the grand Annibale Caracci, and the unsurpassed Guido Reni. On this the despicable Capuzzi broke out into louder laughter, and squeaked out, in his abominable falsetto: 'Very good, my sweet Signor Beard-curler, my talented Signor Surgeon, my charming Annibale Caracci, my most beloved Guido Reni, *go to all the devils*, and don't show that nose of yours inside my door again, unless you want every bone in your body broken.' And the demented old totterer actually took hold of me with no less an idea in his head than that of chucking me out of the door and downstairs. But this was rather more than could be endured. I was furious, and I seized hold of the fellow, turned him topsy-turvy, with his toes pointing to the ceiling (screaming at the top of his lungs), and ran downstairs and out of the door, which was from thenceforth closed against me.

"Matters were in this position when you came to Rome, and Heaven inspired the good Father Bonifazio to conduct me to you; and then, when that had happened, through your cleverness, which I had striven after in vain, when the Academy of San Luca had admitted me, and all Rome was praising and honouring

me above my desert, I went straight away to the old man, and appeared suddenly before him in his room like a threatening spectre. That is what I must have seemed like to him, for he turned as pale as death, and drew back behind a table, trembling in every limb. In a grave, firm voice, I told him that I was not now the Beard-curler and Surgeon, but the celebrated Painter, and Member of the Academy of San Luca, Antonio Scacciati, to whom he could not refuse his niece's hand. You should have seen the fury into which the old man fell. He yelled, he beat about him with his arms, he cried out that I was a remorseless murderer, seeking to take his life, that I had stolen his Marianna away from him, as I had counterfeited her in the picture which drove him to madness and despair. That now all the world--all the world--was looking at his Marianna, his life, his hope, his everything, with longing, coveting eyes; but that I had better be careful, for he would burn the house down about my ears, and make an end of me and my picture together. And on this he began to vociferate, and scream out so loudly, 'Fire!--murder!--thieves!--help!' that I thought of nothing but getting out of the house as speedily as possible.

"You see that this old lunatic Capuzzi is over head and ears in love with his niece. He keeps her shut up, and, if he can get a dispensation, he will force her to the most horrible marriage conceivable. All hope is at an end."

"Why not, indeed?" said Salvator, laughing. "For my part, I think, rather, that your affairs could not possibly be in a better position. Marianna loves you--you know that well enough--and all that has to be done is to get her out of the clutches of this old lunatic. Now I really do not see what should prevent two adventurous, sturdy fellows, like you and me, from accomplishing this. Keep up your heart, Antonio! Instead of lamenting, and getting to be love-sick and powerless, the thing to do is to keep thinking on Marianna's rescue. Just watch, Antonio, how we will lead the old donkey by the nose. The very wildest undertakings are not wild enough for me, in circumstances like those. This very moment I shall set to work to see what more I can find out about the old fellow and all his ways of life. You must not let yourself be seen in this, Antonio. Go you quietly home, and come to me to-morrow as early as you can, that we may consider the plan for our first attack."

With that Salvator washed his brushes, threw on his cloak, and hastened to the Corso; whilst Antonio, comforted, and with fresh hope in his heart, went home, as Salvator had enjoined him.

Signor Pasquale Capuzzi makes his appearance in Salvator Rosa's abode.--What happened there.--Rosa and Scacciati's artful stratagem, and its consequences.

Antonio was not a little surprised, the next morning, when Salvator gave him the most minute account of Capuzzi's whole manner of life, which, in the interval, he had found out all about. Salvator said the miserable Marianna was tortured by the crack-brained old scoundrel in the most fiendish manner. That he sighed, and made love to her all day long; and, what was worse, by way of touching her heart, sang to her all sorts of amorous ditties and arias which he had composed, or attempted to compose. Moreover, he was so madly jealous that he would not allow this much-to-be-compassionated girl even the usual female attendance, for fear of love-intrigues to which the Abigail might possibly be corrupted. "Instead of that," Salvator went on, "there comes, every morning and evening, a little horrible, ghastly spectre of a creature, with hollow eyes, and pale, flabby, hanging cheeks, to do what a maid-servant ought to do for the beautiful Marianna. And this spectre is none other than that tiny hop-o-my-thumb Pitichinaccio, dressed in woman's clothes. When Capuzzi is away, he carefully locks and bars all the doors; and besides that, watch and ward is kept by that infernal fellow who was once a Bravo, afterwards a Sbirro, who lives downstairs in Capuzzi's house. Therefore it seems impossible to get inside the door. But I promise you, Antonio, that to-morrow night you shall be in the room with Capuzzi, and see your Marianna, though, this time, only in Capuzzi's presence."

"What!" cried Antonio, "is that which appears to me an impossibility going to come to pass to-morrow night?"

"Hush, Antonio!" said Salvator; "let us calmly reflect how the plan which I have hit upon is to be carried out. To begin with, I must tell you that I have a certain connection with Signor Capuzzi which I was not aware of. That wretched spinett standing in the corner there is his property, and I am supposed to be going to pay him the exorbitant price of ten ducats for it. When I had got somewhat better after my illness, I had a longing for music, which is consolation and recreation to me. I asked my landlady to get hold of an instrument of that sort for me. Dame Caterina soon found out that a certain old fellow in Strada Ripetta had an old spinett for sale. It was brought here, and I troubled myself neither about the price nor about the owner. It was only last night that I discovered that it was our honourable Signor Capuzzi who was going to swindle me with his old, broken-down instrument. Dame Caterina had applied to an acquaintance who lives in the house with Capuzzi, and, in fact, on the same storey; so that now you see where I got all my information from."

"Ha!" cried Antonio; "thus is the means of admission discovered. Your landlady----"

"I know what you are going to say," said Salvator. "You think the way to your Marianna is through Dame Caterina. That would never do at all. Dame Caterina is much too talkative; she can't keep the most trifling secret, and is therefore by no means to be made use of in our undertaking. Listen to me, quietly. Every evening, when the little Castrato has done the maid-servant work, Signor Pasquale Capuzzi carries him home in his arms, difficult as that job is, considering the shakiness of his own old knees. Not for all the world would the timorous Pitichinaccio set foot on the pavement at that time of the night. Very good; when----"

At this moment a knock came to Salvator's door, and, to the no small astonishment of both, in came Signor Pasquale Capuzzi in all his glory. As soon as he saw Scacciati he stood still, as if paralysed in every limb, opened his eyes wide, and panted for air as if his breath would fail him. But Salvator hurried up to him, took him by both hands, and cried out: "My dear Signor Pasquale! how highly honoured I am that you should visit me in my humble lodging. Doubtless it is the love of art that brings you. You wish to look at what I have been doing lately; perhaps you are even going to honour me with a commission. Tell me, dear Signor Pasquale, wherein I can do you a pleasure."

"I have to speak with you," stammered Capuzzi, with difficulty, "dear Signor Salvator; but, alone; when you are by yourself. Allow me to take my departure for the present, and come back at a more convenient time."

"By no means, my dear Signor," said Salvator, holding the old man fast. "You must not go. You could not possibly have come at a more convenient time, for, as you are a great honourer of the noble art of painting, it will give you no small joy when I present to you here Antonio Scacciati, the greatest painter of our time, whose glorious picture, the marvellous 'Magdalene at the Saviour's feet,' all Rome regards with the utmost enthusiasm. No doubt you are full of the picture, like the rest, and have been anxious to make the painter's acquaintance."

The old man was seized by a violent trembling. He shook like one in the cold stage of a fever, sending, the while, burning looks of rage at Antonio; who, however, went up to him with easy courtesy, declaring that he thought himself fortunate to meet Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, whose profound knowledge of music, as well as of painting, not only Rome, but all Italy admired, and he recommended himself to his protection.

It restored the old fellow to his self-control that Antonio treated him as if he met him for the first time, and addressed him in such flattering terms. He forced himself to a sort of simpering smile, and (Salvator having let go his hands) softly stroked the points of his moustaches heavenwards, stammered a few

unintelligible words, and then turned to Salvator, whom he attacked on the subject of the payment of the ten ducats. "We will settle that every-day little affair afterwards," said Salvator. "First let it please you to look at the sketches which I have made for a picture, and, as you do so, to drink a glass of good Syracuse." Salvator placed his sketches on the easel, drew up a chair for the old gentleman, and, when he had seated himself, handed him a large, beautiful goblet, in which the noble Syracuse was sparkling.

The old man was only too fond of a glass of good wine, when he had not to pay for it; and, moreover, as he was expecting to receive ten ducats for a worn-out, rickety spinett, and was seated before a boldly sketched-in picture, whose wonderful beauty he was quite capable of appreciating, he could not but feel exceedingly happy in his mind. This satisfaction he gave expression to, smirking quite pleasantly, stroking his chin and moustaches assiduously, half closing his eyes, and whispering, time after time, "Glorious! Precious!" without its clearly appearing whether he referred to the picture or to the wine.

As he had now become quite friendly, Salvator said, suddenly: "Tell me, my dear sir, is it not the case that-you have a most beautiful niece, of the name of Marianna? All our young fellows are continually rushing to the Strada Ripetta, impelled by love-craziness. They give themselves cricks in the neck with gazing up at your balcony in the hope of seeing her, and catching a glance from her heavenly eyes."

The complacent smirk disappeared instantly from the old man's face, and all the good humour with which the wine had inspired him vanished. Gazing before him gloomily, he said, in a harsh voice: "See there the profound corruption of our sinful youth, who fasten their diabolical looks on children, detestable seducers that they are!--for I assure you, my dear sir, my niece Marianna is a mere child--a mere child scarce out of the nursery!"

Salvator changed the subject. The old man recovered his composure; but when, with new sunshine in his face, he placed the full goblet to his lips, Salvator set on him again, with: "Tell me, my dear Signor, has your niece (that young lady of sixteen), the lovely Marianna, really that wonderful chestnut-brown hair, and those eyes, full of the rapture and bliss of Heaven, which we see in Antonio's Magdalene? That is what is everywhere said."

"I can't say," cried the old man, in an angrier tone than before. "Don't let us refer to my niece; we can exchange words of more importance on the subject of the noble art to which your beautiful picture itself leads us."

But as, whenever the old man took up the goblet and placed it to his lips to take a good draught, Salvator again began to speak of the beautiful Marianna, Pasquale at last sprung from his chair in fury, banged the goblet down on the table with such violence that it was nearly being broken, and cried in a screaming voice: "By the black, hellish Pluto, by all the Furies, you make the wine poison--poison to me. But I see how it is. You, and your fine Signor Antonio along with you, think you will make a fool of me; but you won't find it quite so easy. Pay me this instant the ten ducats you owe me, and I will leave you and your comrade, the beard-curler Antonio, to all the devils."

Salvator cried out as if overcome by the most furious anger, "What! You dare to treat me in this manner in my own lodging? Pay you ten ducats for that rotten old box, out of which the worms have long since gnawed all the marrow, all the sound! Not ten, not five, not three, not a single ducat will I pay you for that spinett, which is scarcely worth a quattrino. Away with the crippled old thing," and therewith Salvator sent the little spinett spinning round and round with his foot, its strings giving out a loud wail of sorrow.

"Ha!" screamed Capuzzi, "there is still law in Rome. I will have you put in prison, into the deepest dungeon;" and, growling like a thunder-cloud, he was making for the door. But Salvator put both his arms about him, set him down in

the chair again, and whispered in his ear in dulcet tones, "My dear Signor Pasquale, do you not see that I am only joking? Not ten, thirteen ducats you shall have for your spinett," and went on repeating into his ear, "thirteen bright ducats," so long and so often that Capuzzi said, in a faint, feeble voice, "What say you, dear sir? Thirteen ducats for the spinett, and nothing for the repairs?" Then Salvator let him go, and assured him, on his honour, that in an hour's time the spinett should be worth thirty--forty ducats, and that he, Capuzzi, should get that sum for it.

The old man, drawing breath, murmured: with a deep sigh, "Thirty--forty ducats!" Then he added, "But you have greatly enraged me, Signor Salvator." "Thirty ducats," reiterated Salvator. The old man blinked his eyes. But then again, "You have wounded me to the heart, Signor Salvator." "Thirty ducats," said Salvator again and again, till at length the old man said, quite appeased, "If I can get thirty or forty ducats for my spinett, all will be forgotten and forgiven, dear Signor."

"But before I fulfil my promise," said Salvator, "I have one little stipulation to make which you, my worthy Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senegaglia, can easily comply with. You are the first composer in all Italy, and, into the bargain, the very finest singer that can possibly be found. I have listened with rapture to the grand scena in the opera 'Le Nozze di Teti e di Peleo,' which the villain Francesco Cavalli has cribbed from you and given out as his own. If you would be good enough to sing me that aria during the time that I am setting the spinett to rights, I cannot imagine anything more delightful that could happen to me."

The old fellow screwed his face up into the most sugary smile imaginable, twitched his eyebrows, and said, "It is easy to see that you are a fine musician yourself, Signor, for you have taste, and you can value people better than the unthankful Romans. Listen, listen to the aria of all arias."

He rose up, stood on the extreme points of his tiptoes, stretched out his arms, and closed both his eyes (so that he was exactly like a cock making ready for a crow), and immediately began to utter such a terrible screeching that the walls resounded again, and Dame Caterina came rushing in with her two daughters, having no other idea than that the terrible howling indicated the happening of some signal disaster. They stood completely bewildered in the doorway when they became aware of the old gentleman crooning in this manner, thus constituting themselves the audience of this unheard-of virtuoso, Capuzzi.

But as this was going on, Salvator had set the spinett to rights, shut down the top of it, taken his palette and set to work to paint, in bold touches, upon the very cover of the spinett, the most wonderful subject imaginable. The principal theme of it was a scene from Cavalli's opera, 'Le Nozze di Teti;' but there was mingled with this, in utterly fantastic fashion, a whole crowd of other characters, amongst whom were Capuzzi, Antonio, Marianna (exactly as she appeared in Antonio's picture), Salvator himself, Dame Caterina and her daughters, and even the Pyramid Doctor, and all so genially and comprehendingly pourtrayed, that Antonio could not conceal his delight at the Maestro's talent and technique.

The old fellow by no means restricted himself to the scena which Salvator had asked him for, but went on singing, or rather crowing, without cessation, working his way through the most terrible recitatives from one diabolical aria to another. This may have gone on for some two hours or so, till he sank down into an arm-chair, cherry-brown of countenance. By that time, however, Salvator had got so far with his sketch that everything in it appeared to be alive, and the effect of it, when seen a little way off, was that of a finished picture.

"I have kept my promise as regards the spinett, dear Signor Capuzzi," Salvator whispered into the old man's ear, and Capuzzi sprang up like one awaking from sleep. His eyes fell on the painted spinett; he opened them wide, as if looking upon a miracle, crammed his peaked hat down on to his periwig, took his crook-headed stick under his arm, made one jump to the spinett, wrenched the cover of

it out of the hinges, and ran, like one possessed, out of the door, down the steps, and off and away out of the house, whilst Dame Caterina and her daughters accompanied his exit with bursts of laughter.

"The old skinflint knows very well," said Salvator, "that he has only to take the painted top of the spinett to Count Colonna, or to my friend Rossi, to get forty ducats, or more, for it in a moment."

Salvator and Antonio now set about considering the plan of attack which they were about to carry out on the following night. We shall presently see what it was, and what was the success of their attempt.

When night came, Pasquale, after carefully bolting and barring up his house, carried the little monster of a Castrato home. The little creature mewed and complained all the way, that not only was he compelled to sing his lungs into a consumption over Capuzzi's arias, and burn his hands with cooking of macaroons, but, into the bargain, was employed in a service which brought him in nothing but cuffs on the ears and sound kicks, which Marianna dealt out to him in ample measure whenever he came into her vicinity. The old gentleman comforted him as well as he could, promising to supply him more plentifully with sugar- stuff than he had hitherto done, and even going so far as to enter into a solemn undertaking (inasmuch as the little wretch would not cease whining and lamenting) to have a little Abbate's coat made for him out of an old black plush doublet, which he had often looked upon with envious glances. He demanded, besides, a periwig and a sword. Discussing those matters, they reached the Strada Vergognona, for that was where Pitichinaccio lived, and, indeed, only four doors from Salvator.

The old man set the little creature carefully down, and opened the door. Then they went up the narrow steps, more like a hen's ladder than anything else; but scarcely had they got half-way up when they became aware of a tremendous raging on the storey above, and a wild drunken fellow made his voice heard, calling upon all the devils in hell to show him the way out of this accursed, haunted house. Pitichinaccio, who was in front, pressed himself close to the wall and implored Capuzzi to go on first, for the love of all the saints. Scarcely, however, had Capuzzi gone a step or two up when the fellow from above came stumbling down the stairs, came upon Capuzzi like a whirlwind, seized hold of him, and went floundering down with him through the open door right into the middle of the street. There they remained lying prostrate, Capuzzi nethermost, and the drunken fellow on the top of him, like a heavy sack. Capuzzi screamed pitifully for help, and immediately there appeared two men, who, with much pains, eased Capuzzi of his burden, the drunken fellow, who went staggering away as they did so.

The two men were Salvator and Antonio, and they cried, "Jesus! what has happened to you, Signor Capuzzi? What are you doing here at this time of the night? You seem to have had some bad business going on in the house."

"It's all over with me," groaned Capuzzi; "the hellhound has broken every bone in my body. I can't move a muscle."

"Let us see--let us see!" said Antonio; and he felt him all over, giving him, in the course of his examination, a pinch in the right leg of such shrewdness that Capuzzi uttered a yell.

"Saints and angels!" ejaculated Antonio, "your right leg is broken just at the most dangerous place. If it is not attended to immediately, you are a dead man; or, at the very least, lamed for life."

Capuzzi uttered a frightful howl. "Calm yourself, my dear Signor," said Antonio. "Although I am a painter now, I have not forgotten my surgery. We will carry you into Salvator's lodgings, and I will bandage you properly at once."

"Dear Signor Antonio," whined Capuzzi, "you are inimically minded towards

me, I am aware."

"Ah!" interposed Salvator, "there can be no question of enmity in a case like this. You are in danger, and that is sufficient reason why the honourable Antonio should devote all his skill to your service. Take hold of him, friend Antonio."

Together they lifted the old man up softly and carefully, and carried him--crying out over the suffering which his broken leg caused him--to Salvator's lodgings.

Dame Caterina declared she had felt quite certain that something was going to happen, and consequently hadn't been able to go to bed. And when she saw the old gentleman and heard what had happened to him, she broke out into reproaches as to his works and ways. "I know well enough, Signor Pasquale, who it was that you were taking home, as usual. You think, as long as you have your pretty niece Marianna at home with you, you don't require any woman to do anything there, and you most shamefully and God-defiantly misuse that poor creature of a Pitichinaccio, whom you dress up in woman's clothes. But remember, *ogni carne ha il mio osso*--every flesh has its own bones. If you have a girl in the house, you can't do without women. *Fate il passo secondo il gamba*--don't stretch your legs farther than the bedcover goes, and don't do more, nor less, than what is right for your Marianna. Don't shut her up like a prisoner. Don't turn your house into a gaol. *Asino punto convien che trotti*--one who has started on the road must go along. You have a pretty niece, and you must arrange your life accordingly; that's to say, you mustn't do what she doesn't wish. But you are an ungallant, hard-hearted man, and (I'm afraid I must say, at your time of life), amorous and jealous into the bargain. You must pardon me for saying all this straight out to your face, but you know *chi ha nel petto fiele, non pu sputar miele*--what the heart is full of comes out at the lips. If you don't die of this accident of yours--as, at your time of life, it is to be feared you will--I hope it will be a warning to you, and you'll leave your niece at liberty to do what she wishes, and marry the charming young gentleman whom I think I know about."

Thus did the stream of Dame Caterina's words flow on, whilst Salvator and Antonio carefully undressed the old gentleman and laid him on the bed. Dame Caterina's words were dagger-thrusts, which went deep into his heart; but, whenever he tried to get in a word between them, Antonio impressed on him that anything in the nature of talking was fraught with the utmost danger, so that he was obliged to swallow the bitter pill of her utterances. Salvator at length sent her away to get some iced water, which Antonio had ordered.

Salvator and Antonio convinced themselves that the fellow whom they had employed had done his business most admirably. Beyond one or two blue marks, Capuzzi had not suffered the slightest damage, frightful as his tumble had the appearance of being. Antonio carefully put splints and bandages on his right foot and leg, so that he could not move; and at the same time they wrapped him in cloths soaked in iced water, on the pretext of keeping off fever, so that he shivered as if he were in an ague.

"My good Signor Antonio," he said, in faint accents, "tell me, is it all over with me? Am I a dead man?"

"Do not excite yourself, Signor Pasquale," said Antonio.

"As you bore the first application of the bandages so well, and did not fall into a faint, I hope all danger is over; but the most careful nursing is absolutely essential. The most important point is that the surgeon must not let you be out of his sight for a moment."

"Ah, Antonio!" whined the old gentleman, "you know how fond I am of you--what a high opinion I have of your talent! Don't leave me--give me your dear hand! That is it! My dear, good son, you won't go away from me, will you?"

"Although I am no longer a surgeon," said Antonio, "although I have cast away

the abominable slavery of that calling to the four winds of heaven, I do not mind making an exception in your case, Signor Pasquale, and I undertake to cure you. The only thing which I ask of you in return is, that you will give me back your friendship--your confidence; you have been a little hard towards me."

"Say nothing about that," whispered the old fellow; "do not let us allude to it, dear Antonio."

"Your niece," said Antonio, "will be half-dead with anxiety at your not having come home. All things considered, you are wonderfully strong and well, and we will move you to your own house as soon as it is daylight. When we have got you there, I will have another look at your bandages, and see to the bed upon which you are to be laid; and I will tell your niece all that will be necessary to do in your case, so that you may very soon be quite better."

The old gentleman heaved a very deep sigh, closed his eyes, and remained silent for some moments. He then stretched his hand out toward Antonio, drew him close to him, and said, in a whisper: "Tell me, dearest Antonio, I am right, am I not, in supposing that all that about Marianna--my niece--was merely your fun--the sort of jesting which gets into young fellows' heads?"

"I beg you," said Antonio, "not to think about matters of that sort at such a time as this. Put them out of your head altogether. It is certainly true that your niece did attract my eyes a little; but I have very different matters in my mind at present. And--I must tell you quite candidly--I am very glad that you sent me and my foolish attempt to the right about so speedily. I thought I was in love with Marianna, but it was merely that I saw in her a splendid model for my Magdalene. I presume that is why I have become completely indifferent to her since my picture was finished. I have no longer the slightest interest in her."

"Antonio!" cried the old gentleman; "Antonio, blessed of heaven! you are my comfort, my help, my consolation! If you are not in love with Marianna, my troubles are at an end."

"To tell you the truth, Signor Pasquale," said Salvator, "if one did not know you to be a serious man, of great intelligence, very well aware what is suitable to his advanced period of life, one would be disposed to fancy that you were idiot enough to be in love with this niece of yours (a child of sixteen) yourself."

The old man closed his eyes again, and groaned and lamented over the terrible sufferings he was enduring, which had returned with double force.

The morning-red came streaming through the window. Antonio told the old gentleman it was time to take him to his own house in Strada Ripetta. He answered with a deep, melancholy sigh. Salvator and Antonio lifted him out of bed, and wrapped him in a large cloak of Dame Caterina's, which had been her husband's. The old gentleman implored, for the love of all the saints, that the shameful ice-cloths which were upon his bald head should be taken away, and that he should wear his periwig and plumed hat; also that Antonio should, as far as possible, arrange his moustaches, so that Marianna should not be too much alarmed by his appearance. Two bearers, with a litter, were waiting at the door. Dame Caterina, continually scolding at the old gentleman, and quoting proverbs plentifully, brought down bedding, in which, carefully packed, and attended by Salvator and Antonio, he was got home to his own house.

When Marianna saw her uncle in this terrible condition, she gave a loud cry, and a flood of tears burst from her eyes. Without paying any attention to her lover, who was present, she took the old man's hands, pressed them to her lips, and lamented over the sad misfortune which had befallen him. Such was this good girl's compassion for the old fellow who tortured her with his insane fondness for her. All the same the inborn nature of woman within her displayed itself, for a few significant looks of Salvator's were amply sufficient to let her understand the whole position of matters. It was only then that she gave a stolen glance at the

happy Antonio, blushing deeply as she did so, and it was marvellous to see how a somewhat roguish smile victoriously dispelled her tears. On the whole, Salvator had never thought that she was so delightful, so wonderfully lovely (notwithstanding the Magdalene picture) as he now found her actually to be. And whilst he almost envied Antonio his good fortune, he felt doubly the necessity of getting the poor girl out of the clutches of the accursed Capuzzi, at whatever cost.

The latter, welcomed in this charming manner (which he by no means deserved) by his delightful niece, forgot his troubles; he smiled, and ogled, working his lips so that his moustaches went up and down; and he groaned and whined, not so much from pain as from amorousness.

Antonio skilfully prepared the bed for his patient, and when he had been laid down upon it, tightened the bandages--and did so to such an extent on the left leg, that the old gentleman had, perforce, to lie as motionless as a wooden doll. Salvator went away, leaving the lovers to their happiness.

The old gentleman was lying buried in cushions, and Antonio had, moreover, so bound a thick cloth soaked in ice-water about his head, that he could not hear a trace of what the lovers were whispering; so they now, for the first time, uttered all that was in their hearts, and vowed eternal fidelity, with tears and the sweetest kisses. The old man could not possibly have any suspicion, as Marianna, every now and then, kept asking him if there was anything he wanted, and even permitted him to press her little white hand to his lips. When it was high day, Antonio hastened away, according to his own statement, to order what was further necessary for the patient, but, in reality, to consider how he might possibly manage to keep him in a still more helpless state, if he could, so that Salvator and he might reflect upon what steps were to be taken in the next place.

A fresh plot which Salvator and Antonio form, and carry out upon Signor Pasquale Capuzzi and his associates; and the results thereof.

On the following morning Antonio came to Salvator, all vexation and anger.

"Well, how goes it?" Salvator cried to him. "What are you hanging your head for, superlatively happy man, who can kiss and caress his darling every day?"

"Ah, Salvator!" answered Antonio; "it is all over with my happiness. The devil delights in making me the sport of his tricks. Our plots have all come to nothing, and we are at open war with the accursed Capuzzi."

"So much the better! so much the better!" said Salvator. "But tell me what has been happening."

"Just imagine, Salvator," said Antonio. "When, yesterday, I was going back to Strada Ripetta, after I had been gone about two hours, bringing all sorts of essences, &c., there I saw the old gentleman standing at his door, completely dressed. At his back were the Pyramid Doctor, and the accursed Sbirro, whilst there was some little many-coloured object running in and out amongst their legs; this, I believe, was that little abortion of a Pitichinaccio. As soon as the old fellow saw me he menaced me with his fist, uttered the most gruesome curses and maledictions, and swore he would have every bone in my body broken if I dared to come to his door. 'Be off with you to all the devils in Hell, cursed Beard-scratcher!' he croaked and screamed at me. 'You thought to make a fool of me, with all sorts of infernal lies and deceptions; you have striven like the very Satan himself to tempt and mislead my Marianna. But wait a little. I will spend my last farthing, if necessary, in getting your life-light snuffed out before you are aware of it. And as for your fine patron, Signor Salvator--the murderer, the robber, the cheat-the-gallows!--he shall to hell to join his leader, Mas' Aniello. Him I'll get kicked out of Rome; that won't give me much trouble.' Thus did the old man rave; and as the cursed Sbirro, egged on by the Pyramid Doctor, made as if he would set on me and attack me, whilst the curious populace began to crowd round, what

could I do but get off as quickly as possible? In my despair I thought I should not come to you, for I felt certain you would only laugh--and in fact you hardly can help doing so at this moment."

Indeed, when Antonio ceased speaking, Salvator did laugh heartily.

"Now," he cried, "now the affair is really beginning to become most delightful. But I shall now tell you, circumstantially, my dear Antonio, what happened in Capuzzi's house when you had gone out. Scarcely had you got down-stairs, when Signor Splendiano Accoramboni--who, heaven knows how, had found out that his bosom friend Capuzzi had broken his leg in the night--came, in the most solemn state, to see him, bringing a surgeon with him. Your bandagings, and your whole treatment of Capuzzi, could not but excite some suspicion; the surgeon took the splints and bandages off, and of course found--what we know very well--that there was nothing whatever the matter with Capuzzi's foot; not so much as a sprained ankle. Very well; it did not require much acuteness to find out the rest."

"My dearest Maestro," asked Antonio, full of amazement, "how on earth did you manage to find out all this?--how could you get into Capuzzi's house, and know all that went on?"

"I told you," said Salvator, "that in Capuzzi's house--and in fact on the same storey with him--there lives an acquaintance of Dame Caterina's. This acquaintance, the widow of a wine-merchant, has a daughter whom my little Margerita often goes to see. Girls have a special faculty for finding out others like themselves, and in this way Rosa (the wine-merchant's widow's daughter) and Margerita soon discovered a little peep-hole in the dining-room, which is the next room to a dark chamber which opens into Marianna's room. The whisperings of the girls by no means escaped Marianna's notice, neither did the peephole; so that the way to mutual communications was marked out, and taken advantage of. When the old gentleman is having his afternoon nap, the girls have a right good chatter to their heart's content. You have no doubt noticed that little Margerita (her mother's favourite, and mine) is by no means so grave and reserved as her elder sister Anna, but a droll, merry creature. Without having exactly told her about your love affair, I have asked her to get Marianna to let her know all that goes on in the house. In this she has proved very clever; and if I, just now, laughed a little at your pain and despair, it was because I have it in my power to prove to you that your affairs have just, for the first time, got into an exceedingly favourable groove. I have a whole sackful of delightful news for you."

"Salvator!" cried Antonio, his eyes bright with joy, "what hopes dawn upon me! Blessings on the peephole in the dining-room. I can write to Marianna--Margerita will take the note with her."

"No, no, Antonio," said Salvator, "not quite that; Margerita shall do us good service without being exactly your go-between. Besides, chance--which often plays strange tricks--might place your love-prattle in the hands of old Capuzzi, and bring a thousand new troubles upon Marianna's head, just at the moment when she is on the point of getting the amorous old goose properly and completely under her little satin shoe. For just listen how affairs are progressing. The style in which Marianna received him when he was taken home has turned him round completely. He believes no less a thing than that Marianna has ceased to care for you, but has given one half of her heart to him, so that all he has to do is to get hold of the other half. Since she has imbibed the poison of your kisses, she has all at once become some three years cleverer and more experienced. She has not only convinced the old gentleman that she had nothing to do with our escapade, but that she abhors the idea of it, and would repel with the deepest scorn any plot which should have the object of bringing you into her proximity. In the excess of his delight at this, he vowed that if there should be anything he could do to please her, he would set about it in a moment; she had but to give her wish a name. On this she very quietly said what she would like would be that her *zio carissima* should take her to the theatre outside the Porto del Popolo, to see Signor Formica. The old fellow was somewhat startled by this, and consulted with

the Pyramid Doctor and Pitichinaccio; and the result is that Signor Pasquale and Signor Splendiano are actually going to take Marianna to the said theatre to-morrow. Pitichinaccio is to be dressed as a waiting-maid; but he only consented to this on condition that Pasquale should give him a periwig, over and above the plush doublet, and that he and the Pyramid Doctor should relieve each other, from time to time, of the task of carrying him home at night. This has been all agreed upon; and this remarkable three-bladed-clover will really go, to-morrow evening, with beautiful Marianna, to see Signor Formica, at the theatre outside the Porto del Popolo."

It is necessary now to say something as to this theatre, and Signor Formica himself.

Nothing can be sadder than when, at carnival time in Rome, the *impressarii* have been unfortunate in their composers--when the *primo tenore* of the Argentina has left his voice on the road--when the *primo uomo da donna* in the Teatro Valle is down with the influenza--in short, when the chief pleasures to which the Romans have been looking forward have proved disappointments, and Giovedi Grasso has been shorn, at one fell swoop, of all the hoped-for flowers which were expected to come at that time into blossom. Immediately alter a melancholy carnival of this description (in fact, the fasts were scarcely over) a certain Nicolo Musso opened a theatre outside the Porto del Popolo, limiting himself to announcing the performance of minor, improvised *buffonades*. His advertisement was couched in a clever and witty style of wording, and from it the Romans formed in advance a favourable opinion of Musso's undertaking, and would have done so even had they not, in the unsatisfied state of their dramatic appetites, been eager to snatch at anything of the kind that was offered to them. The arrangements of the theatre--or rather of the little booth--could not be said to give evidence of any very flourishing state of finances on the manager's part. There was no orchestra; there were no boxes. There was a sort of gallery at the back of the audience part of the house, adorned with the arms of the Colonnas--a mark that the Conte Colonna had taken Murso and his theatre under his special protection. The stage was a raised platform covered with carpets, and surrounded with gay-coloured paper-hangings which had to serve for forests, interiors, or streets, according to the requirements of the drama. As, moreover, the audience had to be content with hard, uncomfortable wooden benches to sit upon, it is not matter for wonder that the first set of spectators expressed themselves pretty strongly on the subject of the audacity of Signor Musso in giving the name of a theatre to this boarded booth. But scarcely had the two first actors who appeared spoken a few words, when the audience became attentive. As the piece went on, the attention became applause, the applause astonishment, and the astonishment enthusiasm, which expressed itself in the most prolonged and stormy laughter, hand-clapping, and cries of bravo!

And, in truth, nothing more perfect could have been seen than those improvised representations of Nicolo Musso's which sparkled with wit, fun, and *esprit*, castigating the follies of the day with unsparing lash. The performers all rendered their parts with incomparable distinctiveness of character, but the "Pasquarello" more particularly carried the house away with him bodily, by his inimitable play of gesture, and a talent for imitating well-known personages, in voice, walk, and manner, by his inexhaustible drollery, and the extraordinary originality of the ideas which struck him. This actor, who called himself Signor Formica, seemed to be inspired by a very remarkable and unusual spirit; often, in his tone and manner, there would be a something so strange that the audience, while in the middle of a burst of the heartiest laughter, would suddenly feel a species of cold shiver. Almost on a par with him, and a worthy compeer, was the "Dr. Graziano" of the troupe, who had a play of feature, a voice, a power of saying the most delightful things in, apparently, the most foolish manner, to which nothing in the world could be likened. This "Doctor Graziano" was an old Bolognese, of the name of Maria Aglia. As a matter of course, all the fashionable world of Rome soon came thronging to the little theatre outside the Porto del Popolo. The name of Formica was on everybody's lips; and in the streets as in the

theatre, all voices were crying, with the utmost enthusiasm, "Oh, Formica! Formica benedetto! Oh, Formicisimo!" He was looked upon as a supernatural being; and many an old woman, ashake with laughter in the theatre, would (if anybody ventured to criticise Formica's action in the slightest degree) turn grave, and say, with the utmost seriousness and solemnity--

"Scherza coi fanti e lascia star santi."

This was because, out of the theatre, Formica was an unfathomable mystery. No one ever saw him anywhere, and every attempt to come upon his traces was vain. Nothing as to where he lived could be got out of Musso.

Such was the theatre to which Marianna wished to go.

"Let us fly straight at our enemies' throats," Salvator said; "the walk home from the theatre to the town offers us a most admirable opportunity."

He then communicated a plan to Antonio, which seemed very risky and daring, but which the latter adopted with delight, thinking it would enable him to rescue his Marianna from the abominable Capuzzi; moreover, it pleased him well that Salvator made one great feature of it the punishing of the Pyramid Doctor.

When evening came, Salvator and Antonio each took a guitar, went to Strada Ripetta, and (by way of annoying old Capuzzi) treated the lovely Marianna to the most exquisite *serenata* imaginable. For Salvator played and sang like a master, and Antonio had a lovely tenor voice, and was almost an Odoardo Ceccarelli. Signor Pasquale of course came out on to the balcony, and scolded down at the singers, ordering them to hold their peace; but the neighbours, whom the beautiful music had brought to their windows, cried out to him, asking him whether, as he and his friends were in the habit of howling and screaming like all the demons in hell, he wouldn't suffer such a thing as a little *good* music in the street? Let him be off into the house, they said, and stop his ears, if he didn't want to hear the beautiful singing. Thus Signor Pasquale was obliged, to his torture, to endure Salvator and Antonio's singing, all night long--songs which at times consisted of the sweetest words of love, and at others ridiculed the folly of amorous old men. They distinctly saw Marianna at the window, and heard Pasquale adjuring her, in the most honeyed terms, not to expose herself to the night air.

The next evening there passed along the street towards the Porto del Popolo the strangest group of persons ever seen. They attracted all eyes, and people asked each other if some strange survival of the Carnival had preserved two or three mad maskers. Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, in his many-coloured, well-brushed Spanish suit, a new yellow feather in his steeple-crowned hat, tightly belted and buckled, all tenderness and grace, tripping along on shoes too tight for him, as if treading on eggs, conducted on his arm the lovely Marianna, whose pretty figure, and still more beautiful face, could not be seen, in consequence of the extraordinary manner in which she was wimpled and wrapped up in a cloak and hood. On her other side tripped along Signor Splendiano Accoramboni in his enormous wig, which covered the whole of his back, so that, when seen from behind, he looked like some enormous head moving along on two diminutive legs. Close behind Marianna, almost clinging on to her, came, in crab-like fashion, the little hideosity of a Pitichinaccio, in flame-coloured female dress, with his hair bedecked, in the most repulsive style, with flowers of all the colours of the rainbow.

On this particular evening Signor Formica even surpassed himself; and--what he had never done before--he introduced little snatches of songs, imitating various well-known singers. In old Capuzzi this awoke all the old delight in theatrical matters which in former days had been a regular mania with him. He kissed Marianna's hands over and over again, and vowed that he certainly would bring her to Nicolo Musso's theatre every night without fail. He extolled Signor Formica to the very skies, and joined most heartily in the uproarious applause of the rest

of the audience. Signor Splendiano was less content, and repeatedly begged Signor Capuzzi and Marianna not to laugh so very immoderately. He named, in one breadth, some twenty maladies which were liable to be brought on by over-agitation of the diaphragm; but neither the one nor the other gave themselves any trouble on the subject. Pitichinaccio was thoroughly unhappy. He had been obliged to sit just behind the Pyramid Doctor, who so overshadowed him with his enormous wig that he could not see the smallest peep of the stage, nor of the characters upon it; moreover, he was tortured by two facetious women who were sitting beside him, and who kept on calling him "Charming, pretty signora," and asking him whether he was married, for all he was so young, and had nice little children, who must be the dearest little things imaginable, &c., &c. Drops of cold perspiration stood on the poor little creature's brow; he whimpered and whined, and cursed the hour when he was born.

When the acting was over, Signor Pasquale waited till every one had left the house; and as the last of the lamps was being put out, Signor Splendiano lighted at it the stump of a wax candle, and they set forth on their homeward way. Pitichinaccio whined and cried; Capuzzi, to his torment, had to take him on his left arm, having Marianna on his right; before them went Doctor Splendiano with his candle-stump, whose feeble rays made the darkness of the night seem deeper.

While they were still some distance from the Porto del Popolo, they found themselves suddenly surrounded by several tall figures, thickly wrapped in cloaks. The Doctor's candle was instantly snatched from his hand, and went out on the ground. Capuzzi and the Doctor stood speechless and amazed. Then there fell (it was not clear from whence) a faint reddish glimmer upon the cloaked figures, and four pale death's-heads were seen staring at the Pyramid Doctor, with hollow, fearful eyes. "Woe! woe! woe unto thee, Splendiano Accoramboni!" howled the terrible spectres, in deep, hollow tones. Then one of them wailed out, "Knowest thou me? knowest thou me, Splendiano? I am Cordier, the French painter, buried last week; sent under-ground by thee, with thy drugs!" Then the second: "Knowest thou *me*, Splendiano? I am Kueffner, the German painter, whom thou didst poison with thy hellish electuaries!" Then the third: "Knowest thou *me*, Splendiano? I am Liers, the Fleming, whom thou didst murder with thy pills, cheating his brother out of his pictures!" Then the fourth: "Knowest thou *me*, Splendiano? I am Ghigi, the Neapolitan painter, whom thou didst slay with thy powders!" Finally, all the four cried out in quartet, "Woe! woe to thee, Splendiano Accoramboni, accursed Pyramid Doctor! Thou must away!--away with us!--down, down under the earth! On!--on with thee! Halloh!--halloh!" Therewith they seized the luckless Doctor, heaved him up, and disappeared with him like the storm-wind.

Sorely as terror was like to overcome Pasquale, he collected himself, and took heart of grace with wonderful courage, when he saw that this affair only concerned his friend Accoramboni. Pitichinaccio had put his head, flowers and all, under Pasquale's cloak, and was clinging so tightly about his neck that it was impossible to shake him off.

"Recover yourself," said Capuzzi to Marianna, when nothing more was to be seen of the spectres or of the Pyramid Doctor. "Recover yourself! Come to me, my sweet, darling little dove! My good friend Splendiano is gone. May Saint Bernard, who was a doctor himself, stand by him and defend him, if those revengeful painters, whom he sent to that Pyramid of his rather before their time, are going to twist his windpipe. Ah! who will take the bass parts in my canzonet now, I should like to know? And this creature here, Pitichinaccio, is squeezing my throat to that extent that, what with that, and what with the fright at seeing Splendiano spirited away, I dare say it'll be three months good before I can get out a single note in tune! Don't you be frightened, my own sweetest Marianna!--it is all over."

Marianna declared that she had quite recovered from the fright, and only begged him to let her walk by herself to enable him to get quit of his troublesome lap-child; but he only held her the tighter, and vowed that no consideration in the

world would induce him to allow her to venture a single step by herself in the terrible darkness.

Just then, as Capuzzi was going to step courageously forward, there suddenly rose before him, as if from the depths of the earth, four terrible-looking figures of devils, in short cloaks of glittering red, who glared at him with fearful eyes, and began making a horrible croaking and squeaking. "Hup! hup!" they cried. "Pasquale Capuzzi!--idiotic fool!--amorous old donkey! We are comrades of yours; we are love-devils; and we have come to carry you down to the hottest hell, you and your bosom-friend there, Pitichinaccio!" Thus screaming, the devils fell upon Capuzzi, and he, with Pitichinaccio, went down, both of them raising piercing yells of distress like those of a whole herd of beaten donkeys.

Marianna had forcibly torn herself away from the old fellow, and sprung to one side, where one of the devils folded her softly in his arms, and said, in a sweet voice of affection: "Oh, Marianna! my own Marianna! it has all come right at last. My friends are taking the old man a long distance off, while we find some place of safety to fly to."

"My own Antonio!" Marianna whispered softly.

Suddenly a bright glare of torches lightened up the place, and Antonio felt himself stabbed on the shoulder-blade. Quick as lightning he turned round, drew his sword, and attacked the fellow, who was aiming a second stab with his stiletto. He saw that his three friends were defending themselves against a much stronger force of Sbirri. He managed to beat off the man who was attacking him, and to join his friends; but, bravely as they fought, the struggle was too unequal, and the Sbirri must unfailingly have had the best of it, had not two men suddenly burst, with loud shouts, into the ranks of the young fellows, one of whom immediately floored the Sbirro who was taxing Antonio the hardest.

The fight was now speedily decided to the disadvantage of the Sbirri, and those of them who were not on the ground wounded, fled with loud cries towards the Porto del Popolo.

Salvator Rosa--for it was no other who had hastened to Antonio's help, and struck down the Sbirro--was for starting off without more ado, with Antonio and the young painters who were in the devils' dresses, after the Sbirri to town.

Maria Agli, who had come with him, and, notwithstanding his years, had set to with the Sbirri like the others, thought this was not advisable, as the guard at the Porto del Popolo, informed of the affair, would of course arrest them all. So they betook themselves to Nicolo Musso, who received them gladly in his small abode not far from the theatre. The painters took off their devils' masks and their cloaks rubbed with phosphorus; and Antonio--who, save for the unimportant prick in his shoulder, was not at all hurt--brought his surgical skill into play, all the others having wounds, though none of any importance.

The plot, so daringly and skilfully contrived, would have succeeded had not Salvator and Antonio left one person out of account; and that person ruined it all. Michele, the ex-Bravo and Sbirro, who lived downstairs in Capuzzi's house, and was a kind of servant to him, had, by his wish, gone behind him to the theatre, but at some distance, as the old man was ashamed of his tattered and scoundrelly appearance. In the same way, Michele had followed on the homeward way; so that, when the spectres appeared, Michele--who really did not fear death or devil--smelt a rat, ran, in the darkness, straight away to the Porto del Popolo, gave the alarm, and came back with the Sbirri, who, as we know, arrived just at the moment when the devils fell upon Signor Pasquale, and were going to take him away, as the dead men had taken the Pyramid Doctor.

Bat in the thick of the fight, one of the young painters had distinctly seen a fellow hurrying away towards the gate with Marianna, in a fainting state, in his arms, followed by Pasquale, who was rushing along at an incredible rate, as if his

veins were running quicksilver. There was, moreover, some glimmering object visible by the torch-light hanging on to his cloak, and whining, probably Pitichinaccio.

Next morning Doctor Splendiano was discovered at the Pyramid of Cestius, rolled up in a ball and immersed in his periwig, fast asleep, as though in a warm, soft nest. When they woke him, he talked incoherently, and it was hard to convince him that he was still in this visible life and, moreover, in Rome. When, at length, he was taken to his house, he thanked the Virgin and all the Saints for his rescue, threw all his tinctures, essences, electuaries, and powders out of window, made a bonfire of his recipes, and for the future healed his patients in no other manner than by laying his hands upon them and stroking them, as a celebrated physician used to do before him (who was a Saint into the bargain, but whose name I cannot think of at the moment), with much success, for his patients died as well as the other's, and before their deaths saw heaven open, and anything that the Saint pleased.

"I do not know," said Antonio, next day, to Salvator, "what fury has blazed up within me since some of my blood was spilt. Death and destruction to the miserable, ignoble Capuzzi! Do you know, Salvator, that I have made up my mind to get into his house by force; and if he makes any resistance, I will run him through, and carry Marianna off."

"Glorious idea!" exclaimed Salvator. "A truly happy inspiration. I have no doubt you have also devised the means of carrying Marianna through the air to the Piazza di Spagna, so that you may reach that place of sanctuary before they have arrested you and hanged you! No, no, dear Antonio, there is nothing to be done in this affair by violence, and you may be quite certain that Signor Capuzzi will be too well prepared for anything in the shape of an open attack. Besides this, our escapade has attracted a great deal of attention; and more than that, the laughable style in which we set about our little piece of entertainment with Splendiano and Capuzzi has had the effect of waking the police up from their gentle slumbers, so that they will now be on the watch for us, as far as their feeble powers enable them. No, Antonio, we must resort to stratagem: '*Con arte e con inganno si vive mezzo l'anno; con inganno e con arte si vive l'altro parte.*' That is what Dame Caterina says, and she is quite right. I can't help laughing at our having set to work just as if we were innocent boys; but it is my fault, chiefly, seeing that I have the advantage of you in years. Tell me, Antonio, if our plot had succeeded, and you had really carried Marianna off, where should you have gone with her?--where could you have kept her hidden?--how could you have got married by the priest so speedily that the old man should not have managed to interfere? As it is, in a very few days you shall actually carry her off. I have enlisted the aid of Nicolo Musso and Formica, and in conjunction with them thought out a plan which scarcely can break down. Comfort yourself, therefore, Signor Formica is going to help you."

"Signor Formica!" repeated Antonio, in an indifferent, almost contemptuous tone; "and pray how can that 'funny-man' help me?"

"Ho, ho!" cried Salvator, "I must beg you to treat Signor Formica with a proper amount of respect. Don't you know that he is a kind of wizard, and has all sorts of wondrous secret arts at his command? I tell you, Signor Formica is going to help you. And old Maria Agli, our great and grand 'Doctor Graziano,' of Bologna, has joined in our plot, and is going to play a most important part in it. You shall carry your Marianna off from Musso's theatre."

"Salvator," said Antonio, "you are buoying me up with vain hopes. You have said, yourself, that Capuzzi will be thoroughly on his guard against any more open attacks; so, after what has happened to him already, how can he possibly be induced to go to Musso's theatre another time?"

"It is not such a difficult matter as you suppose," answered Salvator, "to get him to go back there again; the difficulty will be to induce him to go without his

companions, and to get him on to the stage. But however that may be, you must now arrange matters with Marianna so as to be ready to fly from Rome whenever the favourable moment arrives. You will have to go to Florence. Your art will be an introduction to you there to begin with, and I will take care that you shall not want for friends, or for valuable support and assistance. We shall have to rest on our oars for a few days, and then we shall see what more is to be done. Keep up your courage. Formica will help."

A Fresh Misfortune Comes Upon Signor Pasquale Capuzzi. Antonio Scacciati Carries Out A Plot At Musso's Theatre, And Flies To Florence.

Signor Pasquale knew but too well who were the authors of the trick played upon him and the poor Pyramid Doctor near the Porto del Popolo; and we can imagine his rage with Antonio and with Salvator Rosa, whom he rightly considered to be the prime mover in the matter. He did his utmost to console Marianna, who was quite ill, from the fright--as she put it--but really from disappointment and vexation at the accursed Michele's having carried her off, with his Sbirri, from Antonio. Meanwhile, Margarita industriously brought her tidings of her lover, and she based all her hopes and expectations upon the enterprising Salvator. She waited most impatiently from day to day for anything in the shape of fresh events, and vented her vexation upon the old gentleman by a thousand teasings and naggings, which rendered him humble and submissive in his foolish amourishness, but had not the effect of in any degree casting out the love-devil by which he was possessed. When Marianna had poured out upon his devoted head a full measure of all the evil caprices of a selfish girl, she had only to suffer him to press his withered lips a single time upon her little hand, and he would vow, in the excess of his delight, that he would never leave off kissing the Pope's slipper till he had obtained his dispensation to marry his niece, quintessence as she was of all beauty and loveliness. Marianna was careful to do nothing to disturb this condition of delight, for those rays of hope of her uncle's made her own to shine brighter--her hopes of being all the nearer escaping him, the more firmly he believed himself to be united to her by bonds which were indissoluble.

Some time had elapsed when, one day, Michele came stumping upstairs and announced to his master (who opened the door after a good deal of knocking), with much prolixity, that there was a gentleman below who insisted, most urgently, on speaking with Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, who, he was aware, lived in that house.

"Oh, all ye heavenly hosts!" cried the old gentleman, in a rage, "doesn't this lubber know as well as possible that I never speak with strangers in the house!"

But Michele said the gentleman was very well-looking, rather elderly, and spoke exceedingly nicely, saying his name was Nicolo Musso.

"Nicolo Musso!" said Capuzzi, thoughtfully to himself; "Nicolo Musso, who has the theatre outside the Porta del Popolo! What can he want with me?" He carefully closed and bolted the door, and went down with Michele to talk with Nicolo in the street.

"My dear Signor Pasquale," said Nicolo, greeting him with an easy courtesy, "how very much delighted I am that you honour me with your acquaintance! How many thanks I owe you! Since the Romans saw *you*--the man of the most acknowledged taste, of the most universal knowledge, the virtuoso in art--in my theatre, my reputation, and my receipts, have been doubled. All the more does it pain me that some wicked, malicious fellows should have made a murderous attack upon you and your party as you were going home from my theatre at night. For the love of all the Saints, Signor Pasquale, do not form a prejudice against me and my theatre on account of an affair of this sort, which could scarcely have been anticipated. Do not deprive me of your patronage."

"My good Signor Nicolo," said Capuzzi, flattered, "let me assure you that I never, anywhere, found more pleasure than in your theatre. Your Formica, your Agli, are actors, whose equals have still to be discovered; but the alarm which brought my friend Splendiano Accoramboni--and indeed myself as well--nearly to death's door, was too severe. It has closed to me for ever, not your theatre, but the road to it. Open your theatre in the Piazza del Popolo, or in Strada Babuina, or Strada Ripetta, and I shall never miss a single evening; but no power on earth would induce me to set foot outside the Porto del Popolo at night."

Nicolo sighed as if possessed by profound sorrow. "That hits me hard," he said; "harder than you perhaps may suppose, Signor Pasquale. I had based all my hopes upon you. In fact, I came to implore your assistance."

"My assistance!" echoed the old gentleman; "my assistance! In what way could that be of any use to you, Signor Nicolo?"

"My dear Signor Pasquale," answered Nicolo, passing his handkerchief over his eyes as if wiping away a tear or two, "you will have observed that my actors occasionally introduce a little aria or so here and there; and my idea was to carry that further gradually; bring a small orchestra together, and finally evade prohibitions so far as to start an opera. You, Signor Capuzzi, are the first composer in all Italy, and it is only the incredible frivolity of the Romans, and the envy of the *Maestri*, that are to blame for the circumstance that anything except your compositions is to be heard on the stage. Signor Pasquale, I came to beg you, on my knees, to allow me to represent your immortal works in my theatre."

"My good Signor Nicolo!" cried the old fellow, with bright sunshine in his face, "why are we talking here in the public street? Will you be kind enough to climb up a steep flight of stairs, and come with me into my humble dwelling?"

As soon as he got into the room with Nicolo, he hauled out a great packet of dusty music-manuscript, opened it up, turned pages over, and began that frightful yelling and screeching which he called "singing." Nicolo demeaned himself like one enraptured. He sighed, he groaned; he cried "bravo!" from time to time, and "Bravissimo! Benedetto Capuzzi!" At length, as if in an excess of blissful enthusiasm, he fell at the old man's feet, and clasped his knees, hugging them so very tightly, however, that Capuzzi gave a great bound to try and shake him off, screamed with the pain, and cried out: "All the Saints! let me go, Signor Nicolo! you'll be the death of me!"

"No!" cried Nicolo. "No, Signor Pasquale! I will not rise from this spot till you promise to let me have that heavenly aria which you have just rendered so magnificently, so that Formica may sing it two nights hence on my stage."

"You are a person of some taste," sighed Pasquale; "a man of insight; to whom, rather than to you, should I intrust my compositions? You shall take all my arias with you (Oh! oh! do let me go!) but, oh heavens! I shall not hear them--my heavenly masterpieces! (Oh, oh! let go my legs, Signor Nicolo!)"

"No!" cried Nicolo, still on his knees, and firmly grasping the old man's spindle-shanks like a vice. "No, Signor Pasquale! I will not let you go till you give me your word that you will come to my theatre the evening after to-morrow. Have no fear of being attacked again. You may be certain that, when the Romans have heard those arias of yours, they will carry you home triumphantly in a torchlight procession. But even if they do not, I and my trusty comrades will arm, and escort you safely home."

"You and your comrades will escort me home, will you?" Pasquale inquired; "how many of them might there be?"

"Eight or ten people will be at your disposal, Signor Pasquale. Make up your mind; decide upon coming, and yield to my earnest prayers."

"Formica," lisped Pasquale, "has a capital voice; how he *would* sing my arias!"

"Decide on it," cried Nicolo once more, grasping the old man's legs tighter than ever.

"You promise me," said Pasquale; "you undertake to be responsible that I get safe home without being set upon?"

"Upon my life and honour," said Nicolo, giving the legs an extra grip.

"Done!" cried the old gentleman. "The evening after to-morrow I shall be at your theatre."

Nicolo jumped up, and pressed the old man to his heart with such violence that he coughed and gasped for breath.

At this juncture Marianna came in. Pasquale tried to restrain her by casting a grim look at her, but in vain. She went straight to Musso, and said angrily: "It is of no use your trying to entice my dear uncle to go to your theatre again. Remember that the horrible trick played upon me by abandoned villains who have a plot against me nearly cost my darling uncle and his worthy friend Splendiano their lives, not to mention myself. Never will I allow him to run such a risk again. Cease your attempts, Nicolo. Dearest uncle! you will stay quietly at home, will you not, and never venture outside the Porto del Popolo again in the treacherous night, which is no one's friend?"

This came upon Signor Pasquale like a clap of thunder. He gazed at his niece with eyes widely opened; and presently addressed her in the sweetest language, explaining to her at much length that Signor Nicolo had taken the responsibility of making such arrangements that there should be no possible risk of danger on the homeward way.

"For all that," answered Marianna, "my opinion remains the same, and I implore you most earnestly, dearest uncle, not to go. Excuse me, Signor Nicolo, for speaking clearly in your presence, and uttering the dark presentiment which I so strongly feel. I know that Salvator Rosa is a friend of yours, and I have no doubt so is Antonio Scacciati. How if you were in collusion with my enemies? How if you are tempting my uncle (who, I know, will not go to your theatre unless I am with him) only to have a surer opportunity of carrying out some fresh plot against him?"

"What an idea!" cried Nicolo, as if horrified. "What a terrible suspicion to entertain, Signora! Have you had such an evil experience of me in the past? Is my reputation such that you believe me capable of such a frightful piece of treachery? But if you *do* think so badly of me--if you have no confidence in the help I have promised--you can bring Michele (who was so useful in rescuing you on the former occasion), and let him bring a good force of Sbirri, who could be waiting for you outside; as you could scarcely expect *me* to fill my house with Sbirri."

Marianna, looking him steadfastly in the eyes, said earnestly: "Since you suggest that, I see that you mean honourably, Signor Nicolo, and that my evil suspicions of you were unfounded. Pray forgive my thoughtless words. Yet I cannot overcome my anxiety, and my fear for my dearest uncle, and I again beg him not to venture upon this dangerous expedition."

Signor Pasquale had listened to the conversation with strange looks, which clearly testified to the contest within him. He could now restrain himself no longer; he fell on his knees before Marianna, seized her hands, kissed them, covered them with tears which streamed from his eyes, and cried, as if beside himself: "Heavenly and adored Marianna! the fire in my heart breaks forth into flame! Ah! this anxiety, this fear on my account; what are they but the sweetest admissions of your love for me?" He entreated her not to allow herself to be alarmed in the very slightest degree, but to hear, on the stage, the most lovely of the arias which the divinest of composers ever had written.

Nicolo, too, continued the most pathetic entreaties, until Marianna declared

she was persuaded, and promised to lay aside all fear, and go with her dear uncle to the theatre outside the Porto del Popolo.

Signor Pasquale was in the seventh heaven of bliss. He had the full conviction that Marianna loved him, and he was going to hear his own music on the stage, and gather the laurels which he had so long been striving for in vain. He was on the very point of finding his fondest dreams realized, and he wanted his light to shine in all its glory on his faithful friends. His idea, therefore, was that Signor Splendiano and little Pitichinaccio should go with him, just as they had done on the former occasion.

But in addition to the spectres who had carried him off, all manner of direful apparitions had haunted Signor Splendiano on the night when he slept in his periwig near the Pyramid of Cestius. The whole burying-ground seemed to have come to life, and hundreds of the dead had stretched their bony arms out at him, complaining loudly concerning his essences and electuaries, the tortures of which were not abated even in the tomb. Hence the Pyramid Doctor, though he could not contradict Signor Pasquale when he held that the whole thing was only a trick performed by a parcel of wicked young men, continued to be in a melancholy mood; and though, formerly, he was not greatly prone to anything in the nature of superstition, he now saw spectres everywhere, and was sorely plagued with presentiments and evil dreams.

As for Pitichinaccio, nothing would persuade him that those devils who fell upon him and Signor Pasquale were not real and veritable demons from the flames of hell, and he screamed aloud whenever any one so much as alluded to that terrible night. All Pasquale's assurances that it was only Antonio Scacciati and Salvator Rosa who were behind those devil's masks were unavailing; for Pitichinaccio vowed, with many tears, that, notwithstanding his terror, he distinctly recognized the fiend Fanfarell, by his voice and appearance, and that said Fanfarell had beaten his stomach black and blue.

It may be imagined what trouble Signor Pasquale had to persuade the Pyramid Doctor and Pitichinaccio to go with him again to Musso's theatre. Splendiano did not agree to do so until he had succeeded in getting from a monk of the Order of St. Bernard a consecrated bag of musk (the smell whereof neither dead men nor devils can abide), with which he was proof against all attacks. Pitichinaccio could not resist the promise of a box of grapes in sugar, but Signor Pasquale had to expressly agree that he was not to wear female attire (which, he thought, was what had brought the devils upon him), but go in his Abbate's costume.

What Salvator had dreaded seemed thus to be about to insist on happening, although, as he declared, his whole plot depended for success upon Signor Pasquale and Marianna going by themselves, without the faithful companions, to Musso's theatre.

Both he and Antonio cudgelled their brains how to keep Splendiano and Pitichinaccio away; but there was not time enough to carry out any plan having that for its aim, as the great stroke itself had to be struck on the evening of the next day. But heaven--which often employs the oddest tools in the punishment of foolish folk--interposed, in this instance, in favour of the lovers, and so guided Michele that he gave the rein to his natural dunderheadedness, and by that means brought about what the skill of Salvator and Antonio was powerless to accomplish.

On that self-same night there suddenly arose, in Strada Ripetta before Pasquale's house, such a terrible swearing, shouting, and quarrelling that all the neighbours started from their sleep, and the Sbirri (who had been after a murderer who took sanctuary in the Piazza di Spagna), supposing there was another murder going on, came hurrying up with their torches. When they, and a crowd of people attracted by the noise who came with them, arrived on the scene of the supposed murder, what was seen was poor little Pitichinaccio lying on the ground as if dead; Michele belabouring the Pyramid Doctor with a frightful

cudgel, and the said Doctor in the act of falling down; whilst Signor Pasquale, picking himself up with difficulty, drew his sword, and began furiously lunging at Michele. All round lay fragments of shattered guitars. Several people stopped the old gentleman's arm, or he would infallibly have run Michele through the body. The latter (who, now that the torches had come, saw, for the first time, who it was that he had to do with), stood like a statue, with eyes staring out of his head. Presently He emitted a terrific yell, tore his hair, and implored forgiveness and mercy. Neither the Pyramid Doctor nor Pitichinaccio were seriously hurt, but they were so stiff, and so black and blue, that they could not move a muscle, and had to be carried home.

Signor Pasquale had brought this trouble upon his own pate. We are aware that Salvator and Antonio had favoured Marianna with the most beautiful night-music imaginable, but I have forgotten to add that they went on repeating it on succeeding nights, tremendously infuriating Signor Pasquale; his anger was held in check by the neighbours, and he was silly enough to apply to the authorities to prevent the two painters from singing in Strada Ripetta. The authorities considered it an unheard of thing in Rome to forbid anybody singing whenever he chose, and said it was absurd to demand it. On this Signor Pasquale determined to put an end to the thing himself, and promised Michele a good sum of money if he would fall upon the singers and give them a good cudgelling on the first opportunity. Michele at once provided himself with a big stick, and kept watch every night behind the door. However, it happened that Salvator and Antonio thought it advisable to discontinue the night-music in Strada Ripetta on the nights immediately preceding the execution of their plot, so that nothing might suggest ideas of his enemies to the old man. And Marianna innocently remarked that, much as she hated Salvator and Antonio, she would have been very glad to hear their singing, for their music, soaring on the breeze in the night, surpassed everything.

Pasquale took mental note of this, and, as an exquisite piece of gallantry, determined to delight and surprise his beloved with a serenata, composed by himself, and carefully rehearsed with his companions. So the very night before the projected visit to the theatre he slipped secretly out and fetched his two associates, who were prepared beforehand. But no sooner had they struck the first chords on their guitars than Michele (whom his master had unfortunately forgotten to warn of what was going to happen), in high glee at the near prospect of earning the promised reward, burst out at the door, and set to work unmercifully becudgelling the musicians. What happened afterwards we know. Of course it was out of the question that either Splendiano or Pitichinaccio could go with Pasquale to the theatre, as they were lying in their beds covered all over with sticking-plaster. But Signor Pasquale could not refrain from going himself, although his shoulders and back smarted not a little from the licking he had had; every note of his aria was a rope dragging him there irresistibly.

"Now that the obstacle which we thought insurmountable has cleared itself out of the way of its own accord," said Salvator to Antonio, "everything depends upon your adroitness in not letting slip, when it comes, the proper moment for carrying your Marianna off from Nicolo's theatre. But you will not fail; and I greet you already as the bridegroom of Capuzzi's beautiful niece, who will be your wife in a few days. I wish you every happiness, Antonio, although it goes to my very marrow when I think of your marriage."

"What do you mean, Salvator?" asked Antonio.

"Call it whim, or fanciful idea, Antonio," he answered; "the long and the short of it is, I love women; but every one of them, even her whom I am madly in love with, for whom I would gladly die, affects my mind with an apprehension which raises in me the most inexplicable and mysterious shudder the moment I think of a union with her such as marriage would be. The unfathomable element in woman's nature mockingly sets all the weapons of our sex at complete defiance. She whom we believe to have devoted herself to us with her whole being--to have opened to

us the innermost recesses of her nature--is the first to deceive us, and with the sweetest kisses we imbibe the most destroying poison."

"And my Marianna?" asked Antonio, aghast.

"Pardon me, Antonio," answered Salvator; "even your Marianna, who is sweetness and delightsomeness personified, has given me a fresh proof how constantly we are menaced by the mysterious nature of woman. Remember how that innocent, inexperienced child behaved when we took her uncle home to her; how, at one glance of mine, she comprehended the whole situation, and played her part, as you said yourself, with the most amazing ability. But that was not to be named in the same day with what happened when Musso went to see the old man. The most practised skill, the most impenetrable craftiness--in short, every art of the woman most accomplished and experienced in the ways of the world--could suggest nothing more than what little Marianna did, in order to throw dust in the old man's eyes with the most absolute assurance of success. She could not possibly have acted with greater talent to make the road clear for us, whatever our undertakings were to be. The campaign against the insane old fool was legitimate--every kind of trick and artifice seems justified; still, however, dear Antonio, don't let my dreamer's fancies influence you too much, and be as happy with your Marianna as ever you can."

If only some monk had accompanied Signor Pasquale as he was on his way to Musso's theatre with Marianna, everybody must have thought the strange pair were being taken to the place of execution; for ahead of them marched Michele, truculent in aspect, and armed to the teeth; and he was followed by well on to twenty Sbirri, who were surrounding Signor Pasquale and Marianna.

Nicolo received the old gentleman and the lady with much solemnity of ceremony, and conducted them to the places reserved for them close in front of the stage. Much flattered at being thus honoured, Signor Pasquale looked about him with proud, beaming glances; and his pleasure was increased by the circumstance that there were none but women round and behind Marianna. Behind the scenes, on the stage, one or two violins and a bass were being tuned, and the old gentleman's heart beat high with anticipation, and a sort of electric shock pierced through his joints and marrow when all at once the ritornello of his aria sounded.

Formica came on as Pasquarello, and sang, with the gestures most peculiarly characteristic of Capuzzi, and in his very voice, that most atrocious of all arias. The theatre resounded with the audience's most uproarious laughter. People shouted out: "Ah! Pasquale Capuzzi! Compositore--Virtuoso celeberrimo! Bravo, bravissimo!" The old man, not observing the tone of the laughter, was all delight. When the aria ended, the audience called for silence; Doctor Graziano (played on this occasion by Nicolo) came on, holding his ears, and calling out to Pasquarello to cease his din, and not make such an insane crowing. He proceeded to ask Pasquarello when he had taken to singing, and where he had picked up that abominable tune. Pasquarello said he did not know what the Doctor meant, and that he was just like the Romans, who had no taste for real music, and left the finest talents in neglect. The aria, he said, was by the greatest of living composers and virtuosi, whose service it was his good fortune to be in, and who himself gave him lessons in music and singing. Graziano went over the names of a number of well-known composers and virtuosi, but at each renowned name Pasquarello disdainfully shook his head.

At length he said the Doctor showed gross ignorance in not knowing the very greatest composer of the day--none other than Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, who had done him the honour to take him into his service. Could he not see that Pasquarello was the friend and servant of Signor Pasquale?

The Doctor broke into an immoderate fit of laughter and cried: "What! had Pasquarello, after serving *him*, where, besides wages and food, many a good *quattrino* fell into his mouth, gone to the very greatest and most accomplished

skinflint and miser that ever swallowed macaroni?--to the motley Carnival-fool, who strutted about like a turkey-cock after a shower?--to that cur, that amorous old coxcomb, who poisons the air in Strada Ripetta with that disgusting goat-bleating which he calls 'singing?'" &c., &c.

To this Pasquarello answered quite angrily, that it was mere envy on the Doctor's part. To speak with his heart in his hand (*parla col cuore in mano*) the Doctor was by no means in a position to pass a judgment on Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senegaglia. To speak heart in hand, the Doctor himself had a pretty good dash of all which he was finding fault with in the admirable Signor Pasquale. Speaking, as he was, heart in hand, he had often, himself, known some six hundred people or so to laugh with all their throats at Doctor Graziano himself. And then Pasquarello held forth at great length in praise of his new master, Signor Pasquale, attributing to him all possible excellences, and finishing with a description of his character, which he made out to be absolutely perfect as regarded amiability and lovableness.

"Blessed Formica!" whispered Signor Capuzzi aside to himself, "I see that you have determined to render my triumph complete, by rubbing the noses of the Romans in all the envy and ingratitude with which they have persecuted me, and showing them clearly whom and what I am."

"Here comes my master himself," cried Pasquarello; and there came on to the stage Signor Capuzzi, as he lived and moved, in dress, face, walk, and manner--in all respects so exactly similar to the Capuzzi down in the audience part of the house, that the latter, quite alarmed, let go his hold of Marianna (whom he had been holding up to this time with one hand), and rubbed his nose and periwig, as if to find out whether he was awake or dreaming of seeing his own double, or really in Nicolo Musso's theatre, obliged to believe his eyes, and infer that he did see this miraculous appearance.

The Capuzzi on the stage embraced Doctor Graziano with much amity, and inquired after his welfare. The Doctor said his appetite was good, at his service (*per servir-lo*), and his sleep sound; but that his purse laboured under a complete depletion. Yesterday, in honour of his lady love, he said, he had spent his last ducat in buying a pair of rosemary stockings, and he was just going to certain bankers to see if they would lend him thirty ducats.

"How could you think of such a thing?" cried Capuzzi. "Why pass the door of your best friend? Here, my dear sir, are fifty ducats; pray accept them."

"Pasquale, what are you doing?" cried the Capuzzi down in the audience, half aloud.

Doctor Graziano talked of giving a bill and paying interest; but the stage Capuzzi vowed he could not think of taking either from such a friend as the Doctor. "Pasquale! are you crazy?" cried the Capuzzi below, louder.

Doctor Graziano made his exit here, after many grateful embracings. Pasquarello then went forward, with lowly reverences; lauded Signor Capuzzi to the skies; said *his* (Pasquarello's) purse was afflicted with the same malady as the Doctor's, and begged for some of the same medicine. The Capuzzi on the stage laughed, saying he was glad that Pasquarello knew how to take advantage of his good dispositions, and threw him two or three shining ducats.

"Pasquale, you're mad! the devil's in you!" the audience-Capuzzi cried, very loudly. The audience called him to order. Pasquarello waxed still louder in Capuzzi's praise, and came, at length, on the subject of the arias which he (Capuzzi) had composed, with which he (Pasquarello) was in hopes of charming the world. Capuzzi on the stage patted Pasquarello on the shoulder, and said he could confide to a faithful servant like *him*, that the truth was that he really knew nothing whatever about music, and that the aria he had been mentioning, like all the arias he had ever written, was cribbed from Frescobaldi's canzone, and

Carissimi's motets.

"You lie, you scoundrel, in your throat!" screamed the Capuzzi below, rising from his seat. "Silence!--sit down!" cried the audience; the women who were sitting near him dragged him down into his place.

The stage-Capuzzi went on to say it was time, now, to come to matters of more importance. He wanted to give a large dinner the next day, and Pasquarello must set to work briskly to get together all the requirements. He drew out of his pocket a list of the most expensive and recherché dishes, and read it aloud; as each dish was mentioned, Pasquarello had to say how much it would cost, and the money was handed to him on the spot.

"Pasquale!--idiotic fool!--madman!--spendthrift!--prodigal!" cried the Capuzzi below, in crescendo, after the mention of the several dishes, and grew more and more angry the higher the total bill for this most unheard-of of all dinners became.

When at length the list was gone through, Pasquarello asked Signor Pasquale's reason for giving so grand a dinner; and Capuzzi (on the stage) replied: "To-morrow will be the happiest day of all my life. Let me tell you, my good Pasquarello, that to-morrow I celebrate the wedding-day, rich in blessings, of my dear niece Marianna. I am giving her hand to that fine young fellow, the greatest of all painters, Scacciati."

Scarce had the Capuzzi on the stage uttered those words, than he of the audience, quite beside himself, and incapable of further self-control, sprang up, with all the fury of a demon in his face of fire, clenched both his fists at his counterfeit, and screamed out at him, in a yelling voice: "That you shall not!--that you shall never! you infernal scoundrel of a Pasquale! Will you defraud yourself of your own Marianna, you dog? Are you going to throw her at that diabolical rascal's head? The sweet Marianna--your life, your hope, your all-in-all? Ah, beware! Have a care, deluded blockhead! These fists shall beat you black and blue, and give you something else to think about than dinners and marriages."

But the Capuzzi on the stage clenched *his* fists too, and cried out in a similar fury, with the same yelling voice: "May all the devils enter your body! you cursed, senseless Pasquale! Abominable skinflint!--old amorous goose!--motley fool, with the cap and bells over your ears! Have a care of yourself, or I will blow the breath of life out of you! that the mean actions you want to father upon the shoulders of the good, honourable, upright Pasquale may be put an end to at last."

To an accompaniment of the most furious curses and maledictions of the Capuzzi beneath, he on the stage proceeded to narrate one scurrilous story of him after another, finishing off by crying out: "Try if you dare, Pasquale--amorous old ape!--to interfere with the happiness of those two young people, destined for each other by heaven."

As he spoke, there appeared at the back of the stage Antonio Scacciati and Marianna, with their arms about each other. Shaky as the old gentleman was on his legs, fury gave him strength and agility. At a bound he was on to the stage, where he drew his sword, and ran at Antonio. But he felt himself seized from behind; an officer of the Papal Guard was holding him, and said, in a serious tone: "Consider a little, Signor Pasquale Capuzzi; you are on Nicolo Musso's stage. Without being aware of it, you have been playing a most entertaining part this evening. You will not find Antonio or Marianna here." The two performers whom Capuzzi had taken to be them had come closer, with the rest of the actors, and he did not know their faces at all. The sword fell from his trembling hand; he drew a deep breath, like one waking from a fearful dream, clasped his forehead, forced his eyes wide open. The dreadful sense of what had really happened flashed upon him, and he cried: "Marianna!" in a terrible voice, till the walls re-echoed.

But his calling could no longer reach her ears; for Antonio had carefully

watched for the moment when Capuzzi, oblivious of everything, even himself, was contending with his counterfeit on the stage, had then cautiously made his way to Marianna, and taken her through the audience to a side door, where the Vetturino was waiting with the carriage; and away they were driven towards Florence as fast as they could go.

"Marianna!" the old man continued crying. "She has gone!--she has flown!--the villain Antonio has robbed me of her! Away!--after her! Good people, have pity! Get torches; search for my dove! Ha, the serpent!"

And the old man was making off; but the officer held him fast, saying: "If you mean the pretty young girl who was sitting by you, I rather fancy I saw her slip out with a young fellow--Antonio Scacciati, I believe,--some considerable time ago, just as you were beginning that useless, silly quarrel with the actor who had on a mask something like you. Signor Pasquale, it is my duty to arrest you, on account of your behaviour, and the murderous attack upon the actor."

Signor Pasquale, with pale death in his face, incapable of uttering a word or a sound, was marched off by the very Sbirri who had come there to protect him from masquerading demons and spectres. Thus there fell upon him deep distress and sorrow, and all the wild despair of a foolish and deceived old amorous fool, on the very night when he looked to celebrate his greatest triumph.

Salvator Rosa Quits Rome For Florence.
The End Of This Story.

All things here below under the sun are subject to constant change and fluctuation, but there is nothing that more deserves to be called fickle and fleeting than mankind's opinions, which keep rotating in an eternal circle, like Fortune's wheel. Bitter censure falls to-day upon him who yesterday gathered a grand harvest of praise; he who walks to-day a-foot may to-morrow ride in a gilded chariot.

Who was there in all Rome who did not scorn and mock at old Capuzzi, with his mean avarice, his silly amorousness, his crazy jealousy?--or who did not wish the poor tormented Marianna her freedom? Yet now that Antonio had succeeded in carrying her off, all the scorn and mockery suddenly turned to pity for the poor old fellow who was seen creeping about the streets of Rome, with bowed head, inconsolable.

Misfortunes rarely come singly. Soon after Marianna had been carried off, Pasquale lost his dearest bosom friends. Little Pitichinaccio choked himself with an almond, which he incautiously tried to swallow as he was in the middle of a *cadenza*; and a slip of the pen (of his own making) put a sudden period to the life of the renowned Pyramid-Doctor, Signor Splendiano Accoramboni. Michele's cudgelling had such an effect on him that he fell into a fever. He determined to cure himself by a remedy which he believed he had discovered. He demanded pen and ink, and wrote a recipe, in which, by putting down a wrong fever, he enormously increased the quantity of a very powerful ingredient; so that as soon as he swallowed the medicine he fell back upon his pillow and was gone; proving, by his own death, the effect of this final tincture of his prescribing in the most striking and heroic manner.

As we have said, all who had previously laughed the most heartily at Capuzzi, and the most sincerely wished success to the brave Antonio in his undertaking, were now all compassion for the old man; and the bitterest blame was laid, not upon Antonio so much as upon Salvator Rosa, whom they all, with very good reason, held to have been at the bottom of the whole affair.

Salvator's enemies (of whom there were a goodly band) were not slow to stir up the fire to the best of their ability. "See!" they said; "this is Masaniello's worthy

comrade, always ready to lay his hand to any evil trick, any robberish undertaking; if his dangerous stay in Rome is prolonged, we shall soon feel the effects of it heavily."

And, in fact, the ignoble herd of those who conspired against Salvator succeeded in stemming the bold flight which his fame would otherwise have taken. One picture after another came from his hand, bold of conception, magnificent of execution, but the so-called "connoisseurs" always shrugged the shoulder; said, now that the mountains were too blue; now, that the trees were too green, the figures too tall, or too stumpy; found fault with everything where there was no fault to be found, and made it their business to detract from Salvator's well-merited renown in every possible way. His chief persecutors were the members of the Academia di San Luca, who could never get over the affair of the surgeon, and went out of their own province to depreciate the pretty verses which Salvator wrote about that time, even trying to make out that he did not live upon the fruit of his own land, but pilfered the property of other people. And this, too, led to Salvator's being by no means in a position to surround himself with the splendour and luxury which he had formerly displayed in Rome. Instead of the grand, spacious studio, where all the celebrities of Rome used to visit him, he went on living at Dame Caterina's, beside his green figtree. And in this very restrictedness he, doubtless, soon found comfort and ease of heart.

But he laid the malignant conduct of his enemies more to heart than there was any occasion for; nay, he felt as though some creeping malady, engendered by annoyance and vexation, was gnawing at his inmost marrow. In this evil mood, he conceived and executed the great pictures which set all Rome in uproar. One of them represented the transitoriness of all earthly things; and in the principal female figure (which bore all the marks of a disreputable calling) it was easy to recognize the lady-love of one of the Cardinals. In the other was shown the Goddess of Fortune distributing her precious gifts. But Cardinal's hats, Bishop's mitres, and decorations were falling down upon bleating sheep, braying asses, and other despised creatures; whilst well-favoured men, in tattered garments, looked up in vain for the slightest favour. Salvator had given the rein to his bitter mood, and those beasts' heads had very striking resemblances to sundry well-known characters. It may be imagined how the hatred of him increased, and how much more bitterly he was persecuted than before.

Dame Caterina cautioned him with tears in her eyes. She had noticed that as soon as it was dark, birds of evil omen--suspicious-looking characters--came slinking about the house, watching Salvator's every step. He saw that it was time to be gone; and Dame Caterina and her dear daughters were the only people he felt any pain in parting from. Remembering the Duke of Tuscany's repeated invitations, he went to Florence; and there his mortification was richly compensated for, and the annoyances of tome lost sight of in the honour and fame--so richly merited--which were bestowed upon him in fullest measure. The Duke's presents, and the large prices which he got for his pictures, soon enabled him to occupy a large mansion, and furnish it in the most magnificent style. There he collected round him all the most famous poets and literati of the day; it is sufficient to mention amongst them Evangelista Torricelli, Valerio Chimentelli, Battista Ricciardi, Andrea Cavalcanti, Pietro Salviati, Filippo Apolloni, Volumnio Bandelli, Francesco Rovai. Art and science were joined together in a charming fusion, and Salvator Rosa had a manner of endowing the meetings with an element of the fanciful, which in a peculiar manner gave a stimulus to the thoughts and ideas of the company. Thus, the dining-hall had the appearance of a beautiful shrubbery, containing sweet-smelling bushes and flowers and gurgling springs; and the very dishes, served by singularly-attired pages, had a wonderful appearance, as if they came from some far-off enchanted land. These assemblages of poets and *savants* in Salvator Rosa's house were at the time known as the Academia de' Percossi.

But although Salvator occupied his mind in this manner with art and science, his inmost heart was cheered by his friend Antonio Scacciati, who was living a

happy artistic life, free from care, with the beautiful Marianna. They used to think, sometimes, of the old deceived Signor Pasquale, and all that took place in Nicolo Musso's theatre. And Antonio asked Salvator how he had managed to interest not only Musso, but the wonderful Formica and Agli, in his affairs, to employ their talents on his behalf as they had done. Salvator said it had been an easy matter, inasmuch as Formica had been his most intimate friend in Rome, and always delighted to carry out upon the stage anything that he had suggested to him. Antonio declared that, much as he was unable still to help laughing when he thought of the occurrence which had made no happiness, he wished, from his heart, for a reconciliation with the old man, even although he should never touch a farthing of Marianna's fortune (which the old man had taken possession of), seeing that his art brought him money enough. Marianna, too, could often not restrain her tears at the thought that her father's brother would never till his dying day forgive the trick that had been played upon him; and thus Pasquale's hatred cast a sorrowful shadow upon her happy life. Salvator comforted them both with the thought that time cures much harder matters, and that chance might perhaps bring the old man to them in a much less dangerous manner than if they had remained in Rome, or were to go back there now.

We shall find that a spirit of prophecy dwelt in Salvator. A considerable time had elapsed, when one day Antonio burst into Salvator's studio, breathless, and pale as death. "Salvator!" he cried; "my friend! my protector!--I am lost unless you help me! Pasquale Capuzzi is here, and has got a warrant to arrest me for carrying off his niece."

"But what can Pasquale do to you now?" asked Salvator. Has not the Church united Marianna and you?"

"Alas!" answered Antonio, in despair, "even the Church cannot save me here. Heaven knows how he has accomplished it, but the old man has managed to get the ear of the Pope's nephew; and it is this nephew who has taken him under his protection, and given him hope that the Holy Father will declare our marriage void; and not only that, but give him a dispensation to enable *him* to marry his niece."

"Stop!" cried Salvator. "Now--*now* I understand the whole matter. It is that nephew's hatred for *me*, Antonio, which threatens to ruin everything. This nephew--this conceited, raw, boorish fellow--is one of those beasts which the Goddess of Fortune is overwhelming with her gifts in that picture of mine. That it was I who helped you to your Marianna--more or less indirectly, of course--is known not only to this nephew, but to every one in Rome. Season enough to persecute you, since they cannot specify anything against *me*. Even were it not for my affection for you, Antonio, as my best and dearest friend, I could not but stand by you if it were for nothing else than that it is I who have brought this mischance upon you. But, by all the saints, I do not see how I am to set about spoiling the game of your enemies."

As he said this Salvator, who up to this point had been working away at a picture without interrupting himself, laid his brushes, palette and mahlstick down, got up from his easel, and, folding his arms across his breast, strode 'several times up and down, whilst Antonio, in deepest thought, contemplated the floor with fixed glance.

Presently Salvator halted before him, and cried, laughing: "Antonio, there is nothing that *I* can accomplish as against your powerful enemies; but there is *one* who can, and will, help you; and that is Signor Formica."

"Alas!" cried Antonio; "do not jest with an unfortunate, for whom there is no further salvation."

"Still determined to despair?" cried Salvator, who had suddenly risen into the highest spirits. He laughed aloud: "I tell you, Antonio, friend Formica will help in Florence quite as well as he did in Rome. Go quietly home. Comfort your

Marianna, and await the course of events quite tranquilly. All I expect of you is that you will be ready and prepared to do whatever Signor Formica--who happens to be here at this moment--may require of you." Antonio promised obedience with all his heart, hope and confidence at once beginning to glimmer up within him.

Signor Pasquale was not a little astonished to receive a formal invitation from the Academia de' Percossi. "Ha!--indeed!" he cried. "One sees that Florence is the place where they know how to esteem merit; where a man endowed with such gifts as Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senegalia chances to possess, is properly appreciated."

Thus the thought of the amount of artistic knowledge which he possessed, and of the honours which were being paid to him in consequence, overcame the repugnance which he would otherwise have entertained to an assemblage which had Salvator Rosa, at its head. The Spanish state costume was brushed more carefully than usual; the steeple-crowned hat adorned with a new feather; the shoes set off with fresh bows of ribbon; and Signor Pasquale made his appearance in Salvator's house glittering like a golden beetle, with a countenance of radiant sunshine. The splendour around him--Salvator himself (who was much more finely dressed than he had been wont to be)--inspired him with reverence; and--as is usually the case with shallow souls, which are puffed-up at first, but at once fall down into the dust when they perceive any distinct superiority over them--Pasquale was all deference and humility towards that Salvator whom he was for ever lording over in Rome.

So much attention was paid to Signor Pasquale on all hands; his opinions were so unconditionally appealed to; so much was said as to his artistic merits, that he felt himself a new man; nay, it seemed to him that a special spirit came to life within him, so that he really spoke much more sensibly on many subjects than might have been expected. As, in addition to all this, he had never in all his life partaken of such a splendid dinner, or tasted such inspiring wine, his enjoyment necessarily mounted higher and higher, and he forgot all about the wrongs done him in Rome, and the unpleasant business which had brought him to Florence.

In a short time the bushes at the bottom of the hall began to get in motion, the leafy branches opened out apart, and a little theatre came into view, with its stage, and some seats for an audience.

"All ye saints!" cried Pasquale Capuzzi, in much alarm. "Where am I? That is Nicolo Mussos's theatre!"

Without paying attention to his outcry, two gentlemen of dignified appearance--Evangelista Torricelli and Andrea Cavalcanti--took him by the arms, one on each side, and conducted him to a seat in front of the stage, taking their places on either side of him.

No sooner were they seated than there entered on to the stage, Formica, as Pasquarello!

"Accursed Formica!" cried Pasquale, springing up and shaking his clenched fist towards the stage. Torricelli's and Cavalcanti's grave looks of disapproval, however, constrained him to silence and quietness.

Pasquarello sobbed, wept, and cursed his fate which brought him nothing but grief and misery; declared he did not know how he should manage to laugh, were it but ever so little, and concluded by saying that, in the excess of his despair, he would most certainly cut his throat, were it not that the sight of blood always made him faint; or throw himself into the river, if he only could help swimming when in the water.

Here Doctor Graziano entered and inquired the cause of his grief.

Pasquarello asked him if he did not know what had been happening in his master's, Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senegaglia's, house?--whether he had heard

that an abandoned ruffian had run off with his master's niece, Marianna?

"Ha!" murmured Capuzzi, "I see what it is, Signor Formica. You think you will exculpate and excuse yourself; you desire my forgiveness. Well, we shall see."

Doctor Graziano expressed his sympathy, and thought the ruffian must have been very clever to have evaded Capuzzi's search after him. Pasquarello told the Doctor not to allow himself to imagine that the rascal Antonio Scacciati succeeded in getting the better of the deep and clever Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, supported as he was, moreover, by influential friends. Antonio was in prison, his marriage declared void, and Marianna again in her uncle's hands.

"Has he got her?" cried Capuzzi, beyond himself; "has he got her again, the good Capuzzi? Has he got his little dove again; his Marianna? Is the scoundrel Antonio in prison? O most blessed Formica!"

"You take too lively an interest in the piece, Signor Pasquale," said Cavalcanti very seriously. "Pray allow the actors to speak, and do not interrupt them."

Signor Pasquale, abashed, sat down in his place again.

Pasquarello went on to say that there had been a wedding. Marianna had repented of what she had done; Signor Pasquale had obtained the necessary dispensation from the Holy Father, and had married his niece.

"Yes, yes," murmured Pasquale, aside, whilst his eyes shone with delight; "yes, yes, my dearest Formica! He marries the sweet Marianna, the lucky Pasquale! He always knew the little dove loved him; it was but the devil that led her astray."

In that case, Doctor Graziano said, everything was well, and there was no cause for lamentation.

But Pasquarello began to sob and cry more violently than before, and at last fell down in a faint, as if overcome by his terrible sorrow.

Doctor Graziano ran about anxiously; regretted that he had not a smelling-bottle about him; searched in all his pockets, and at length pulled out a roasted chestnut, which he held under the nose of the insensible Pasquarello. The latter recovered at once, sneezing violently, begged him to excuse the weak state of his nerves, and went on to say that after the marriage Marianna had fallen into the deepest melancholy, calling continually on Antonio's name, and regarding the old man with loathing and contempt. But the latter, blinded by his love and jealousy, had never ceased torturing her in the most terrible manner with his foolishness. Then Pasquarello related a number of mad tricks which Pasquale had been guilty of, and which were actually told of him in Rome. Signor Pasquale jigged uneasily on his seat here and there, murmuring, "Accursed Formica, you lie!--what devil inspires you?" It was only the fact that Torricelli and Cavalcanti kept their grave eyes fixed upon him that restrained a wild outburst of his anger. Pasquarello ended by saying that the luckless Marianna had at last fallen a victim to her unstilled love-longing, her bitter sorrow, and the thousand-fold tortures which the accursed old man had inflicted upon her, and had passed away from this world, in the flower of her age.

At this moment there was heard an awe-inspiring *De profundis*, chanted by hoarse and hollow voices; and men in long white mantles appeared upon the stage bearing a bier, on which lay the body of the beautiful Marianna, shrouded in white grave-clothes. Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, in the deepest mourning, tottered along behind it, moaning aloud, beating his breast, and crying, in his despair, "Oh, Marianna! Marianna!"

When the Capuzzi in the audience saw the body of his niece, both the Capuzzis (him on the stage and he of the audience) howled, and cried in the most heart-breaking tones: "Oh, Marianna! Oh, Marianna! Miserable man that I am! Ah me! Ah me!"

Imagine the corpse of the beautiful girl on the open tier, Surrounded by the mourners, their solemn *De profundis*, and along with all this, the comic masks, Doctor Graziano and Pasquarello, expressing their grief in the most absurd gesticulations; and then the two Capuzzis, howling and crying in despair. And in truth, all they who were spectators of this strangest of dramatic representations, notwithstanding the irrepressible laughter into which they could not help breaking over the extraordinary old man, were penetrated by a deep and eerie shudder of awe.

The stage now suddenly grew dark. There was thunder and lightning; and out of the depths arose a pale and spectral form, exactly alike in every feature to Capuzzi's brother, Pietro, father of Marianna, who died in Senegaglia.

"Wicked Pasquale!" cried the spectre-form, in hollow, terrible tones; "what have you done with my daughter? Despair and die, accursed murderer of my child! Your reward awaits you in hell!"

The Capuzzi on the stage fell down as if struck by lightning, and at the same instant the Capuzzi down beneath fell senseless from his seat. The branches rustling, closed into their former places; and the stage, with Marianna and Capuzzi, and Pietro's grizzly ghost, disappeared from view. Signor Pasquale was in such a deep faint that it cost some trouble to bring him to himself again.

At last he revived, with a deep sigh, stretched his hands out before him as if to keep off the terror which seized upon him, and cried in hollow tones: "Let me go, Pietro!" A stream of tears burst from his eyes, and he cried, with sobs: "Ah, Marianna!--my darling beautiful girl!--my own Marianna!"

"Bethink you!" said Cavalcanti at last. "Consider Signor Pasquale! It was only on the stage that you saw your niece dead. She is alive. She is here, to implore your forgiveness for the thoughtless stratagem to which love--and, perhaps, your own inconsiderate conduct--impelled her."

Here Marianna, with Antonio Scacciati behind her, rushed forward from the back of the hall, and fell at the feet of the old gentleman, who had been placed in an easy chair. Marianna, in the fullest lustre of her beauty, kissed his hands, bedewed them with hot tears, and begged forgiveness for herself and Antonio, united to her by the Church's benediction. From the old man's deathly pale face flames suddenly broke, fury flashed from his eyes, and he cried in a half-articulate voice: "Ha! abandoned wretch!--venomous serpent! whom I nourished in my bosom, for my destruction!" But the grave old Torricelli came up to him, in all his dignity, and said that he (Capuzzi) had seen in a figure the fate which would inevitably overtake him if he dared to prosecute his evil design against the peace and happiness of Antonio and Marianna. He painted, in the most brilliant colours, the folly--the madness--of amorous old age yielding to love, which has the power of bringing down upon its head the most destroying evil with which Heaven can threaten man, since it annihilates all the affection which might still be his portion, whilst hatred and contempt aim their death-dealing arrows at him from every side.

And Marianna cried out, in a tone which penetrated the heart: "Oh, my uncle! I want to love and honour you as a father! You will bring me to the bitter death if you take Antonio from me!"

And all the poets who were surrounding the old man cried, with one voice, that it was impossible that such an one as Signor Pasquale Capuzzi di Senegaglia--a lover and patron of the arts, himself an admirable and accomplished artist--should not forgive; that he, who occupied the position of a father to the loveliest of women, should not welcome with joy, as a son-in-law, a painter such as Antonio Scacciati, prized by the whole of Italy, overwhelmed with honour and fame.

It was easy to see that a mental process of some kind was going on within the old man. He sighed; he groaned; he hid his face in his hands, whilst Torricelli

plied him with the most convincing arguments; whilst Marianna implored him, in the most moving accents; whilst the others extolled and belauded Antonio Scacciati to the utmost of their skill. The old man looked, now at his niece, now at Antonio, whose fine dress and rich chain of honour proved the truth of what was urged as to his artistic position and success.

All anger had disappeared from Capuzzi's countenance. He sprung up with beaming glances, pressed Marianna to his heart, and cried: "Yes, I forgive you, my beloved child! I forgive you, Antonio! Far be it from mo to destroy your happiness. You are right, my worthy Signor Torricelli. Signor Formica has shown me, in a figure, on the stage, all the misery and destruction which would have come upon me if I had carried out my insane idea. I am cured--completely cured--of my folly. But where is Signor Formica?--where is my worthy physician, that I may thank him a thousand times for my recovery, which he has brought about. The terror which he knew how to cause me has transformed my whole being."

Pasquarello came forward. Antonio threw himself upon his breast, crying:

"Oh, Signor Formica! to whom I owe my life, my all! cast aside the mask which disguises you, that I may see your face--that Formica may cease to be a mystery to me."

Pasquarello took off the cap, and the skilfully-constructed mask, which seemed to be an actual, natural face, placing no obstacle in the way of facial expression. And this Formica--this Pasquarello--was transformed into--Salvator Rosa!

"Salvator!" cried Marianna, Antonio, and Capuzzi, *ensemble*, all amazement.

"Yes," said that wondrous man. "Salvator Rosa; whom the Romans would have none of, as painter, as poet; and who, as Formica, for more than a year, on Nicolo Musso's poor little stage, moved them almost nightly to the loudest and most immoderate applause; from whom they gladly accepted all ridicule and mockery of what was bad, though they would not swallow it in Salvator's poems and pictures. Salvator Formica it is who has aided you, dear Antonio."

"Salvator!" old Capuzzi began; "Salvator Rosa! I have looked upon you as my worst enemy, but I have always held your art in highest honour; and now I love you as the most valued of my friends, and I venture to beg you to accept me as such."

"Say, my worthy Signor Pasquale," answered Salvator, "in what I can be of service to you, and be assured beforehand that I will employ all my powers to fulfil your desires."

There dawned in Capuzzi's face once more that sugary smile which had vanished since Marianna's departure. He took Salvator's hand, and whispered gently: "My dear Signor Salvator, you can do anything with the good Antonio. Beg him, in my name, to allow me to spend the brief remainder of my days with him and my dear daughter Marianna, and to accept from me the fortune which she inherits from her mother, to which I mean to add a liberal marriage-portion. And then, too, he mustn't look askew if I now and then kiss the lovely child's little white hand; and--at all events on Sundays when I go to mass--he must dress my moustache for me; a thing which nobody in all the world can do as he can."

Salvator had difficulty in restraining his laughter; but before he could make answer, Antonio and Marianna, embracing the old man, assured him that they would not consider the reconciliation complete, or feel thoroughly happy, until he took his place by their hearth as a beloved father, never to leave them more. Antonio added that he would dress Capuzzi's moustachios not only on Sundays, but every day of the week, in the daintiest manner. And now the old man was all joy and happiness. Meanwhile a splendid supper had been served, and to this they all sate down, in the happiest mood of mind.

In taking my leave of you, dear reader, I wish with all my heart that the

happiness which has now fallen to the lot of Salvator and all his friends, may have glowed very brightly in your own breast, whilst you have been reading the story of the marvellous Signor Formica.

"Now," began Lothair, when Ottmar had ended, "since our friend has been fair and honourable enough to admit from the outset the lack of vigour--the weakness of knee, so to speak, of his production, which it has pleased him to call a 'Novella,' this appeal to our considerateness does, certainly, draw the sting out of our criticisms, which were formed up, in complete steel, to attack him. He bares his bosom to the partizan-pike, and therefore, as magnanimous adversaries, we withhold our thrust, and are bound to have mercy."

"More than that," said Cyprian, "to console his pain, we feel ourselves permitted to bestow a certain limited amount of praise. For my part, I see a good deal in this work that is pleasant and Serapiontic. Capuzzi's broken leg, for instance, and its consequences, his mysterious serenade----"

"Which," interrupted Vincenz, "has all the more of the real Spanish, or the true Italian smack about it, just because it ends with a tremendous cudgelling. No proper Novella of the kind would be complete without the due amount of licking, and I prize it highly as, medically speaking, a specially powerful stimulant, always employed by the best writers. In Boccacio things hardly ever wind up without cudgelling; and where does it rain more blows or thrusts than in the Romance of all Romances, 'Don Quixote?' Cervantes himself considered it necessary to apologise to his readers about it. Now-a-days intellectual ladies will have none of such matters in connection with the mental 'teas' (which they enjoy along with tea for the body); the honoured hide of a favourite poet--if he would retain his footing at 'teas,' and in pocket-books--must, at highest, be blackened by a tap or so on the nose, or the least little box on an ear. But what of tea? What of cultivated ladies? Behold in me, oh, Ottmar, your champion in complete armour, and cudgel soundly in all the novels you may be thinking of writing. I praise you for the cudgelling's sake."

"And I," said Theodore, "for the delightful trio which Capuzzi, the Pyramid-doctor, and the somewhat shudder-creating little abortion, Pitichinaccio, form; and, moreover, for the wonderful way in which Salvator Rosa--who never appears as the hero of the tale, but always as an auxiliary--conforms to his character as it is described, and also as it appears in his own works."

"Ottmar," said Sylvester, "has held chiefly to the adventurous and enterprising side of his character, and given us less of what was grave and gloomy in him. *A propos* of this, I think of the famous sonnet in which, allegorising on his own name--Salvator--he utters his deep indignation at his enemies and persecutors who accused him of plundering from older writers in his poetry, which, indeed, is all ruggedness, and deficient in interior connectedness."

"But," said Lothair, "to return to Ottmar's Novella. The principal fault which I have to find with it is that, instead of a story rounding itself into a whole in all its parts, he has merely given us a series of pictures, although they are often delightful enough."

"Can I do otherwise than fully agree with you?" said Ottmar. "Still, you will all admit that it requires very skilful navigation to keep clear of the rocks upon which I have run."

"Perhaps," said Sylvester, "the rocks in question are more dangerous to dramatic writers. Nothing--at least in my opinion--is more annoying than, instead of a Comedy, in which all that happens is necessarily and closely attached to the thread which runs through the piece, and should appear to be indispensably necessary to the picture represented, to see merely a series of arbitrary incidents, or even unconnected, detached situations; and indeed, the ablest dramatic author

of recent times has set the example of this thoughtless (or 'frivolous') treatment of Comedy. Does the 'Pagen-streiche,' for example, consist of anything but a series of ludicrous situations strung together apparently by chance, and at random? In former days, when, on the whole (at all events as regards the drama), one cannot complain of the want of due seriousness, every writer of a Comedy took much pains to construct a regular plot, and out of that plot all the comic element, the drollery, nay, the very absurdity, duly evolved itself, of itself; because it seemed the natural thing for it to do. Jünger (although he but too often seems very 'flat') always did this, and even Brenner--utterly prosaic as he was on the whole--was by no means deficient in the power of making the comic element flow out from his plots, and his characters have often real force and vividness of life, derived from actuality; as, for instance, in his 'Eheprokurator.' Only those ladies of his, with their grand phrases, are completely unenjoyablo by us nowadays. Notwithstanding this, I have a very high opinion of him, for the reasons I have given."

"In my mind," said Theodore, "his Operas put him out of court altogether. They may serve as examples how an opera ought not to be written."

"For the simple reason," said Vincenz, "that the departed (peace to his ashes, as Sylvester very properly said) did not show many signs of having much poetry in his constitution; so that in the romantic realm of opera he could not find the slightest indication of a track to go upon. However, as you are talking in this strain on the subject of Comedy, I might do worse than point out that you are wasting your time in discussing a nonentity--a thing which does not exist; and cry out to you, as Romeo did to Mercutio--

> 'Peace, peace, good people, peace,
> Ye talk of nothing.'

What I mean is that, taking them altogether, we never see a single German Comedy presented on the stage, for the simple reason that the old ones cannot be swallowed or digested (by reason of the weakness of our stomachs), and new ones are no longer written. The reason of the latter I might establish, very briefly, in a treatise of some forty sheets or so; but, for the moment, I let you off with a play-upon-words. What I say is, that we have no comic plays, because we have none of the comic which plays with itself; nor the sense for it."

"Dixi," cried Sylvester, laughing. "Dixi, and the name 'Vincenz' thereunder, with due stamp and seal. I happened, at the moment, to be thinking that in the lowest class of dramatic performances, or rather of productions destined to be represented on the stage, perhaps those should be included in which some clever *farceur* mystifies and befools some good uncle--a theatre director, or some such person. And yet it is not so very long ago that shallow, stupid stuff of this description constituted almost the daily bread of every stage. Just at present there seems to be more or less an intermission in this."

"It will never come to an end," said Theodore, "as long as there are actors to whom nothing in the world can be more delightful than to let themselves be wondered at and admired as chameleontic marvels, in that they change their costume and appearance in the most varied manner in the course of the same evening. Right out of the very depths of my being have I been compelled to roar with laughter over the self-apotheosis of self-sufficiency with which, after passing through a marvellous series of soul-transmigrations, the true *ego* of the performer takes its enfranchised flight, like a beautiful insect. Generally speaking, this is done in the shape of a pretty, elegant night-moth, dressed in black, with silk stockings, and a three-cornered hat under one arm, having, from the moment of its appearance as such, only to deal with the admiring public, not troubling itself about that which previously had been doing it soccage-service. As (*vide* Wilhelm Meister's 'Lehr-jahren') a special line of parts may so bind and enslave to it some given actor, who, for instance, plays all the characters who have to be cudgelled, or otherwise maltreated, every stage must possess a *sujet* who undertakes all the parts of the character of *souffre douleur*, and consequently plays those

indispensable theatre managers, &c.; at all events, every starring actor has a part of the kind in his pocket, by way of entrance-pass, or letter of credit."

"What you say," answered Lothair, "reminds me of a most extraordinary fellow whom I met with in a theatrical troupe in a small town in the south of Germany, who was the exact image of that 'pedant' (to speak technically) in Wilhelm Meister. Insupportable as he now was on the stage in his little minor parts, *praying* them out in the most direful monotony, it was said that formerly, in his younger days, he had been a capital actor, and used to play, for instance, those sly, scampish inn-keepers which, in older times, used to occur in almost every comedy, and over whose total disappearance from the stage the host in Tieck's 'Verkehrter Welt' complains. When I knew this man he seemed to have completely accepted his fate, which truely had been a pretty hard one, and, in complete apathy, to place no value on anything in the world, least of all on himself. Nothing penetrated the crust which the heaping up of the most complete wretchedness had formed over the surface of his better self, and he was perfectly satisfied with himself under it; and yet there often beamed out of his deep-set, clever eyes the gleam of a higher intelligence, and there would rapidly jerk over his face the expression of a bitter irony, so that the exaggerated submissiveness with which he bore himself towards every one--and more particularly towards his manager (a silly young man, full of vanity)--took, in him, the form of an ironical contempt. On Sundays he used to take his seat at the lower end of the *table d'hôte* of the best hotel in the place, dressed in a good well-brushed suit of clothes, whose cut and extraordinary pattern indicated the actor of a long by-gone period; and there he enjoyed a hearty meal, never saying a word to a soul, although he was exceptionally temperate, particularly as regarded the wine, for he scarcely half-emptied the bottle which was placed before him. At each filling of his glass he made a courteous bow to the landlord, who gave him his Sunday dinner in return for his teaching his children reading and writing. It happened that I was dining one Sunday at this *table d'hôte*, and found only one vacant seat, which was at this old fellow's side. I hastened to occupy this place, hoping that I might have the good fortune to bring to the surface that better spirit which must be shut up within the man. It was difficult, almost impossible, to get hold of that spirit. Just when one thought one had him, he suddenly dived down, and slunk away in utter humility of submissiveness. At length, after I had with difficulty induced him to swallow a glass or two of good wine, he seemed to begin to thaw a little, and spake with visible emotion of the fine old theatrical times, now past and gone, apparently never to return. The tables were being cleared; one or two of my friends joined themselves to me; the player wanted to take his leave. I held him fast, though he made the most touching protests. A poor superannuated actor, he said, was no fit company for gentlemen such as we; it would be better that he should not stay, it was not his place, and so forth. It was not so much to my powers of persuasion as to the irresistible attractions of a cup of coffee, and a pipe of the best Knaster, which I had in my pocket, that I could attribute his remaining. He spoke with vividness and *esprit* of the old theatrical days. He had seen Eckhoff, and acted with Schroeder. It came out that the untuned state in which he was now so marred proceeded from the circumstance that those by-gone days had been, for him, the world wherein he had breathed freely, and moved unconstrainedly, and that, now that he was thrown forth out of that period, he had no firm standing-point that he could get hold of. But how marvellously did this man astonish us when, having become thoroughly at his ease, and free from constraint with us, he spoke the speech of the Ghost in Hamlet, as given in Schroeder's version (Schlegel's translation he knew nothing about), with a power of expression which touched our hearts; and we were all moved to admiration at the manner in which he delivered several passages from the part of Oldenhelm (for he would have nothing to say to the name 'Polonius'), rendering them in such a way that we distinctly saw before our eyes the courtier, in his second childhood now, but who had clearly not lacked worldly wisdom in former times, and still showed distinct traces of it. This he brought before us in a manner very seldom seen on the boards. All this, however, was but the prelude to a scene which I never saw the parallel of, and which I can never forget. It is here that I really, for the first time, come to what, during this conversation of ours, brought to my

remembrance the old actor in question, and my worthy Serapion Brethren must pardon me if I have made my introduction to this somewhat too long. This man was compelled to undertake those wretched subordinate parts which we were talking of, and thus it chanced that, some days after the occasion I have been speaking of, he had to play the part of the 'Manager' in the piece 'The Rehearsal,' which the *Impresario* had altered to suit himself, thinking he particularly excelled in it. Whether it was that the conversation with us has stirred up his inner, better self, or that, perhaps (as it was rumoured afterwards), on that day he had reinforced his natural power with wine--contrary as that was to his usual custom--he had no sooner come upon the stage than he appeared to be a totally different man from what he had been at other times. His eyes sparkled, and the hollow wavering voice of the worn-out hypochondriac was transformed into a clear, resonant bass, such as is employed by jovial characters of the old style; for instance, the rich uncles who, in the exercise of poetical justice, punish folly and reward virtue. The beginning of the piece gave no indication of what was to come; but how amazed was the audience when, after the first changes of dress had been made, the strange creature turned upon the manager with sarcastic smiles, and addressed him somewhat as follows: 'Would not the respected audience have recognised our good So-and-so' (he mentioned the manager's name here), 'just as readily as I did myself at the first glance? Is it possible to base the power of deception on a coat cut in a particular fashion, or on a more or less frizzled wig? and in this way to stuff out a meagre talent, unsupported by any vigour of intelligence, like a child deserted by its nurse? The young man who is trying to pass himself off upon me, in this unskilled manner, as a many-sided artist, a chameleontic genius, need not gesticulate so immoderately with his hands, nor fold himself up like a pocketknife after each of his speeches, nor roll his r's so fearfully; and if he had not done so, I believe that a highly-prized audience (any more than I myself) would not have recognised our little manager in one instant, as has been the case now, to such an extent that it is pitiable. But, inasmuch as the piece has got to go on for another half-hour, I shall conduct myself, this once more, as if I didn't see it; although the affair is terribly tedious and uncongenial to me.' Be it enough to say that upon each fresh entrance of the manager, the old fellow ridiculed his acting in the most delicious manner; and it may be fancied that this was accompanied by the most ringing laughter of the audience; whilst the best part of it all was that the manager, completely absorbed in his numerous changes of costume, was absolutely unconscious of what was going forward till the very last scene. Perhaps the old fellow may have made a wicked compact with the theatre tailor; but it is a fact that the wretched manager's wardrobe had got into the most complete confusion, so that the intermediate scenes which the old man had to fill out lasted much longer than usual, giving him time enough to let the fulness of his bitter mockery of the poor manager stream forth in all its glory, and even to imitate his manner of speaking, saying many things with a wicked verity which sent the audience out of itself. The whole piece was turned topsy-turvy, so that the stop-gap intermediate scenes became the principal and important part of the business. It was delightful, too, how the old fellow sometimes told the audience beforehand how the manager was going to appear, mimicking his gestures and attitudes; and that he attributed the ringing laughter, which really belonged to the old fellow's admirable imitation of him, to his own success in making up. At last, however, the manager could not possibly help finding out what the old fellow was doing, and you may suppose he flew at him like a raging wild boar, so that it was all that he could do to escape mishandling. He did not dare to appear on the stage again; but the audience and the public had got so fond of the old actor, and took his side with so much zeal, that the manager (burdened, moreover, since that celebrated evening, with the curse of ludicrosity), found himself compelled to close his theatre, and betake himself elsewhere. Several respectable townsmen, with the innkeeper at their head, met, and collected a considerable sum of money for the old actor, enough to enable him to have done for ever with the worries of the stage, and end his days in comfort in the place. But marvellous, nay, unfathomable, is the mind of an actor! Before a year was over he suddenly disappeared, nobody knew whither, and presently he was discovered travelling with a strolling company, quite in the same subordinate position from which he had so recently shaken himself clear."

"With a very slight 'moral application,'" said Ottmar, "this tale of the old actor belongs to the moral codex of all stage-players, and of those who desire to become players."

During this, Cyprian had risen silently, and, after walking once or twice up and down the room, taken his position behind the window curtain. Just when Ottmar ceased speaking, a blast of wind came suddenly howling and raging in. The lights threatened to go out; Theodore's writing-table seemed to become alive; hundreds of papers flew up, and were wafted about the room; the strings of the old piano groaned aloud.

"Hey, hey!" cried Theodore, as he saw his literary notices, and who knows what other written matter, at the mercy of the raging autumn storm. "Hey, hey, Cyprianus, what are you about?" And they all set to work to keep the lights in, and shield themselves from the thick snowflakes which came swirling in.

"It is true," said Cyprian, shutting the window, "the weather won't let one look to see what it is."

"Tell me," said Sylvester, taking the wholly absentminded and deeply preoccupied Cyprian by both hands, and forcing him to sit down again in the seat he had left, "only tell me--that is all I ask--where have you been? In what distant region have you been wandering? for far, far away from us has that restless spirit of yours been bearing you again."

"Not so very far away from you as you may suppose," answered Cyprian. "And, at all events, it was your own conversation which opened the door for my departure. You had been saying so much about Comedy, and Vincenz was stating his conclusion (justly resulting from experience), that amongst us the fun which plays with itself is lost. It occurred to me that, on the other hand, many real talents have displayed themselves in tragedy, in more and most recent times, and along with this thought I was struck by the remembrance of a writer who began, with genuine, high-aspiring genius, but suddenly, as if carried away by some fatal eddy, went under, so that his name is scarcely ever heard of."

"There," said Ottmar, "you were going in exact opposition to Lothair's principle--that true genius never goes under."

"And Lothair is right," answered Cyprian, "if he holds that the fiercest storms of life cannot blow out the flame which blazes forth from the inner spirit,--that the bitterest adversities, the keenest misfortunes fight in vain against the inner heavenly might of the soul, which only bends the bow to deliver the arrow with the greater power. But how were it if in the first inner germ of the embryo there lurked the poisonous parasite larva, the worm, which, developing along with the beautiful blossom, gnaws at its life, so that it bears its death within itself? No storm is then needed for its destruction."

"In that case," said Lothair, "your genius would be wanting in the first condition indispensible to the tragic-poet who would enter upon life free, and in possession of his powers. I mean that such a poet's genius must be absolutely healthy--sound--free from the slightest ailment, such as psychic weakness, or, to use your language, anything such as congenital poison. Who could, and can, congratulate himself more on such a soundness of mental constitution than our grand Gœthe, mighty father of us all? It is with such an unweakened strength as his, with such an inward purity, that heroes are begotten, such as Goetz von Berlichingen and Egmont! And if we cannot, perhaps, admit such a heroic power (in quite the same degree) in our Schiller, there is, on the other hand, that pure sun-glance of the inner soul beaming round his heroes in which we, beneficently warmed, feel as powerful and strong as their creator. And we must not forget the Robber Moor, whom Ludwig Tieck, with perfect justice, calls the Titanic creation of a young and daring imagination. But we are getting far from the tragic poet whom you were speaking of, Cyprian, and I hope you will tell us at once to whom you allude,

although I fancy I have a strong idea?"

"I was very nearly breaking in upon your conversation, as I did once before, with strange words and sayings," answered Cyprian, "which you would not have understood, inasmuch as you were not seeing the images of my waking-dream. Nevertheless, I cry out 'No! Since the days of Shakespeare there never stalked such a Being across the stage as this superhumanly terrible, gruesome old man!' And that you may not remain a moment longer in doubt on the subject, I add at once that no modern poet can congratulate himself on such a loftily tragic and powerful creation as the author of the Söhne des Thales."

The friends looked at each other in amazement. They made a rapid pass-muster of the principal characters in Zacharias Werner's pieces, and then came to the same conclusion--that in every case there was a certain element of the strange and singular, and often of the commonplace, mingled with the truly great, the grandly tragic which seemed to indicate that the author had never come to any really clear seeing of his heroes, and that he was doubtless deficient in that absolute health and soundness of the inner mind which Lothair considered indispensible to every writer of tragedy.

Theodore alone had been laughing within himself, as if he were of another opinion, and now began:

"Halt! Halt! ye worthy Serapion Brethren. Don't be in too great a hurry. I know very well, in fact, I am the only one of you who can know, that Cyprian is speaking of a work which the writer never finished, which is consequently unknown to the world, although friends in the writer's neighbourhood, to whom he communicated sketches of scenes from it, had ample reason to be convinced that it would rise to the position of being amongst the grandest and most powerful, not only that he ever produced, but which have been seen in modern days."

"Of course," said Cyprian, "I was talking of the second part of the 'Kreuz an der Ostsee,' in which it is that the terrible, gruesome, gigantic character to whom I was alluding occurs, the old King of Prussia, Waidewuthis. It may be impossible for me to give you a distinct idea of this character, which the poet, by virtue of some mighty spell at his command, seems to have conjured up from the mysterious depths of the subterranean kingdoms. It must suffice if I enable you to look into the interior mechanism of the springs which the poet has placed within it to set this production of his into due activity of movement. According to historical tradition, the earliest 'culture' of the ancient Prussians was originated by their king, Waidewuthis. He introduced the rights of property. The fields were divided, and agriculture carried on. He also gave the nation a form of religious worship, inasmuch as he himself carved three graven images, to which sacrifices were offered beneath an ancient oak-tree, where they were set up; but a terrible power grasped hold of him (though himself all-powerful, the god of the nation which he ruled), those rude graven images, carved by his own hands, that the people's force and will might bow down before them as embodiments of a higher energy, suddenly awoke into life. And what inflamed those senseless images thus into life was the fire which the Satanic Prometheus stole from Hell. Rebellious thralls of their Lord and Maker, those idols began to wield against himself the weapons with which he had armed them. And thus commences the monstrous conflict of the Superhuman principle with the Human. I do not know if I have been intelligible to you--if I have quite succeeded in representing to you the poet's colossal idea; but, as Serapion Brethren, I would charge you to look deep down, as I have done, into the terrible abyss which the poet has opened and disclosed, and feel the terror and awe which overwhelms me even now as I think of that Waidewuthis."

"And in truth," said Theodore, "our Cyprian has turned quite white; which of course proves how the whole grand sketch of the extraordinary picture which the poet displayed before him--but from which he has shown us only one of the principal groups--has stirred his inner soul. But, as regards Waidewuthis, I think it would have been sufficient to say that the poet, with astonishing power and

originality, conceived this Daemon with so much grandeur, power, and might, so gigantic a figure, that he appears quite worthy of the contest, and that the triumph, the glory of Christianity must beam forth all the brighter in consequence. It is true that in many of his characteristics, the old monarch appears to me as if he were--to speak with Dante--the Imperador del Doloroso Regno in person, walking on earth. The catastrophe of his overthrow, that triumph of Christianity, which is the final chord towards which everything strives, in the whole work (which to me, at all events, according to the design of the second part, seems to belong to another world), I have never been able to form a conception of to myself in dramatic form; although in quite other sounds, and in those only, I did conceive the possibility of a conclusion which, in terrific sublimity, would surpass everything else which could be conceived of. But this only became apparent to me when I had read Calderon's great 'Magus.' Moreover, the poet has not uttered himself as to the mode in which he would finish the work; at least nothing of the sort has reached my ears."

"It seems to me," said Vincent, "on the whole very much as though it had gone with the poet, as to his work, as it did with old King Waidewuthis and his graven images. It grew over his head; and that he could not get control of his own power is proved by the very failure of his inward energy, which, at length, does not allow anything sound, healthy, vigorous, to come to the light of day. On the whole, even if Cyprian is right in thinking that the old king had the best possible dispositions for turning out a splendid and powerful Satan, I do not see how he could have got into due relation with humanity again. The Satan would have had to be, at the same time, a grand, powerful kingly hero."

"And that is exactly what he was," answered Cyprian. "But to prove this to you, I should require to know whole scenes by heart, which the author communicated to us. I remember one in particular, very vividly, which seemed to me magnificent. King Waidewuthis knew that none of his sons would succeed him in the crown, so he selected a boy--I think he appeared about twelve years old--as his successor. In the night they two--Waidewuthis and the boy--are lying by the fire, and Waidewuthis. occupies himself in kindling the boy's courage towards the idea of the godly-might of the Euler of a People. This address of Waidewuthis seemed to me quite masterly, quite perfect. The boy, who has a young tame wolf, his faithful playmate, in his arms, listens attentively to the old man's words; and when the latter at last asks him if, for the sake of power he would be capable of sacrificing even his wolf, the boy looks him gravely in the face, and without a word, throws the wolf into the flames."

"I know," cried Theodore, as Vincent smiled strangely, and Lothair seemed on the point of breaking out from inward impatience, "I know what you are going to say--I hear the severe sentence of condemnation with which you dismiss the author; and I will admit that I should have perfectly agreed with you only a day or two ago, and been of the same opinion, not so much from conviction, as from anger that the author should have entered upon paths which must for ever carry him away from me, Bo that a re-encounter between us must have appeared scarcely conceivable, and moreover, almost not to be desired. It would have been quite justifiable for the world, considering the manner in which the author had commenced his career, to think that there was evidence of an untruthful inconstancy--a weathercockiness--of mind, disposed to cast over others the veil which self-deception had woven around him; although, all this time, the truth had torn this veil asunder, with rude vigour, so that the world could discern, in his heart, a wicked spirit of self-seeking, endeavouring to gain the glitter of false fame for purposes of self-beatification. But I am obliged to confess that his preface to his sacred drama, 'The Mother of the Macabees,' has completely disarmed me. And this preface can only be perfectly understood by the few friends of his who were closely associated with him in his most beautiful blossoming-time. It contains the most affecting admissions of culpable weaknesses; the most pathetic lamentations over powers for ever lost. Those things may have escaped the writer involuntarily, and it is very likely that he did not, himself, perceive that deeper significance which the friends whom he had

abandoned must have seen in those words. As I read this preface, I seemed to see, through a dim, colourless ocean of cloud, rays feebly piercing of a lofty, noble spirit, rising beyond the crack-brained follies of immature perversity, and, if not fully conscious of its own value, yet possessing a considerable inkling of its worth. The writer seemed to me much like one of those who are victims of that form of insanity of which the predominant symptom is 'fixed idea.' Those unhappy people are, in their lucid intervals, aware of their delusions; but, to soothe the comfortless horror of that consciousness, they strive to convince themselves that in those very delusions their highest and truest existence lives and moves. And this they do by the most ingenious sophisms; striving also to induce themselves to believe that their consciousness of their delusion is nothing but the sick doubting of Humanity immeshed and enslaved in the Earthly. And in the preface which I am speaking of, the writer touches upon the second part of the 'Kreuz an der Ostsee,' admitting this."

"Please don't make such horrible faces, Lothair! Sit still on your chair, Ottmar; don't drum the Russian Grenadiers' March on the elbow of your seat, Vincenz. I really think that the author of the 'Soehne des Thales' deserves to be discussed rationally and quietly by us, and I must confess that my heart is very full of this subject, and I cannot help letting the froth which is seething there boil thoroughly over."

"Ha!" cried Vincenz, very loudly and pathetically, "how the froth seethes!--now that is a quotation from the 'Kreuz an der Ostsee,' where the heathen priests sing it in fearful and horrible strains. My dear Serapion-Brother Theodore, you may rage, revile, curse and blaspheme as much as you please, but I must just introduce into this many-sided discussion one little anecdote, which will throw, at all events, a momentary glimpse of sunshine over all those corpse-watchers' countenances. The author of whom we are speaking had got together a few friends that he might read to them the 'Kreuz an der Ostsee' from the manuscript. They had heard some passages from it before, which had raised their expectations to the highest pitch. The author had, as usual, seated himself in the centre of the circle, at a small table where two candles were burning in tall candlesticks. He had taken his manuscript out of his breast-pocket, and laid down before him his big snuff-box, and his blue-and-white checked pocket-handkerchief. Profound silence reigned. Not a breath was audible. The author, making one of his extraordinary faces, which defy all description, began as follows:--

"'Bankputtis!--Bankputtis!--Bankputtis!'

"Of course you remember that, in the opening scene, at the rising of the curtain, the Prussians are discovered, assembled by the seashore, collecting amber; and they invoke the deities who preside over this. Very well. The author, as I have said, began with the words--

"'Bankputtis! Bankputtis!"

"Then there was a short pause; after which there came forth out of a corner the soft voice of a member of the audience, saying: 'My dearest and most beloved friend! Most glorious of all authors; if you have written the whole of this most admirable poem of yours in that infernal language, not one soul of us understands a single syllable of it. For God's sake, be so kind as to start with a translation of it.'"

The friends laughed; but Cyprian and Theodore remained silent and grave. Before the latter could begin to speak, Ottmar said: "It is impossible, in this connection, that I should forget the extraordinary, nay, almost preposterously absurd, meeting of two men who were--at all events as concerned their opinions upon Art and their views about it--absolutely heterogeneous in their natures. Indisputable as it may be that Werner carried the idea of the 'Kreuz an der Ostsee' about with him for a long time, to the best of my knowledge the first impulse to his writing it came to him from Iffland, who was anxious that he should write a tragedy for the Berlin stage. The 'Soehne des Thales' was then attracting

much attention, and perhaps that dramatic writer may have been interested in this newly-developed talent, or he may have thought he saw that this young *débutant* was capable of being trained to the performance of the systematic round of theatre tricks, and would acquire a skilled 'stage-hand.' However this may be, think of Iffland with the manuscript of the 'Kreuz an der Ostsee' in his hands. Iffland--to whom the tragedies of Schiller (which then, in spite of all opposition, had made their way, chiefly through the great Fleck) were really disgustful, in the depths of his soul; Iffland, who although he did not dare, for dread of that sharp lash which he had felt already, to speak out his real opinion, had put *this* in print: 'Tragedies which contain grand historical incidents, and a crowd of characters, are the ruin of the stage;' adding, 'on account of the tremendous expenses,' but thinking, in his heart, '*dixi et salvavi*.'--Iffland, who would have been too pleased to put upon his privy-councillors, secretaries, and so forth, tragic *cothurni* made after his own pattern--read the 'Kreuz an der Ostsee' in the light of its being a tragedy expressly written for the Berlin stage, which he himself should set out into scenes, and in which he should play nothing less than the Ghost of Bishop Adalbert, murdered by the Pagan Prussians, very frequently appearing on the stage as a terror-inspiring character not sparing of partly edifying, partly mystic speeches, while at every mention of the name of Christ a flame breaks out of his forehead, to instantaneously disappear again. It was impossible to throw this piece overboard (as would have been done in a moment in the case of the *dii minores*), notwithstanding that it was one which was full of improbabilities, and bristling with difficulties (much more real difficulties from the stage-manager's point of view, than many Shakesperian plays, in which those difficulties are more apparent than real). What had to be done was to express great admiration of it; to laud it up to the skies, and then to declare, with deep regret, that the capabilities of the stage were not practically sufficient for the production of a thing so great. It was this which had to be done; and the letter in which Iffland stated all this to the author (the construction of which was on the lines of the well-known form of refusal of the Italians, '*ben parlato-ma*'), was, of course, a classical master-piece of theatrical diplomacy. It was not from the nature of the piece itself that the manager deduced the impossibility of representing it on the stage; he merely, in a courteous manner, complained of the stage-manager, the property-men, and the carpenters, to whose magic there were such narrow limits that they were not even capable of making a Saint's glory shine in the air. But, no more on the subject. It is for Theodore to make such excuses as he can for the errors of his friend."

"To defend and excuse this friend of mine," said Theodore, "I fear would be a very unsatisfactory thing to try to do. I should much prefer to set you a psychical problem to solve, which ought, really, to lead you to consider how peculiar influences may work upon the psychical organism; or, indeed (to return to Cyprian's simile, the worm engendered along with the most beautiful flower), on the worm which is to poison and kill. We are told Hysterism in the mother is not transmitted, by heredity, to the son, but that it does produce in him a peculiarly lively imagination, even to the extent of eccentricity; and I believe that there is one of ourselves in whose case the correctness of this theory is confirmed. Now, how might it be with the effect of actual *insanity* of the mother upon the son, although he does not, as a rule, inherit that either? I am not speaking of that weak, childish sort of mental aberration in women, which is often the result of an enfeebled nervous system; what I have in view is that abnormal mental state in which the psychic principle, volatilized into a sublimate by the operation of the furnace of imagination, has been converted into a poison, which has attacked the vital spirits, so that they have become sick unto death, and the human creature, in the delirium of this malady, believes the dream of another life-condition to be actual waking reality. Now, a woman highly gifted mentally, and largely endowed with imagination and fancy, may in those circumstances be much more like to a heavenly prophet than to an insane creature, and in the excitement of her paroxysms may say things, which to many persons would appear much more like the direct inspiration of higher intelligences than the mere utterances of insanity. Suppose that the fixed idea of such a woman consisted in her believing herself to be the Virgin Mary, and her son Christ, and let this be repeated daily to the boy,

who is not taken away from her, whilst his powers of comprehension gradually develop themselves. He is over-bountifully endowed with talent and intelligence, and specially with a glowing imagination. Friends and teachers whom he respects and believes all tell him that his poor mother is out of her mind, and he himself sees the craziness of the idea, which is not so much as new to him, since it exists in nearly every lunatic asylum. But his mother's words sink deeply into his heart; he thinks he is hearing announcements from another world, and feels vividly the belief taking root within him upon which he bases his system of thinking. Above all, he is very much struck and imbued with what the maternal prophetess tells him regarding the trials of this world; the scoffing and despite which the consecrated one must endure. He finds this all realized, and in his boyish melancholy looks upon himself as a Divine victim, when his schoolfellows make fun of him for his quaint-looking clothes and his timid awkward manners. What follows? Must there not arise in the breast of such a youth the belief that the so-called insanity of his mother, which seems to *him* lofty and sublime beyond the comprehension of the common herd, is really neither more nor less than a prophetic announcement, in metaphorical language, of the high destiny in store for him, chosen by the powers of heaven! Saint--prophet!--could there be stronger impulses to mysticism for a youth fired with a glowing power of imagination? Let it be further supposed that he is physically and psychically excitable to the most destructive extent, and apt to fall a prey to and be carried away by the most irresistible tendency to vice, and the wicked lusts of the world.... I desire to pass in haste, and with averted face, by the fearful abysses of human nature whence the germs of those tendencies spring, which might take root and flourish in the heart of the unfortunate youth without his being further to blame than in that he had a hot blood, only too congenial a soil for the luxuriant poison-plant.... I dare not go further; you feel the terrible nature of the strife which tears the heart of the unhappy youth. Heaven and hell are drawn up in battle array; and it is this mortal combat imprisoned within him which gives rise to phenomena on the surface in utter discord with everything else conditioned by mortal nature, and capable of no interpretation whatever. How, then, if the glowing power of imagination of this man (who in youth imbibed the germ of those eccentricities from his mother's mental state) should subsequently, at a time when Sin, bereft of all her adornments, accuses herself, in all her repulsive nakedness, for the hellish deceptions of the past, lead him, driven by the pain and remorse of his repentance, to take refuge in the mysticism of some religious *cultus*, coming to meet him with hymns of victory and perfume of incense? How when then, out of the most hidden depths, the voice of some dark spirit within should become audible, saying: 'It was but mortal blindness which led you to believe that there was dissension in your heart. The veil has fallen, and you perceive that sin is the stigma of your heavenly nature, of your supernatural calling, wherewith the Eternal has marked the chosen one. It was only when you set yourself to offer resistance to sinful impulse, to contend with the Eternal Power, that you were abandoned in your blindness and degeneracy. The purified fires of hell shine in the glories of the Saints.' And thus does this terrible hypermysticism impart to the lost one a consolation which completes the ruin of the rotten walls of the edifice of his existence; just as it is when the madman derives comfort and enjoyment from his madness, that his recovery is known to be hopeless."

"Oh, please go no further," cried Sylvester. "You hurried, with averted face, past an abyss which you avoided looking into; but to me it seems as if you were leading us along upon narrow, slippery paths, where terrible and threatening gulfs yawn at us on either side. What you last said reminded me of the horrible mysticism of Pater Molinos, the dreadful doctrine of Quietism. I shuddered when I read the leading theorem of that doctrine. 'Il ne faut avoir nul égard aux tentations, ni leur opposer aucune résistance. Si la nature se meut, il faut la laisser agir; ce n'est que la nature!'[1] This, of course, would carry----"

[Footnote 1: "Toute opération active est absolument interdite par Molinos. C'est même offenser Dieu, que de ne pas tellement s'abandonner à lui, que l'on

soit comme un corps inanimé. De-là vient, suivant cette hérésiarque, que le vœu de faire quelque bonne œuvre est un obstacle à la perfection, parce que l'activité naturelle est ennemie de la grâce; c'est un obstacle aux opérations de Dieu et à la vraie perfection, parce que Dieu veut agir en nous sans nous. Il ne faut connoître ni lumière, ni amour, ni résignation. Pour être parfait, il ne faut pas même connoître Dieu; il ne faut penser, ni au paradis, ni à l'enfer, ni à la mort, ni à l'éternité. On ne doit point désirer de sçavoir si on marche dans la volonté de Dieu, si on est assez résigné ou non. En un mot, il ne faut point que l'âme connoisse ni son état ni son néant; il faut qu'elle soit comme un corps inanimé. Toute réflexion est nuisible, même celles qu'on fait sur ses propres actions, et sur ses défauts. Ainsi on ne doit point s'embarrasser du scandale que l'on peut causer, pourvu que l'on n'ait pas intention de scandaliser. Quand une fois on a donné son libre arbitre à Dieu, on ne doit plus avoir aucun désir de sa propre perfection, ni des vertus, ni de sa sanctification, ni de son salut; il faut même se défaire de l'espérance, parce qu'il faut abandonner à Dieu tout le soin de ce que nous regarde, même celui de faire en nous et sans nous sa divine volonté. Ainsi c'est une imperfection que de demander; c'est avoir une volonté et vouloir que celle de Dieu s'y conforme. Par la même raison il ne faut lui rendre grâce d'aucune chose; c'est le remercier d'avoir fait notre volonté; et nous n'en devons point avoir." ('Causes célèbres,' par Richer. Tom. ii.: 'Histoire du Procès de la Cadière.')]

"It would carry us a good deal too far," interrupted Lothair, "into the realm of the most horrible dreams, and--to speak generally--of that amount of crack-brainedness of which there can never be any question amongst us Serapion Brethren. So let us abandon the subject of all that sublimity of mental unhingedness which is the foster-mother of religious mania."

Ottmar and Vincenz agreed in this, and added that Theodore had committed a breach of Serapiontic rule by speaking so fully on a subject to some extent strange to the other brethren, in this manner giving himself up to impulses of the moment, and damming up the flow of other communications.

Cyprian, however, look Theodore's part, maintaining that the subject on which, for the most part, he had been speaking, might be thought to possess such an amount of interest (though, as far as he himself was concerned, he must say it was of an uncanny character) that even those to whom the person to whom it had referred had never been known, could not but feel themselves very much attracted and affected by it.

Ottmar thought that he could have felt a certain amount of interest about it if it had been written in a book. Cyprian said that the *sapienti sat*, was enough as regarded it.

In the meantime, Theodore had gone into the next room, and now came back with a veiled picture, which he placed on a table against the wall, setting two candles in front of it. All eyes were bent upon it, and when Theodore quickly removed the cloth from before it an "Ah!" came from all their lips.

It was the author of the 'Soehne des Thales,' a life-size half-length, a most speaking likeness, as if it had been stolen out of a looking-glass.

"Is it possible!" cried Ottmar, enthusiastically. "Yes, from under those bushy eyebrows there gleams from the dark eyes the strange fire of that unlucky mysticism which dragged the poet to his destruction. But the goodness, the kindliness, the lovableness and the talents which beam out of the rest of his features, and this charmingly 'roguish' smile of real humour which plays about the lips, and seems to try unsuccessfully to hide itself in the long, projecting chin, which the hand is stroking so quietly. Of a truth I feel myself more and more drawn to this mystic, who grows the more human the longer one looks at him."

"We all feel the same," cried Lothair and Vincenz.

"Yes, yes," cried the latter, "those sorrowful, gloomy eyes get brighter. You are right, Ottmar, he grows human--*homo factus est*. See, he looks with his eyes--he smiles; presently he will say something that will delight us; some heavenly jest; some fulminating sally of wit is playing about his lips. Out with it, out with it, good Zacharias! Stand on no ceremony! We are your friends, master of reserved irony! Ha! Serapion Brethren! let us elect him, glasses in hand, an honorary member of our Society; we will drink to our brotherhood, and I will pour a libation before his picture, and bedew with a few glittering drops my own varnished Parisian boots into the bargain."

The friends took their filled glasses in hand to carry out Vincenz's suggestion.

"Stop!" cried Theodore. "Let me say a word or two first. To begin with, I hope you will by no means apply that psychical problem of mine (which I perhaps stated somewhat too forcibly) directly to our author here. Rather take it that my object was to show you very vividly and convincingly how dangerous it is to form conclusions about phenomena in a man of which we know nothing as to their deep psychic origin; nay, how heartless, as well as senseless, it is to persecute, with silly scorn and childish derision, one who has been the victim of a depressing influence, such as we ourselves would probably have resisted less successfully. Who shall cast the first stone at one who has grown defenceless because his strength has ebbed away with the heart's-blood flowing from wounds inflicted by his own self-deception? My end is gained now. Even you--Lothair, Ottmar, Vincenz, severe inflexible critics and judges, have quite altered your opinions now that you have seen my poet face to face. His face speaks truth. I must testify that, in the happy days when he and I were friends, he was the most delightful and charming of men in every relation of life. All the oddities, and strange eccentricities of his exterior, and of his whole being (which he himself, with delicate irony, tried to bring to light, rather than to conceal) only produced the effect of rendering him, in the most various surroundings and most diverse circumstances, always in the most attractive manner, utterly delightful. Moreover, he was full of a subtle humour which rendered him the worthy *confrère* of Hamann, Heppel, and Scheffner. It is impossible that all that blossom of promise can be withered and dead, blighted by the poison breath of a miserable infatuation. No! If that picture could come to life--if the poet were to walk in and sit down actually amongst us here, life and genius would coruscate out of his discourse as of yore. I fain would hope that I see the dawn of a new and brilliant day! May the rays of true wisdom break out more and more brightly; may recovered strength and renewed power of labour produce work which shall show us the poet in the pure glory of the verily inspired singer, even if it does not happen before the late autumn of his days! And to this, ye Serapion Brethren, let us drink in happy expectation."

The friends, forming a semicircle round the picture, clinked their glasses together. "And then," said Vincenz, "it won't matter whether he is Private Secretary, Abbé, or Privy Councillor, Cardinal, or the very Pope; or even a Bishop *in partibus infidelium*, that's to say, of Paphos!"

As was usually the case with Vincenz, he had without intending it, or even being aware of it, stuck a comic tail on to a serious subject. But the friends felt too strangely moved to pay particular attention to this. They sat down again in silence at the table, while Theodore carried the poet's picture back into the next room.

"I had meant," said Sylvester, "to read you this evening a story, for the idea of which I am indebted to a strange chance, or rather, to a strange remembrance. But it is so late that Serapiontic hours would be long over before I had finished it."

"That is very much my case too," said Vincenz, "with my long-promised tale, which I have got pressed against my heart here in the breast-pocket of my coat

(that usual *boudoir* of literary productions) like a pet child. It has sucked itself fat and lusty at the mother's milk of my imagination, and has thereby got so forward and so talkative that if I were to let it begin, it would go on till daybreak. So that it must wait till the next meeting. To talk, I mean to converse, appears dangerous to-night; for, before one knows where one is, some heathen king, or Pater Molinos (or some *mauvais sujet* or another of the sort), suddenly sits in the midst of us, talking all kinds of unintelligible nonsense. So that if either of us can out with a manuscript with something amusing in it, I hope he will let us hear it."

"If anything which any one of us may be able to produce to-night," said Cyprian, "must seem to be nothing more than a stop-gap, or an intermezzo between other melodies, I may pluck up courage to read to you a trifle which I wrote down many years ago, when I had been passing through a period of much mystery and some danger. I had completely forgotten the existence of the pages in question, until they accidentally came into my hands a short time ago, vividly recalling the times to which they relate. My belief is that what led to the production of this rather chimerical story is much more interesting than the thing itself; and I shall have more to say on that subject when I have finished it."

Cyprian read:

PHENOMENA.

When any allusion was made to the last siege of Dresden, Anselmus turned even paler than he ordinarily was. He would fold his hands in his lap--he would gaze before him, lost in melancholy memories--he would murmur to himself,

"God of Heaven, were I to put my legs into my new riding-boots at the proper time, and run across the bridge towards Neustadt, paying no attention to burning straw, and the bursting shells, I have no doubt that this great personage and the other would, put his head out of his carriage window and say, with a polite bow, 'Come along, my good sir, without any ceremony. I have room for you.' But there was I shut up and hemmed in in the middle of the accursed Marmot's-burrow, all ramparts, embankments, trenches, star-batteries, covered ways, &c., suffering hunger and misery as much as the best of them. Didn't it come to this, that if one happened to turn over the pages of a Roux's dictionary by way of passing the time, and came upon the word 'Eat,' one's exhausted stomach cried out in utter amazement, 'Eat? Now what does that mean?' People who had once on a time been fat buttoned their skin over them, like a double-breasted coat, a natural Spencer! Oh, heavens, if only that Master of the Rolls--that Lindhorst--hadn't been there! Popowicz of course wanted to kill me, but the Dolphin sprinkled marvellous life-balsam out of its silver-blue nostrils. And Agafia!" When he spoke this name, Anselmus was wont to get up from his seat, jump just a little, once, twice, three times; and then sit down again. It was always quite useless to ask him what he really meant, on the whole, by those extraordinary sayings and grimaces. He merely answered, "Can I possibly describe what happened with Popowicz and Agafia without being supposed to be out of my mind?" And every one would laugh gently, as much as to say, "Well, my good fellow, we suppose that whether or not."

One drear, cloudy October evening, Anselmus, who was understood to be somewhere a long way off--came in at the door of a friend of his. He seemed to be moved to the depths of his being, he was kindlier and tenderer than at other times--almost pathetic. His humour (often perhaps too wildly discursive, too universally antagonistic) was bowing itself, tamed and bridled, before the mighty Spirit which had possession of his inner soul. It had grown quite dark, the friend wanted to send for lights. But Anselmus, taking hold of both his arms, said: "If you would, for once, do me a real favour, don't have lights brought. Let's be content with the dim shining of that Astral lamp which is sending its glimmer from the closet there. You can do what you please--drink tea, smoke tobacco, but don't

smash any cups, or throw lighted matches on to my new trousers. Either of those things would not only pain me, but would make an unnecessary noise and disturbance in the enchanted garden into which I have at last managed to get to-day, and in which I am enjoying myself to my soul's content. I shall go and lie on that sofa."

He did so. After a considerable pause, he began:

"To-morrow morning at eight o'clock it will be exactly two years since Count von der Lobau marched out from Dresden with twelve thousand men and four-and-twenty guns, to fight his way to the Meissner Hills."

"Well," said his friend, "I have been sitting here on the stretch of an expectation, almost of a devout description, thinking I was going to hear of some celestial manifestation, coming hovering out of your enchanted garden--and this is all? What interest do I take in Count von der Lobau and his expedition? And fancy you remembering that there were just twelve thousand men and four-and-twenty guns. When did military details of the sort begin to effect a lodgment in that head of yours?"

"Are those days of mystery and fatality," said Anselmus, "which we passed through so short a time ago so completely forgotten by you that you no longer recollect the manner in which the armed monster grasped us and drove us? The *noli turbare* no longer held in check our own exertions of force, and we would not *be* held in check or protected, for in every heart the demon made deep wounds, and, driven by wild torture, every hand grasped the unfamiliar sword, not for defence, no--for attack, that the hateful ignominy might be atoned for, and revenged, by Death! Even at this hour there comes upon me, in bodily form of flesh and blood, that power which was active in those days of darkness, and drove me forth from art and science into that blood-stained tumult. Was it possible, do you think, for me to go on sitting at my desk? I hurried up and down the streets, I followed the troops when they marched out, as far as I dared, merely to see with my own eyes as much as I could, and from what I Baw to gather some hope, paying no heed to the miserable, deceptive, proclamations and news 'from the seat of war.' Very good. When at length that battle of all battles was fought, when all round us every voice was shouting for joy at new-won freedom, whilst we were still lying in chains of slavery, I felt as if my heart would break. I felt as though I must gain air and freedom, for myself and all who were chained to the stake along with me, by means of some terrible deed. It may seem to you now, and with the knowledge of me which you think you possess, incredible and ludicrous; but I can assure you that I went about with the idea in my mind, the insane idea, that I would set a match to some fort which I knew the enemy had got well-stocked with powder, and blow it into the air."

The friend could not help smiling a little at the wild heroism of the unwarlike Anselmus. The latter, however, could not see this, as it was dark; and after a few moments' silence he proceeded as follows. "You have all of you often said that a peculiar planet which presides over me has a manner of bringing marvellous matters about my path on occasions of importance, matters in which people do not believe and which often seem to myself as if they proceeded out of my own inner being, although there they are, outside of me also, taking form as mystic symbols of that element of the marvellous which we find all about us everywhere in life. It was so with me this day two years ago in Dresden. That long day had dragged itself out in dull, mysterious silence; everything was quiet outside the gate--not a shot to be heard. Late in the evening--it might have been about ten o'clock, I slunk into a coffee house in the old market, where, in an out-of-the-way back room into which none of the hated foreigners were allowed to penetrate, friends of like minds and opinions gave each other reassurance of comfort and hope. It was there where, notwithstanding all the lies which were current, the true news of the engagements at the Katzbach, Culm, &c., were first received, where our R. told us of the victory at Leipzig two days after it happened, though God knows how he obtained his knowledge of it. My way had led me past the

Brühl Palace, where the Field Marshal was quartered, and I had been struck by the unusual lighting-up of the salons, as well as the stir going on all over the house. I was just mentioning this to my friends, with the remark that the enemy must have something in hand, when R. came hurrying in, breathless, and in great excitement. 'Hear the latest thing,' he began at once. 'There has been a Council of War at the Field Marshal's. General Mouton (Count von der Lobau) is going to fight his way to Meissen with twelve thousand men and four-and-twenty guns. He marches out this morning.' After a good deal of discussion we at last adopted R.'s opinion that this attack, which, from the unceasing watchfulness of our friends outside, might very probably be disastrous to the enemy, would very likely force the Field Marshal to capitulate, and so put a period to our miseries. "How," thought I, as I was going home about midnight, "can R. have found out what the decision come to was almost at the very moment it was arrived at?" However, I was presently aware of a hollow, rumbling sound making itself audible through the deathly stillness of the night. Guns and ammunition waggons, well loaded up with forage, began passing slowly by me in the direction of the Elbe bridge. "R. was right then," I had to say to myself. I followed the line of their march and got as far as the centre of the bridge, where there was at that time a broken arch, temporarily repaired with wooden beams and scaffolding. At each side of this construction was a species of fortification, constructed of high palisading and earth-works. Here, close to this fortification, I took up my position, pressing myself close to the balustrade of the bridge so as not to be seen. It now seemed to me that the tall palisades began moving backwards and forwards, and bending over towards me, murmuring hollow, unintelligible words. The deep darkness of the cloudy night prevented my seeing anything clearly; but when the troops had crossed, and all was as still as death on the bridge, I could make out that there was a deep, oppressed breathing near me, and a faint, mysterious whimpering or whining--one of the dark, scarcely distinguishable baulks of the timber was rising into a higher position. An icy horror fell upon me, and, like a man tortured in a nightmare dream, firmly fettered by leaded clamps, I could not move a muscle. The night-breeze rose, wafting mists about the hills: the moon sent feeble rays through rents in the clouds. And I saw, not far from me, the figure of a tall old man with silvery hair and a long beard. The mantle which fell over his haunches he had cast across his breast in numerous heavy folds. With his long, white naked arm he was stretching a staff far out over the river. It was from him that the murmuring and whimpering proceeded. At that moment I heard the sound of marching coming from the town, and I saw the sheen of arms. The old man cowered down, and began to whimper and lament, in a pitiful voice, holding out a cap to those who were coming over the bridge, as if asking for alms. An officer, laughing, cried, "*Voilà St. Pierre, qui veut pêcher!*" The one who came next stopped, and said very gravely, "*Eh bien! Moi, pêcheur, je lui aiderai à pêcher.*" Several officers and soldiers, quitting the ranks, threw the old man money, sometimes silently, sometimes with gentle sighs, like men in expectation of death; and he, then, always nodded from side to side with his head in a curious way, uttering a sort of hollow cry of a singular description. At length an officer (in whom I recognized General Mouton) came so very close to the old man that I thought his foaming charger would tramp upon him; and, turning quickly to his aide-de-camp, as he thrust his hat more firmly down on to his head, he asked him, in a loud excited voice, "*Qui est cet homme?*" "The escort which was in attendance on him stood motionless; but an old, bearded sapper, who was passing with his axe on his shoulder, said, calmly and gravely, "*C'est un pauvre maniaque bien connû ici. On l'appelle St. Pierre Pêcheur.*" On that the force passed on across the bridge, not as at other times, full of foolish jesting, but in dispirited ill-temper and gloom. As the last sound of them died away, and the last gleam of their arms disappeared, the old man slowly reared himself up, and stood with uplifted head and staff outstretched, like some miraculous saint ruling the stormy water. The waves of the river rose into mightier and mightier billows, as if stirred from their depths. And I seemed to hear a hollow voice, coming up from amidst those rushing waters, and saying in the Russian language.

"Michael Popowicz! Michael Popowicz! Do you not see the fireman?"

The old man murmured to himself. He seemed to be praying. But suddenly he cried out, "Agafia!" And at that moment his face glowed in blood-red fire which seemed to be shooting up at him out of the Elbe. On the Meissner Hills great fluttering flames blazed up into the sky; their reflection shone into the river, and upon the old man's face. And now, close beside me upon the bridge, there began to be audible a sort of plashing and splashing, and I saw a dim form climbing up arduously, and presently swing itself over the balustrade with marvellous dexterity.

"Agafia?" the old man cried.

"Girl! Dorothea! In the name of heaven," I was beginning, but in an instant I felt myself clasped hold of, and forcibly drawn away. "Oh, for Christ's sake keep silence, dearest Anselmus, or you are a dead man," whispered the creature who was standing close to me, trembling and shivering with cold. Her long black hair hung down dripping, her sodden garments were clinging to her slender body. She sank down exhausted, saying, in tones of gentle complaining, "Oh, it is so cold down there! Do not say another word, Anselmus dearest, or we must certainly die."

The light of the flames was glowing upon her face, and I saw that she was Dorothea, the pretty country girl who had taken asylum with my landlord when her native village was plundered, and her father killed. He employed her as a servant, and used to say that her troubles had quite stupefied her, or otherwise she would have been a nice enough little thing. And he was right there. She scarcely spoke, except to utter a few words which sounded like incoherent nonsense, whilst her face, which would otherwise have been beautiful, was marred by a strange unmeaning smile. She used to bring my coffee into my room every morning, and I remarked that her figure, complexion, &c., were not at all those of a peasant girl. "Ah," my landlord used to say, "you see she's a farmer's daughter, and a Saxon."

As this girl was thus lying, rather than kneeling before me, half dead, dripping, I quickly pulled off my cloak and wrapped her in it, whispering to her, "Warm yourself, dear, oh, warm yourself, darling Dorothea, or you will die! What were you doing in the cold river?"

"Oh, keep silent!" she said, throwing back the hood of her mantle, and combing her dripping hair back with her fingers. "What I implore you to do is to keep silent. Come to that stone seat yonder. Father is speaking with Saint Andrew, and can't hear us."

We crept cautiously to the stone seat. Utterly carried away by the most extraordinary sensations, overmastered by fear and rapture, I clasped the creature in my arms. She sat down in my lap without hesitation, and threw her arms about my neck. I felt the icy water from her hair running down my neck; but as drops sprinkled on fire only increase its flaming, love and longing only seethed up within me the more vehemently.

"Anselmus," she whispered, "I believe you are good and true. When you sing it goes right through my heart, and you have charming ways. You won't betray me. Who would get you your coffee if you did? And, listen, when you are all starving (and you soon will be), I'll come to you at night, all alone, when nobody can know, and bake you nice cakes. I have flour, fine flour, hidden away in my little room. And we'll have bridecake, white and lovely!" At this she began to laugh, but immediately sobbed and wept. "Ah me! like those in Moskow. Oh! my Alexei! my Alexei! Beautiful dolphin, swim! Swim through the waves! Am I not waiting for you, your faithful love?" She drooped her little head, her sobs grew fainter, and she seemed to sink into a slumber, her bosom heaving and falling in sighs of longing. I looked at the old man. He was standing with outstretched arms, and saying, in hollow tones, "He gives the signal! See how he shakes his fiery locks of flame; how eagerly he treads into the ground those fiery pillars on which he traverses the land! Hear ye not his step of thunder? Feel ye not the vivifying

breath which wreathes before him like a gleaming incense cloud? Hither! hither! mighty brethren!"

The sound of the old man's words was like the hollow roar of the approaching whirlwind, and while he spoke, the fire upon the Meissner Hills blazed brighter and brighter. "Help, Saint Andrew!" the girl cried in her sleep. And suddenly she sprung up as if possessed by some terrible idea, and throwing her left arm more closely round me, whispered into my ear, "Anselmus! it would be better that I killed you," and I saw a knife gleaming in her right hand. I repulsed her in terror, with a loud cry of, "Mad creature! What would you do?" Then she screamed out, "Ah, I cannot do it! But all is over with you now!" At that moment the old man cried, "Agafia, with whom are you speaking?" And ere I could bethink me, he was close to me, aiming a stroke with his swung staff at me which would have cleft my skull in two had not Agafia seized me from behind and drawn me quickly away. The staff splintered into a thousand pieces on the stone bench. The old man fell on his knees. "Allons! allons!" resounded from all sides. I had to collect my thoughts, and spring quickly to one side to avoid being crushed by the guns and ammunition waggons which were again coming across.

Next morning the Russians drove this expeditionary force down from the hills, and back into the fortifications, notwithstanding the superiority of its numbers. "'Tis a strange thing," people said, "that our friends outside were informed of the enemy's plans, for that signal fire on the Meissner Hills had the effect of assembling the troops, so that they might make a resistance in force, just at the very time and place where he intended to concentrate his attacking bodies."

For several days Dorothea did not come in the morning with my coffee; and my landlord, pale with terror, told me had seen her, along with the mad beggar of the Elbe bridge, marched off from the marshal's quarters to Neustadt under a strong escort.

"Oh, good heavens!" said Anselmus's friend, "they were discovered and executed."

But Anselmus gave a strange smile and said, "Agafia got away; and, alter the Peace was signed, I received, from her own hands, a beautiful white wedding-cake of her own making."

The reticence of Anselmus was proof against every effort to induce him to say anything more concerning this astonishing affair.

When Cyprian had finished, Lothair said, "You told us that the events which suggested this sketch would be more interesting than it is itself; so that I consider those suggesting circumstances are an essential part of it, without which it is not complete. Therefore, I think you ought at once to give us your why and wherefore, as a sort of explanatory note."

"Does it not seem to you to be as unusual as remarkable," said Cyprian, "that all that I have read to you is literally true, and that even the little 'wind up,' has its kernel of actuality?"

"Let us hear!" the friends cried.

"To begin with," said Cyprian, "I must tell you that the fate which befell Anselmus in my sketch was actually my own, as well. My being ten minutes late decided my destiny, so that I was shut up in Dresden just as it was surrounded on all sides. It is a fact that after the battle of Leipzig, when our condition became more painful and trying day by day, certain friends, or mere acquaintances, whom a similar lot and a like way of thinking had drawn together, used to assemble in the back room of a coffee-house, much as the disciples did at Emmaus. The landlord, one Eichelkraut, was a reliable, trustworthy man, who made no secret of his hostility to the French, and always obliged them to treat him with proper

respect and keep their due distance from him when they came in as customers. No Frenchman was allowed to make his way into that backroom on any pretext, and if one did succeed in showing his nose there, he could never get a morsel to eat, or a drop to drink, let him implore, or swear, as much as he liked. Moreover, the room was always as silent as the grave, and we all blew such stifling clouds out of our pipes that the place soon became so full of the exhalation that a Frenchman would be very soon smoked out, like a wasp, and usually went growling and swearing out of the door like one. As soon as he did, the window would be opened to let the reek out, and we would be restored to our peace and comfort again. The life and soul of those meetings was a well-known talented and charming writer: and I remember with great pleasure how he and I used to get upstairs to the upper story of the house, look out of the little garret window into the night, and see the enemy's bivouac fires shining in the sky. We used to say to each other all sorts of wonderful things which the shimmer of those fires, combined with the moonlight, used to put into our heads, and then go down and tell our friends what we imagined we had seen. It is a fact that one night one of our number (an advocate) who was always the first to hear any news, and whose reports were always reliable (heaven knows whence he derived his information), came in and told us the decision which had just been come to by the council of war concerning the expedition of Count von der Lobau, exactly as I have repeated it to you. It is likewise true that as I was going home about midnight, while the French battalions were falling-in in profound silence (no *generale* being beaten) and beginning their march over the bridge, I met ammunition waggons, so that I could have no doubt of the accuracy of his information. And lastly, it is the fact that, on the bridge, there was a grey old beggar lying, begging from the French troops as they crossed, whom I could not remember having seen in Dresden before. Last of all it is the fact, and the most wonderful of all, that when, much interested and excited, I reached my own quarters, on climbing up to the top story I *did* see a fire on the Meissner Hills, which was neither a watch fire nor a burning building. The sequel showed that the Russians must have known that night all about the attack intended to be made on the following morning, inasmuch as they concentrated troops which had been at a considerable distance upon the Meissner Hills, and it was principally Russian Landwehr which drove the French back as a storm sweeps a field of stubble. When the remnant of them fell back into the fortifications, the Russians quietly marched off to their previous positions. So that at the very time when the council of war was held at Gouvion de St. Cyr's, the decision which it arrived at was communicated to, or, more probably, overheard by persons who were not supposed to have this in their power. Strangely enough, the advocate knew every detail of the deliberation; for instance, that Gouvion was opposed to the expedition, and only yielded lest he might be thought wanting in courage, in a case where rapidity of decision was a desideratum. Count von der Lobau was determined to march out and endeavour to cut his way to the emperor's army. But how did the surrounding force know so soon of what was projected? For they knew of it in the course of an hour. Not only was it apparently impossible to get across the strongly fortified bridge; and if not, the river would have had to be swum, and the various trenches and walls got over. Moreover, the whole of Dresden was palisaded, and carefully guarded by sentries, to a considerable distance round. Where was the possibility of any human being surmounting all those obstacles in such a short space of time! One might think of telegraphic signals, made by means of lights from some tall tower or loftily situated house. But consider the difficulty of carrying that out, and the risk of detection, for such signals would have been easily seen. At all events it remains an incomprehensible thing how what actually happened came to pass; and that is enough to suggest to a lively imagination all sorts of mysterious and sufficiently extraordinary hypotheses to account for it."

"I bow my knee in deep reverence before Saint Serapion," said Lothair; "and before the most worthy of his disciples, and I am quite sure that a Serapiontic account of the important incidents of the war, as seen by him, if given in his characteristic style, would be exceedingly interesting, as well as very instructive, to imaginative members of the profession of arms. At the same time I have little doubt that the incidents in question came about quite naturally, and in the

ordinary course of events. But you had to get your landlord's servant-girl, the pleasing Dorothea, into the water, as a sort of deluding Nixie; and she----"

"Don't jest about that," Cyprian said, very solemnly. "Don't make jokes on that subject, Lothair. At this moment I see that beautiful creature before my eyes, that lovely terrible mystery (I do not know what other name to call her by). It was I who had that bridecake sent to me; glittering in diamonds, flashing like lightning, wrapped in priceless sables----"

"Listen," cried Vincenz. "We are getting at it now. The Saxon maid-servant--the Russian Princess--Moskow--Dresden-- Has not Cyprian always spoken in the most mysterious language, and with the most recondite allusions, of a certain period of his life just after the first French war? It is coming out now! Speak! Let all your heart stream forth, my Cyprianic Serapion and Serpiontic Cyprian."

"And how if I keep silence?" answered Cyprian, suddenly drawing in his horns, and growing grave and gloomy. "And how if I am obliged to keep silence? And I *shall* keep silence!"

He spoke those words in a strangely solemn and exalted tone, leaning back in his chair, and fixing his eyes on the ceiling, as was his wont when deeply moved.

The friends looked at one another with questioning glances.

"Well," said Lothair at last, "it seems that somehow our meeting of to-night has fallen into a strange groove of ill-fortune, and it appears to be hopeless to expect any comfort or enjoyment out of it. Suppose we have a little music, and sing some absurd stuff or other as vilely as we can."

"Yes," said Theodore, "that is the thing." And he opened the piano. "If we don't manage a canon--which, according to Junker Tobias is a thing which can reel three souls out of a weaver's body--we will make it awful enough to be worthy of Signor Capuzzi and his friends. Suppose we sing an Italian *Terzetto buffo* out of our own heads. I'll be the prima donna, and begin. Ottmar will be the lover, and Lothair had better be the comic old man, and come in, raging and swearing in rapid notes."

"But the words, the words," said Ottmar.

"Sing whatever you please," said Theodore; "Oh Dio! Addio! Lasciami mia Vita."

"No, no," cried Vincenz. "If you won't let me take part in your singing--although I feel that I possess a wonderful talent for it, which only wants the voice of a Catalani to produce itself in the work-a-day world with drastic effect, allow me at least to be your librettist--your poet-laureate. And here I hand you your libretto at once."

He had found on Theodore's writing-table the 'Indice de Teatrali Spettacoli' for 1791, and this he handed to Theodore. This indice, like all which appear yearly in Italy, merely contained a list of the titles of the operas performed, with the names of their composers, and of the singers, scene-painters, &c., concerned in their production. They opened the page which related to the opera in Milan, and it was decided that the prima donna should sing the names of the lover-tenors (with a due interspersing of Ah Dio's and Oh Cielo's), that the lover-tenor should sing the names of the prima donnas in like manner, and that the comic old man should come in, in his furious wrath, with the titles of the operas which had been given and an occasional burst of invective, appropriate to his character.

Theodore played a *ritornello* of the cut and pattern which occurs by the hundred in the opera buffas of the Italians, and then began to sing in sweet, tender strains "Lorenzo Coleoni! Gaspare Rossari! Oh Dio! Giuseppo Marelli! Francesco Sedini!" &c. Ottmar followed with "Giuditta Paracca! Teresa Ravini! Giovanna Velata--Oh Dio!" &c. And Lothair burst duly in with rapid, angry quavers: "Le Gare Generose, del Maestro Paesiello--Che vedo? La Donna di

Spirito, del Maestro Mariella. Briconaccio! Piro, Re di Epiro! Maledetti!--del Maestro Zingarelli," &c.

This singing, which Lothair and Ottmar accompanied with appropriate gesticulations (Vincenz illustrating Theodore's impersonations with the most preposterous grimaces imaginable), warmed up the friends more and more. In a comic description of enthusiastic inspiration each seized the drift of the other's ideas. All the passages, imitations, &c. (to use musical expressions), usually employed in compositions of this description, were reproduced with the utmost accuracy--so that any one who had come in by accident would never have dreamt that this performance was improvised on the spur of the moment, even if the strange hotch-potch of names had struck him as curious.

Louder and more unrestrainedly raged this outbreak of Italian *rabbia*, until (as may be supposed), it culminated in a wild, universal burst of laughter, in which even Cyprian joined.

At their parting, on this evening, the friends were in a condition of wild enjoyment, rather than (as was the case on other occasions), lull of rational delight.

SECTION EIGHT.

The Serapion Brethren had assembled for another meeting.

"I must be greatly mistaken," said Lothair, "and be anything but the possessor of a native genius (supplemented by assiduous practice) for physiognomy--such as I believe that I do possess, if I do not read very distinctly in the face of every one of us (not excepting my own, which I see magically gleaming at me in yonder mirror), that our minds are all fully charged with matter of importance, and only waiting for the word of command to fire it off. I am rather afraid that more than one of us may have got shut up in one or other of his productions one of those eccentric little firework devils which may come fizzling out, dart backwards and forwards about the room, banging and jumping, and not manage to pop out of the window until it has managed to give us all a good singeing. I even dread a continuation of our last conversation, and may Saint Serapion avert that from us! But lest we should fall immediately into those wild, seething waters, and that we may commence our meeting in a duly calm and rational frame of mind, I move that Sylvester begins by reading to us that story which we could not hear on the last occasion because there was no time left."

This proposal was unanimously agreed to.

"The woof which I have spun," said Sylvester, producing a manuscript, "is composed of many threads, of the most various shades, and the question in my mind is whether--on the whole--you will think it has proper colour and keeping. It was my idea that I should, perhaps, put some flesh and blood into what I must admit, is a rather feeble body, by contributing to it something out of a great, mysterious period--to which it really does but serve as a sort of framework."

Sylvester read:--

THE MUTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE OF THINGS.

A tumble over a root as a portion of the system of the universe--Mignon and the gypsy from Lorca, in connection with General Palafox--A Paradise opened at

Countess Walther Puck's.

"No!" said Ludwig to his friend Euchar, "no! There is no such lubberly, uncouth attendant on the goddess of Fortune as Herr Tieck has been pleased to introduce in the prologue to his second part of 'Fortunat,' who, in the course of his gyrations, upsets tables, smashes ink-bottles, and goes blundering into the President's carriage, hurting his head and his arm. No! For there is no such thing as chance. I hold to the opinion that the entire universe, and all that it contains, and all that comes to pass in it--the complete macrocosm--is like some large, very ingeniously constructed piece of clockwork-mechanism, which would necessarily come to a stop in a moment if any hostile principle, operating wholly involuntarily, were permitted to come in contact--in an opposing sense--with the very smallest of its wheels."

"I don't know, friend Ludwig," said Euchar, laughing, "how it is that you have come, all of a sudden, to adopt this wretched, mechanical theory--which is as old as the hills, and out of date long ago--disfiguring and distorting Goethe's beautiful notion of the red thread which runs all through our lives--in which, when we think about it in our more lucid moments, we recognize that higher Power which works above, and in us."

"I have the greatest objection to that simile," said Ludwig. "It is taken from the British navy. All through the smallest rope in their ships (I know this, of course, from the Wahlverwandschaften), runs a small red thread, which shows that the rope is Government property. No, my dear friend! Whatever happens is pre-ordained, from the beginning, as an essential necessity, just because it does happen. And this is the Mutual Interdependence of Things, upon which rests the principle of all being, of all existence. Because, as soon as you----"

However, it is necessary, at this point, to explain to the courteous reader that as Ludwig and Euchar were thus talking together, they were walking in an alley of the beautiful park at W----. It was a Sunday. Twilight was beginning to fall, the evening breeze was whispering in the branches which, reviving after the heat of the day, were exhaling gentle sighs. Among the woods were sounding the happy voices of townsfolk in their Sunday clothes, out for the afternoon, some of them lying in the sweet grass enjoying their simple supper, and others refreshing themselves in the various restaurants, in accordance with the winnings of their week.

Just as Ludwig was going on to explain more fully the profound theory of the mutual interdependence of things, he stumbled over the thick root of a tree, which (as he always wore spectacles) he had not seen; and he measured his length on the ground.

"*That* was comprehended in the mutual interdependence of things," said Euchar gravely and quietly, lifting up his friend's hat and stick, and giving him his hand to help him on to his legs again. "If you had not pitched over in that absurd manner the world would have come to a stop at once."

But Ludwig felt his right knee so stiff that he was obliged to limp, and his nose was bleeding freely. This induced him to take his friend's advice and go into the nearest restaurant, though he generally avoided these places, particularly on Sundays. For the jubilations of the Sunday townsfolk were exceptionally displeasing to him, giving him a sensation of being in places which were not by any means *convenable*--at all events for people of his position.

In the front of this restaurant the people had formed a deep, many-tinted ring, from the interior of which there Bounded the tones of a guitar and a tambourine. Ludwig, assisted by his friend, went limping into the house, holding his handkerchief to his face. And he begged so pitifully for water, and a little drop of wine-vinegar, that the landlady, much alarmed, thought he must be at the point of death. Whilst he was being served with what he required, Euchar (on whom the sounds of the guitar and tambourine exercised an irresistible fascination) crept

forth, and endeavoured to penetrate into the closed circle. He belonged to that restricted class of Nature's favourites whose exterior and whole being ensure a kindly reception everywhere, and in all circumstances. So that on this occasion some journeymen mechanics (people who are not usually much given to politeness of a Sunday) at once made room for him when he asked what was going forward, so that he as well as themselves might have a look at the strange little creature who was dancing and playing so prettily and cleverly. And a curious and delightful scene displayed itself to Euchar, which fettered all his mind and attention.

In the middle of the ring a girl with her eyes blindfolded was dancing the fandango amongst nine eggs, arranged three by three behind each other on the ground, and playing a tambourine as she danced. At one side stood a little deformed man, with an ill-looking gypsy face, playing the guitar. The girl who was dancing seemed to be about fifteen. She was oddly dressed in a red bodice, gold-embroidered, and a short white skirt trimmed with ribbons of various colours. Her figure and all her motions were the very ideal of elegance and grace. She brought the most marvellous variety of sounds out of her tambourine. Sometimes she would raise it above her head, and then hold it out in front of her or behind her, with her arms stretched out, in the most picturesque attitudes. Now it would sound like a far-off drum; now like the melancholy cooing of the turtle-dove, and presently like the distant roar of the approaching storm. All this was accompanied in the most delightful manner by the tinkling of the clear, harmonious bells. And the little guitar-player by no means fell short of her in virtuosity; for he, too, had quite a style of his own of treating his instrument--making the dance melody (which was a most characteristic one, wholly out of the common run of such things) predominate at times, loud and clear, and hushing it down at other times into a mysterious piano, striking the strings with the palms of his hand (as the Spaniards do in producing that peculiar effect), and presently dashing out bright-sounding, full harmonies. The tambourine went on *crescendo*, as the guitar-strings clanged louder and louder, and the girl's boundings increased in their scope in a similar ratio. She would set down her foot within a hair's-breadth of the eggs with the most complete certainty and confidence, so that the spectators could not help crying out, thinking that one of those fragile things must infallibly be broken. Her black hair had fallen down, and it flew about her head, giving her much the effect of a Mænad. The little fellow cried out to her in Spanish, "Stop!" And on this, while still going on with her dance, she lightly touched each of the eggs, so that they rolled together into a heap; upon which, with a loud beat on her tambourine and a forcible chord on the guitar, she came to a sudden standstill, as if banned there by some spell. The dance was done.

The little fellow went up to her and undid the cloth which bound her eyes. She rolled up her hair, took the tambourine, and went round amongst the spectators, with downcast looks, to collect their contributions. Not one had slunk off out of the way. Every one, with a face of pleasure, put a piece of money into that tambourine. When she came to Euchar, and as he was going to put something into it, she made a sign of refusal.

"May not I give you anything?" he said.

She looked up at him, and the glowing fire of her loveliest of eyes flashed through the night of her black silken lashes.

"The old man," she said gravely--almost solemnly--in her deep voice, and with her foreign accent, "told me that you, sir, did not come till the best part of my dance was done; and so I ought not to take anything from you." Thus speaking she made Euchar a pretty courtesy, and went to the little man, taking the guitar from his hands, and going with him to a table at some distance.

When Euchar looked round him, he perceived Ludwig sitting not far off, between two respectable townsfolk, with a great glass of beer before him, making the most earnest signs. Euchar went to him, saying, with a laugh, "Why, Ludwig, when did you take to drinking beer?" Ludwig, however, made signals to him, and

said, in meaning accents, "What do you say? Beer is one of the most delicious of drinks, and I delight in it above all things--when it is so magnificent as it is here."

The citizens rose, and Ludwig shook hands with them most politely, putting on a look which was half-pleased, half-annoyed, when they expressed at parting their regret for his mishap.

"You are always getting me into hot water with your want of tact," he said. "If I hadn't allowed myself to be treated to a glass of beer, if I hadn't managed to gulp the abominable trash down--those sturdy counter-jumpers would probably have been offended, and would have looked upon me as one of the profane. Then you must needs come and bring me into discredit, when I had been playing my part so very nicely."

"Well," said Euchar, "if you had been bowed out of their company, or even come in for a little touch of cudgelling, wouldn't it all have been a part of the mutual interdependence of things? But just listen as I tell you what a charming little drama your trip over the tree-root (predestined, according to the conditions of the Macrocosmus, to occur) gave me an opportunity of seeing."

And he told him about the charming egg dance by the Spanish girl. "Mignon!" cried Ludwig enthusiastically. "Heavenly, divine Mignon!"

The guitarist was sitting not far off, at a table, counting the receipts, and the girl was standing beside him, squeezing an orange into a glass of water. Presently the old man put the money together, and nodded to the girl with eyes sparkling with gladness, whilst she handed him the orange-water, and stroked his wrinkled cheeks. He gave a disagreeable, cackling laugh, and gulped down the liquid with every indication of thirst. The girl sat down and began tinkling on the guitar. "Oh Mignon!" cried Ludwig again. "Heavenly, divine Mignon! Ah, I shall rescue her, like another Wilhelm Meister, from the thraldom of this accursed miscreant who holds her in bondage!" "How do you know," asked Euchar, "that this little hunchback is an accursed miscreant?" "Cold creature!" answered Ludwig. "Cold, passionless creature, you understand nothing, you have no sympathy with anything, no sense of the genial, the imaginative. Don't you see--don't you comprehend how every description of the most insulting contempt, envious feeling, wickedness, ill-temper, and avarice of the vilest kind gleam out of the green, cat's-eyes of that little gypsy abortion--are legible in every wrinkle of his diabolical-looking face? Yes! I am going to rescue that beautiful child out of the clutches--the Satanic clutches--of that brown monster! If I could only have a talk with her, the little charmer!" "Nothing is easier than that," said Euchar, and he signed to her to come near.

The girl put the instrument down, came near, and made a reverence, casting her eyes modestly on the ground. "Mignon!" cried Ludwig. "Mignon! Sweet, beautiful creature!"

"I am called Emanuela," she said.

"And that horrible ruffian there," Ludwig went on, "where did he steal you from? How did you get into his clutches, poor thing?"

The girl lifted her eyes, and sending a beaming, serious glance through and through Ludwig, replied. "I don't understand you, sir. I don't know what you mean--why you ask me this?"

"You are a Spaniard, my child," Euchar began.

"I am," she answered, her voice trembling. "I am, indeed. You see me--you hear me. Why should I deny it?"

"Then, of course, you can play the guitar and sing a song?"

She covered her eyes with her hand, and said, in a scarce audible whisper, "Ah!

I should like to play and sing *you* one. But my songs are burning hot; and here it is so cold--so cold!

"Do you know," said Euchar, speaking in Spanish, and in a heightened tone, "the song *Laurel immortal*?"

She clapped her hands, raised her glance to Heaven, tears filled her eyes; she flew to the table, seized the guitar, sprang, rather than walked back to the two friends, placed herself before Euchar, and began

> "Laurel immortal al gran Palafox,
> Gloria da España, de Francia terror!"

The expression which she put into this song was indescribable. From the deepest pain of death there flamed forth the most fiery enthusiasm--each note seemed to be a lightning flash which must shiver every ice-covering of the chilled breast. As for Ludwig he was--to use a familiar expression--ready to jump out of his skin with sheer rapture. He interrupted her singing with boisterous "Bravas!" "Bravissimas!" and a hundred other such expressions of approbation.

"Do be so kind, my dear fellow, as to make a little less noise!" Euchar said. "Oh, of course," he answered, "you unimpressionable people are never in the least affected by music!" However he did what Euchar had asked him to do.

When she had finished, she went and leant on a tree, as if wearied. And as she let the chords go on sounding more and more softly till they died away in a *pianissimo*, great tears were falling upon the instrument.

"You are in some need, my poor, pretty child," said Euchar, in the tone which comes only from a deeply moved heart. "Although I did not see the beginning of your dance, you have more than made up for that by your song, and you must not refuse to accept something from me."

He had taken out a little purse in which bright ducats were shining, and was handing it to her as she came closer to him. She fixed her gaze upon his hand, seized it in both her own, and falling on her knees with a loud cry of "*Oh, Dios!*" covered it with the warmest kisses. "Ah!" cried Ludwig, "nothing but gold is worthy to touch that beautiful little hand." And he asked Euchar if he could give him change for a thaler, as he had no smaller money about him.

Meanwhile the hunchback had come limping up, and he lifted the guitar, which Emanuela had dropped on the ground, making many smiling reverences to Euchar, supposing that he had been exceedingly generous to the girl, from the motion with which she had thanked him.

"Scoundrel--miscreant!" growled Ludwig.

The man started in alarm, and said, in a lamentable tone, "Ah, sir, why are you so angry? Don't condemn poor Biagio Cubas--a good, respectable, honest man. Don't judge me by the colour of my skin, or by the ugliness of my face. I know I *have* an ugly face. I was born in Lorca, and am every bit as good a Christian as you are yourself."

The girl jumped up hastily, crying out to the old man in Spanish, "Come away, little father, as quickly as you can." And they both hurried off, Cubas continuing to make various odd reverences, and Emanuela fixing upon Euchar the most soul-full gaze of which her beautiful eyes were capable.

When the strange couple were lost among the trees, Euchar said, "You must see, do you not, that you were in much too great a hurry to condemn that little cobold in your own mind? He *has* a touch or so of the gypsy about him. As he says himself, he comes from Lorca. And Lorca is an old Moorish town, and the Lorcanese (good enough folks, all the same) bear undeniable traces of their ancestry. So there is nothing which they take in worse part than to have this

imputed to them, which is why they keep perpetually declaring that they are Christians of ever so old standing. This was the case with this little fellow, in whose face his Moorish origin is certainly reflected to the extent of positive caricature."

"No matter!" cried Ludwig. "I stick to my opinion; the man is a tremendous scoundrel, and I will leave no stone unturned till I deliver my charming, beautiful Mignon from his clutches."

"If you insist on thinking the little fellow a scoundrel," said Euchar, "I can't say that I have very much confidence, for my part, in the charming beautiful Mignon."

"What!" cried Ludwig. "Not have confidence in that divine little creature, whose eyes beam with the purest, most innocent truth and tenderness? However, there we see the icy, prosaic nature wholly devoid of feeling for all such matters, distrustful of everything which doesn't fit all in a moment into the compartments, the grooves of his everyday business."

"Well, don't get so excited about it, my dear, enthusiastic friend," said Euchar quietly. "You will probably say that I have no tangible reason for distrusting the beautiful Mignon. But my reason is that I have this instant discovered that as she was kissing my hand she took away that little ring with the curious stone (which you know I always wear) from my finger. And I am greatly distressed to lose it, because it is a souvenir of a period of my life which was full of intense interest and importance."

"In heaven's name," said Ludwig, in an awestruck whisper, "it is not possible, surely! No, no!" he cried, loudly and excitedly, "it cannot be possible! That lovely face could not deceive: that eye--that glance--You must have dropped the ring--let it fall."

"Well--" said Euchar, "we shall see. But it is getting dark: let us get back to the town."

All the way home, Ludwig did not cease talking of Emanuela, calling her by the sweetest names, and declaring that he was quite certain--from a peculiar glance which she had cast on him at parting--that he had made a deep impression on her--a sort of event which generally happened to him in similar cases--*i.e.* when the romantic element entered amongst the circumstances of everyday life. Euchar did not interrupt him by so much as a syllable; but he worked himself up more and more--till, just at the town gate (where the drummer of the guard was beginning to beat the tattoo), he screamed into his friend's ear (a process necessitated by the row made by the military virtuoso on his instrument), as he cast himself upon his bosom, that he was most deeply in love with the sweet Mignon, and that the sole object of his life from thenceforth was to find her again, and free her from the bondage of the atrocious old monster.

There was a servant in a handsome livery standing at Ludwig's door, who handed him a card of invitation. As soon as he had read it, and sent the servant away, he embraced his friend as frantically as he had done at the town gate, and cried, "Oh, Euchar! call me the most fortunate--the most enviable--of mortals. Open your heart! Form some slight idea of my happiness! Mingle your tears of joy with mine!"

"What can there be of such a marvellously fortunate description announced to you on a card?" inquired Euchar.

"Don't be startled," murmured Ludwig, "when I open to you the gates of the magically brilliant Paradise of a thousand delights, which will unfold itself to me by the virtue of this card here."

"Well," said Euchar, "I am sure I shall be very glad indeed, to hear what the piece of good fortune is which is coming to you."

"Hear it," cried Ludwig; "learn it--understand it! Be amazed at it--doubt of it--cry out--shriek--shout! I have got an invitation to the supper and ball to-morrow evening at Countess Walther Puck's! Victorine! Victorine! Sweet, lovely Victorine!"

"And how about sweet, lovely Mignon?" asked Euchar. But Ludwig groaned forth, in the most pathetic tones, "Victorine! My life!" and bolted into his quarters.

The Friends, Ludwig and Euchar. Evil Dream of the Loss, at Piquet, of a Pair of Handsome Legs. Woes of an Enthusiastic Dancer. Comfort, Hope, and Monsieur Cochenille.

It may be expedient to tell the courteous reader a little more concerning this pair of friends, so that he may form, at all events, to some extent, a well-grounded opinion as to each of them.

Both had the title of Baron. Educated together, and having grown up in the most intimate friendship, they could not part even when the lapse of years brought to light most striking dissimilarities in their mental characteristics, which became more and more developed as time went on. In his childhood, Euchar belonged to the class of "good, well-behaved children," so-called, because in "society" they will sit for hours in the same spot, ask no questions, never want anything, and so forth, and then in due course, develop into wooden blockheads. With Euchar the case was different. If when, in his capacity of a "good, well-behaved" boy he chanced to be sitting with bent head and downcast eyes, some one spoke to him, he would start in alarm, stammer, and falter in his speech, often even shed tears, and seem to have been awakened from a deep dream. When alone, he appeared to be a totally different being. If watched without his being aware of it, he would be talking loudly and eagerly, as if with several people about him, and he would "act" whole stories--which he had heard or read--as if they were dramas, so that tables, cupboards, chairs, whatever happened to be in the room with him, had to represent towns, forests, villages, and dramatis personæ. But when he had an opportunity of being alone in the open air, a special ecstasy seemed to inspire him. Then he would jump, dance, and shout through the woods, putting his arms about the trees, throwing himself down into the grass--and so forth. In any sort of game played by boys of his own standing, he was most unwilling to take part, and was consequently looked upon as being "funky," and a creature who had no "pluck," for he would never take his share in anything where there was any chance of risk--such as a big jump, or a difficult piece of climbing. But here, also, it was curious that, when at the end nobody had had the pluck to do the thing, Euchar would wait till they were all gone, and then, when he was by himself, would do with the utmost ease, what they had all only *wanted* to do. For instance, if the idea was to get up a high, slender tree, and nobody had managed to do it, as soon as all their backs were turned, and Euchar was alone, he would be at the top of it in a few seconds. Seeming outwardly to be cold and apathetic, he really threw himself into everything with all his soul, and a persevering steadfastness such as only belongs to strong characters. And when--as was often the case--that which he felt keenly came to the surface, it did so with such irresistible force, that everyone who had any knowledge of such matters was amazed at the depth of feeling which lay hidden in the boy's nature. Many schoolmasters, and tutors, who had to do with him, could make neither head nor tail of him as a pupil, and there was only one of them--the last--who said the boy was a poet: at which his papa was very much distressed, thinking that the boy had inherited his mother's temperament, and she had always had the most terrible headaches whenever she went to a party or any social function. However, the papa's most intimate friend, a smooth-spoken young chamberlain, assured him that the schoolmaster in question was an ass to say what he did, and utterly mistaken, seeing that the blood in the veins of young Euchar was noble, so that, being by birth an aristocrat, he never could be in any danger of being capable of poetry. And this was very consoling to the old gentleman. How the lad developed

with those dispositions may be readily inferred. Nature had imprinted on his face the unmistakable signet with which she stamps her prime favourites. But Mother Nature's favourites are those who have the power of completely realising the illimitable love of their kind mother, and of understanding the depths of her being: and they are only understood by those who are favourites themselves. Consequently Euchar was not understood by the general crowd--was considered unimpressionable, cold, incapable of the due degree of ecstasy on the subject of the newest tragedy at the theatre--and was stigmatized as a prosaic creature. Above all, a whole coterie of ladies of the most refined intellectual development and culture, who might well be credited with the power of insight on this particular subject, could by no means understand how it was possible that that Apollo's brow, those sharply curving, masterful eyebrows, those eyes which darted such a darksome fire, those softly pouting lips, should belong to a mere lifeless image. And yet all this seemed to be the case. For Euchar did not know in the least degree how to say nothing, about nothing, in words which meant nothing, to pretty ladies, and look, whilst so-doing, like a Rinaldo in bonds.

Matters were quite different with Ludwig. He belonged to the race of those wild, uncontrollable boys of whom people are in the habit of predicting that the world will not be wide enough for them. It was he who always invented the maddest and most adventurous features of all games. It was naturally to be expected that he would be the one of all others to "come to grief" on those occasions: but he was always the one who came out of them safe and sound, because he had the knack of keeping himself in a safe spot during the carrying out of the adventure--if he did not manage to slip out of it altogether. He took up every subject rapidly, with the utmost enthusiasm--and dropped it again as quickly. So that he learned a great many things, but did not learn much. When he came to young man's estate, he wrote very pretty verses, played passably on several instruments, drew very nice pictures, spoke with a certain degree of correctness and fluency several languages, and was, consequently, a paragon of up-bringing. He could get into the most surprising ecstasies about everything, and give utterance to the same in the most magniloquent words. But it was with him as with the drum--which gives forth a sound which is loud in proportion to its emptiness. The impression made upon him by everything grand, beautiful, sublime, resembled the outside tickling which excites the skin without affecting the inner fibres. Ludwig belonged to that class of people who say, "I want to do" so-and-so; but who never get beyond this principle of "wanting to do" into action. But, as in this world, those who announce, with the proper amount of loudness and emphasis, what they "intend," or are "going" to do, are held in far greater consideration than those who quietly go and "do" the things in question, it of course happened that Ludwig was considered "capable" of performing the grandest deeds, and was admired accordingly, people not troubling themselves to ascertain whether he had "done" the deeds which he had talked about so loudly. There were, it must be said, people who "saw through" Ludwig, and, starting from what he said, took some pains to find out what he had done, or if he had done anything at all. And this grieved him all the more that, in solitary hours, he was sometimes obliged to admit to himself that this everlasting "meaning" and "intending" to do things, without ever doing them, was, in reality, a miserable sort of business. Then he came upon a book--forgotten and out of date--in which was set forth that mechanical theory of the mutual interdependence of things. He eagerly adopted this theory, which justified and accounted for his doings, or rather his "intentions" of doing, in his own eyes, and in those of others. According with this theory, if he did not carry out anything which he had intended to do--what he had said he was going to do--it was not he who was to blame: its not happening was simply a part of the mutual interdependence of things.

The courteous reader will, at all events, see the great convenience of this theory.

Moreover, as Ludwig was a very good-looking young fellow, with blooming red cheeks, he would, by virtue of his qualities, have been the idol of all elegant circles, had not his short-sight led to his committing numerous "quid-pro-quos,"

which had often most annoying consequences. However, he consoled himself with the thought of the "impression," which was indescribable, which he believed himself to make upon all female hearts: and, besides, there was a good deal in the habit he had, just because he was so short-sighted, of placing himself in a closer proximity to ladies with whom he was conversing, than might have been considered altogether *convenable*, a species of innocent pushingness, belonging to the "genial" character, so as to be sure not to make any mistakes with reference to the person he was addressing; a matter which had more than once been productive of annoyance.

The morning after the ball at Count Walther Puck's, Euchar received a note from Ludwig, running as follows:

"Dearest and most beloved friend,--I am utterly miserable. I am stricken by destiny. It is all over with me! I am dashed down from the flowery summit of the fairest hope into the blackest and most fathomless abyss of the deepest despair. That which was to have been the source of my indescribable bliss constitutes my misery. Come to me as speedily as you can, and give me some comfort, if such a thing be possible."

Euchar found him stretched on his sofa, with his head bound up, pale and worn from sleeplessness.

"Is it you?" he cried, in a feeble voice, stretching an arm towards him: "is it you, my noble friend? Ah! *you* have some sympathy for my sufferings. At all events, let me tell you what I have gone through, and then say whether you think all is over with me, or not."

"Things did not turn out quite as you expected at the ball, I suppose," said Euchar.

Ludwig heaved a deep sigh.

"Was the lovely Victorine a little unkind?" inquired Euchar. "Didn't she behave to you quite as you expected?"

"I offended her," answered Ludwig, in the most funereal tones, "to an extent, and in a manner, which she can never forgive."

"Good heavens!" cried Euchar; "this is very distressing. How did it happen? Please to let me hear."

Ludwig, after heaving a profound sigh, and quoting some verses of appropriate poetry, went on, in a voice of profound melancholy:

"Yes, Euchar. As the mysterious whirring of the wheels of a clock tells me that it is going to strike the hour, warnings go before coming misfortunes. On the very night before the ball I had an awful, a horrible dream. I thought I was at the ball, and when I was going to begin dancing, I suddenly found that I could not move my feet from the floor. And I saw in the mirror, to my horror, that instead of the well-looking nether extremities which nature has provided me with, I was dragging about under my body, the gouty old legs of the Consistorial President, with all their wrappings and bandages. And while I had to stick to the floor in this terrible manner, lo and behold! the Consistorial President, with Victorine in his arms, whirling along in a Laendler, lightly and gracefully as any bird. But the point of the thing was, that he sniggered at me, with the most insulting style of sneering laughter, and said he had won my legs from me at picquet.

"I awoke, as you may imagine, bathed in a perspiration of anguish. Still sunk in thought over this horrible vision of the night, I must needs set the cup of almost boiling chocolate to my lips, and burn them to that extent, that you may see the mark still, although I have rubbed on as much pomade as I could. Now I know that you don't take much interest in other people's troubles, so I shall say nothing about the numerous fateful events which destiny dogged my steps with all day

yesterday, and merely tell you that when it came to be time to dress in the evening, two stitches burst out of one of my silk stockings--two of my waistcoat buttons came off--as I was getting into the carriage to go to the ball, I let my Wellington get into the mud, and at last, in the carriage itself, when I wanted to tighten the patent buckles of my pumps, I found, to my intense annoyance, that my idiot of a servant had put on two which we're not a pair! I was obliged to go home again, and lost a good half hour. However, Victorine came to me in all the glory of her beauty and delightsomeness. I asked her for the next dance. It was a Laendler, we started off together. I was in heaven. But in a moment I felt the spite of adverse fortune."

"The mutual interdependence of things," said Euchar, interrupting.

"Call it whatever you please," said Ludwig, "it doesn't matter to me to-day. All I know is, that it was fate which made me fall over that tree-stump yesterday. As I was dancing I felt the pain come on again in my knee, and it grew more and more unendurable. Just at that moment Victorine said, loud enough to be heard by the other people who were dancing, "We seem all to be going to sleep." Signs were made to the band, people clapped their hands to them, and the pace grew faster and faster. With all my might I struggled with the diabolical pain, and conquered it. I danced along daintily, and put on a delighted expression of countenance; but for all I could do, Victorine kept saying: 'What is the matter, Herr Baron? You are not one bit the partner that you generally are.' Burning dagger thrusts into my heart!"

"Poor, dear friend," said Euchar, laughing; "I see the full extent of your sufferings!"

"And yet," continued Ludwig, "all this was only the prelude to the most terrible of all events. You know that I have been for a long time applying my mind to arranging the figures of a '*seize*:' and you know of your own experience, how little I have made of the very considerable amount of china, glass, and stoneware that I have knocked off the tables in my lodgings here, in my practice of the intricacies of those 'tours, or figures,' that I might attain to the perfection of performance which was my dream. One of them is the most utterly glorious that the mind of man has ever hit upon, of its kind. Four couples stand, picturesquely grouped, the gentleman, balancing on his right tip-toe, places his right-arm about his partner, raising, at the same time, his left-arm in a graceful curve above his head--whilst the other couples make the 'ronde.' Such an idea never entered the heads of Vestris or Gardel. Very well. I had based my hopes of highest happiness upon this particular '*seize*.' I had been destining it for Count Walther Puck's birthday: I intended to whisper into Victorine's ear during this more than earthly 'tour'--'Most divine countess, I love you unutterably--I adore you! Be mine, angel of light!' that was the reason, dear Euchar, why I was so overwhelmed with joy when I got the invitation to the ball there, for I had had great doubts about it. Count Walther Puck had appeared to be a good deal annoyed with me a little while ago, one day when I was explaining to him the theory of the mutual interdependence of things--the mechanism of the macrocosm--when he took it into his head that I was making out that he was a pendulum. He said it was a piece of chaff in very bad taste; but that he would take no notice of it in consideration of my youth, and he turned his back. Very well! The unfortunate Laendler came to an end. I did not dance any more, I went into the ante-room, and who should follow me but the good Cochenille, who at once opened a bottle of champagne for me. The wine sent fresh life into my veins. I didn't feel the pain any longer. The '*seize*' was just going to begin--I flew back to the dancing-room, darted up to Victorine, kissed her hand fiercely, and took my position in the 'ronde.' The 'tour,' which I have told you of, came on; I outdid myself! I hovered--I balanced--the God of the dance in person; I threw my arm round my partner. I whispered, 'Divine, heavenly Countess,' just as I had arranged with myself that I should do. My declaration of love went forth from my lips, I gazed ardently into my partner's eyes. Ruler of heaven! It was not Victorine I had been dancing with! It was somebody else altogether, some lady whom I didn't know in the least, though she was the same sort of person as

Victorine in style and feature, and dressed exactly as she was. You may imagine that I felt as if smitten by a flash of lightning. Everything about me was swimming in a chaos. I didn't hear the music any longer; I dashed wildly through amongst the rows of people, hearing cries of pain here and there, till I found myself arrested and held tight by a pair of powerful arms, whilst a voice of fury droned into my ear, 'Death and damnation, Herr Baron, are you out of your senses? Have you nine devils in you, or what?' 'Twas the very Consistorial President whom I had seen in my dream. He was holding me tight in a remote corner of the room, and he went on as follows: 'I was just getting up from the card-table, when you came bursting like a hurricane out of the middle of the dancing room, and jumped about like a creature possessed upon my unfortunate feet, till I could have roared like a bull with the pain of it, if I hadn't been a person of proper conduct. Don't you see what a disturbance you've been making here?' And, in fact, the whole of the '*seize*' was in confusion, the music had stopped, and I saw that some of the dancers were going about limping, ladies were being led to their seats, and people were holding smelling-bottles to their noses. I had been dancing the 'tour' of despair upon the poor people's feet, till the President, strong as a tree, had put a period to my fell career. Victorine approached me with eyes sparkling with scorn: 'Verily, Herr Baron, a charming performance!' she said. 'You ask me to dance with you--you dance with another lady, and throw the whole room into confusion.' You may picture to yourself my apologies and excuses. 'These practical jokes are a speciality of yours, Herr Baron,' Victorine went on, scarcely containing her anger. 'I know you--but I beg that you will not select *me* as the object of that cutting irony of yours in the future.' With that she left me standing. The lady I had been dancing with then came up amiability--nay, I may say, even affectionateness--personified. The poor child had taken fire. I cannot wonder at it; but is it any fault of mine? Oh, Victorine! Victorine! Oh, ill-starred '*seize*'--dance of the furies, which has consigned me to the depths of Orcus!"

Ludwig closed his eyes, groaned and sighed. His friend had the grace not to break out into irrepressible laughter.

When Ludwig had taken a cup or two of chocolate--without this time burning his lips--he seemed to recover himself to some extent, and bear his terrible fate with somewhat greater equanimity. Presently he said to Euchar, who had been interesting himself in a book which he had taken up. "You had an invitation to that accursed ball yourself, had you not?"

"I had," said Euchar, scarcely looking up from the page.

"And you never came--and you never told me that you had one, at all."

"I had another engagement," said Euchar, "as it happened, which prevented me from going to the ball--an engagement of far greater importance to me than any ball in the world, even had the Emperor of Japan himself been the giver of it."

"Countess Victorine," Ludwig continued, "made the most particular inquiries as to why you didn't come. She was all anxiety, and kept looking towards the door. I should have been really very jealous. I should quite have thought that, for the first time in your career, you had touched a lady's heart, if the matter had not been explained. The fact is, I scarcely dare to tell you in what an unsparing manner the lovely Victorine spoke of you. She even went the length of saying that you were a cold-hearted piece of eccentricity, whose presence often marred all enjoyment: so that she had been dreading that you would act as her kill-joy on that evening as you so often had done before, and was quite delighted when she found that you were not coming. To speak candidly, my dear Euchar, I can't make out how it is that you, gifted by the heavens with so many bodily and mental excellences, should always be so unlucky with the other sex--why I should always cut the ground from under your feet. Cold creature! I feel certain that you have no conception of the heavenly bliss of love, and that is why you are not beloved. Whereas I, on the other hand----Believe me when I tell you that Victorine's fiery indignation itself was engendered by the flames of love which blazed in her heart for me--the fortunate, the blessed one."

The door opened, and there came into the room a quaint little fellow, in a red coat with big steel buttons, black silk breeches, heavily powdered *frisure*, and a little round pigtail.

"Good Cochenille!" Ludwig called out to him. "Dearest Monsieur Cochenille, to what do I owe this pleasure?"

Euchar, declaring that important engagements called him away, left his friend alone with the confidential servant of Count Walther Puck.

Cochenille, sweetly smiling, with downcast eyes, stated that their Countly Excellencies were quite convinced that the most honoured Herr Baron had been attacked, during the '*seize*,' by a malady which bore a Latin name something like Raptus, and that he, Monsieur Cochenille, was come to make inquiries as to his present state of welfare.

"Raptus! Raptus! Nothing of the kind." And he related, and detailed at length, how the whole matter had come about, ending by begging the talented Kammerdiener to put affairs in order as far as he possibly could.

Ludwig learned that his partner was a cousin of Countess Victorine, just arrived from the country for the occasion of the Count's birthday--that she and the Countess Victorine were one heart and one soul, and--inasmuch as the sympathies of young ladies often display themselves in the form of silks and crapes--were often in the habit of dressing exactly alike. Cochenille was further of opinion that the vexation of Countess Victorine was not very genuine. He had handed her an ice at the end of the ball, when she was standing talking to her cousin, and had noticed that they were laughing tremendously, and had heard them several times mention the honoured Baron's name. The truth was, according to what he had been able to observe, that this cousin was of a temperament exceedingly disposed to the tender passion, and would only be too delighted if the Baron would carry further what he had begun, namely, at once set to work to pay assiduous attentions to her, and in due course put on *glacé* gloves, and lead her to the altar: but that he, for his part, would do everything he could to prevent such a course of events. The first thing in the morning, as he would be having the honour to *friser* his Countly Highness, he would take an opportunity of laying the whole matter before him, and would also take the liberty of begging him, as an uncle regardful of his niece's best interests, to represent to her that the Herr Baron's declaration of love was merely a species of "flourish" belonging to the "tour" which he happened to be executing at the time--just as declarations of the kind generally were. That, he thought, would be of some service. Cochenille finally advised the Baron to go and see Countess Victorine as soon as possible, and told him there would be an opportunity of doing so that very day. Madame Bechs, the Consistorial President's lady, was giving an aesthetic tea that afternoon, with tea which (he had been told by the Russian Ambassador's valet) had come direct overland from China through the Russian Embassy, and had an extraordinarily delicious flavour and scent. There he would find Victorine, and be enabled to put everything straight again.

Ludwig saw that it was nothing but unworthy doubt which had had the power of disturbing his love-happiness: and he resolved to make himself so marvellously charming at the "thé" of Madame Bech, the Consistorial President's lady, that Victorine should never so much as dream of being at all "grumpy."

The Æstetic Tea. Choking Cough of a Tragic Poet. The Story Takes a Serious Turn, and Tells of Bloody Battle, Suicide, and Similar Matters.

The courteous reader must be good enough to accompany Ludwig and Euchar to this æsthetic tea, which is now going forward at Madame Bech's, the Consistorial President's lady. About a dozen of the fair sex, appropriately attired, are seated in a semi-circle. One is thoughtlessly laughing; another is immersed in

a contemplation of the tips of her shoes, with which she is managing to practise the "pas" of a "Française," silently and unobserved; a third appears to be sweetly sleeping (and dreaming more sweetly still); a fourth darts the fiery beams from her eyes athwart the room in all directions, with the intention that they shall impinge upon not one but all the men who are present. A fifth lisps forth "Heavenly! Glorious! Sublime!" and those utterances are for the behoof of a young poet, who is reading out with all possible pathos a new tragedy of destiny, tedious and silly enough even to be read aloud on such an occasion. A delightful feature of the affair was, that one heard a species of *obbligato* accompaniment going on in the next room, a species of growling, like the rumble of distant thunder. This was the voice of the Consistorial President, who was playing piquet with Count Walther Puck, and making himself audible in this manner.

The poet read out, in the most dulcet accents at his command--

> "Ah! but once more! once more only
> Let me hear thee, voice of beauty,
> Voice of rapture, voice of sweetness,
> Voice from out the deep abysses,
> Voice from out the heights of Heaven!
> Hark! oh, listen----"

Here the thunder which had been rumbling so long broke out into a peal: "Hell and damnation!" roared the Consistorial President's voice, re-echoing through the room, so that the people jumped up from their chairs, alarmed. But it was pretty that the poet, not suffering himself to be disturbed in the slightest, went on reading--

> "Yea! it is the breath beloved,
> Music of those lips of nectar."

But a destiny higher than that which ruled in the poet's tragedy did not permit him to finish his reading. Just as he was going to raise his voice to the highest pitch of tragic power, to enunciate a terrible execration which his hero was going to utter, something, heaven knows what, got into his throat, so that he broke out into a frightful fit of coughing, by no means to be assuaged, and had to be assisted out of the room, more dead than alive.

This sudden interruption appeared to be the reverse of disagreeable to the lady of the house, who had for some time been giving indications of weariness and annoyance. As soon as the tranquillity of the company was restored, she pointed out that it was time that a vivid narrative of something should take the place of reading, and thought Euchar ought really to make it his duty to undertake this, seeing that, in general, he was so obstinately silent, as to contribute little to the entertainment of the company.

Euchar said, modestly, that he was anything but a good story-teller, and that the tale which he thought of telling was of a very serious, perhaps even terrible description, and might be anything but enjoyable by the company. But four very young ladies immediately cried out, with one voice "Oh! something terrible, please! I do so love to be terrified!"

Euchar took his place in the chair of the narrator, and began as follows:--

"We have been passing through a period in which events have swept athwart the stage of the world like a series of raging hurricanes. Humanity, shaken to its depths, has given birth to things portentous, even as the storm-tossed ocean casts up to the surface of its seething surges the terrible marvels of its abysses. Whatever could be accomplished by lion-like courage, unconquerable valour, hatred, revenge, fury, and despair, was achieved during the Spanish war of independence. I should like to tell you of the adventures of a friend of mine, whom I shall call Edgar, who served in that war, under the banners of Wellington. He had left his native place in deep, bitter irritation, at the shame of his Fatherland,

and gone to Hamburg, where he lived in a little room which he had taken, in a retired quarter. He had a neighbour, who lived in the next room to him, with only a wall between them, but he knew nothing more of him than that he was an old man, in infirm health, who never went out. He often heard him groan, and break out into gentle pathetic lamentations; but he did not understand the words he spoke. After a time, this neighbour begun to walk assiduously up and down in his room, and it appeared to indicate returning health when he tuned a guitar one day, and began to sing in a soft voice, songs which Edgar recognized to be Spanish romances.

On being closely questioned, the landlady confided to Edgar, that his neighbour was a French officer who had been invalided from the Romana corps, that he was under secret espionage, and very seldom ventured to go out.

In the middle of the night Edgar heard this Spaniard play on his guitar more loudly than before, and begin, in powerful strangely changing melody, the 'Profecia del Pirineo of Don Juan Baptista de Arriaja.' There came the stanzas commencing--

> "Y oye que el gran rugido,
> En ya trueno en los campos de Castilla," &c.

The glowing enthusiasm with which the old gentleman's singing was instinct, set Edgar's blood ablaze. A new world dawned on him. He knew, now, how to arouse himself from out his sickly mood, and under an impulse to deeds of valour, fight out the contest which was eating up his heart. He could not resist an eager desire to make the acquaintance of the man who had thus inspired him with new life. The door gave way at the pressure of his hand, but the moment he entered the room, the old man sprung from his bed with a cry of "Träidor" (traitor), and made straight at Edgar with a drawn dagger. Edgar succeeded in evading the well-aimed thrust by a skilful movement, and in grasping the old man, and holding him down on his bed.

While he thus held him, for he had but little strength at the time, he implored him in the most touching language, to forgive the stormy fashion of his entrance: he assured him that he was no traitor; but that on the contrary, what he had heard him sing had lighted up all the rage, the inconsolable pain, which had been tearing his breast asunder into an unslakeable desire for combat. He longed to hurry to Spain, there to fight for the freedom of the country. The old man gazed fixedly at him, and said, "Can it be possible?" and embraced Edgar, who, naturally, continued his assurances that nothing could induce him to forego his resolve, at the same time throwing his dagger down on the ground.

Edgar now learned that the old gentleman's name was Baldassare de Luna, and that he belonged to one of the most noble families of Spain. He was helpless and friendless, and had the prospect, unalleviated, of dragging out a miserable existence, far from home, without a friend or pecuniary resource. It was some time ere Edgar could succeed in infusing any hope or comfort into his heart: but when, at length, he most solemnly undertook to arrange for their escape to England together, new life appeared to circulate in the Spaniard's veins. He was no longer the old invalid, but an enthusiastic youth, breathing out defiance to his oppressors. Edgar kept his word. He succeeded in evading the vigilance of the spies, and in escaping with Baldassare de Luna to England. But it was not the will of fate that this brave and luckless man should see his native land again. He was prostrated by another attack of illness, and died in London, in Edgar's arms. A spirit of prophecy gave him to see the coming glory of his rescued country. Amid the latest prayerful whisperings which issued with difficulty from his lips stiffening in death, Edgar distinguished the word "Vittoria," and an expression of heavenly beatitude glowed on de Luna's countenance.

At the time when Souchet's victorious force was threatening to bear down all opposition and rivet the shameful foreign yoke more firmly than ever, to all eternity, Edgar arrived before Tarragona with Colonel Sterret's English brigade.

It is matter of history that Colonel Sterret considered the position so insecure, that he would not disembark his troops. This our eager young soldier could not endure. He left the English force, and betook himself to the Spanish general Contreras, who was occupying the fortress with 8,000 Spanish soldiers. We are aware that Souchet's force took Tarragona by storm, notwithstanding the most heroic defence, and that Contreras himself, with a bayonet wound, fell into the hands of the enemy.

The scenes which passed before Edgar's eyes, displayed all the terribleness of hell itself. Whether it was on account of shameful treachery, or from incomprehensible carelessness on the part of those whose duty it was to attend to the matter, the troops who had to defend the principal *enceinte* of the fort, soon ran short of ammunition. They for a long time resisted with the bayonet the incoming of the enemy through the gateway which had been forced: but when, ultimately, they had to retire before the urgency of his fire, they rushed across to the further gateway in wild disarray, and in confused masses: and as this gate was too narrow to admit of their passage, they had, therefore, to submit to a terrific massacre. Yet some 4,000 Spaniards--Almeira's regiment, with which Edgar happened to be at the time--managed to force their way through. With the courage of despair they broke their passage through the enemy's battalions which were there posted, and continued their flight towards Barcelona. They were fancying that they were in safety, when they were assailed by a terrible fire from some field-pieces, which the enemy had placed in position behind a trench cut across the road, bringing inevitable destruction into their ranks. Edgar was hit, and fell to the ground.

A violent pain in the head was what he felt when he recovered consciousness. It was dark night, and all the terrors of death permeated him as he heard the hollow groans and the heart-piercing cries which surrounded him. He managed to get upon his legs and creep along. When at length the morning began to break he found himself close to a deep ravine; but as he was about to go down into it a troop of the enemy's cavalry came slowly up. It seemed an impossibility to avoid being taken prisoner; but suddenly shots came dropping out of the thickest part of the wood, emptying several saddles, and presently a party of Guerillas made an attack on the remainder of the troop. He shouted out to his deliverers in Spanish, and they welcomed him gladly. He had only been struck by a spent ball, and soon recovered, so as to be able to join Don Joachim Blake's force, and enter Valenzia with it, after several engagements.

Who does not know that the plain watered by the Guadalquivir, where stands the beautiful Valenzia with her stately towers, is an earthly paradise? All the heavenly delightsomeness of a sky for ever fair penetrates and pervades the hearts and souls of the dwellers there, for whom life is an unbroken festa. And this Valenzia was now the theatre of a most bitter and bloody war. Instead of the dulcet tones of the lute, stealing like the cooing of doves up in the nights to the trellised windows, the place resounded with the hollow rolling of guns and ammunition waggons, the wild challenge of sentries, and the weird, mysterious murmur of soldiery marching through the streets. All joy was driven into dumbness. All the white faces, drawn by grief and horror, had written upon them the dread anticipation of terrible things imminent. The most furious execrations, offspring of inward fury, were showered upon the enemy. The Alameda--at other times the haunt of the gay world--was now a parade ground for the troops. Here Edgar one day, as he was standing alone, leaning against a tree, reflecting on the dark, adverse destiny which seemed to weigh upon Spain, observed that a man, far advanced in years, tall, and of haughty demeanour, who was walking up and down near him with long steps, stopped and scrutinized him keenly each time that he passed him. At last Edgar accosted him, enquiring courteously what in him had attracted such a share of his attention. "I see that I was not mistaken," he answered, whilst a gloomy fire flashed from beneath his black, bushy eyebrows. "You are not a Spaniard--and yet, if your coat does not belie you, I am bound to look upon you as one who fights on our side. And that strikes me as rather remarkable." Edgar, though nettled at the brusquerie of this gentleman's address,

told him, temperately enough, what had brought him to Spain.

But scarcely had he mentioned the name of Baldassare di Luna than the old man cried out in much excitement, "Baldassare di Luna do you say? My beloved cousin! the dearest and most intimate friend I have left in the world." Edgar repeated all that had happened, not failing to mention the heavenly hopes with which Baldassare had taken leave of life.

The old man clasped his hands, raised his eyes to heaven--his lips moved--he seemed to be communing with his departed friend. "Forgive me," he said, "if a gloomy mistrust, which is foreign to my character, influenced me against you. Some time ago it was believed that the accursed knavery of the enemy had gone so far as to introduce foreign officers amongst our forces to act as spies. The incidents at Tarragona but too much encouraged suspicions of this kind, and the Junta has now determined to expel all foreigners. Don Joachim Blake, however, has insisted that foreign engineers, at all events, are indispensable to him, solemnly engaging, at the same time, to shoot down every foreigner at once who is subject to the slightest ground of suspicion. If you are a friend of my Baldassare you are undoubtedly a man of valour and honour. At all events, I have told you everything, and you can act accordingly." With this he took his departure.

The fortune of arms appeared to have completely abandoned the Spaniards, and the very courage of despair itself could avail nothing against the rapidly-advancing foe. Valenzia was hemmed in more and more closely on all sides, so that Blake, pushed to extremity, determined to force his way out with twelve thousand chosen troops. It is known that few succeeded in getting through, that the remainder were in part killed, in part driven back into the town. It was here that Edgar, at the head of the brave Ovihuela Rifle Regiment, managed to give a momentary check to the enemy, thus rendering the wild confusion of the flight less disastrous. But, as at Tarragona, a musket bullet struck him down at the crisis of the engagement. He described his condition from that moment till he regained clear consciousness as one inexplicably strange. It often seemed to him that he was in the thick of fighting. He would seem to hear the thunder of the cannon, the wild cries of the combatants--the Spaniards would seem to be advancing victorious, but as he was seized on by the joy of battle and starting off to lead his battalion under fire, he would seem to become suddenly paralysed, and sink down in unconscious insensibility. Then he would become clearly aware that he was lying on some soft bed, that people were giving him cool drink--he heard gentle voices speaking softly, and yet could not arouse himself from his dreams. Once, when he thought he was back in the thick of the battle, it seemed to him that he was grasped firmly by the shoulder, whilst a rifleman of the enemy's fired at him, striking him on the breast, where the bullet in an incomprehensible manner went slowly boring its way into the flesh with the most unspeakable torments till all sense of feeling sunk away into a deep, deathlike sleep.

Out of this death sleep Edgar awoke suddenly into full and clear consciousness, but in such strange surroundings that he could not form an idea as to where he might be. The soft luxurious bed with its silken curtains, was quite out of keeping with the small, low-roofed, dungeon-like vault of undressed stones in which it stood. A dim lamp shed a feeble light around--neither door nor window was discernible. Edgar raised himself with difficulty, and saw that there was a Franciscan friar sitting in a corner, seemingly asleep. "Where am I?" Edgar cried, with all the energy which he could concentrate.

The monk started from his sleep, trimmed the lamp, took it up, looked at Edgar's face by the light, felt his pulse, and murmured something which Edgar could not understand. He was going to interrogate the monk as to what had happened to him, when the wall opened noislessly, and a man came in whom Edgar immediately recognized as the person who had spoken to him on the Alameda. The monk called out to this person that the crisis was over and all would now go well. "Praise be to God," said the old gentleman, and approached nearer to Edgar's bed.

Edgar wished to speak, but the old gentleman prevented him, assuring him that the slightest exertion would be dangerous to him still. It was natural that he should be surprised at finding himself in such surroundings, but a few words would be sufficient, not only to put him at his ease, but to explain why it had been necessary to place him in this dreary prison.

Edgar now learnt all. When he fell wounded in the breast the intrepid "battle-brethren," in spite of the hotness of the fire, had taken him up and transported him into the town. It happened that in the thick of the confusion Don Rafaele Marchez (this was the old man's name) saw the wounded Edgar, and instead of his being sent to the hospital he was carried to Don Rafaele's own house at once, so that the friend of his Baldassare might have every possible care. His wound was serious enough in itself, but the peculiar danger of his condition was the violent nervous fever, traces of which had previously displayed themselves, which now broke out in all its fury. It is matter of notoriety that a tremendous fire had been kept up on Valenzia for three days and nights with the most terrible effect, that all the terror and horror of this bombardment spread abroad in this city thronged to excess with people--that the self-same populace, excited to fury by the Junta, after insisting that Blake should keep up the defence to the very utmost, turned round and demanded an immediate surrender under the most violent threats--that Blake, with heroic self-command, drove the crowds asunder by Walloon Guards, and then made an honourable capitulation to Souchet. Don Rafaele Marchez would not allow Edgar, sick unto death, to fall into the enemy's hands. As soon as the capitulation was arranged and the enemy within the walls of Valenzia, Edgar was removed to the vault, where he was safe against discovery. "Friend of my sainted Baldassare," (thus he finished his narrative) "be *my* friend too. Your blood has flowed for my country--every drop of it has fallen seething into my breast, and washed away every vestige of the mistrust which cannot but arise in this fateful time. The same fire which enflames the Spaniard to the most bitter hatred flashes up in his friendship too, making him capable of every deed, every sacrifice, for his ally. My house is occupied by the enemy, but you are in safety, for I swear to you that whatever happens I will rather let myself be buried under the ruins of Valenzia than betray you. Believe me in this."

In the daytime a profound stillness as of the grave reigned around Edgar's room, but in the night he often thought he heard in the distance the echo of soft footfalls, the hollow murmur of many voices together, the opening and shutting of doors, the clatter of weapons. Some subterranean action seemed to be going on during the hours of sleep. Edgar questioned the Franciscan, who only--and that rarely--quitted him for an instant or two, tending him with the most unwearied care. But the Franciscan was of opinion that as soon as Edgar was well he would hear from Don Rafaele what it was that was going on. And this was so. For when Edgar was well enough to leave his bed, Don Rafaele came one night with a lighted torch and begged Edgar to dress and follow him with Father Eusebio, which was the name of the Franciscan, his doctor and nurse.

Don Rafaele led him through a long and rather narrow passage till they came to a closed door, which was opened on Don Rafaele's knocking.

How amazed was Edgar to find himself in a spacious vaulted chamber brilliantly lighted, in which there was a numerous assemblage of persons for the most part of wild, dirty, sullen appearance. In the middle stood a man who, though dressed like the commonest peasant, with wild hair and all the marks of a homeless, nomadic life, had in all his bearing something of the dauntless and the awe-aspiring. The features of his face were noble, and from his eyes flashed a warlike fire which bespoke the hero. To him Don Rafaele conducted his friend, announcing him as the brave young German whom he had rescued from the enemy, and who was prepared to take part in the grand contest for the freedom of Spain. Then Don Rafaele, turning to Edgar, said, "You are here in the heart of Valenzia, which is besieged by our enemies--the hearth on which burns for ever that fire whose unquenchable flame, ever blazing up with renewed vigour, is destined to destroy our accursed foe when the moment comes when, misled by his

fallacious successes, he shall surpass himself in defiant arrogance. You are here in the subterranean vaults of the Franciscan Monastery. Along a hundred bye-paths unknown to betrayers the chiefs of the brave make their way to this spot, and hence, as from a focus, they dart in all directions rays which carry death and destruction to foreigners. Don Edgar, we look upon you as one of ourselves. Take your part in the glory of our undertakings."

Empecinado (for the man dressed as a peasant was none other than the renowned Guerilla chieftain)--Empecinado, whose fearless daring formed the theme of many a popular tale amounting to the miraculous--who set at defiance all the efforts of the enemy, like some incarnation of the spirit of vengeance, who when he had vanished without a trace would suddenly burst forth with redoubled force--who at the very moment when the enemy announced the utter annihilation of his bands would suddenly appear at the very gates of Madrid, placing the Pretender's life in danger--this Empecinado took Edgar by the hand, addressing him in enthusiastic words.

At this point in the proceedings a young man was brought in bound. His face, of deathly pallor, wore all the signs of hopeless despair; he was trembling, and appeared to find it difficult to stand upright when placed in the presence of Empecinado. The latter pierced him through and through with his glance of fire, and at length spoke to him, in a tone of the most appalling calmness. "Antonio," he said, "you are in league with the enemy. You have several times had interviews with Souchet, at unusual hours. You endeavoured to hand over, by treachery, our Place d'Armes at Cuença."--"It is so," answered Antonio, with a terrible sigh, not raising his bowed-down head. "Is it possible," cried Empecinado, breaking out into the wildest anger, "is it possible that you are a Spaniard--that the blood of your ancestors runs in your veins? Was not your mother Virtue personified? Would not the slightest suspicion that she was capable of betraying the honour of her house be an atrocious outrage? But for this I should believe you to be a bastard sprung from the most despicable race on earth. You have merited death. Prepare yourself to die."

Antonio threw himself at Empecinado's feet in anguish and despair, crying, "Uncle! uncle! do you not know that all the furies of hell are rending my breast. There are times--often--when the subtlety of Satan can bring anything to pass. Yes, uncle, I am a Spaniard. Let me prove it. Be merciful. Grant that I may blot out the disgrace which the most abominable arts of hell have brought upon me--that I may appear to you and to the Brethren purified from my offence. You understand me, uncle? You know the reason of my so imploring you!"

Empecinado seemed somewhat moved by the young man's entreaties. He raised him, and said gently, "Your repentance is sincere. You are right in saying that the cunning of Satan is able to accomplish much. I know the reason of your entreaty. I pardon you. Son of my dear sister, come to my heart!" Empecinado with his own hands untied his bonds, embraced him, and at once handed to him the dagger from his own girdle. "My thanks," the young man cried. He kissed Empecinado's hands, bedewing them with his tears, then he raised his eyes to heaven in prayer, and drove the dagger deep into his heart, falling dead without a sound.

This occurrence so shook the invalid Edgar that he nearly fainted. Father Eusebio took him back to his chamber.

Some weeks afterwards Don Rafaele Marchez considered that it was safe for him to liberate his friend from the prison in which he could not recover his health. He took him, in the night, up to a room which had windows looking out upon an unfrequented street, and warned him not to cross the threshold--at all events in the daytime, by reason that the French were quartered in the house.

Edgar could not explain to himself the irresistible desire which one day seized him to go out into the corridor. At the very instant that he did so the door of the room opposite opened, and a French officer came out meeting him.

"Why how came *you* here, friend Edgar!" cried the Frenchman. "Welcome a thousand times!" Edgar had at once recognized him as Colonel la Combe of the Imperial Guard. Chance had brought this Colonel, just at the time of Germany's terrible degradation, to his uncle's house, where he himself was living, having had to abandon his military career. La Combe came from the south of France. Through the tenderness (by no means a common characteristic of his nation) with which he dealt with those who were so bitterly tried, he succeeded in overcoming the deep dislike--nay, the irreconcilable hatred, which was so firmly rooted in Edgar's soul against the arrogant foe, and finally, by virtue of certain traits of character, which placed beyond all doubt the true nobility of la Combe's nature, in gaming his friendship.

"Edgar," cried the Colonel, "what has brought *you* to Valenzia?"

It may be imagined how sorely the question embarrassed Edgar. He could make no reply. The Colonel gazed at him gravely, and said in a serious tone. "Ah, I understand. You have given the rein to your animosity--you have drawn your sword for the imagined freedom of a nation of madmen, and I cannot blame you for it. I should be forming a very poor opinion of your friendship if I could suppose you capable of imagining that I could betray you. No, my friend; now that I have found you, you are in absolute safety for the first time. From this moment you shall be nobody but the commercial traveller of a German house of business in Marseilles, an old acquaintance of mine. So no more about that." Much as it distressed Edgar, la Combe did not rest until he quitted his hermitage, and shared with him the better quarters provided for him by Don Rafaele.

Edgar hastened to acquaint the suspicious Spaniard with all the circumstances of the case, and his previous relations with la Combe. Don Rafaele restricted himself to the answer, delivered in a grave and dry manner--

"Really; that is a very curious chance indeed!"

The Colonel sympathized keenly with Edgar's position. At the same time he could not divest himself of the characteristic temper of his nation, which sees in liveliness of movement, and the eager pursuit of pleasure, the best means of healing a wounded heart. Thus it happened that the Colonel walked arm in arm with the Marseilles commercial traveller in the Alameda, and drew him into the wild amusements of his light-hearted comrades.

Edgar noticed, clearly enough, that many strange forms dogged him about, watching him with suspicious looks; and it went deeply to his heart when, one day on entering a Posada with the Colonel, he heard distinctly behind him a whisper of "Acqui esta el traïdor!" ("That is the traitor.")

Don Rafaele grew daily more cold and monosyllabic towards Edgar, and at last he saw him no more, and was given to understand by him that, instead of taking his meals with him, he should take them with Colonel la Combe.

One day, when duty had called the Colonel elsewhere, and Edgar was alone, there came a gentle knock at his door, and Father Eusebio entered. He made enquiry after Edgar's welfare, and talked on all kinds of indifferent subjects, but presently came to a pause, and after looking fixedly into Edgar's eyes, cried with much emotion--

"No, Don Edgar, *you* are not a traitor. It is in human nature that, in that waking dream which constitutes the delirium of fever--when the forces of life are in bitter combat with man's earthly envelope, and the strong tension of the fibres cannot hem in the thoughts and fancies which strive for utterance--it is, I say, in human nature that a man can then no longer help revealing phases of his being which are secret at other times. How often have I, Don Edgar, watched by your pillow during long nights? How often have you, all unknowing, allowed me to read the very depths of your soul? No, Don Edgar, it is impossible that you can be a traitor. But have a care of yourself--have a care of yourself!"

Edgar implored Eusebio to tell him clearly what he was suspected of, and what danger was threatening him.

"I will not conceal from you," said Eusebio, "that your intimacy with Colonel la Combe and his companions has caused suspicion to rest upon you--that fears are entertained that you might, from no evil intention, but out of mere lightheartedness, on some occasion when you may have taken more of our strong Spanish wines than was advisable, perhaps divulge some of the secrets of this house, into which Don Rafaele has initiated you. There is no doubt that you are in a certain amount of danger."

"But," continued Eusebio, after having maintained a thoughtful silence, with downcast eyes, for a time, "there *is* one way of escaping all risk. You have only to throw yourself into the arms of the Frenchmen. They will get you out of Valenzia."

"What are you talking about?" Edgar burst out. "Sooner death without reproach, than escape coupled with miserable disgrace."

"Don Edgar," cried the monk with enthusiasm, "you *are* no traitor!" He strained Edgar to his heart, and left the chamber with his eyes full of tears.

That night Edgar, happening to be alone (the Colonel chancing to be from home), heard steps approaching, and Don Rafaele's voice calling, "Open your door, Don Edgar." On opening it he saw Don Rafaele with a torch in his hand, and Father Eusebio behind him. Don Rafaele begged Edgar to accompany him, he having to attend an important meeting in the vault of the Franciscan monastery.

As they were passing along the subterranean passage, Don Rafaele being in advance with the lighted torch, Eusebio whispered softly in his ear,

"Oh, God, Don Edgar! you are going to your death! There is no escape possible for you now."

Edgar had ventured his life in many a fight with brave lightheartedness; but here all the anxiousness, the uncertainty of the manner of his assassination, could not but weigh heavily upon him, so that Eusebio had some difficulty in supporting him. And yet, as the way was still long, he managed to acquire a measure of self-control which enabled him not only to command himself, but to resolve upon the line of conduct which he should adopt in these circumstances. "When the door of the vault opened, Edgar saw the terrible Empecinado, with rage and fury flashing from his eyes. Behind him were standing several Guerillas and one or two Franciscan friars. Having now quite recovered his calm courage, Edgar walked firmly and fearlessly up to the Guerilla chief, and, addressing him gravely and quietly, said--

"It happens very fortunately that I am brought face to face with you to-day, Don Empecinado. I have been anxious to make a request to Don Rafaele, and now I have the opportunity of laying it before yourself. As Father Eusebio, my doctor and faithful guardian, will testify, I have now quite recovered. I am well and strong, and find it impossible to bear the tedious idleness of life among enemies whom I detest. I therefore beseech you, Don Empecinado, let me be taken and placed upon those secret paths known to you, that I may join your bands, and be engaged in enterprises for which my soul yearns."

"H'm!" said Empecinado, in a tone approaching mockery. "Do *you* then hold with the crack-brained populace, who prefer death to doing homage to the Grand Nation? Have not your friends taught you better?"

"Don Empecinado," said Edgar, "you do not understand the German mode of looking at matters. It is not known to you that German courage, which burns on for ever inextinguishably, like a pure naphtha flame, and German faithfulness, firm as the primeval rock, form the most impenetrable coat of mail, from which all the poisoned darts of treachery and wickedness fall back harmlessly. I beg you once more, Don Empecinado, to let me go out into the open country, that I may

prove myself deserving of the good opinion which I believe myself to have already earned."

Empecinado looked at Edgar in amazement, whilst a low murmur circulated amongst the assemblage. Don Rafaele moved forward to speak to Empecinado, but he motioned him back, and going to Edgar, took his hand and said with emotion--

"Another fate was in store for you. You had another destiny reserved for you to-day. However, Don Edgar, think of your own country. The enemies who have covered it with shame are here to-day before you. Remember that your German peoples, too, will raise their eyes to the Phoenix which will soar, with shining plumage, from the flames which are kindling here, and their despair give place to warm longing, the parent of dauntless courage, of battle to the very death!"

"I thought of all this," said Edgar, "before I left my own country, to shed my blood for your freedom. All my being dissolved itself into lust for vengeance, when Don Baldassare di Luna lay dying in my arms."

"If you are serious in this," cried Empecinado, as one suddenly breaking into fury, "you must set forth this very night, this very moment. You must not enter Don Rafaele's house again." Edgar declared that this was precisely what he desired, and was immediately conducted away by a man named Isidor Mirr (who afterwards became a guerilla chief), and Father Eusebio.

As they went the good Eusebio could not sufficiently express his delight at Edgar's escape.

"Heaven!" he said, "seeing your goodness put courage into your heart--a divine miracle, in my belief."

It was much closer to Valenzia than he expected, or than the enemy probably were aware, that Edgar met the first troop of Guerillas, and to it he attached himself.

I pass over in silence Edgar's warlike adventures, which often might sound as if taken from some book of knightly fables, and I come to the time when he unexpectedly encountered Don Rafaele Marchez among the Guerillas.

"You really had great injustice done to you, Don Edgar," said Don Rafaele. Edgar turned his back upon him.

When morning broke, Don Rafaele got into a state of anxiety which grew every instant till it attained a pitch of the most intense anguish. He ran up and down, sighed, clasped his hands, raised them to heaven, and prayed.

"What is the matter with the old fellow?" Edgar enquired.

"He has managed," said Isidor Mirr, "to get safe out of Valenzia himself, and to save the best of his belongings, and get them loaded up upon mules. He has been expecting them all night, and has every reason to anticipate evil."

Edgar marvelled at Don Rafaele's avarice, which seemed to render him oblivious of everything besides. It was midnight; the moon was shining brightly among the hills; when musketry fire was heard from the ravine beneath, and presently some rather seriously wounded Guerillas came limping up, reporting that the troop which was escorting Don Rafaele's mules had been unexpectedly attacked by some French Chasseurs, that nearly all their comrades had fallen, and the mules been captured by the enemy.

"Great heavens, my child--my poor, unfortunate child," Don Rafaele cried, and sank to the ground.

"What is the matter here?" cried Edgar loudly. "Come on, come on, brethren,

down into the glen, to avenge our comrades, and snatch the booty from the teeth of these pigs."

"The good German is right," cried Isidor Mirr. "The good German is right," re-echoed all around, and away they rushed down into the ravine like a bursting thunderstorm.

There were only a few Guerillas left, and they were fighting with the courage of despair. With a cry of "Valenzia," Edgar rushed into the thickest mass of the enemy, and with the death-announcing roar of thirsting tigers the Guerillas dashed after him, planted their daggers in the breasts of the foemen, and felled them with the butts of their muskets. Well-directed bullets hit them in their headlong flight. These were the Valenzia men who had overtaken General Moncey's Cuirassiers in their march, dashed upon their flank, cut them down before they gathered how they were situated, and retired into their lurking-places masters of the arms and horses.

All this was over and done when Edgar heard a piercing scream from the densest part of the thicket. He made haste to the spot, and found a little man struggling with a Frenchman, and holding the bridle of the mule he was in charge of in his teeth. Just as Edgar came on the scene the Frenchman struck down the little man with a dagger, which he seemed to have taken from him, and was trying to drive the mule further into the thicket. Edgar gave a loud shout; the Frenchman fired at him, missed him, and Edgar ran him through with his bayonet. The little fellow was whimpering. Edgar raised him up, undid with some difficulty the bridle, which he had been convulsively biting, and noticed for the first time as he was helping him on to the mule that there was a shrouded form upon it already clinging to the creature's neck with its arms, and softly lamenting. Behind this girl, for such, judging by her voice, was the shrouded form, Edgar deposited the little wounded man, took the mule by the bridle, and thus made his way back to the little Place d'Armes, where, as no more of the enemy was visible, Isidor Mirr and his men had again taken up their positions.

The little man, who had fainted from loss of blood, though his wounds did not seem to be dangerous, and the girl, were lifted from the mule. At this moment Don Rafaele in a state of the most wild excitement darted forward with cries of "My child, my sweet child!" and was in the act to clasp the young creature, who did not seem to be more than about eight or ten in years, in his arms, when, suddenly seeing the bright torchlight shining on Edgar's face, he threw himself at his feet, crying, "Oh Don Edgar, Don Edgar! this knee has never bent to mortal man till now; but you are no mortal--you are an angel of light sent to save me from deadly anxiety and inconsolable despair! Oh, Don Edgar, fiendish mistrust was deeply rooted in my bosom, ever brooding upon evil. It was an undertaking deserving the bitterest execration to plan the destruction of one such as you with your true heart all honour and valour---to devote you to a shameful death. Strike me down, Don Edgar--execute a bloody vengeance upon me, vile wretch that I am! Never can you forgive what I have done."

Edgar, fully conscious that he had done nothing more than his duty and honour demanded of him, was pained by Don Rafaele's behaviour, and tried by all means to calm and silence him, at length with difficulty succeeding.

Don Rafaele said Colonel la Combe had been greatly distressed at Edgar's disappearance, and suspecting foul play, he had been on the point of ransacking the house and having him, Don Rafaele, arrested. This was why it had been necessary for him to escape, and it had been entirely owing to the Franciscan's help that he had been able to bring away his daughter, his servant, and many things which he required. Meanwhile the wounded servant and Don Rafaele's daughter had been taken on some distance in advance, whilst Don Rafaele, too old to share in the exploits of the Guerillas, was to follow them. At his sorrowful parting with Edgar he gave him a certain talisman, which brought him deliverance in many a serious danger.

Here Euchar ended his story, which had been listened to by the company with the keenest interest.

The Poet, who had got over his coughing fit and returned to the room, expressed the opinion that in Edgar's Spanish adventures there was fine material for a tragedy, all that he thought wanting being a due spice of love-making and an effective *finale*, such as a striking case of insanity, a good apoplexy, or something of the kind.

"Oh, yes, love," said a young lady blushing at her own temerity. "The only thing your delightful story wanted was some charmingly interesting love affair!"

"Dear Lady," said Euchar laughing, "I was not telling you the story of a novel, but the adventures of my friend Edgar. His life amongst the wild Spanish mountains was unfortunately poor in experiences of that kind."

"I have a strong belief," said Victorine in a low tone, "that I know this same Edgar, who has remained in poverty, because he has despised the most precious of gifts."

But no one's enthusiasm equalled that of Ludwig, who cried out most excitedly, "I know that mysterious Profecia del Pirineo by the glorious Don Juan Baptista de Arriaza. Oh, it fired my very veins! I wanted to be off to Spain to fight for that glorious cause--had it only been comprehended in the system of the mutual interdependence of things. I can quite put myself in Edgar's place. How I should have spoken to that terrible Empecinado in that awful situation in the Franciscan monastery!" And he began a harangue, which was so pathetic that everybody was astonished, and could not sufficiently marvel at his brave and heroic resolution.

"But it was not a part of the mutual interdependence of things," said the lady of the house, "although, perhaps, it does form a part of that interdependence--or, at all events, fits into it--that, as it happens, I have provided an entertainment for my visitors which forms a suitable pendant to Euchar's story."

The doors opened, and Emanuela came in followed by the stunted little Biagio Cubas with his guitar in his hands, making all manner of quaint obeisances and salutations. But Emanuela, with that indescribable charm of manner which had so fascinated Euchar and Ludwig in the Park, came into the circle curtseying, and said in a gentle voice that she was going to exhibit a little piece of skilfulness, which would not have much to recommend it except its being a little out of the common.

During the short time which had elapsed since our two friends had seen the girl she seemed to have grown taller, more beautiful, and more developed in figure--moreover, she was admirably, almost expensively dressed. "Now," Ludwig whispered into his friend's ear, as Cubas with quaint and comical features was getting things ready for the egg-fandago, "now is your chance to get back your ring."

"My dear goose," said Euchar, "don't you see it is on my finger? I found I had taken it off along with my glove; I discovered that on the same evening when I thought I had lost it."

Emanuela's dancing took everybody by storm, no one having ever seen such a thing before. Euchar kept his gaze fixed upon her earnestly. Ludwig broke out into exclamations of the utmost rapture. Victorine, close to whom he was sitting, whispered to him, "Hypocrite! You dare to pretend to speak of love to me while you are devoted to this brazen little wretch of a Spanish egg-dancer! Don't dare to look at her again, sir!"

Ludwig was considerably discomposed on the whole by Victorine's passion for him, with its tendency to flame out into jealousy without any rational cause. He

said to himself, "I really am one of the luckiest fellows in the world; but all the same, this sort of thing rather bores a man."

When she had ended her dance Emanuela took the guitar and began singing Spanish ballads of cheerful, happy character. Ludwig begged her to sing that splendid thing which had so greatly delighted Euchar. She at once began--

"Laurel immortal al gran Palafox," etc.

Her enthusiastic delivery of these lines waxed in fervour as she went on, her voice swelled into greater power, the chords of the instrument clanged louder and louder. When she came to the Strophe, which speaks of the liberation of the Fatherland, she fixed her beaming eyes on Euchar, a river of tears rushed down her cheeks, and she fell on her knees. The hostess hurried to her, raised her up, and said, "No more, no more, sweet darling child," and, taking her to a sofa, kissed her on the brow and stroked her cheeks.

"She's out of her mind," Victorine whispered excitedly to Ludwig. "You can't be in love with a mad creature! No, no. Tell me at once--on the spot--that you can't possibly be in love with a maniac!"

"Good gracious, no! Of course not," Ludwig cried, considerably alarmed. He found the greatest possible difficulty in properly adapting himself to the excessively passionate manifestation which Victorine's affection had taken to displaying.

While the hostess was refreshing Emanuela with sweet wine and biscuits the valiant little guitarist, Biagio Cubas, who had sunk down in a corner and was sobbing profusely, was served with a glass of genuine Xeres, which he drained to the last drop with a gladsome "Donna, viva hasta mil annos."

It may readily be supposed that the ladies attacked Emanuela with a string of enquiries as to her country, circumstances, and so forth. The hostess felt the painfulness of her position too keenly not to so contrive that the firmly-closed circle should disperse itself into several subsidiary eddies, in which every one, the piquet players included, soon began to revolve. The consistorial president considered the little Spanish girl a delightful, natty little creature; the only thing was that somehow her dancing got into his own legs and made his head feel as giddy as if he were waltzing with the devil in person. The singing struck him as something quite out of the common; it delighted him immensely.

Count Walther Puck was of quite a different opinion. Of her singing he thought nothing at all; there was no such thing as a trillo in it all. But he praised her dancing most warmly, and thought it quite delicious. He said that his opinion on the subject was of some value, seeing that at one time he had been as good a performer as the most celebrated Maîtres de ballet.

"Will you believe me, brother Consistorial-President," he said, "when I tell you that in my youthful days, when I was a perfect model specimen of nimbleness and vigour, I used to be able to spring the fiocco and knock down a tambourine hung up nine feet above the tip of my nose with my toe! And as for this egg-fandago, why I have often smashed more eggs in performing that dance than seven hens would lay in four-and-twenty hours."

"Bless my soul," said the Consistorial-President, "that was doing the thing in a most stupendous style!"

"Yes," said the Count. "And then I must tell you my good old Cochenille plays the flageolet really very nicely indeed. And now and then I get him to play for me in the dressing-room; and then I really give myself full swing in the dancing line--of course, only there quite in private. You see what I mean?"

"Of course, of course," answered the Consistorial-President, "I quite understand."

Meanwhile Emanuela and her companion had disappeared.

As the company were about dispersing the hostess said, "Friend Euchar, I feel certain that you know a great deal more than you have told us about your friend Edgar, We should be deeply interested to hear a great deal more. "What you have told us was only a fragment of it, though it has so excited and interested us that none of us will sleep a wink to night. I can't accord you longer time than till to-morrow evening for satisfying our curiosity. "We must hear more of Don Rafaele, and Empecinado, and the Guerillas. And if it is possible that Edgar can get into a love affair, please don't deprive us of the satisfaction of that."

"That would be delightful!" sounded from all sides; and Euchar had to promise that he would be present with the matter necessary for the completing of his story.

As they were going home Ludwig could not say enough on the subject of Victorine's passion for him, bordering, as it seemed to do, on insanity. "All the same," he said, "that jealousy of hers has had the effect of enabling me to read my own heart clearly. And I have read there that my love for Emanuela is a thing unutterable. I am going to find her out, declare my passionate adoration for her--and clasp her to my heart."

"Exactly, my dear child," said Euchar imperturbably. "That is, of course, the proper thing for you to do."

On the next evening when the company were assembled again *chez Madame la Présidente*, she told them with much regret that Baron Euchar had written to say that he was unexpectedly obliged to start immediately on a journey, and must postpone the continuation of his story till he came back.

Euchar's Return. Scenes in a truly happy Ménage. Conclusion of the Story.

Two years had past away when one morning a handsome carriage well loaded with baggage drew up at the door of the Golden Angel (principal hotel in W----), and out of it got a young gentleman, a lady very closely shrouded in wraps, and an old man. Ludwig happened to be passing at the time, and naturally he had a look at the arrivals through his eye-glass. The young gentleman happened to turn round, and he immediately embraced Ludwig, crying out, "My dear old fellow!"

The latter was not a little astonished to see his old friend Euchar, for it was he who had got out of the carriage. "My dear fellow," he said, "who is that terribly muffled-up lady?--and the old gentleman? And, bless my soul, here comes a fourgon with baggage, and sitting on the back of it--good gracious, do my eyes deceive me?"

Euchar took Ludwig by the arm, led him a step or two across the street, and said, "You shall hear all about everything in good time, dear friend; but, to begin with, how have things been going with you? You are terribly pale--the fire of your eyes has gone out. To tell you the honest truth, you look about ten years older than when I saw you last. Have you been having a bad illness or some serious trouble?"

"Oh, dear no!" answered Ludwig. "Quite the contrary. I believe I am the very happiest fellow under the sun, for I am living a life of utterly ideal, Utopian love and bliss. The heavenly Victorine gave me that exquisite, tender hand of hers--bestowed it, my dear fellow, upon unworthy me rather more than a year ago! That pretty house which you see there with its windows shining in the sun is my home, and you must come there with me this moment and see that earthly paradise of mine. How delighted my dear wife will be to see you again! Let us give her a surprise."

Euchar begged for a few minutes time just to change his dress, and promised to come then at once and see with his own eyes how all things had worked together for Ludwig's happiness.

Ludwig came to meet his friend at the bottom of the stair, and begged him to make as little noise as possible in coming up, explaining that Victorine often suffered terribly from nervous headaches, and had a bad one just then, which rendered her nervous system so sensitive that she could hear the very softest footfall in any part of the house, although her own rooms were in the most distant part of it. Consequently they two now crept as softly as they could up the stairs, which were thickly carpeted, into Ludwig's own room. After the heartiest outpourings of gladness at seeing his old companion again, Ludwig rang the bell, but immediately cried out, "Oh, Lord, what have I done, wretch that I am!" putting both his hands before his face. And it was not long before a snappish creature of a lady's maid came in screeching out to Ludwig in a horrible, vulgar tone of voice, "Herr Baron, for heaven's sake what are you doing? You'll kill my lady. She's in spasms now."

"Good gracious! my good Nettie," said Ludwig in a lamentable voice, "I really forgot all about it. I was so happy. Here is the greatest friend I have in the world come to see me. We haven't met for years. He's an old intimate friend of your mistress, too. Go and beg her--implore her--to let me bring him to her." Ludwig put money into her hand, and she made her exit with a vixenish "I'll see what I can do."

Euchar, finding himself in presence of a situation which is but too common in life, and is consequently served up to us *ad nauseam* in comedies and novels, had his own particular ideas as to his friend's domestic happiness. He felt with Ludwig all the painfulness of the position, and began to talk about indifferent subjects. But Ludwig would not give in to this, saying that what had been happening to him since they had been apart had been too remarkable and interesting that he should delay for a moment to communicate it to Euchar.

"Of course," he began, "you remember that evening when we were all at Madame Veh's and you told the Story of your friend Edgar's adventures. And, of course, you remember how Victorine flamed up into jealousy and showed her heart, which was blazing with passion, without disguise. Idiot that I was--I fully admit to you that I was an idiot--I fell desperately in love with that little Spanish dancing girl, and thought that I could read in her eyes that my love was not without some hope. Perhaps you noticed that at the finish of her fandango, whim she made the eggs into a pyramid the apex of that pyramid was directed towards me. I was sitting just in the centre of the circle behind Madame Veh's chair. Now could she have expressed more clearly how deep her interest in me was? I wanted to find the dear little creature out the next morning, but it was not a part of the mutual interdependence of things that I should succeed in that. I had almost forgotten all about her when chance----"

"The mutual interdependence of things, you mean," interrupted Euchar.

"Well, well," went on Ludwig. "But, at all events, a few days afterwards I was going through the Park, and in front of that Café where you and I saw that little Spanish girl for the first time, out came the landlady rushing--oh, you have no idea what an interest that good woman, who got the vinegar and water that day when I hurt my knee, takes in me still--but that is not to the present purpose--to ask if I knew what had become of the little Spanish girl and her companion, who used to come there so often, and of whom nothing had been seen for several weeks. Next day I took a great deal of trouble to find out whether she was in the town or not, but it did not lie in the mutual interdependence of things that I should succeed in this. And my heart repented of the foolishness it had been so near committing, and turned back again to the heavenly Victorine. But my crime of infidelity to her had made such a profound impression upon that super-sensitive organization of hers that she refused to see me or even to hear my name mentioned. Good old Cochenille assured me that she had fallen into a state of

absolute melancholia; that she would often cry till the was almost breathless, and wail in the most pathetic manner, saying 'He is lost to me. I have lost him for ever.' You may imagine the effect which all this produced upon me--how I was dissolved in sorrow over this unfortunate misunderstanding. Cochenille proffered me his aid. He said he would diplomatically convince the Countess that I was quite an altered man, never dancing more than four times at the most at balls, sitting at the theatre staring at the stage in an oblivious manner, and paying not the smallest attention to my clothes. I sent a flowing stream of gold pieces into his hands, and in return he gave me fresh hopes every morning. At last Victorine allowed me to see her again. How lovely she was! Oh, Victorine, my darling--beautiful, sweetest of wives--amiability and kindness personified!"

Here Nettchen came in and said that the Baroness was astonished at the Baron's extraordinary conduct. First he rang the bell as if the house were on fire, and then he asked her to receive a visitor in the exceedingly critical state of her health. She most certainly could not see anybody that day whoever it might be, and begged the strange gentleman to excuse her. Nettchen looked Euchar straight in the eyes, scanned him over carefully from head to foot, and left the room.

Ludwig stared before him in silence, and then continued his tale in a low voice and with bated breath, saying, "You can't imagine the degree of almost contemptuous coldness with which Victorine received me. If it hadn't been that her previous outbursts of burning affection had convinced me that this coldness was merely put on to punish me, I should really have had my doubts, and should have hesitated. But at last this counterfeiting got too difficult for her, her behaviour grew kindlier and kindlier, till all in a moment she gave me her shawl to carry. And then my triumph was utterly brilliant. I rearranged that '*seize*' of mine, which had played such an important part in my destiny, danced it with her in the most heavenly manner, whispered in her ear--at the proper moment, whilst balancing myself on tiptoe and placing my arm about her--'Heavenly Countess, I love you unspeakably! Angel of light, I implore you to be mine.' Victorine smiled into my eyes; but that did not prevent me from paying the proper visit the next morning, with the good help of my friend Cochenille, at the fitting hour, about one o'clock, and making my formal proposal for her hand. She gazed at me in silence. I threw myself at her feet, seized that hand which was to be mine, and covered it with glowing kisses. She allowed me to do this; but I really felt it a good deal, and thought it was extremely queer, that all the time her eyes were fixed steadfastly upon nothing that I could discover, staring before her as if she had been a lifeless image. But at last a great tear or two came to her eyes. She pressed my hand so vehemently that, as I happened to have a sore finger, I could scarcely help crying out with the pain of it, rose from her chair, and left the room with her handkerchief over her face. I had no doubts as to my good fortune. I hastened to the Count and made my formal proposal for his daughter.

"'Good. Very good, indeed, my dear Baron,' said the Count, smiling in the most affable manner. 'But have you given the Countess any intimation of this? Have you given her any opportunity of inferring it at all? Are you beloved? I admit that I am foolish enough to take the greatest possible interest in love matters.'

"I told him what had happened during the 'seize.' His eyes sparkled with delight. 'That was delicious!' he cried over and over again. 'That was most delicious, indeed, Herr Baron! Tell me what your "tour" consisted of, dear Baronetto.' I danced this 'tour' for him, and remained pausing in the position which I described to you long since. 'Charming; charming, indeed, my angelic friend!' he cried, and ringing the bell, he shouted, 'Cochenille, Cochenille!'

"When Cochenille came in I had to sing him the music of my 'seize,' which was composed by myself. 'Get your flageolet, Cochenille,' said the Count, 'and play what the Baron has been singing.' Cochenille did so tolerably correctly. I had to dance with the Count, taking the lady's part, and I should not have believed it of the old gentleman, while poising himself on his right tiptoe he whispered into my

ear, 'Most incomparable of barons, my daughter Victorine is yours.'

"The lovely Victorine behaved rather coyly, as young ladies are apt to do under such circumstances. She was reserved and silent, formal and stiff, said neither 'Yes' nor 'No,' and on the whole behaved to me in such a way that my hopes began to sink again. Besides, it so happened that I just then, for the first time, found out that on the celebrated occasion, when I put my arm round the cousin instead of Victorine in the 'seize,' those two girls had planned this practical joke on purpose just to make me the victim of a contemptible mystification. I really was terribly distressed and annoyed, and could almost have cried, to think that it had formed a part of the mutual interdependence of things that I should be led about by the nose in this sort of way. But those doubts were vain. Ere I knew where I was, wholly unexpectedly the heavenly 'Yes' came trembling from her beautiful lips just when I had fallen into the deepest dejection. It was only then that I found out what a constraint Victorine had been putting upon herself before, for she was now so wildly happy and in such amazing spirits that anything like this condition had never been seen in her before. No doubt it was only maidenly coyness that made her refuse to allow me to take her hand or to kiss it, or to indulge in any kind of innocent little endearment. Many of my friends did try to put a quantity of absurd nonsense into my head. But the day before our wedding was destined to drive the last shadow of doubt from my mind. Early on that morning I hastened to her. Some papers were lying on her work-table. I glanced at them; they were in her own handwriting. I began reading. It was a diary. Oh, heavens! Oh, all ye Gods! Each day's entries gave me fresh proof how dearly, with what unspeakable fondness Victorine had loved me all along. The most trifling incidents were recorded, and always there came, 'You do not comprehend this heart of mine. Cold and unfeeling, must I cast aside all maidenly reserve in the wildness of my despair, throw myself at your feet, and tell you that without your love life is only death to me?' And it went on in this strain. On the night when I fancied myself so wildly in love with the little Spanish girl she had written, 'All is lost and done. He loves her; nothing can be, more certain. Mad creature, don't you know that the eye of the woman who loves is all-seeing?' Just as I was reading this aloud in came Victorine. I threw myself at her feet with the diary in my hand, crying, 'No, no; I never was in love with that strange child. You, you alone, were always my idol!'

"Victorine fixed a gaze on me, cried out in a screaming sort of tone, which rings in my ears still, 'Unfortunate fellow, it was not you I meant,' and rushed from the room. Now could you have imagined that maidenly coyness would have been capable of being carried so far?"

Here Nettchen came in to enquire on the Baroness's part why the Baron did not bring the visitor to see her, inasmuch as she had been expecting him for the last half hour. "A splendid model wife," cried the Baron with much emotion, "always sacrificing herself to my wishes." It astonished Euchar not a little to find the Baroness very much dressed as if for company.

"Here is our dear old Euchar!" the Baron cried. "We have got him back again." But when Euchar approached and took her hand she was seized with a violent trembling, and, with a faint cry of "Oh, God," fell back on her couch fainting.

Euchar could not bear the pain of the situation, and he left the room as quickly as possible. "Unfortunate fellow," he cried, "it was, indeed, not you she meant." He understood now the fathomless depth of misery into which his friend's incredible vanity had plunged him--he knew now upon whom Victorine's love had been bestowed, and felt himself strangely moved and touched. He comprehended now, and only now, the significance of many things which his own simple straightforwardness had prevented him from seeing before. Now, and only now, he saw through and through the impassioned Victorine, and could scarcely explain to himself how he had failed to discover that it was with him she was in love. The occasions on which her fondness for him had led her to give expression to it, almost in defiance of all considerations, rose more clearly before his mental sight, and he distinctly remembered that just on those very occasions some

strange unaccountable antipathy to her had caused a curious, inexplicable irritation of feeling towards her. This feeling of angry irritation he now brought to bear upon himself, filled as he was by the profoundest pity for the poor girl, whose destiny seemed to have been ruled by such an evil star.

It so happened that on this very evening the self-same party to which Euchar had told the story of Edgar's adventures in Spain, two years previously, were assembled at Madame Veh's. He was greeted with the greatest warmth, but an electric thrill went through him when he saw Victorine, as he had not thought he would meet her there. There was no trace of illness about her. Her eyes shone as brilliantly as of old, and a carefully-chosen costume of great tastefulness enhanced her loveliness and charm. Euchar, distressed by her presence, was depressed and put out, contrary to his usual wont. Victorine so managed matters as to be able to approach him, and suddenly seizing his hand, drew him aside, saying gravely and calmly--

"You know my husband's pet theory of the mutual interdependence of things? I believe what constitutes the real 'mutual interdependence of things' in our lives to be the follies which we commit, repent of, and commit again and again. So that our lives appear to consist of a process of being wildly hunted hither and thither by a species of enchantment beyond our control, which drives us on before it till it mocks and dashes us into death. I know all, Euchar; I know whom I am going to see this evening. It was not you who brought those bitter, hopeless sorrows upon me; not you, but an evil fate. The demon was laid and vanished at the moment when I saw you again. May peace and rest be upon us, Euchar."

"Yes, Victorine," Euchar answered, "may rest and peace be upon us. However miscomprehended a life may be, the Eternal Power does not leave it without hope."

"All is ended--and well," said Victorine; and, wiping a tear away, she turned to the company.

Madame Veh had been observant of this pair, and now whispered to Euchar--

"I told her everything. Was I right?"

"I must go through with the whole business," Euchar answered.

The company--as often happens in such circumstances--felt a fresh impulse to festivity and enjoyment in Euchar's unexpected return, and besieged him with enquiries as to where he had been and what had happened to him during his absence.

"What has really brought me here," said Euchar, "is the obligation which I am under to keep my promise of two years ago that I would tell you a good deal more of my friend Edgar's history, and put a copestone upon it such as our friend the Poet thought it wanted. As I can now assure you that no dark clouds have come over his path, that there have been no deeds of violence, but that, on the contrary, as the ladies wished, my story will be concerned with a rather romantic love-affair, I feel sure that I may reckon upon a fair measure of approval."

All applauded, and speedily formed into a narrower ring. Euchar at once commenced as follows--

I pass over in silence the warlike adventures which Edgar met with while fighting in company with the Guerillas--although *they* were sufficiently romantic--contenting myself with explaining that the talisman which Don Rafaele Marchez gave him when parting with him, was a little ring inscribed with mystic characters, which showed that he was an initiate in the most secret of the confederacies or societies; thus assuring him, wherever he might be, of the most absolute and unlimited confidence of those acquainted with those signs, and

rendering all danger such as he had been exposed to in Valenzia impossible.

Soon afterwards he joined the English forces, and served under Wellington. He was never touched by a hostile bullet again, and when the campaign was over he returned to his own country safe and sound. Don Rafaele Marchez he had never seen again, nor had he heard anything of his further fortunes.

Edgar had been a long while back in his native town, when, one day, Don Rafaele's little ring (which he always wore on his finger) disappeared under peculiar circumstances. Early on the morning of the day following this, a queer little fellow came into his room, held the missing ring up to him, and asked him if it was his. When Edgar replied that it was, the little man cried out excitedly in Spanish--

"Oh, *you are* Don Edgar; there can be no doubt about it." And then Edgar clearly remembered the face and figure of the little fellow, who was Don Rafaele's faithful servant, the same who had displayed the lion courage of despair in trying to save his master's daughter.

"In the name of all the saints!" Edgar cried, "you must be Don Rafaele's faithful servant! I recognise you. Where is *he*? My strange presentiment is going to come true."

The little man implored Edgar to go with him at once.

He took him to one of the most distant suburbs, climbed with him to the garret of a miserable house, and--what a spectacle! Sick, worn to a shadow, with all the traces of the most mortal suffering upon his deathlike face, Don Rafaele Marchez was lying upon a bed of straw, with a girl praying by his side. When Edgar came in, the girl rushed up to him, and drew him to the side of the old man, crying in a tone of the warmest delight--

"Father, father! this is he, is it not?"

"Yes," said the old man, his dim eyes brightening as he raised his folded hands to heaven, "it is he--our preserver. Ah, Don Edgar, who would have believed that the fire which burned within me for my country and freedom would have turned upon me for my destruction."

After the first outpourings of mingled delight and regret, Edgar learned that Don Rafaele's enemies had managed, after the establishment of peace, to bring charges against him causing him to be regarded with suspicion by the government. He was sentenced to be banished, and his property was confiscated. He fell into the deepest poverty. His devoted daughter and his faithful servant supported him by dancing and playing.

"Emanuela and Biagio Cubas, of course!" Ludwig cried out. And all the others repeated after him, "Of course, of course--Emanuela and Biagio Cubas!"

The hostess enjoined silence on the ground that, although there might be many things which could be gradually explained, the narrator ought not to be interrupted until he had come to the end of his story. Moreover she felt no doubt that as soon as Edgar saw the lovely Emanuela he must, of course, have fallen desperately in love with her.

"That, of course, is exactly what he did do," said Euchar, a slight redness overspreading his cheeks. Even before this particular meeting with her, on other occasions of his seeing that marvellously beautifully child, he had felt the most distinct presentiments of what would follow, and a sense of the deepest affection, like nothing which he had ever experienced before. He immediately set to remedy the condition of affairs. He took away Don Rafaele, Emanuela, and the trusty Cubas, to a country estate belonging to his uncle. And in arranging this I was of some assistance to him. It seemed as if Don Rafaele's lucky star was going to rise again; for soon after this there came a letter from good Father Eusebio to say that

the brethren, well acquainted with the secret corners of his house, had hidden away the very considerable property (in the shape of gold and jewels) which he possessed (and which he had walled up before his flight) in their own convent; so that all that was necessary was to send some trustworthy person to fetch them. Edgar set out at once for Valenzia with the faithful Cubas. He saw his kind old nurse, Father Eusebio, again, and Don Rafaele's treasure was handed over to him. But he knew that Don Rafaele prized honour above everything, and he succeeded in Madrid in completely re-establishing his innocence. The decree of banishment was cancelled.

The doors opened and there entered a beautifully dressed lady, followed by an old gentleman of lofty bearing and aristocratic looks. The hostess rose to receive them, and led the lady within the circle. The other guests had all risen, and the host presented "Donna Emanuela Marchez, our friend Euchar's bride. Ron Rafaele Marchez."

"Yes," said Euchar, with the bliss of the happiness which he had achieved radiating from his eyes, and glowing in brilliant roses on his cheeks, "I have only now to tell you that he whom I spoke of to you as Edgar was none other than myself."

Victorine clasped the beautiful Emanuela in her arms, and pressed her warmly to her heart. They seemed to know each other already. But Ludwig, casting a glance of sorrow upon the group, said--

"All this was a part of the mutual interdependence of things."

The friends were pleased with Sylvester's tale, and were unanimous in thinking that Edgar's adventures in Spain during the War of Independence, although they might perhaps be considered to be interwoven in merely an episodical form, really constituted the kernel of the story, and that their happy effect was accounted for by their being founded upon actual historical facts.

"There is no doubt," said Lothair, "that matter which is absolutely historical possesses a certain peculiar quality which the inventive faculty, when it merely hovers about in empty space, with nothing to anchor upon, cannot attain to. In the same way the skilful introduction of truly historical customs, manners, habitudes and so forth, belonging to any race, or people, or to any particular class of people, gives to a work of fiction a life-like colouring which it is difficult otherwise to attain. But I insist upon their being introduced *skilfully*. For there is no doubt that it is not so easy to introduce historical facts--things which have actually happened--into a work of which the incidents belong to the domain of pure imagination, as many people think it is. And it requires a peculiar skilfulness, which everybody is not fortunate enough to possess. In the absence of it there appears merely a pale, distorted simulacrum of life, instead of the freshness of reality. I know works--particularly some by literary ladies--in which one feels, at every instant, how the writer has gone dipping the brush into the colour-box, bringing nothing out of it, after all, but a sort of jumble of strokes of different colours, just where what was wanted was a thoroughly life-like picture."

"I quite agree with you," said Lothair. "And, having just chanced to remember a particular novel, written by an otherwise fairly clever woman (which, notwithstanding all the dippings of her brush into the aforesaid paint-box, does not possess a single atom of real semblance of life, or of poetic truth, from one end of it to the other, so that one cannot remember it for a single moment), I merely wish to say that this particular skill in producing an effect of reality and historical truth, brilliantly distinguishes the works of a writer who has only rather recently become known to us. I mean Walter Scott. I have only read his 'Guy Mannering.' But *ex ungue leonem*. The 'exposition' of this tale is based upon Scotch manners and customs, and matters belonging peculiarly to the place in which the scene of it is laid. But, without any acquaintance with them, one is

carried away by the vivid reality of the characters and incidents in an extraordinary degree, and the 'exposition' is to be termed so utterly masterly just because we are landed *in medias res* in a moment, as if by the wave of an enchanter's wand. Moreover, Scott has the power of drawing the figures of his pictures with a few touches, in such a way that they seem to come out of their frames, and move about before us in the most living fashion imaginable. Scott is a splendid phenomenon appearing in the literature of Great Britain. He is as vivid as Smollett, though far more classic and noble. But I think he is wanting in that brilliant lire of profound humour which coruscates in the writings of Sterne and Swift."

"I am just in your position, Ottmar," said Vincenz. "'Guy Mannering' is the only work of Scott's which I have read. But I was much struck by the originality of it, and the manner in which, in its methodical progress, it gradually unwinds itself like a clue of thread, gently and quietly, never breaking its firm-spun strands. My chief objection to it is, that (no doubt in faithfulness to British manners) the female characters are so tame and colourless, except that grand gipsy woman--although she is scarcely so much to be called a woman as a kind of spectral apparition. Both of the young ladies in 'Guy Mannering' remind me of the English coloured engravings, which are all exactly alike--*id est*, as pretty as they are meaningless and expressionless, and as to which one sees distinctly that the originals of them would never allow anything further than 'Yea, yea; nay, nay!' to cross those pretty little delicate lips of theirs, as anything more might lead unto evil. Hogarth's milkmaid is a prototype of all these creatures. Both of the girls in 'Guy Mannering' lack reality--the god-like vivifying breath of life."

"Might not one wish," said Theodore, "in the case of some of the female characters of one of our most talented writers (particularly in some of his earlier works) that they had a little more flesh and blood, since they are really all so very apt to melt into wreaths of mist when one looks at them closely? Nevertheless, let us love and honour both of those writers--the foreigner and our countryman, because of the true and glorious things which they have bestowed upon us."

"It is remarkable," said Sylvester, "that--unless I mistake--another great writer appeared on the other side of the channel, about the same time as Walter Scott, and has produced works of equal greatness and splendour, but in a different direction. I mean Lord Byron, who appears to me to be much more solid and powerful than Thomas Moore. His 'Siege of Corinth' is a masterpiece, fall of genius. His predominant tendency seems to be towards the gloomy, the mysterious and the terrible; and his 'Vampire' I have avoided reading, for the bare idea of a vampire makes my blood run cold. So far as I understand the matter, a vampire is an animated corpse which sucks the blood of the living."

"Ho! ho!" cried Lothair, laughing, "a writer such as you, my dear friend, Sylvester, must of course have found it necessary to dip more or less deeply into all kinds of accounts concerning magic, witches, sorcery, enchantment, and other such works of the devil, because they are necessary for your work, and part of your stock in trade. And I should suppose you have gone into those subjects yourself with the view of getting some personal experience of them as well. As regards vampirism--that you may see how well read I am in these matters--I will tell you the name of a delightful treatise in which you may study this dark subject. The complete title of this little book is 'M. Michael Ranft (Deacon of Nebra). Treatise on the Mastication and Sucking of the Dead in their Graves; wherein the true nature and description of the Hungarian vampires and bloodsuckers is clearly set forth, and all previous writings on this subject are passed in review and subjected to criticism.' This title in itself will convince you of the thoroughness of this treatise, and you will learn from it that a vampire is nothing other but an accursed creature who lets himself be buried as being dead, and then rises out of the grave and sucks people's blood in their sleep. And those people become vampires in their turn. So that, according to the accounts received from Hungary and quoted by this magister, the inhabitants of whole villages become vampires of the most abominable description. To render those vampires

harmless they must be dug out of their graves, a stake driven through their hearts, and their bodies burnt to ashes. Those horrible beings very often do not appear in their own proper forms, but *en masque*. A certain officer, I happen to remember, writing from Belgrade to a celebrated doctor in Leipzig for information as to the true nature of vampires, expresses himself thus: 'In a village called Kinklina it chanced that two brothers were troubled by a vampire, so that one of them used to sit up by the other at night whilst he slept. The one who was watching used to see something like a dog opening the door, but this dog used to make off when he cried out at it. At last one night they both were asleep at the same time, and the vampire bit and sucked a place under the right ear of one of them, leaving a red mark. The man died of this in three days' time. In conclusion,' said the officer, 'as the people of this place make all this out to be miraculous, I venture to take the liberty of requesting you to tell me your private opinion as to whether it is caused by the intervention of sympathetic, diabolical, or astral spirits. And I remain, with much respect, &c.' Take example by this officer of enquiring mind. As it happens his name occurs to me at this moment. He was an ensign in the Prince Alexander regiment, Sigismund Alexander Friedrich von Kottwitz. The military mind seems to have been considerably exercised on the subject of vampirism about that time. Magister Ranft quotes in his book an official declaration made by an army surgeon before two of his brother officers concerning the detection and destruction of a vampire. This declaration contains, *inter alia*, the following passage: 'Inasmuch as they perceived, from the aforesaid circumstances, that this was unmistakably a vampire, they drove a stake through its heart, upon which it gave vent to a distinct gasp, emitting a considerable quantity of blood.' Is that not both interesting and instructive?"

"All this of Magister Ranft's," said Sylvester, "may, no doubt, be sufficiently absurd and even rather crack-brained; but, at the same time, if we keep to the subject of vampirism itself, never minding in what particular fashion it may be treated, it certainly is one of the most horrible and terrible notions imaginable. I can conceive nothing more ghastlily repulsive to the mind."

"Still," said Cyprian, "it is capable of providing a material, when dealt with by a writer of imagination possessed of some poetical tact, which has the power of stirring within us that profound sense of awe which is innate in our hearts, and when touched by the electric impulse from an unseen spirit world causes our soul to thrill, not altogether unpleasantly after a fashion. A due amount of poetic tact on the author's part will prevent the horror of the subject from going so far as to be loathsome; for it generally has such an element of the absurd about it that it does not impress us so deeply as if that were not the case. Why should not a writer be permitted to make use of the levers of fear, terror, and horror because some feeble soul here and there finds it more than it can bear? Shall there be no strong meat at table because there happen to be some guests there whose stomachs are weak, or who have spoiled their own digestions?"

"My dear, fanciful Cyprian," Theodore said, "there was no occasion for your vindication of the horrible. We all know how wonderfully great writers have moved men's hearts to their very depths by means of that lever. We have only to think of Shakespeare. Moreover, who knew better how to use it than our own glorious Tieck in many of his tales? I need only instance the 'Love-Spell.' The leading idea of that story cannot but make everybody's blood run cold, and the end of it is full of the utmost fear and horror; but still the colours are blended so admirably that, in spite of all the terror and dismay, the mysterious magic charm so seizes upon us that we yield ourselves up to it without an effort to resist. How true is what Tieck puts in the mouth of his Manfred in answer to women's objections to the element of the awe-inspiring in fiction. Of course, what is the fact is that whatsoever of the terrible encounters us in our daily life is just what tortures and tears our hearts with irresistible pain. And, indeed, the cruelty of mankind, as exercised by tyrants, great and small, without pity or mercy, and with the diabolical malignity of hell itself, produces misery on a par with anything told of in fiction. And how finely the author says: 'In those imaginary legends the misery cannot reach the world with its rays until they have been broken up into

prismatic colours,' and I should have supposed that in that condition they would have been endurable by eyes even not very strong."

"We have often spoken already," said Lothair, "of this most genial writer; the full recognition of whom, in all his grand super-excellence and variety, is reserved for posterity, whilst Wills o' the Wisp rapidly scintillating into our ken and blinding the eye for a moment with borrowed light, go out into darkness just as speedily. On the whole, I believe that the imagination can be moved by very simple means, and that it is often more the *idea* of the thing than the thing itself which causes our fear. Kleist's tale of the 'Beggar Woman of Lucarno' has in it, at least to me, the most frightening idea that I can think of, and yet how simple it is. A beggar woman is sent contemptuously, as if she were a dog, to lie behind the stove, and dies there. She is heard every night hobbling across the floor towards the stove, but nothing is seen. It is, no doubt, the wonderful colouring of the whole affair Which produces the effect. Not only could Kleist 'dip' into the aforesaid colour-box, but he could lay the colours on, with the power and the genius of the most finished master. He did not need to raise a vampire out of the grave, all he needed was an old woman."

"This discussion about vampirism," said Cyprian, "reminds me of a ghastly story which I either heard or read a very long time ago. But I think I heard it, because I seem to remember that the person who told it said that the circumstances had actually happened, and mentioned the name of the family and of their country seat where it took place. But if this story is known to you as being in print, please to stop me and prevent my going on with it, because there's nothing more wearisome than to tell people things which they have known for ever so long."

"I foresee," said Ottmar, "that you are going to give us something unusually awful and terrible. But remember Saint Serapion and be as concise as you can, so that Vincenz may have his turn; for I see that he is waiting impatiently to read us that long-promised story of his."

"Hush! hush!" said Vincenz. "I could not wish anything better than that Cyprian should hang up a fine dark canvas by way of a background so as to throw out the figures of my tale, which I think are brightly and variedly coloured, and certainly excessively active. So begin, my Cyprianus, and be as gloomy, as frightful, as terrible as the vampirish Lord Byron himself, though I know nothing about him, as I have never read a word of his writings."

Count Hyppolitus (began Cyprian) had just returned from a long time spent in travelling to take possession of the rich inheritance which his father, recently dead, had left to him. The ancestral home was situated in the most beautiful and charming country imaginable, and the income from the property was amply sufficient to defray the cost of most extensive improvements. Whatever in the way of architecture and landscape gardening had struck the Count during his travels--particularly in England--as specially delightful and apposite, he was going to reproduce in his own demesne. Architects, landscape gardeners, and labourers of all sorts arrived on the scene as they were wanted, and there commenced at once a complete reconstruction of the place, whilst an extensive park was laid out on the grandest scale, which involved the including within its boundaries of the church, the parsonage, and the burial ground. All those improvements the Count, who possessed the necessary knowledge, superintended himself, devoting himself to this occupation body and soul; so that a year slipped away without its ever having occurred to him to take an old uncle's advice and let the light of his countenance shine in the Residenz before the eyes of the young ladies, so that the most beautiful, the best, and the most nobly born amongst them might fall to his share as wife. One morning, as he was sitting at his drawing table sketching the ground-plan of a new building, a certain elderly Baroness--distantly related to his father--was announced as having come to call. When Hyppolitus heard her name he remembered that his father had always spoken of her with the greatest indignation--nay, with absolute abhorrence, and had often warned people who

were going to approach her to keep aloof, without explaining what the danger connected with her was. If he was questioned more closely, he said there were certain matters as to which it was better to keep silence. Thus much was certain, that there were rumours current in the Residenz of some most remarkable and unprecedented criminal trial in which the Baroness had been involved, which had led to her separation from her husband, driven her from her home--which was at some considerable distance--and for the suppression of the consequences of which she was indebted to the prince's forbearance. Hyppolitus felt a very painful and disagreeable impression at the coming of a person whom his father had so detested, although the reasons for this detestation were not known to him. But the laws of hospitality, more binding in the country than in town, obliged him to receive this visit.

Never had any one, without being at all ill-favoured in the usual acceptation of that term, made by her exterior such a disagreeable impression upon the Count as did this Baroness. When she came in she looked him through and through with a glance of fire, and then she cast her eyes down and apologized for her coming in terms which were almost over humble. She expressed her sorrow that his father, influenced by prejudices against her with which her enemies had impregnated his mind, had formed a mortal hatred to her, and though she was almost starving, in the depths of her poverty he had never given her the smallest help or support. As she had now, unexpectedly as she said, come into possession of a small sum of money she had found it possible to leave the Residenz and go to a small country town a short distance off. However, as she was engaged in this journey she had not found it possible to resist the desire to see the son of the man whom, notwithstanding his irreconcilable hatred, she had never ceased to regard with feelings of the highest esteem. The tone in which all this was spoken had the moving accents of sincerity, and the Count was all the more affected by it that, having turned his eyes away from her repulsive face, he had fixed them upon a marvellously charming and beautiful creature who was with her. The Baroness finished her speech. The Count did not seem to be aware that she had done so. He remained silent. She begged him to pardon--and attribute to her embarrassment at being where she was--her having neglected to explain that her companion was her daughter Aurelia. On this the Count found words, and blushing up to the eyes implored the Baroness, with the agitation of a young man overpowered by love, to let him atone in some degree for his lather's shortcomings--the result of misunderstandings--and to favour him by paying him a long visit. In warmly enforcing this request he took her hand. But the words and the breath died away on his lips and his blood ran cold. For he felt his hand grasped as if in a vice by fingers cold and stiff as death, and the tall bony form of the Baroness, who was staring at him with eyes evidently deprived of the faculty of sight, seemed to him in its gay many tinted attire like some bedizened corpse.

"Oh, good heavens! how unfortunate just at this moment," Aurelia cried out, and went on to lament in a gentle heart-penetrating voice that her mother was now and then suddenly seized by a tetanic spasm, but that it generally passed off very quickly without its being necessary to take any measures with regard to it.

Hyppolitus disengaged himself with some difficulty from the Baroness, and all the glowing life of sweetest love delight came back to him as he took Aurelia's hand and pressed it warmly to his lips. Although he had almost come to man's estate it was the first time that he felt the full force of passion, so that it was impossible for him to hide what he felt, and the manner in which Aurelia received his avowal in a noble, simple, child-like delight, kindled the fairest of hopes within him. The Baroness recovered in a few minutes, and, seemingly quite unaware of what had been happening, expressed her gratitude to the Count for his invitation to pay a visit of some duration at the Castle, saying she would be but too happy to forget the injustice with which his father had treated her.

Thus the Count's household arrangements and domestic position were completely changed, and he could not but believe that some special favour of fortune had brought to him the only woman in all the world who, as a warmly

beloved and deeply adored wife, was capable of bestowing upon him the highest conceivable happiness.

The Baroness's manner of conduct underwent little alteration. She continued to be silent, grave, much wrapped up in herself, and when opportunity offered, evinced a gentle disposition, and a heart disposed towards any innocent enjoyment. The Count had become accustomed to the death-like whiteness of her face, to the very remarkable network of wrinkles which covered it, and to the generally spectral appearance which she displayed; but all this he set down to the invalid condition of her health, and also, in some measure, to a disposition which she evinced to gloomy romanticism. The servants told him that she often went out for walks in the night-time, through the park to the churchyard. He was much annoyed that his father's prejudices had influenced him to the extent that they had; and the most earnest recommendations of his uncle that he should conquer the feeling which had taken possession of him, and give up a relationship which must sooner or later drive him to his ruin, had no effect upon him.

In complete certainty of Aurelia's sincere affection, he asked for her hand; and it may be imagined with what joy the Baroness received this proposal, which transferred her into the lap of luxury from a position of the deepest poverty. The pallor and the strange expression, which spoke of some invincible inward pain or trouble, had disappeared from Aurelia's face. The blissfulness of love beamed in her eyes, and shimmered in roses on her cheeks.

On the morning of the wedding-day a terrible event shattered the Count's hopes. The Baroness was found lying on her face dead, not far from the churchyard: and when the Count was looking out of his window on getting up, full of the bliss of the happiness which he had attained, her body was being brought back to the Castle. He supposed she was only in one of her usual attacks; but all efforts to bring her back to life were ineffectual. She was dead. Aurelia, instead of giving way to violent grief, seemed rather to be struck dumb and tearless by this blow, which appeared to have a paralyzing effect on her.

The Count was much distressed for her, and only ventured--most cautiously and most gently--to remind her that her orphaned condition rendered it necessary that conventionalities should be disregarded, and that the most essential matter in the circumstances was to hasten on the marriage as much as possible, notwithstanding the loss of her mother. At this Aurelia fell into the Count's arms, and, whilst a flood of tears ran down her cheeks, cried in a most eager manner, and in a voice which was shrill with urgency:

"Yes, yes! For the love of all the saints. For the sake of my soul's salvation--yes!"

The Count ascribed this burst of emotion to the bitter sense that, in her orphaned condition, she did not know whither to betake herself, seeing that she could not go on staying in the Castle. He took pains to procure a worthy matron as a companion for her, till in a few weeks, the wedding-day again came round. And this time no mischance interfered with it, and it crowned the bliss of Aurelia and Hyppolitus. But Aurelia had all this while been in a curiously strained and excited condition. It was not grief for her mother, but she seemed to be unceasingly, and without cessation, tortured by some inward anxiety. In the midst of the most delicious love-passage she would suddenly clasp the Count in her arms, pale as death, and like a person suddenly seized by some terror--just as if she were trying her very utmost to resist some extraneous power which was threatening to force her to destruction--and would cry, "Oh, no--no! Never, never!" Now that she was married, however, it seemed that this strange, overstrained, excited condition in which she had been, abated and left her, and the terrible inward anxiety and disturbance under which she had been labouring seemed to disappear.

The Count could not but suspect the existence of some secret evil mystery by which Aurelia's inner being was tormented, but he very properly thought it would

be unkind and unfeeling to ask her about it whilst her excitement lasted, and she herself avoided any explanation on the subject. However, a time came when he thought he might venture to hint gently, that perhaps it would lie well if she indicated to him the cause of the strange condition of her mind. She herself at once said it would be a satisfaction to her to open her mind to him, her beloved husband. And great was his amazement to learn that what was at the bottom of the mystery, was the atrociously wicked life which her mother had led, that was so perturbing her mind.

"Can there be anything more terrible," she said, "than to have to hate, detest, and abhor one's own mother?"

Thus the prejudices (as they were called) of his father and uncle had not been unfounded, and the Baroness had deceived him in the most deliberate manner. He was obliged to confess to himself--and he made no secret of it--that it was a fortunate circumstance that the Baroness had died on the morning of his wedding-day. But Aurelia declared that as soon as her mother was dead she had been seized by dark and terrible terrors, and could not help thinking that her mother would rise from her grave, and drag her from her husband's arms into perdition.

She said she dimly remembered, one morning when she was a mere child, being awakened by a frightful commotion in the house. Doors opened and shut; strangers' voices cried out in confusion. At last, things becoming quieter, her nurse took her in her arms, and carried her into a large room where there were many people, and the man who had often played with her, and given her sweetmeats, lying stretched on a long table. This man she had always called "Papa," and she stretched her hands out to him, and wanted to kiss him. But his lips, always warm before, were cold as ice, and Aurelia broke into violent weeping, without knowing why. The nurse took her to a strange house, where she remained a long while, till at last a lady came and took her away in a carriage. This was her mother, who soon after took her to the Residenz.

When Aurelia got to be about sixteen, a man came to the house whom her mother welcomed joyfully, and treated with much confidentiality, receiving him with much intimacy of friendship, as being a dear old friend. He came more and more frequently, and the Baroness's style of existence was soon greatly altered for the better. Instead of living in an attic, and subsisting on the poorest of fare, and wearing the most wretched old clothes, she took a fine lodging in the most fashionable quarter, wore fine dresses, ate and drank with this stranger of the best and most expensive food and drink daily (he was her daily guest), and took her part in all the public pleasurings which the Residenz had to offer.

Aurelia was the person upon whom this bettering of her mother's circumstances (evidently attributable solely to the stranger) exercised no influence whatever. She remained shut up in her room when her mother went out to enjoy herself in the stranger's company, and was obliged to live just as miserably as before. This man, though about forty, had a very fresh and youthful appearance, a tall, handsome person, and a face by no means devoid of a certain amount of manly good looks. Notwithstanding this, he was repugnant to Aurelia on account of his style of behaviour. He seemed to try to constrain himself, to conduct himself like a gentleman and person of some cultivation, but there was constantly, and most evidently, piercing through this exterior veneer the unmistakable evidence of his really being a totally uncultured person, whose manners and habits were those of the very lowest ranks of the people. And the way in which he began to look at Aurelia filled her with terror--nay, with an abhorrence of which she could not explain the reason to herself.

Up to this point the Baroness had never taken the trouble to say a single word to Aurelia about this stranger. But now she told her his name, adding that this Baron was a man of great wealth, and a distant relation. She lauded his good looks, and his various delightful qualities, and ended by asking Aurelia if she thought she could bring herself to take a liking to him. Aurelia made no secret of

the inward detestation which she felt for him. The Baroness darted a glance of lightning at her, which terrified her excessively, and told her she was a foolish, ignorant creature. After this she was kinder to her than she had ever been before. She was provided with grand dresses in the height of the fashion, and taken to share in all the public pleasures. The man now strove to gain her favour in a manner which rendered him more and more abhorrent to her. But her delicate, maidenly instincts were wounded in the most mortal manner, when an unfortunate accident rendered her an unwilling, secret witness of an abominable atrocity between her abandoned and depraved mother and him. When, a few days after this, this man, after having taken a good deal of wine, clasped Aurelia in his arms in a way which left no doubt as to his intention, her desperation gave her strength, and she pushed him from her so that he fell down on his back. She rushed away and bolted herself in her own room. The Baroness told her, very calmly and deliberately, that, inasmuch as the Baron paid all the household expenses, and she had not the slightest intention of going back to the old poverty of their previous life, this was a case in which any absurd coyness would be both ludicrous and inconvenient, and that she would really have to make up her mind to comply with the Baron's wishes, because, if not, he had threatened to part company at once. Instead of being affected by Aurelia's bitter tears and agonized intreaties, the old woman, breaking into the most brazen and shameless laughter, talked in the most depraved manner of a state of matters which would cause Aurelia to bid, for ever, farewell to every feeling of enjoyment of life in such unrestrained and detestable depravity, defying and insulting all sense of ordinary propriety, so that her shame and terror were undescribable at what she was obliged to hear. In fact she gave herself up for lost, and her only means of salvation appeared to her to be immediate flight.

She had managed to possess herself of the key of the hall door, had got together the few little necessaries which she absolutely required, and, just after midnight, was moving softly through the dimly-lighted front hall, at a time when she thought her mother was sure to be last asleep. She was on the point of stepping quietly out into the street, when the door opened with a clang, and heavy footsteps came noisily up the steps. The Baroness came staggering and stumbling into the hall, right up to Aurelia's feet, nothing upon her but a kind of miserable wrapper all covered with dirt, her breast and her arms naked, her grey hair all hanging down and dishevelled. And close after her came the stranger, who seized her by the hair, and dragged her into the middle of the hall, crying out in a yelling voice--

"Wait, you old devil, you witch of hell! I'll serve you up a wedding breakfast!" And with a good thick cudgel which he had in his hand he set to and belaboured and maltreated her in the most shameful manner. She made a terrible screaming and outcry, whilst Aurelia, scarcely knowing what she was about, screamed aloud out of the window for help.

It chanced that there was a patrol of armed police just passing. The men came at once into the house.

"Seize him!" cried the Baroness, writhing in convulsions of rage and pain. "Seize him--hold him fast! Look at his bare back. He's----"

When the police sergeant heard the Baroness speak the name he shouted out in the greatest delight--

"Hoho! We've got you at last, Devil Alias, have we?" And in spite of his violent resistance, they marched him off.

But notwithstanding all this which had been happening, the Baroness had understood well enough what Aurelia's idea had been. She contented herself with taking her somewhat roughly by the arm, pushing her into her room, and locking her up in it, without saying a word. She went out early the next morning, and did not come back till late in the evening. And during this time Aurelia remained a prisoner in her room, never seeing nor hearing a creature, and having nothing to

eat or drink. This went on for several days. The Baroness often glared at her with eyes flashing with anger, and seemed to be wrestling with some decision, until, one evening, letters came which seemed to cause her satisfaction.

"Silly creature! all this is your fault. However, it seems to be all coming right now, and all I hope is that the terrible punishment which the Evil Spirit was threatening you with may not come upon you." This was what the Baroness said to Aurelia, and then she became more kind and friendly, and Aurelia, no longer distressed by the presence of the horrible man, and having given up the idea of escaping, was allowed a little more freedom.

Some time had elapsed, when one day, as Aurelia was sitting alone in her room, she heard a great clamour approaching in the street. The maid came running in, and said that they were taking the hangman's son of ---- to prison, that he had been branded on the back there for robbery and murder, and had escaped, and was now retaken.

Aurelia, full of anxious presentiment, tottered to the window. Her presentiment was not fallacious. It *was* the stranger (as we have styled him), and he was being brought along, firmly bound upon a tumbril, surrounded by a strong guard. He was being taken back to undergo his sentence. Aurelia, nearly fainting, sank back into her chair, as his frightfully wild look fell upon her, while he shook his clenched fist up at the window with the most threatening gestures.

After this the Baroness was still a great deal away from the house; but she never took Aurelia with her, so that the latter led a sorrowful, miserable existence--occupied in thinking many thoughts as to destiny, and the threatening future which might unexpectedly come upon her.

From the maidservant (who had only come into the house subsequently to the nocturnal adventure which has been described, and who had probably only quite recently heard about the intimacy of the terms in which the Baroness had been living with this criminal), Aurelia learned that the folks in the Residenz were very much grieved at the Baroness's having been so deceived and imposed upon by a scoundrel of this description. But Aurelia knew only too well how differently the matter had really stood; and it seemed to her impossible that, at all events, the men of the police, who had apprehended the fellow in the Baroness's very house, should not have known all about the intimacy of the relations between them, inasmuch as she herself had told them his name, and directed their attention to the brand-marks on his back, as proofs of his identity. Moreover, this loquacious maid sometimes talked in a very ambiguous way about that which people were, here and there, thinking and saying; and, for that matter, would like very much to know better about--as to the courts having been making careful investigations, and having gone so far as to threaten the Baroness with arrest, on account of strange disclosures which the hangman's son had made concerning her.

Aurelia was obliged to admit, in her own mind, that it was another proof of her mother's depraved way of looking at things that, even after this terrible affair, she should have found it possible to go on living in the Residenz. But at last she felt herself constrained to leave the place where she knew she was the object of but too well-founded, shameful suspicion, and fly to a more distant spot. On this journey she came to the Count's Castle, and there ensued what has been related.

Aurelia could not but consider herself marvellously fortunate to have got clear of all these troubles. But how profound was her horror when, speaking to her mother in this blessed sense of the merciful intervention of Heaven in her regard, the latter, with fires of hell in her eyes, cried out in a yelling voice--

"You are my misfortune, horrible creature that you are! But in the midst of your imagined happiness vengeance will overtake you, if I should be carried away by a sudden death. In those tetanic spasms, which your birth cost me, the subtle craft of the devil----"

Here Aurelia suddenly stopped. She threw herself upon her husband's breast, and implored him to spare her the complete recital of what the Baroness had said to her in the delirium of her insanity. She said she felt her inmost heart and soul crushed to pieces at the bare idea of the frightful threatenings--far beyond the wildest imagination's conception of the terrible--uttered to her by her mother, possessed, as she was at the time, by the most diabolical powers.

The Count comforted his bride to the best of his ability, although he felt himself permeated by the coldest and most deathly shuddering horror. Even when he had regained some calmness, he could not but confess to himself that the profound horribleness of the Baroness, even now that she was dead, cast a deep shadow over his life, sun-bright as it otherwise seemed to be.

In a very short time Aurelia began to alter very perceptibly. Whilst the deathly paleness of her face, and the fatigued appearance of her eyes, seemed to point to sortie bodily ailment, her mental state--confused, variable, restless, as if she were constantly frightened at something--led to the conclusion that there was some fresh mystery perturbing her system. She shunned her husband. She shut herself up in her rooms, sought the most solitary walks in the park. And when she then allowed herself to be seen, her eyes, red with weeping, her contorted features, gave unmistakable evidence of some terrible suffering which she had been undergoing. It was in vain that the Count took every possible pains to discover the cause of this condition of hers, and the only thing which had any effect in bringing him out of the hopeless state into which those remarkable symptoms of his wife's had plunged him, was the deliberate opinion of a celebrated doctor, that this strangely excited condition of the Countess was nothing other than the natural result of a bodily state which indicated the happy result of a fortunate marriage. This doctor, on one occasion when he was at table with the Count and Countess, permitted himself sundry allusions to this presumed state of what the German nation calls "good hope." The Countess seemed to listen to all this with indifference for some time. But suddenly her attention became vividly awakened when the doctor spoke of the wonderful longings which women in that condition become possessed by, and which they cannot resist without the most injurious effects supervening upon their own health, and even upon that of the child. The Countess overwhelmed the doctor with questions, and the latter did not weary of quoting the strangest and most entertaining cases of this description from his own practice and experience.

"Moreover," he said, "there are cases on record in which women have been led, by these strange, abnormal longings, to commit most terrible crimes. There was a certain blacksmith's wife, who had such an irresistible longing for her husband's flesh that, one night, when he came home the worse for liquor, she set upon him with a large knife, and cut him about so frightfully that he died in a few hours' time."

Scarcely had the doctor said these words, when the Countess fell back in her chair fainting, and was with much difficulty recovered from the succession of hysterical attacks which supervened. The doctor then saw that he had acted very thoughtlessly in alluding to such a frightful occurrence in the presence of a lady whose nervous system was in such a delicate condition.

However, this crisis seemed to have a beneficial effect upon her, for she became calmer; although, soon afterwards there came upon her a very remarkable condition of rigidity, as of benumbedness. There was a darksome fire in her eyes, and her deathlike pallor increased to such an extent, that the Count was driven into new and most tormenting doubts as to her condition. The most inexplicable thing was that she never took the smallest morsel of anything to eat, evincing the utmost repugnance at the sight of all food, particularly meat. This repugnance was so invincible that she was constantly obliged to get up and leave the table, with the most marked indications of loathing. The doctor's skill was in vain, and the Count's most urgent and affectionate entreaties were powerless to induce her to take even a single drop of medicine of any kind. And, inasmuch as

weeks, nay, months, had passed without her having taken so much as a morsel of food, and it had become an unfathomable mystery how she managed to keep alive, the doctor came to the conclusion that there was something in the case which lay beyond the domain of ordinary human science. He made some pretext for leaving the Castle, but the Count saw clearly enough that this doctor, whose skilfulness was well approved, and who had a high reputation to maintain, felt that the Countess's condition was too unintelligible, and, in fact, too strangely mysterious, for him to stay on there, witness of an illness impossible to be understood--as to which he felt he had no power to render assistance.

It may be readily imagined into what a state of mind all this put the Count. But there was more to come. Just at this juncture an old, privileged servant took an opportunity, when he found the Count alone, of telling him that the Countess went out every night, and did not come home till daybreak.

The Count's blood ran cold. It struck him, as a matter which he had not quite realized before, that, for a short time back, there had fallen upon him, regularly about midnight, a curiously unnatural sleepiness, which he now believed to be caused by some narcotic administered to him by the Countess, to enable her to get away unobserved. The darkest suspicions and forebodings came into his mind. He thought of the diabolical mother, and that, perhaps, her instincts had begun to awake in her daughter. He thought of some possibility of a conjugal infidelity. He remembered the terrible hangman's son.

It was so ordained that the very next night was to explain this terrible mystery to him--that which alone could be the key to the Countess's strange condition.

She herself used, every evening, to make the tea which the Count always took before going to bed. This evening he did not take a drop of it, and when he went to bed he had not the slightest symptom of the sleepiness which generally came upon him as it got towards midnight. However, he lay back on his pillows, and had all the appearance of being fast asleep as usual.

And then the Countess rose up very quietly, with the utmost precautions, came up to his bedside, held a lamp to his eyes, and then, convinced that he was sound asleep, went softly out of the room.

His heart throbbed fast. He got up, put on a cloak, and went after the Countess. It was a fine moonlight night, so that, though Aurelia had got a considerable start of him, he could see her distinctly going along in the distance in her white dress. She went through the park, right on to the burying-ground, and there she disappeared at the wall. The Count ran quickly after her in through the gate of the burying-ground, which he found open. There, in the bright moonlight, he saw a circle of frightful, spectral-looking creatures. Old women, half naked, were cowering down upon the ground, and in the midst of them lay the corpse of a man, which they were tearing at with wolfish appetite.

Aurelia was amongst them.

The Count took flight in the wildest horror, and ran, without any idea where he was going or what he was doing, impelled by the deadliest terror, all about the walks in the park, till he found himself at the door of his own Castle as the day was breaking, bathed in cold perspiration. Involuntarily, without the capability of taking hold of a thought, he dashed up the steps, and went bursting through the passages and into his own bedroom. There lay the Countess, to all appearance in the deepest and sweetest of sleeps. And the Count would fain have persuaded himself that some deceptive dream-image, or (inasmuch as his cloak, wet with dew, was a proof, if any had been needed, that he had really been to the burying-ground in the night) some soul-deceiving phantom had been the cause of his deathly horror. He did not wait for Aurelia's waking, but left the room, dressed, and got on to a horse. His ride, in the exquisite morning, amid sweet-scented trees and shrubs, whence the happy songs of the newly-awakened birds greeted him, drove from his memory for a time the terrible images of the night. He went

back to the Castle comforted and gladdened in heart.

But when he and the Countess sate down alone together at table, and, the dishes being brought and handed, she rose to hurry away, with loathing, at the sight of the food as usual, the terrible conviction that what he had seen was true, was reality, impressed itself irresistibly on his mind. In the wildest fury he rose from his seat, crying--

"Accursed misbirth of hell! I understand your hatred of the food of mankind. You get your sustenance out of the burying-ground, damnable creature that you are!"

As soon as those words had passed his lips, the Countess flew at him, uttering a sound between a snarl and a howl, and bit him on the breast with the fury of a hyena. He dashed her from him on to the ground, raving fiercely as she was, and she gave up the ghost in the most terrible convulsions.

The Count became a maniac.

"Well," said Lothair, after there had been a few minutes of silence amongst the friends, "you have certainly kept your word, my incomparable Cyprianus, most thoroughly and magnificently. In comparison with this story of yours, vampirism is the merest children's tale--a funny Christmas story, to be laughed at. Oh, truly, everything in it is fearfully interesting, and so highly seasoned with asafœtida that an unnaturally excited palate, which has lost its relish for healthy, natural food, might immensely enjoy it."

"And yet," said Theodore, "our friend has discreetly thrown a veil over a great many things, and has passed so rapidly over others, that his story has merely caused us a passing feeling of the eery and shuddery--for which we are duly grateful to him. I remember very well having read this story in an old book, where everything was told with the most prolix enumeration of all the details; and the old woman's atrocities in particular were set forth in all their minutiæ, truly *con amore*, so that the whole affair produced, and left behind it, a most repulsive impression, which it took a long while to get over. I was delighted when I had forgotten the horrible thing, and Cyprian ought not to have recalled it to my memory; although I must admit that he has acted in accordance with the principles of our patron saint Serapion, and caused us a sufficient thrill of horror, particularly towards the end. It made us all turn pale, particularly the narrator himself!"

"We cannot hurry away too quickly from this gruesome picture," Ottmar said. "And it will not serve as a dark background (as Vincenz expected it would), because the figures of it are in too glaring colours. Allow me, by way of a grand change of subject--a sort of sideways spring away from the hell-broth which Cyprian has served up to us--to say a word or two (merely to give Vincenz time to clear his throat, as I hear him doing) concerning a certain aesthetic tea society, which was brought to my memory by a little paper which accidentally came into my hand to-day. Have I your permission, Vincenz?"

"Strictly speaking," said Vincenz, "it is a breach of all Serapiontic rule to keep chattering in this sort of style; and not only that, but, moreover, without any especial motive or inducement, the most unseemly things about gruesome vampires, and other such matters, are brought forward, so that I am obliged to shut my mouth just as I have got it opened. But go on, my Ottmar. The hours are flying, and I shall have the last word, like a quarrelsome woman, in spite of you. So go on, my Ottmar, go on."

"Chance," began Ottmar, "or rather, a kindly-intentioned introduction, brought me into the aesthetic tea society which I mentioned; and there were circumstances which induced me, or rendered it incumbent on me, to attend its

meetings regularly for a time, although heaven knows they were tedious and wearisome enough. It greatly vexed me that, on an occasion when a really talented man read something which was full of true wit, and admirably appropriate to the occasion, all the people yawned, and grew impatient of it; whilst they were charmed and delighted by the marrowless, spiritless trash of a conceited young poetaster. This latter was all in the line of the gushing and the exuberant, but he also thought very highly of his epigrams. As what they were chiefly remarkable for was the absence of the sting in their tails, he always gave the signal for the laugh himself by beginning it at the proper time; and everybody then joined in it. One evening I asked, modestly, if I might be allowed to read out a few little verses which had occurred to me in moments of a certain amount of inspiration. And as people were good enough to credit me with the possession of a certain amount of brains, my request was received with a good deal of applause. I took out my manuscript and read, with great solemnity--

"'ITALY'S MARVELS.

'When tow'rds the orient heav'n my gaze I bend,
The western sun shines warm upon my back;
Whilst, when I turn me to the beauteous west,
The golden glory strikes upon mine eyeballs.
Oh, sacred land! where nature thus displays
Such mighty marvels to the sight of men,
All adoration, quite compact of love.'

"'Ah! glorious! heavenly! dear Ottmar, and so deeply felt, Bo sensitively expressed, right out of the fulness of your heart, so rich in emotions!' cried the lady of the house, whilst several white ladies and black gentlemen (I only mean black-dressed ones, with great hearts under their jabots) followed her by crying, 'Glorious! heavenly!' and one young lady sighed profoundly, weeping away a scalding tear. Being asked to read something more, I gave to my voice the expression of a deeply moved heart, and read--

"'LIFE DEPTHS.

'A little lad at Yarrow
Had a pretty little sparrow.
The other day he let it fly,
And now 'tis gone, alas! we sigh,
Heigho! the little lad at Yarrow
He hath no more the pretty sparrow.'

"There was a fresh tumult of applause. They begged for more; but I said, modestly, that I could not but feel that stanzas of this kind, grasping as they did comprehensively at the bases of all life, have, in the long run, a tendency to impress the hearts of delicate, impassioned women too strongly, so that I should prefer to quote a pair of epigrams, in which the distinctive feature of the epigram--the sudden flashing out of the species of squib which constitutes the tail--would not fail to be duly appreciated. I read--

"'WIT.

'The pudgy Master Schrein
Drank many a glass of wine,
  But death cut short his thread.
Then quoth his neighbour Spry
(A gossip, deep and sly),
"Our pudgy Master Schrein
No longer drinks his wine,
  And, why?--because he's dead."'

"When the sparkling wit of this roguish epigram had been sufficiently admired, I treated them to the following one in addition--

"'STINGING REPLY.

'Of Hans's book the folks make much ado;
"Say, neighbour Hamm, hast read the wonder yet?"
Thus Humm to Hamm: and Hamm (a joker he)
Said, "Faith, good Humm, I have not read it yet."'

"Everybody laughed heartily, but the lady of the house shook a minatory forefinger at me, saying, 'Ah, wicked scoffer! Is nothing to escape that scathing wit of yours?'

"The clever man shook hands with me as he passed me, saying--

"'Admirably done. Much obliged to you.'

"The young poet turned his back upon me with much contempt. But the young lady who had shed a few tears over 'Italia's Marvels,' came to me, and blushing, as she cast down her eyes, said the maidenly, virginal heart was more disposed to open to the sense of sweet sadness than to the comic; and she begged me to give her a copy of the first poem I had read. She said she had felt so curiously happy and creepy when she heard it. I promised to give it to her, and I kissed the charming young lady's sufficiently pretty hand with all the appropriate rapture of a bard duly appreciated by beauty, with the sole intention of angering the poet, who cast upon me glances as of an infuriated basilisk."

"It is strange enough," said Vincenz, "that, without being in the smallest degree aware of it, you have spoken what may be called a Goldsmith's prologue to my story. Of course you notice my pretty allusion to Shakespeare's Hamlet, and his question, 'Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?' What I mean is, that your prologue consists of what you have said about the irritated poet; for I am greatly mistaken if a poet of that kind is not one of the principal characters in my story; which story I am now going to begin, and I don't intend to stop it until the last word of it is out. And that last word is just as hard to speak as the first."

Vincenz read--

THE KING'S BETROTHED.

(A Story Sketched from Life.)

CHAPTER I.

WHICH GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS CHARACTERS, AND THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS TO EACH OTHER, AND PREPARES THE WAY, PLEASANTLY, FOR THE MANY MARVELLOUS AND MOST ENTERTAINING MATTERS OF WHICH THE SUCCEEDING CHAPTERS TREAT.

It was a blessed year. In the fields the corn, the wheat, and the barley grew most gloriously. The boys waded in the grass, and the cattle in the clover. The trees hung so full of cherries that, with the best will in the world, the great army of the sparrows, though determined to peck everything bare, were forced to leave half the fruit for a future feast. Every creature filled itself full every day at the great guest-table of nature. Above all, however, the vegetables in Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau's kitchen-garden had turned out such a splendid and beautiful crop that it was no wonder Fräulein Aennchen was unable to contain herself with joy on the subject.

We may here explain who Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau and Aennchen were.

Perhaps, dear reader, you may have at some time found yourself in that beautiful country which is watered by the pleasant, kindly river Main. Soft morning breezes, breathing their perfumed breath over the plain as it shimmered in the golden splendour of the new-risen sun, you found it impossible to sit cooped up in your stuffy carriage, and you alighted and wandered into the little grove, through the trees of which, as you descended towards the valley, you came in sight of a little village. And as you were gazing, there would suddenly come towards you, through the trees, a tall, lanky man, whose strange dress and appearance riveted your attention. He had on a small grey felt hat on the top of a black periwig: all his clothes were grey--coat, vest, and breeches, grey stockings--even his walking-stick coloured grey. He would come up to you with long strides, and staring at you with great sunken eyes, seemingly not aware of your existence, would cry out, almost running you down, "Good morning, sir!" And then, like one awaking from a dream, he would add in a hollow, mournful voice, "Good morning! Oh, sir, how thankful we ought to be that we have a good, fine morning. The poor people at Santa Cruz just had two earthquakes, and now--at this moment--rain falling in torrents." While you have been thinking what to say to this strange creature, he, with an "Allow me, sir," has gently passed his hand across your brow, and inspected the palm of your hand. And saying, in the same hollow, melancholy accents as before, "God bless you, sir! You have a good constellation," has gone striding on his way.

This odd personage was none other than Herr Dapsul Von Zabelthau, whose sole--rather miserable--possession is the village, or hamlet, of Dapsulheim, which lies before you in this most pleasant and smiling country into which you now enter. You are looking forward to something in the shape of breakfast, but in the little inn things have rather a gloomy aspect. Its small store of provisions was cleared out at the fair, and as you can't be expected to be content with nothing besides milk, they tell you to go to the Manor House, where the gracious Fräulein Anna will entertain you hospitably with whatever may be forthcoming there. Accordingly, thither you betake yourself without further ceremony.

Concerning this Manor House, there is nothing further to say than that it has doors and windows, as of yore had that of Baron Tondertontonk in Westphalia. But above the hall-door the family coat-of-arms makes a fine show, carved there in wood with New Zealand skilfulness. And this Manor House derives a peculiar character of its own from the circumstance that its north side leans upon the enceinte, or outer line of defence belonging to an old ruined castle, so that the back entrance is what was formerly the castle gate, and through it one passes at once into the courtyard of that castle, in the middle of which the tall watch-tower still stands undamaged. From the hall door, which is surmounted by the coat-of-arms, there comes meeting you a red-cheeked young lady, who, with her clear blue eyes and fair hair, is to be called very pretty indeed, although her figure may be considered just the least bit too roundly substantial. A personification of friendly kindness, she begs you to go in, and as soon as she ascertains your wants, serves you up the most delicious milk, a liberal allowance of first-rate bread and butter, uncooked ham--as good as you would find in Bayonne--and a small glass of beetroot brandy. Meanwhile, this young lady (who is none other than Fräulein Anna von Zabelthau) talks to you gaily and pleasantly of rural matters, displaying anything but a limited knowledge of such subjects. Suddenly, however, there resounds a loud and terrible voice, as if from the skies, crying "Anna, Anna, Anna!" This rather startles you; but Fräulein Anna says, pleasantly, "There's papa back from his walk, calling for his breakfast from his study." "Calling from his study," you repeat, or enquire, astonished. "Yes," says Fräulein Anna, or Fräulein Aennchen, as the people call her. "Yes; papa's study is up in the tower there, and he calls down through the speaking trumpet." And you see Aennchen open the narrow door of the old lower, with a similar *déjeuner à la fourchette* to that which you have had yourself, namely, a liberal helping of bread and ham, not forgetting the beetroot brandy, and go briskly in at it. But she is back directly, and taking you all over the charming kitchen-garden, has so much to say about feather-sage, rapuntika, English turnips, little greenheads, montrue, great yellow, and so forth, that you have no idea that all these fine names merely mean various descriptions

of cabbages and salads.

I think, dear reader, that this little glimpse which you have had of Dapsulheim is sufficient to enable you to understand all the outs and ins of the establishment, concerning which I have to narrate to you all manner of extraordinary, barely comprehensible, matters and occurrences. Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau had, during his youth, very rarely left his parents' country place. They had been people of considerable means. His tutor, after teaching him foreign languages, particularly those of the East, fostered a natural inclination which he possessed towards mysticism, or rather, occupying himself with the mysterious. This tutor died, leaving as a legacy to young Dapsul a whole library of occult science, into the very depths of which he proceeded to plunge. His parents dying, he betook himself to long journeyings, and (as his tutor had impressed him with the necessity of doing) to Egypt and India. When he got home again, after many years, a cousin had looked after his affairs with such zeal that there was nothing left to him but the little hamlet of Dapsulheim. Herr Dapsul was too eagerly occupied in the pursuit of the sun-born gold of a higher sphere to trouble himself about that which was earthly. He rather felt obliged to his cousin for preserving to him the pleasant, friendly Dapsulheim, with the fine, tall tower, which might have been built expressly on purpose for astrological operations, and in the upper storey and topmost height of which he at once established his study. And indeed he thanked his said cousin from the bottom of his heart.

This careful cousin now pointed out that Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau was bound to marry. Dapsul immediately admitted the necessity, and, without more ado, married at once the lady whom his cousin had selected for him. This lady disappeared almost as quickly as she had appeared on the scene. She died, after bearing him a daughter. The cousin attended to the marriage, the baptism, and the funeral; so that Dapsul, up in his tower, paid very little attention to either. For there was a very remarkable comet visible during most of the time, and Dapsul, ever melancholy and anticipative of evil, considered that he was involved in its influence.

The little daughter, under the careful up-bringing of an old grand-aunt, developed a remarkable aptitude for rural affairs. She had to begin at the very beginning, and, so to speak, rise from the ranks, serving successively as goose-girl, maid-of-all-work, upper farm-maid, housekeeper, and, finally, as mistress, so that Theory was all along illustrated and impressed upon her mind by a salutary share of Practice. She was exceedingly fond of ducks and geese, hens and pigeons, and even the tender broods of well-shaped piglings she was by no means indifferent to, though she did not put a ribbon and a bell round a little white sucking-pig's neck and make it into a sort of lap-dog, as a certain young lady, in another place, was once known to do. But more than anything--more than even to the fruit trees--she was devoted to the kitchen-garden. From her grand-aunt's attainments in this line she had derived very remarkable theoretical knowledge of vegetable culture (which the reader has seen for himself), as regarded digging of the ground, sowing the seed, and setting the plants. Fräulein Aennchen not only superintended all these operations, but lent most valuable manual aid. She wielded a most vigorous spade--her bitterest enemy would have admitted this. So that while Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau was immersed in astrological observations and other important matters, Fräulein Aennchen carried on the management of the place in the ablest possible manner, Dapsul looking after the celestial part of the business, and Aennchen managing the terrestrial side of things with unceasing vigilance and care.

As above said, it was small wonder that Aennchen was almost beside herself with delight at the magnificence of the yield which this season had produced in the kitchen-garden. But the carrot-bed was what surpassed everything else in the garden in its promise.

"Oh, my dear, beautiful carrots!" cried Anna over and over again, and she clapped her hands, danced, and jumped about, and conducted herself like a child

who has been given a grand Christmas present.

And indeed it seemed as though the carrot-children underground were taking part in Aennchen's gladness, for some extremely delicate laughter, which just made itself heard, was undoubtedly proceeding from the carrot-bed. Aennchen didn't, however, pay much heed to it, but ran to meet one of the farm-men who was coming, holding up a letter, and calling out to her, "For you, Fräulein Aennchen. Gottlieb brought it from the town."

Aennchen saw immediately, from the hand writing, that it was from none other than young Herr Amandus von Nebelstern, the son of a neighbouring proprietor, now at the university. During the time when he was living at home, and in the habit of running over to Dapsulheim every day, Amandus had arrived at the conviction that in all his life he never could love anybody except Aennchen. Similarly, Aennchen was perfectly certain that she could never really care the least bit about anybody else but this brown-locked Amandus. Thus both Aennchen and Amandus had come to the conclusion and arrangement that they were to be married as soon as ever they could--the sooner the better--and be the very happiest married couple in the wide world.

Amandus had at one time been a bright, natural sort of lad enough, but at the university he had got into the hands of God knows who, and had been induced to fancy himself a marvellous poetical genius, as also to betake himself to an extreme amount of absurd extravagance in expression of ideas. He carried this so far that he soon soared far away beyond everything which prosaic idiots term Sense and Reason (maintaining at the same time, as they do, that both are perfectly co-existent with the utmost liveliness of imagination).

It was from this young Amandus that the letter came which Aennchen opened and read, as follows:--

"HEAVENLY MAIDEN,--

"Dost thou see, dost thou feel, dost thou not image and figure to thyself, thy Amandus, how, circumambiated by the orange-flower-laden breath of the dewy evening, he is lying on his back in the grass, gazing heavenward with eyes filled with the holiest love and the most longing adoration? The thyme and the lavender, the rose and the gilliflower, as also the yellow-eyed narcissus and the shamefaced violet--he weaveth into garlands. And the flowers are love-thoughts--thoughts of thee, oh, Anna! But doth feeble prose beseem inspired lips? Listen! oh, listen how I can only love, and speak of my love, sonnetically!

"Love flames aloft in thousand eager sunspheres,
Joy wooeth joy within the heart so warmly:
Down from the darkling sky soft stars are shining.
Back-mirrored from the deep, still wells of love-tears.

"Delight, alas! doth die of joy too burning--
The sweetest fruit hath aye the bitt'rest kernel--
While longing beckons from the violet distance,
In pain of love my heart to dust is turning.

"In fiery billows rage the ocean surges,
Yet the bold swimmer dares the plunge full arduous,
And soon amid the waves his strong course urges.

"And on the shore, now near, the jacinth shoots:
The faithful heart holds firm: 'twill bleed to death;
But heart's blood is the sweetest of all roots.[1]

"Oh, Anna! when thou readest this sonnet of all sonnets, may all the heavenly rapture permeate thee in which all my being was dissolved when I wrote it down, and then read it out, to kindred minds, conscious, like myself, of life's highest. Think, oh, think I sweet maiden of

"Thy faithful, enraptured,

"AMANDUS VON NEBELSTERN.

"P.S.--Don't forget, oh, sublime virgin! when answering this, to send a pound or two of that Virginia tobacco which you grow yourself. It burns splendidly, and has a far better flavour than the Porto Rico which the Bürschen smoke when they go to the Kneipe."

[Footnote 1: The translator may point out that the original of this nonsense is, itself, intentionally nonsense, and that he has done his best to render it into English--not an easy task.--A. E.]

Fräulein Aennchen pressed the letter to her lips, and said, "Oh, how dear, how beautiful! And the darling verses, rhyming so beautifully. Oh, if I were only clever enough to understand it all; but I suppose nobody can do that but a student. I wonder what that about the 'roots' means? I suppose it must be the long red English carrots, or, who knows, it may be the rapuntica. Dear fellow!"

That very day Fräulein Aennchen made it her business to pack up the tobacco, and she took a dozen of her finest goose-quills to the schoolmaster, to get him to make them into pens. Her intention was to sit down at once and begin her answer to the precious letter. As she was going out of the kitchen-garden, she was again followed by a very faint, almost imperceptible, sound of delicate laughter; and if she had paid a little attention to what was going on, she would have been sure to hear a little delicate voice saying, "Pull me, pull me! I am ripe--ripe--ripe!" However, as we have said, she paid no attention, and did not hear this.

CHAPTER II.

WHICH CONTAINS AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST WONDERFUL EVENT, AND OTHER MATTERS DESERVING OF PERUSAL, WITHOUT WHICH THIS TALE COULD HAVE HAD NO EXISTENCE.

Herr Dapsul Von Zabelthau generally came down from his astronomical tower about noon, to partake of a frugal repast with his daughter, which usually lasted a very short time, and during which there was generally a great predominance of silence, for Dapsul did not like to talk. And Aennchen did not trouble him by speaking much, and this all the more for the reason that if her papa did actually begin to talk, he would come out with all sorts of curious unintelligible nonsense, which made a body's head giddy. This day, however, her head was so full, and her mind so excited and taken up with the flourishing state of the kitchen-garden, and the letter from her beloved Amandus, that she talked of both subjects incessantly, mixed up, without leaving off. At last Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau laid down his knife and fork, stopped his ears with his hands, and cried out, "Oh, the dreary higgledy-piggledy of chatter and gabble!"

Aennchen stopped, alarmed, and he went on to say, in the melancholy sustained tones which were characteristic of him, "With regard to the vegetables, my dear daughter, I have long been cognizant that the manner in which the stars have worked together this season has been eminently favourable to those growths, and the earthly man will be amply supplied with cabbage, radishes, and lettuce, so that the earthly matter may duly increase and withstand the fire of the world-spirit, like a properly kneaded pot. The gnomic principle will resist the attacks of the salamander, and I shall have the enjoyment of eating the parsnips which you cook so well. With regard to young Amandus von Nebelstern, I have not the slightest objection to your marrying him as soon as he comes back from the university. Simply send Gottlieb up to tell me when your marriage is going to

take place, so that I may go with you to the church."

Herr Dapsul kept silence for a few seconds, and then, without looking at Aennchen, whose face was glowing with delight, he went on, smiling and striking his glass with his fork (two things which he seldom did at all, though he always did them together) to say, "Your Amandus has got to be, and cannot help being, where and what he is. He is, in fact, a gerund; and I shall merely tell you, my dear Aennchen, that I drew up his horoscope a long while ago. His constellation is favourable enough on the whole, for the matter of that. He has Jupiter in the ascending node, Venus regarding in the sextile. The trouble is, that the path of Sirius cuts across, and, just at the point of intersection, there is a great danger from which Amandus delivers his betrothed. The danger--what it is--is indiscoverable, because some strange being, which appears to set at defiance all astrological science, seems to be concerned in it. At the same time, it is evident and certain that it is only the strange psychical condition which mankind terms craziness, or mental derangement, which will enable Amandus to accomplish this deliverance. Oh, my daughter!" (here Herr Dapsul fell again into his usual pathetic tone), "may no mysterious power, which keeps itself hidden from my seer-eyes, come suddenly across your path, so that young Amandus von Nebelstern may not have to rescue you from any other danger but that of being an old maid." He sighed several times consecutively, and then continued, "But the path of Sirius breaks off abruptly after this danger, and Venus and Jupiter, divided before, come together again, reconciled."

Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau had not spoken so much for years as on this occasion. He arose exhausted, and went back up into his tower.

Aennchen had her answer to Herr von Nebelstern ready in good time next morning. It was as follows:--

"My own dearest Amandus--

"You cannot believe what joy your letter has given me. I have told papa about it, and he has promised to go to church with us when we're married. Be sure to come back from the university as soon as ever you can. Oh! if I only could *quite* understand your darling verses, which rhyme so beautifully. When I read them to myself aloud they sound wonderful, and *then* I think I *do* understand them quite well. But soon everything grows confused, and seems to get away from me, and I feel as if I had been reading a lot of mere words that somehow don't belong to each other at all. The schoolmaster says this must be so, and that it's the new fashionable way of speaking. But, you see, I'm--oh, well!--I'm only a stupid, foolish creature. Please to write and tell me if I couldn't be a student for a little time, without neglecting my housework. I suppose that couldn't be, though, could it? Well, well: when once we're husband and wife, perhaps I may pick up a little of your learning, and learn a little of this new, fashionable way of speaking.

"I send you the Virginian tobacco, my dearest Amandus. I've packed my bonnet-box full of it, as much as ever I could get into it; and, in the meantime, I've put my new straw hat on to Charles the Great's head--you know he stands in the spare bedroom, although he has no feet, being only a bust, as you remember.

"Please don't laugh, Amandus dear; but I have made some poetry myself, and it rhymes quite nicely, some of it. Write and tell me how a person, without learning, can know so well what rhymes to what? Just listen, now--

> "I love you, dearest, as my life.
> And long at once to be your wife.
> The bright blue sky is full of light,
> When evening comes the stars shine bright.
> So you must love me always truly,
> And never cause me pain unduly,
> I pack up the 'baccy you asked me to send,
> And I hope it will yield you enjoyment no end.

"There! you must take the will for the deed, and when I learn the fashionable way of speaking, I'll do some better poetry. The yellow lettuces are promising splendidly this year--never was such a crop; so are the French beans; but my little dachshund, Feldmann, gave

the big gander a terrible bite in the leg yesterday. However, we can't have everything perfect in this world. A hundred kisses in imagination, my dearest Amandus, from

"Your most faithful fiancée,

"ANNA VON ZABELTHAU.

"P.S.--I've been writing in an awful hurry, and that's the reason the letters are rather crooked here and there.

"P.S.--But you mustn't mind about that. Though I may write a little crookedly, my heart is all straight, and I am

"Always your faithful

"ANNA.

"P.S.--Oh, good gracious! I had almost forgot--thoughtless thing that I am. Papa sends you his kind regards, and says you have got to be, and cannot help being, where and what you are; and that you are to rescue me from a terrible danger some day. Now, I'm very glad of this, and remain, once more,

"Your most true and loving

"ANNA VON ZABELTHAU."

It was a good weight off Fräulein Aennchen's mind when she had written this letter; it had cost her a considerable effort. So she felt light-hearted and happy when she had put it in its envelope, sealed it up without burning the paper or her own fingers, and given it, together with the bonnet-boxful of tobacco, to Gottlieb to take to the post-office in the town. When she had seen properly to the poultry in the yard, she ran as fast as she could to the place she loved best--the kitchen-garden. When she got to the carrot-bed she thought it was about time to be thinking of the sweet-toothed people in the town, and be palling the earliest of the carrots. The servant-girl was called in to help in this process. Fräulein Aennchen walked, gravely and seriously, into the middle of the bed, and grasped a stately carrot-plant. But on her pulling at it a strange sound made itself heard. Do not, reader, think of the witches' mandrake-root, and the horrible whining and howling which pierces the heart of man when it is drawn from the earth. No; the tone which was heard on this occasion was like very delicate, joyous laughter. But Fräulein Aennchen let the carrot-plant go, and cried out, rather frightened, "Eh! Who's that laughing at me?" But there being nothing more to be heard she took hold of the carrot-plant again--which seemed to be finer and better grown than any of the rest--and, notwithstanding the laughing, which began again, pulled up the very finest and most splendid carrot ever beheld by mortal eye. When she looked at it more closely she gave a cry of joyful surprise, so that the maid-servant came running up; and she also exclaimed aloud at the beautiful miracle which disclosed itself to her eyes. For there was a beautiful ring firmly attached to the carrot, with a shining topaz mounted in it.

"Oh," cried the maid, "that's for you! It's your wedding-ring. Put it on directly."

"Stupid nonsense!" said Fräulein Aennchen. "I must get my wedding-ring from Herr Amandus von Nebelstern, not from a carrot."

However, the longer she looked at the ring the better she was pleased with it; and, indeed, it was of such wonderfully fine workmanship that it seemed to surpass anything ever produced by human skill. On the ring part of it there were hundreds and hundreds of tiny little figures twined together in the most manifold groupings, hardly to be made out with the naked eye at first, so microscopically minute were they. But when one looked at them closely for a little while they appeared to grow bigger and more distinct, and to come to life, and dance in pretty combinations. And the fire of the gem was of such a remarkable water that the like of it could not have been found in the celebrated Dresden collection.

"Who knows," said the maid, "how long this beautiful ring may have been

underground? And it must have got shoved up somehow, and then the carrot has grown right through it."

Fräulein Aennchen took the ring off the carrot, and it was strange how the latter suddenly slipped through her fingers and disappeared in the ground. But neither she nor the maid paid much heed to this circumstance, being lost in admiration of the beautiful ring, which the young lady immediately put on the little finger of the right hand without more ado. As she did so, she felt a stinging pain all up her finger, from the root of it to the point; but this pain went away again as quickly as it had come.

Of course she told her father, at mid-day, all about this strange adventure at the carrot-bed, and showed him the beautiful ring which had been sticking upon the carrot. She was going to take it off that he might examine it the better, but felt the same stinging kind of pain as when she put it on. And this pain lasted all the time she was trying to get it off, so that she had to give up trying. Herr Dapsul scanned the ring upon her finger with the most careful attention. He made her stretch her finger out, and describe with it all sorts of circles in all directions. After which he fell into a profound meditation, and went up into his tower without uttering a syllable. Aennchen heard him giving vent to a very considerable amount of groaning and sighing as he went.

Next morning, when she was chasing the big cock about the yard (he was bent on all manner of mischief, and was skirmishing particularly with the pigeons), Herr Dapsul began lamenting so fearfully down from the tower through the speaking trumpet that she cried up to him through her closed hand, "Oh papa dear, what are you making such a terrible howling for? The fowls are all going out of their wits."

Heir Dapsul hailed down to her through the speaking trumpet, saying, "Anna, my daughter Anna, come up here to me immediately."

Fräulein Aennchen was much astonished at this command, for her papa had never in all his life asked her to go into the tower, but rather had kept the door of it carefully shut. So that she was conscious of a certain sense of anxiety as she climbed the narrow winding stair, and opened the heavy door which led into its one room. Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau was seated upon a large armchair of singular form, surrounded by curious instruments and dusty books. Before him was a kind of stand, upon which there was a paper stretched in a frame, with a number of lines drawn upon it. He had on a tall pointed cap, a wide mantle of grey calimanco, and on his chin a long white beard, so that he had quite the appearance of a magician. On account of his false beard, Aennchen didn't know him a bit just at first, and looked curiously about to see if her father were hidden away in some corner; but when she saw that the man with the beard on was really papa, she laughed most heartily, and asked if it was Yule-time, and he was going to act Father Christmas.

Paying no heed to this enquiry, Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau took a small tool of iron in his hand, touched Aennchen's forehead with it, and then stroked it along her right arm several times, from the armpit to the tip of the little finger. While this was going on she had to sit in the armchair, which he had quitted, and to lay the finger which had the ring upon it on the paper which was in the frame, in such a position that the topaz touched the central point where all the lines came together. Yellow rays immediately shot out from the topaz all round, colouring the paper all over with deep yellow light. Then the lines went flickering and crackling up and down, and the little figures which were on the ring seemed to be jumping merrily about all over the paper. Herr Dapsul, without taking his eyes from the paper, had taken hold of a thin plate of some metal, which he held up high over his head with both arms, and was proceeding to press it down upon the paper; but ere he could do so he slipped his foot on the smooth stone floor, and fell, anything but softly, upon the sitting portion of his body; whilst the metal plate, which he had dropped in an instinctive attempt to break his fall, and save damage to his *Os Coccygis*, went clattering down upon the stones. Fräulein Aennchen awoke, with a

gentle "Ah!" from a strange dreamy condition in which she had been. Herr Dapsul with some difficulty raised himself, put the grey sugar-loaf cap, which had fallen off, on again, arranged the false beard, and sate himself down opposite to Aennchen upon a pile of folio volumes.

"My daughter," he said, "my daughter Anna; what were your sensations? Describe your thoughts, your feelings? What were the forms seen by the eye of the spirit within your inner being?"

"Ah!" answered Anna, "I was so happy; I never was so happy in all my life. And I thought of Amandus von Nebelstern. And I saw him quite plainly before my eyes, but he was much better looking than he used to be, and he was smoking a pipe of the Virginian tobacco that I sent him, and seemed to be enjoying it tremendously. Then all at once I felt a great appetite for young carrots with sausages; and lo and behold! there the dishes were before me, and I was just going to help myself to some when I woke up from the dream in a moment, with a sort of painful start."

"Amandus von Nebelstern, Virginia canaster, carrots, sausages," quoth Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau to his daughter very reflectively. And he signed to her to stay where she was, for she was preparing to go away.

"Happy is it for you, innocent child," he began, in a tone much more lamentable than even his usual one, "that you are as yet not initiated into the profounder mysteries of the universe, and are unaware of the threatening perils which surround you. You know nothing of the supernatural science of the sacred cabbala. True, you will never partake the celestial joy of those wise ones who, having attained the highest step, need never eat or drink except for their pleasure, and are exempt from human necessities. But then, you have not to endure and suffer the pain of attainment to that step, like your unhappy father, who is still far more liable to attacks of mere human giddiness, to whom that which he laboriously discovers only causes terror and awe, and who is still, from purely earthly necessities, obliged to eat and drink and, in fact, submit to human requirements. Learn, my charming child, blessed as you are with absence of knowledge, that the depths of the earth, and the air, water, and fire, are filled with spiritual beings of higher and yet of more restricted nature than mankind. It seems unnecessary, my little unwise one, to explain to you the peculiar nature and characteristics of the gnomes, the salamanders, sylphides, and undines; you would not be able to understand them. To give you some slight idea of the danger which you may be undergoing, it is sufficient that I should tell you that these spirits are always striving eagerly to enter into unions with human beings; and as they are well aware that human beings are strongly adverse to those unions, they employ all manner of subtle and crafty artifices to delude such of the latter as they have fixed their affections upon. Often it is a twig, a flower, a glass of water, a fire-steel, or something else, in appearance of no importance, which they employ as a means of compassing their intent. It is true that unions of this sort often turn out exceedingly happily, as in the case of two priests, mentioned by Prince della Mirandola, who spent forty years of the happiest possible wedlock with a spirit of this description. It is true, moreover, that the most renowned sages have been the offspring of such unions between human beings and elementary spirits. Thus, the great Zoroaster was a son of the salamander Oromasis; the great Apollonius, the sage Merlin, the valiant Count of Cleve, and the great cabbalist, Ben-Syra, were the glorious fruits of marriages of this description, and according to Paracelsus the beautiful Melusina was no other than a sylphide. But yet, notwithstanding, the peril of such a union is much too great, for not only do the elementary spirits require of those on whom they confer their favours that the clearest light of the profoundest wisdom shall have arisen and shall shine upon them, but besides this they are extraordinarily touchy and sensitive, and revenge offences with extreme severity. Thus, it once happened that a sylphide, who was in union with a philosopher, on an occasion when he was talking with friends about a pretty woman--and perhaps rather too warmly--suddenly allowed her white beautifully-formed limb to become visible in the air, as if to convince the friends of her beauty, and then killed the poor philosopher on

the spot. But ah! why should I refer to others? Why don't I speak of myself? I am aware that for the last twelve years I have been beloved by a sylphide, but she is timorous and coy, and I am tortured by the thought of the danger of fettering her to me more closely by cabbalistic processes, inasmuch as I am still much too dependent on earthly necessities, and consequently lack the necessary degree of wisdom. Every morning I make up my mind to fast, and I succeed in letting breakfast pass without touching any; but when mid-day comes, oh! Anna, my daughter Anna, you know well that I eat tremendously."

These latter words Herr Dapsul uttered almost in a howl, while bitter tears rolled down his lean chop-fallen cheeks. He then went on more calmly--

"But I take the greatest of pains to behave towards the elementary spirit who is thus favourably disposed towards me with the utmost refinement of manners, the most exquisite *galanterie*. I never venture to smoke a pipe of tobacco without employing the proper preliminary cabbalistic precautions, for I cannot tell whether or not my tender air-spirit may like the brand of the tobacco, and so be annoyed at the defilement of her element. And I take the same precautions when I cut a hazel twig, pluck a flower, eat a fruit, or strike fire, all my efforts being directed to avoid giving offence to any elementary spirit. And yet--there, you see that nutshell, which I slid upon, and, falling over backwards, completely nullified the whole important experiment, which would have revealed to me the whole mystery of the ring? I do not remember that I have ever eaten a nut in this chamber, completely devoted as it is to science (you know now why I have my breakfast on the stairs), and it is all the clearer that some little gnome must have been hidden away in that shell, very likely having come here to prosecute his studies, and watch some of my experiments. For the elementary spirits are fond of human science, particularly such kinds of it as the uninitiated vulgar consider to be, if not foolish and superstitious, at all events beyond the powers of the human mind to comprehend, and for that reason style 'dangerous.' Thus, when I accidentally trod upon this little student's head, I suppose he got in a rage, and threw me down. But it is probable that he had a deeper reason for preventing me from finding out the secret of the ring. Anna, my dear Anna, listen to this. I had ascertained that there is a gnome bestowing his favour upon you, and to judge by the ring he must be a gnome of rank and distinction, as well as of superior cultivation. But, my dear Anna, my most beloved little stupid girl, how do you suppose you are going to enter into any kind of union with an elementary spirit without running the most terrible risk? If you had read Cassiodorus Remus you might, of course, reply that, according to his veracious chronicle, the celebrated Magdalena de la Croix, abbess of a convent at Cordova, in Spain, lived for thirty years in the happiest wedlock imaginable with a little gnome, whilst a similar result followed in the case of a sylph and the young Gertrude, a nun in Kloster Nazareth, near Cologne. But, then, think of the learned pursuits of those ecclesiastical ladies and of your own; what a mighty difference. Instead of reading in learned books you are often employing your time in feeding hens, geese, ducks, and other creatures, which simply molest and annoy all cabbalists; instead of watching the course of the stars, the heavens, you dig in the earth; instead of deciphering the traces of the future in skilfully-constructed horoscopes you are churning milk into butter, and putting sauerkraut up to pickle for mean everyday winter use; although, really, I must say that for my own part I should be very sorry to be without such articles of food. Say, is all this likely, in the long run, to content a refined philosophic elementary spirit? And then, oh Anna! it must be through you that the Dapsulheim line must continue, which earthly demand upon your being you cannot refuse to obey in any possible case. Yet, in connection with this ring, you in your instinctive way felt a strange irreflective sense of physical enjoyment. By means of the operation in which I was engaged, I desired and intended to break the power of the ring, and free you entirely from the gnome which is pursuing you. That operation failed, in consequence of the trick played me by the little student in the nut-shell. And yet, notwithstanding, I feel inspired by a courage such as I never felt before to do battle with this elementary spirit. You are my child, whom I begot, not indeed with a sylphide, salamandress, or other elementary spirit, but of that poor country lady of a fine old family, to whom

the God-forgotten neighbours gave the nickname of the 'goat-girl' on account of her idyllic nature. For she used to go out with a flock of pretty little white goats, and pasture them on the green hillocks, I meanwhile blowing a reed-pipe on my tower, a love-stricken young fool, by way of accompaniment. Yes, you are my own child, my flesh and blood, and I mean to rescue you. Here, this mystic file shall befree you from the pernicious ring."

With this, Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau took up a small file and began filing away with it at the ring. But scarcely had he passed it once or twice backwards and forwards when Fräulein Aennchen cried aloud in pain, "Papa, papa, you're filing my finger off!" And actually there was dark thick blood coming oozing from under the ring. Seeing this, Herr Dapsul let the file fall upon the floor, sank half fainting into the armchair, and cried, in utter despair, "Oh--oh--oh--oh! It is all over with me! Perhaps the infuriated gnome may come this very hour and bite my head off unless the sylphide saves me. Oh, Anna, Anna, go--fly!"

As her father's extraordinary talk had long made her wish herself far enough away, she ran downstairs like the wind.

CHAPTER III.

SOME ACCOUNT IS GIVEN OF THE ARRIVAL OF A REMARKABLE PERSONAGE IN DAPSULHEIM, AND OF WHAT FOLLOWED FURTHER.

Herr Dapsul Von Zabelthau had just embraced his daughter with many tears, and was moving off to ascend his tower, where he dreaded every moment the alarming visit of the incensed gnome, when the sound of a horn, loud and clear, made itself heard, and into the courtyard came bounding and curvetting a little cavalier of sufficiently strange and amusing appearance. His yellow horse was not at all large, and was of delicate build, so that the little rider, in spite of his large shapeless head, did not look so dwarfish as might otherwise have been the case, as he sate a considerable height above the horse's head. But this was attributable to the length of his body, for what of him hung over the saddle in the nature of legs and feet was hardly worth mentioning. For the rest, the little fellow had on a very rich habit of gold-yellow atlas, a fine high cap with a splendid grass-green plume, and riding-boots of beautifully polished mahogany. With a resounding "P-r-r-r-r-r-r!" he reined up before Herr von Zabelthau, and seemed to be going to dismount. But he suddenly slipped under the horse's belly as quick as lightning, and having got to the other side of him, threw himself three times in succession some twelve ells up in the air, turning six somersaults in every ell, and then alighted on his head in the saddle. Standing on his head there, he galloped backwards, forwards, and sideways in all sorts of extraordinary curves and ups and downs, his feet meanwhile playing trochees, dactyls, pyrrhics, &c., in the air. When this accomplished gymnast and trick-act rider at length stood still, and politely saluted, there were to be seen on the ground of the courtyard the words, "My most courteous greeting to you and your lady daughter, most highly respected Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau." These words he had ridden into the ground in handsome Roman uncial letters. Thereupon, he sprang from his horse, turned three Catherine wheels, and said that he was charged by his gracious master, the Herr Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, called "Cordovanspitz," to present his compliments to Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau, and to say, that if the latter had no objection, the Herr Baron proposed to pay him a friendly visit of a day or two, as he was expecting presently to be his nearest neighbour.

Herr Dapsul looked more dead than alive, so pale and motionless did he stand, leaning un his daughter. Scarcely had a half involuntary, "It--will--give--me--much--pleasure," escaped his trembling lips, when the little horseman departed with lightning speed, and similar ceremonies to those with which he had arrived.

"Ah, my daughter!" cried Herr Dapsul, weeping and lamenting, "alas! it is but

too certain that this is the gnome come to carry you off, and twist my unfortunate neck. But we will pluck up the very last scrap of courage which we can scrape together. Perhaps it may be still possible to pacify this irritated elementary spirit. We must be as careful in our conduct towards him as ever we can. I will at once read to you, my dear child, a chapter or two of Lactantius or Thomas Aquinas concerning the mode of dealing with elementary spirits, so that you mayn't make some tremendous mistake or other."

But before he could go and get hold of Lactantius or Thomas Aquinas, a band was heard in the immediate proximity, sounding very much like the kind of performance which children who are musical enough get up about Christmas-time. And a fine long procession was coming up the street. At the head of it rode some sixty or seventy little cavaliers on little yellow horses, all dressed like the one who had arrived as avant-courier at first, in yellow habits, pointed caps, and boots of polished mahogany. They were followed by a couch of purest crystal, drawn by eight yellow horses, and behind this came well on to forty other less magnificent coaches, some with six horses, some with only four. And there were swarms of pages, running footmen, and other attendants, moving up and down amongst and around those coaches in brilliant costumes, so that the whole thing formed a sight as charming as uncommon. Herr Dapsul stood sunk in gloomy amazement. Aennchen, who had never dreamt that the world could contain such lovely delightful creatures as these little horses and people, was quite out of her senses with delight, and forgot everything, even to shut her mouth, which she had opened to emit a cry of joy.

The coach and eight drew up before Herr Dapsul. Riders jumped from their horses, pages and attendants came hurrying forward, and the personage who was now lifted down the steps of the coach on their arms was none other than the Herr Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, otherwise known as Cordovanspitz. Inasmuch as regarded his figure, the Herr Baron was far from comparable to the Apollo of Belvedere, or even the Dying Gladiator. For, besides the circumstances that he was scarcely three feet high, one-third of his small body consisted of his evidently too large and broad head, which was, moreover, adorned by a tremendously long Roman nose and a pair of great round projecting eyes. And as his body was disproportionately long for his height, there was nothing left for his legs and feet to occupy but some four inches or so. This small space was made the most of, however, for the little Baron's feet were the neatest and prettiest little things ever beheld. No doubt they seemed to be scarcely strong enough to support the large, important head. For the Baron's gait was somewhat tottery and uncertain, and he even toppled over altogether pretty frequently, but got up upon his feet immediately, after the manner of a jack-in-the-box. So that this toppling over had a considerable resemblance to some rather eccentric dancing step more than to anything else one could compare it to. He had on a close-fitting suit of some shining gold fabric, and a headdress, which was almost like a crown, with an enormous plume of green feathers in it.

As soon as the Baron had alighted on the ground, he hastened up to Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau, took hold of both his hands, swung himself up to his neck, and cried out, in a voice wonderfully more powerful than his shortness of stature would have led one to expect, "Oh, my Dapsul von Zabelthau, my most beloved father!" He then lowered himself down from Herr Dapsul's neck with the same deftness of skill with which he had climbed up to it, sprang, or rather slung himself, to Fräulein Aennchen, took that hand of hers which had the ring on it, covered it with loud resounding kisses, and cried out in the same almost thundering voice as before, "Oh, my loveliest Fräulein Anna von Zabelthau, my most beloved bride-elect!"

He then clapped his hands, and immediately that noisy clattering child-like band struck up, and over a hundred little fellows, who had got off their horses and out of the carriages, danced as the avant-courier had done, sometimes on their heads, sometimes on their feet, in the prettiest possible trochees, spondees, iambics, pyrrhics, anapaests, tribrachs, bacchi, antibacchi, choriambs, and

dactyls, so that it was a joy to behold them. But as this was going on, Fräulein Aennchen recovered from the terrible fright which the little Baron's speech to her had put her in, and entered into several important and necessary economic questions and considerations. "How is it possible," she asked herself, "that these little beings can find room in this place of ours? Would it hold even their servants if they were to be put to sleep in the big barn? Then what could I do with the swell folk who came in the coaches, and of course expect to be put into fine bedrooms, with soft beds, as they're accustomed to be? And even if the two plough horses were to go out of the stable, and I were to be so hard hearted as to turn the old lame chestnut out into the grass field, would there be anything like room enough for all those little beasts of horses that this nasty ugly Baron has brought? And just the same with the one and forty coaches. But the worst of all comes after that. Oh, my gracious! is the whole year's provender anything like enough to keep all these little creatures going for even so much as a couple of days?" This last was the climax of all. She saw in her mind's eye everything eaten up--all the new vegetables, the sheep, the poultry, the salt meat--nay, the very beetroot brandy gone. And this brought the salt tears to her eyes. She thought she caught the Baron making a sort of wicked impudent face at her, and that gave her courage to say to him (while his people were keeping up their dancing with might and main), in the plainest language possible, that however flattering his visit might be to her father, it was impossible to think of such a thing as its lasting more than a couple of hours or so, as there was neither room nor anything else for the proper reception and entertainment of such a grand gentleman and such a numerous retinue. But little Cordovanspitz immediately looked as marvellously sweet and tender as any marsipan tart, pressing with closed eyes Fräulein Aennchen's hand (which was rather rough, and not particularly white) to his lips, as he assured her that the last thing he should think of was causing the dear papa and his lovely daughter the slightest inconvenience. He said he had brought everything in the kitchen and cellar department with him, and as for the lodging, he needed nothing but a little bit of ground with the open air above it, where his people could put up his ordinary travelling palace, which would accommodate him, his whole retinue, and the animals pertaining to them.

Fräulein Aennchen was so delighted with these words of the Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes that, to show that she wasn't grudging a little bit of hospitality, she was going to offer him the little fritter cakes she had made for the last consecration day, and a small glass of the beetroot brandy, unless he would have preferred double bitters, which the maid had brought from the town and recommended as strengthening to the stomach. But at this moment Cordovanspitz announced that he had chosen the kitchen garden as the site of his palace, and Aennchen's happiness was gone. But whilst the Baron's retainers, in celebration of their lord's arrival at Dapsulheim, continued their Olympian games, sometimes butting with their big heads at each other's stomachs, knocking each other over backwards, sometimes springing up in the air again, playing at skittles, being themselves in turn skittles, balls, and players, and so forth, Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes got into a very deep and interesting conversation with Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau, which seemed to go on increasing in importance till they went away together hand in hand, and up into the astronomical tower.

Full of alarm and anxiety, Fräulein Aennchen now made haste to her kitchen garden, with the view of trying to save whatever it might still be possible to save. The maid-servant was there already, standing staring before her with open mouth, motionless as a person turned like Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. Aennchen at once fell into the same condition beside her. At last they both cried out, making the welkin ring, "Oh, Herr Gemini! What a terrible sort of thing!" For the whole beautiful vegetable garden was turned into a wilderness. Not the trace of a plant in it, it looked like a devastated country.

"No," cried the maid, "there's no other way of accounting for it, these cursed little creatures have done it. Coming here in their coaches, forsooth! coaches, quotha! as if they were people of quality! Ha! ha! A lot of kobolds, that's what *they* are, trust *me* for that, Miss. And if I had a drop of holy water here I'd soon

show you what all those fine things of theirs would turn to. But if they come here, the little brutes, I'll bash the heads of them with this spade here." And she flourished this threatening spade over her head, whilst Anna wept aloud.

But at this point, four members of Cordovanspitz's suite came up with such very pleasant ingratiating speeches and such courteous reverences, being such wonderful creatures to behold, at the same time that the maid, instead of attacking them with the spade, let it slowly sink, and Fräulein Aennchen ceased weeping.

They announced themselves as being the four friends who were the most immediately attached to their lord's person, saying that they belonged to four different nationalities (as their dress indicated, symbolically, at all events), and that their names were, respectively, Pan Kapustowicz, from Poland; Herr von Schwartzrettig, from Pomerania; Signor di Broccoli, from Italy; and Monsieur de Rocambolle, from France. They said, moreover, that the builders would come directly, and afford the beautiful lady the gratification of seeing them erect a lovely palace, all of silk, in the shortest possible space of time.

"What good will the silken palace be to me?" cried Fräulein Aennchen, weeping aloud in her bitter sorrow. "And what do I care about your Baron Cordovanspitz, now that you have gone and destroyed my beautiful vegetables, wretched creatures that you are. All my happy days are over."

But the polite interlocutors comforted her, and assured her that they had not by any means had the blame of desolating the kitchen-garden, and that, moreover, it would very soon be growing green and flourishing in such luxuriance as she had never seen, or anybody else in the world for that matter.

The little building-people arrived, and then there began such a confused-looking, higgledy-piggledy, and helter-skeltering on the plot of ground that Fräulein Anna and the maid ran away quite frightened, and took shelter behind some thickets, whence they could see what would be the end of it all.

But though they couldn't explain to themselves how things perfectly canny *could* come about as they did, there certainly arose and formed itself before their eyes, and in a few minutes' time, a lofty and magnificent marquee, made of a golden-yellow material and ornamented with many-coloured garlands and plumes, occupying the whole extent of the vegetable garden, so that the cords of it went right away over the village and into the wood beyond, where they were made fast to sturdy trees.

As soon as this marquee was ready, Baron Porphyrio came down with Herr Dapsul from the astronomical tower, after profuse embraces resumed his seat in the coach and eight, and in the same order in which they had made their entry into Dapsulheim, he and his following went into the silken palace, which, when the last of the procession was within it, instantly closed itself up.

Fräulein Aennchen had never seen her papa as he was then. The very faintest trace of the melancholy which had hitherto always so distressed him had completely disappeared from his countenance. One would really almost have said he smiled. There was a sublimity about his facial expression such as sometimes indicates that some great and unexpected happiness has come upon a person. He led his daughter by the hand in silence into the house, embraced her three times consecutively, and then broke out--

"Fortunate Anna! Thrice happy girl! Fortunate father! Oh, daughter, all sorrow and melancholy, all solicitude and misgiving are over for ever! Yours is a fate such as falls to the lot of few mortals. This Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, otherwise known as Cordovanspitz, is by no means a hostile gnome, although he is descended from one of those elementary spirits who, however, was so fortunate as to purify his nature by the teaching of Oromasis the Salamander. The love of this being was bestowed upon a daughter of the human race, with whom he

formed a union, and became founder of the most illustrious family whose name ever adorned a parchment. I have an impression that I told you before, beloved daughter Anna, that the pupil of the great Salamander Oromasis, the noble gnome Tsilmenech (a Chaldean name, which interpreted into our language has a somewhat similar significance to our word 'Thickhead'), bestowed his affection on the celebrated Magdalena de la Croix, abbess of a convent at Cordova in Spain, and lived in happy wedlock with her for nearly thirty years. And a descendant of the sublime family of higher intelligences which sprung from this union is our dear Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, who has adopted the sobriquet of Cordovanspitz to indicate his ancestral connection with Cordova in Spain, and to distinguish himself by it from a more haughty but less worthy collateral line of the family, which bears the title of 'Saffian.' That a 'spitz' has been added to the 'Cordovan' doubtless possesses its own elementary astrological causes; I have not as yet gone into that subject. Following the example of his illustrious ancestor the gnome Tsilmenech, this splendid Ockerodastes of ours fell in love with you when you were only twelve years of age (Tsilmenech had done precisely the same thing in the case of Magdalena de la Croix). He was fortunate enough at that time to get a small gold ring from you, and now you wear his, so that your betrothal is indissoluble."

"What?" cried Fräulein Aennchen, in fear and amazement. "What? I betrothed to *him*--I to marry that horrible little kobold? Haven't I been engaged for ever so long to Herr Amandus von Nebelstern? No, never will I have that hideous monster of a wizard for a husband. I don't care whether he comes from Cordova or from Saffian."

"There," said Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau more gravely, "there I perceive, to my sorrow and distress, how impossible it is for celestial wisdom to penetrate into your hardened, obdurate, earthly sense. You stigmatize this noble, elementary, Porphyrio von Ockerodastes as 'horrible' and 'ugly,' probably, I presume, because he is only three feet high, and, with the exception of his head, has very little worth speaking of on his body in the shape of arms, legs, and other appurtenances; and a foolish, earthly goose, such as you probably think of as to be admired, can't have legs long enough, on account of coat tails. Oh, my daughter, in what a terrible misapprehension you are involved! All beauty lies in wisdom, in the thought; and the physical symbol of thought is the head. The more head, the more beauty and wisdom. And if mankind could but cast away all the other members of the body as pernicious articles of luxury tending to evil, they would reach the condition of a perfect ideal of the highest type. Whence come all trouble and difficulty, vexation and annoyance, strife and contention--in short, all the depravities and miseries of humanity, but from the accursed luxury and voluptuousness of the members? Oh, what joy, what peace, what blessedness there would be on earth if the human race could exist without arms or legs, or the nether parts of the body--in short, if we were nothing but busts! Therefore it is a happy idea of the sculptors when they represent great statesmen, or celebrated men of science and learning as busts, symbolically indicating the higher nature within them. Wherefore, my daughter Anna, no more of such words as 'ugly and abominable' applied to the noblest of spirits, the grand Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, whose bride elect you most indubitably are. I must just tell you, at the same time, that by his important aid your father will soon attain that highest step of bliss towards which he has so long been striving. Porphyrio von Ockerodastes is in possession of authentic information that I am beloved by the sylphide Nehabilah (which in Syriac has very much the signification of our expression 'Peaky nose'), and he has promised to assist me to the utmost of his power to render myself worthy of a union with this higher spiritual nature. I have no doubt whatever, my dear child, that you will be well satisfied with your future stepmother. All I hope is, that a favourable destiny may so order matters that our marriages may both take place at one and the same fortunate hour."

Having thus spoken, Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau, casting a significant glance at his daughter, very pathetically left the room.

It was a great weight on Aennchen's heart that she remembered having, a great while ago, really in some unaccountable way lost a little gold ring, such as a child might wear, from her finger. So that it really seemed too certain that this abominable little wizard of a creature had indeed got her immeshed in his net, so that she couldn't see how she was ever to get out of it. And over this she fell into the utmost grief and bewilderment. She felt that her oppressed heart must obtain relief; and this took place through the medium of a goose-quill, which she seized, and at once wrote off to Herr Amandus von Nebelstern as follows:

"My dearest Amandus--

"All is over with me completely. I am the most unfortunate creature in the whole world, and I'm sobbing and crying for sheer misery so terribly that the dear dumb animals themselves are sorry for me. And *you'll* be still sorrier than they are, because it's just as great a misfortune for you as it is for me, and you can't help being quite as much distressed about it as I am myself. You know that we love one another as fondly as any two lovers possibly can, and that I am betrothed to you, and that papa was going with us to the church. Very well. All of a sudden a nasty little creature comes here in a coach and eight, with a lot of people and servants, and says I have changed rings with him, and that he and I are engaged. And--just fancy how awful! papa says as well, that I must marry this little wretch, because he belongs to a very grand family. I suppose be very likely does, judging by his following and the splendid dresses they have on. But the creature has such a horrible name that, for that alone if it were for nothing else, I never would marry him. I can't even pronounce the heathenish words of the name; but one of them is Cordovanspitz, and it seems that is the family name. Write and tell me if these Cordovanspitzes really *are* so very great and aristocratic a family--people in the town will be sure to know if they are. And the things papa takes in his head at his time of life I really can't understand; but he wants to marry again, and this nasty Cordovanspitz is going to get him a wife that flies in the air. God protect us! Our servant girl is looking over my shoulder, and says she hasn't much of an opinion of ladies who can fly in the air and swim in the water, and that she'll have to be looking out for another situation, and hopes, for my sake, that my stepmother may break her neck the first time she goes riding through the air to St. Walpurgis. Nice state of things, isn't it? But all my hope is in *you*. For I know you are the person who ought to be, and has got to be, just where and what you are, and has to deliver me from a great danger. The danger has come, so be quick, and rescue

"Your grieved to death, but most true and loving *fiancée*,

"Anna von Zabelthau.

"P.S.--Couldn't you call this yellow little Cordovanspitz out? I'm sure you could settle his hash. He's feeble on his legs.

"What I implore you to do is to put on your things as fast as you can and hasten to

"Your most unfortunate and miserable,

"But always most faithful *fiancée*.

"Anna von Zabelthau."

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE HOUSEHOLD STATE OF A GREAT KING IS DESCRIBED; AND AFTERWARDS A BLOODY DUEL AND OTHER REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES ARE TREATED OF.

Fräulein Aennchen was so miserable and distressed that she felt paralyzed in all her members. She was sitting at the window with folded arms gazing straight before her, heedless of the cackling, crowing, and queaking of the fowls, which couldn't understand why on earth she didn't come and drive them into their roosts as usual, seeing that the twilight was coming on fast. Nay, she sat there with perfect indifference and allowed the maid to carry out this duty, and to hit the big cock (who opposed himself to the state of things and evinced decided resistance to her authority) a good sharp whang with her whip. For the love-pain which was

rending her own heart was making her indifferent to the troubles of the dear pupils of her happier hours--those which she devoted to their up-bringing, although she had never studied Chesterfield or Knigge, or consulted Madame de Genlis, or any of those other authorities on the mental culture of the young, who know to a hair's-breadth exactly how they ought to be moulded. In this respect she really had laid herself open to censure on the score of lack of due seriousness.

All that day Cordovanspitz had not shown himself, but had been shut up in the tower with Herr Dapsul, no doubt assisting in the carrying on of important operations. But now Fräulein Aennchen caught sight of the little creature coming tottering across the courtyard in the glowing light of the setting sun. And it struck her that he looked more hideous in that yellow habit of his than he had ever done before. The ridiculous manner in which he went wavering about, jumping here and there, seeming to topple over every minute and then pick himself up again (at which anybody else would have died of laughing), only caused her the bitterer distress. Indeed, she at last held her hands in front of her eyes, that she mightn't so much as see the little horrid creature at all. Suddenly she felt something tugging at her dress, and cried "Down, Feldmann!" thinking it was the Dachshund. But it was not the dog; and what Fräulein Aennchen saw when she took her hands from her eyes was the Herr Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, who hoisted himself into her lap with extraordinary deftness, and clasped both his arms about her. She screamed aloud with fear and disgust, and started up from her chair. But Cordovanspitz kept clinging on to her neck, and instantly became so wonderfully heavy that he seemed to weigh a ton at least, and he dragged the unfortunate Aennchen back again into her chair. Having got her there, however, he slid down out of her lap, sank on one knee as gracefully as possible, and as prettily as his weakness in the direction of equilibrium permitted, and said, in a clear voice--rather peculiar, but by no means unpleasing: "Adored Anna von Zabelthau, most glorious of ladies, most choice of brides-elect; no anger, I implore, no anger, no anger. I know you think my people laid waste your beautiful vegetable garden to put up my palace. Oh, powers of the universe, if you could but look into this little body of mine which throbs with magnanimity and love; if you could but detect all the cardinal virtues which are collected in my breast, under this yellow Atlas habit. Oh, how guiltless am I of the shameful cruelty which you attribute to me! How could a beneficent prince treat in such a way his very own subjects. But hold--hold! What are words, phrases? You must see with your own eyes, my betrothed, the splendours which attend you. You must come with me at once. I will lead you to my palace, where a joyful people await the arrival of her who is beloved by their lord."

It may be imagined how terrified Fräulein Aennchen was at this proposition of Cordovanspitz's, and how hard she tried to avoid going so much as a single step with the little monster. But he continued to describe the extraordinary beauty and the marvellous richness of the vegetable garden which was his palace, in such eloquent and persuasive language, that at last she thought she would just have a peep into the marquee, as that couldn't do her much harm. The little creature, in his joy and delight, turned at least twelve Catherine wheels in succession, and then took her hand with much courtesy, and led her through the garden to the silken palace.

With a loud "Ah!" Fräulein Aennchen stood riveted to the ground with delight when the curtains of the entrance drew apart, displaying a vegetable garden stretching away further than the eye could reach, of such marvellous beauty and luxuriance as was never seen in the loveliest dreams. Here there was growing and flourishing every thing in the nature of colewort, rape, lettuce, pease and beans, in such a shimmer of light, and in such luxuriance that it is impossible to describe it. A band of pipes, drums and cymbals sounded louder, and the four gentlemen whose acquaintance she had previously made, viz. Herr von Schwartzrettig, Monsieur de Rocambolle, Signor di Broccoli and Pan Kapustowicz, approached with many ceremonious reverences.

"My chamberlains," said Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, smiling; and, preceded

by them, he conducted Fräulein Aennchen through between the double ranks of the bodyguard of Red English Carrots to the centre of the plain, where stood a splendid throne. And around this throne were assembled the grandees of the realm; the Lettuce Princes with the Bean Princesses, the Dukes of Cucumber with the Prince of Melon at their head, the Cabbage Minister, the General Officer of Onions and Carrots, the Colewort ladies, etc., etc., all in the gala dresses of their rank and station. And amidst them moved up and down well on to a hundred of the prettiest and most delightful Lavender and Fennel pages, diffusing sweet perfume. When Ockerodastes had ascended the throne with Fräulein Aennchen, Chief Court-Marshal Turnip waved his long wand of office, and immediately the band stopped playing, and the multitude listened in reverential silence as Ockerodastes raised his voice and said, in solemn accents, "My faithful and beloved subjects, you see by my side the noble Fräulein Anna von Zabelthau, whom I have chosen to be my consort. Rich in beauty and virtues, she has long watched over you with the eye of maternal affection, preparing soft and succulent beds for you, caring for you and tending you with ceaseless ardour. She will ever be a true and befitting mother of this realm. Wherefore I call upon you to evince and give expression to the dutiful approval, and the duly regulated rejoicing at the favour and benefit which I am about to graciously confer upon you."

At a signal given by Chief Court-Marshal Turnip there arose the shout of a thousand voices, the Bulb Artillery fired their pieces, and the band of the Carrot Guard played the celebrated National Anthem--

"Salad and lettuce, and parsley so green."

It was a grand, a sublime moment, which drew tears from the eyes of the grandees, particularly from those of the Colewort ladies. Fräulein Aennchen, too, nearly lost all her self-control when she noticed that little Ockerodastes had a crown on his head all sparkling with diamonds, and a golden sceptre in his hand.

"Ah!" she cried clapping her hands. "Oh, Gemini! You seem to be something much grander than we thought, my dear Herr von Cordovanspitz."

"My adored Anna," he replied, "the stars compelled me to appear before your father under an assumed name. You must be told, dearest girl, that I am one of the mightiest of kings, and rule over a realm whose boundaries are not discoverable, as it has been omitted to lay them down in the maps. Oh, sweetest Anna, he who offers you his hand and crown is Daucus Carota the First, King of the Vegetables. All the vegetable princes are my vassals, save that the King of the Beans reigns for one single day in every year, in conformity to an ancient usage."

"Then I am to be a queen, am I?" cried Fräulein Aennchen, overjoyed. "And all this great splendid vegetable garden is to be mine?"

King Daucus assured her that of course it was to be so, and added that he and she would jointly rule over all the vegetables in the world. She had never dreamt of anything of the kind, and thought little Cordovanspitz wasn't anything like so nasty-looking as he used to be now that he was transformed into King Daucus Carota the First, and that the crown and sceptre were very becoming to him, and the kingly mantle as well. When she reckoned into the bargain his delightful manners, and the property this marriage would bring her, she felt certain that there wasn't a country lady in all the world who could have made a better match than she, who found herself betrothed to a king before she knew where she was. So she was delighted beyond measure, and asked her royal *fiancé* whether she could not take up her abode in the palace then and there, and be married next day. But King Daucus answered that eagerly as he longed for the time when he might call her his own, certain constellations compelled him to postpone that happiness a little longer. And that Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau, moreover, must be kept in ignorance of his son-in-law's royal station, because otherwise the operations necessary for bringing about the desired union with the sylphide Nehabilah might be unsuccessful. Besides, he said, he had promised that both the weddings should take place on the same day. So Fräulein Aennchen had to take a

solemn vow not to mention one syllable to Herr Dapsul of what had been happening to her. She therefore left the silken palace amid long and loud rejoicings of the people, who were in raptures with her beauty as well as with her affability and gracious condescension of manners and behaviour.

In her dreams she once more beheld the realms of the charming King Daucus, and was lapped in Elysium.

The letter which she had sent to Herr Amandus von Nebelstern made a frightful impression on him. Ere long, Fräulein Aennchen received the following answer--

'IDOL OF MY HEART, HEAVENLY ANNA,--

"Daggers--sharp, glowing, poisoned, death-dealing daggers were to me the words of your letter, which pierced my breast through and through. Oh, Anna! *you* to be torn from me. What a thought! I cannot, even now, understand how it was that I did not go mad on the spot and commit some terrible deed. But I fled the face of man, overpowered with rage at my deadly destiny, after dinner--without the game of billiards which I generally play--out into the woods, where I wrung my hands, and called on your name a thousand times. It came on a tremendously heavy rain, and I had on a new cap, red velvet, with a splendid gold tassel (everybody says I never had anything so becoming). The rain was spoiling it, and it was brand-new. But what are caps, what are velvet and gold, to a despairing lover? I strode up and down till I was wet to the skin and chilled to the bone, and had a terrible pain in my stomach. This drove me into a restaurant near, where I got them to make me some excellent mulled wine, and had a pipe of your heavenly Virginia tobacco. I soon felt myself elevated on the wings of a celestial inspiration, took out my pocket-book, and, oh!--wondrous gift of poetry--the love-despair and the stomach-ache both disappeared at once. I shall content myself with writing out for you only the last of these poems; it will inspire you with heavenly hope, as it did myself.

"Wrapped in darkest sorrow--
In my heart, extinguished,
No love-tapers burning--
Joy hath no to-morrow.

"Ha! the Muse approaches,
Words and rhymes inspiring,
Little verse inscribing,
Joy returns apace.

"New love-tapers blazing,
All the heart inspiring,
Fare thee well, my sorrow,
Joy thy place doth borrow.

"Ay, my sweet Anna, soon shall I, thy champion, hasten to rescue you from the miscreant who would carry you off from me. So, once more take comfort, sweetest maid. Bear me ever in thy heart. He comes; he rescues you; he clasps you to his bosom, which heaves in tumultuous emotion.

"Your ever faithful

"AMANDUS VON NEBELSTERN.

"P.S.--It would be quite impossible for me to call Herr von Cordovanspitz out. For, oh Anna! every drop of blood drawn from your Amandus by the weapon of a presumptuous adversary were glorious poet's blood--ichor of the gods--which never ought to be shed. The world very properly claims that such a spirit as mine has it imposed upon it as public duty to take care of itself for the world's benefit, and preserve itself by every possible means. The sword of the poet is the word--the song. I will attack my rival with Tyrtæan battle-songs; strike him to earth with sharp-pointed epigrams; hew him down with dithyrambics full of lover's fury. Such are the weapons of a true, genuine poet, powerful to shield him from every danger. And it is so accoutred that I shall appear, and do battle--victorious battle--for your hand, oh, Anna!

"Farewell. I press you once more to my heart. Hope all things from my love, and,

especially, from my heroic courage, which will shun no danger to set you free from the shameful nets of captivity in which, to all appearance, you are entangled by a demoniacal monster."

Fräulein Aennchen received this letter at a time when she was playing a game at "Catch-me-if-you-can" with her royal bridegroom elect, King Daucus Carota the First, in the meadow at the back of the garden, and immensely enjoying it when, as was often the case, she suddenly ducked down in full career, and the little king would go shooting right away over her head. Instead of reading the letter immediately (which she had always done before), she put it in her pocket unopened, and we shall presently see that it came too late.

Herr Dapsul could not make out at all how Fräulein Aennchen had changed her mind so suddenly, and grown quite fond of Herr Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, whom she had so cordially detested before. He consulted the stars on the subject, but as they gave him no satisfactory information, he was obliged to come to the conclusion that human hearts are more mysterious and inscrutable than all the secrets of the universe, and not to be thrown light upon by any constellation. He could not think that what had produced love for the little creature in Anna's heart was merely the highness of his nature; and personal beauty he had none. If (as the reader knows) the canon of beauty, as laid down by Herr Dapsul, is very unlike the ideas which young ladies form upon that subject, he did, after all, possess sufficient knowledge of the world to know that, although the said young women hold that good sense, wit, cleverness and pleasant manners are very agreeable fellow-lodgers in a comfortable house, still, a man who can't call himself the possessor of a properly-made, fashionable coat--were he a Shakespeare, a Goethe, a Tieck, or a Jean Paul Richter--would run a decided risk of being beaten out of the field by any sufficiently well put-together lieutenant of hussars in uniform, if he took it in his head to pay his addresses to one of them. Now in Fräulein Aennchen's case it was a different matter altogether. It was neither good looks nor cleverness that were in question; but it is not exactly every day that a poor country lady becomes a queen all in a moment, and accordingly it was not very likely that Herr Dapsul should hit upon the cause which had been operating, particularly as the very stars had left him in the lurch.

As may be supposed, those three, Herr Porphyrio, Herr Dapsul and Fräulein Aennchen, were one heart and one soul. This went so far that Herr Dapsul left his tower oftener than he had ever been known to do before, to chat with his much-prized son-in-law on all sorts of agreeable subjects; and not only this, but he now regularly took his breakfast in the house. About this hour, too, Herr Porphyrio was wont to come forth from his silken palace, and eat a good share of Fräulein Aennchen's bread and butter.

"Ah, ah!" she would often whisper softly in his ear, "if papa only knew that you are a real king, dearest Cordovanspitz!"

"Be still, oh heart! Melt not away in rapture," Daucus Carota the First would say. "Near, near is the joyful day!"

It chanced that the schoolmaster had sent Fräulein Aennchen a present of some of the finest radishes from his garden. She was particularly pleased at this, as Herr Dapsul was very fond of radishes, and she could not get anything from the vegetable garden because it was covered by the silk marquee. Besides this, it now occurred to her for the first time that, among all the roots and vegetables she had seen in the palace, radishes were conspicuous by their absence.

So she speedily cleaned them and served them up for her father's breakfast. He had ruthlessly shorn several of them of their leafy crowns, dipped them in salt, and eaten them with much relish, when Cordovanspitz came in.

"Oh, my Ockerodastes," Herr Dapsul called to him, "are you fond of radishes?"

There was still a particularly fine and beautiful radish on the dish. But the

moment Cordovanspitz saw it his eves gleamed with fury, and he cried in a resonant voice--

"What, unworthy duke, do you dare to appear in my presence again, and to force your way, with the coolest of audacity, into a house which is under my protection? Have I not pronounced sentence of perpetual banishment upon you as a pretender to the imperial throne? Away, treasonous vassal; begone from my sight for ever!"

Two little legs had suddenly shot out beneath the radish's large head, and with them he made a spring out of the plate, placed himself close in front of Cordovanspitz, and addressed him as follows--

"Fierce and tyrannical Daucus Carota the First, you have striven in vain to exterminate my race. Had ever any of your family a head as large as mine, or that of my king? We are all gifted with talent, common-sense, wisdom, sharpness, cultivated manners: and whilst *you* loaf about in kitchens and stables, and are of no use as soon as your early youth is gone (so that in very truth it is nothing but the *diable de la jeunesse* that bestows upon you your brief, transitory, little bit of good fortune), *we* enjoy the friendship of, and the intercourse with, people of position, and are greeted with acclamation as soon as ever we lift up our green heads. But I despise you, Daucus Carota. You're nothing but a low, uncultivated, ignorant Boor, like all the lot of you. Let's see which of us two is the better man."

With this the Duke of Radish, flourishing a long whip about his head, proceeded, without more ado, to attack the person of King Daucus Carota the First. The latter quickly drew his little sword, and defended himself in the bravest manner. The two little creatures darted about in the room, fighting fiercely, and executing the most wonderful leaps and bounds, till Daucus Carota pressed the Duke of Radish so hard that the latter found himself obliged to make a tremendous jump out of the window and take to the open. But Daucus Carota--with whose remarkable agility and dexterity the reader is already acquainted--bounded out after him, and followed the Duke of Radish across country.

Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau had looked on at this terrible encounter rigid and speechless, but he now broke forth into loud and bitter lamentation, crying, "Oh, daughter Anna! oh, my poor unfortunate daughter Anna! Lost--I--you--both of us. All is over with us." With which he left the room, and ascended the astronomical tower as fast as his legs would carry him.

Fräulein Aennchen couldn't understand a bit, or form the very slightest idea what in all the world had set her father into all this boundless misery all of a sudden. The whole thing had caused her the greatest pleasure; moreover, her heart was rejoiced that she had had an opportunity of seeing that her future husband was brave, as well as rich and great; for it would be difficult to find any woman in all the world capable of loving a poltroon. And now that she had proof of the bravery of King Daucus Carota the First, it struck her painfully, for the first time, that Herr Amandus von Nebelstern had cried off from fighting him. If she had for a moment hesitated about sacrificing Herr Amandus to King Daucus, she was quite decided on the point now that she had an opportunity of assuring herself of all the excellencies of her future lord. She sat down and wrote the following letter:--

"My dear Amandus,

"Everything in this world is liable to change. Everything passes away, as the schoolmaster says, and he's quite right. I'm sure *you*, my dear Amandus, are such a learned and wise student that you will agree with the schoolmaster, and not be in the very least surprised that my heart and mind have undergone the least little bit of a change. You may quite believe me when I say that I still like you very well, and I can quite imagine how nice you look in your red velvet cap with the gold tassel. But, with regard to marriage, you know very well, Amandus dear, that, clever as you are, and beautiful as are your verses, you will never, in all your days, be a king, and (don't be frightened, dear) little Herr von Cordovanspitz isn't Herr von Cordovanspitz at all, but a great king, Daucus Carota the

First, who reigns over the great vegetable kingdom, and has chosen me to be his queen. Since my dear king has thrown aside his incognito he has grown much nicer-looking, and I see now that papa was quite right when he said that the head was the beauty of the man, and therefore couldn't possibly be big enough. And then, Daucus Carota the First (you see how well I remember the beautiful name and how nicely I write it now that has got so familiar to me), I was going to say that my little royal husband, that is to be, has such charming and delightful manners that there's no describing them. And what courage, what bravery there is in him! Before my eyes he put to flight the Duke of Radish, (and a very disagreeable, unfriendly creature *he* appears to be) and hey, how he did jump after him out of the window! You should just have seen him: I only wish you had! And I don't really think that my Daucus Carota would care about those weapons of yours that you speak about one bit. He seems pretty tough, and I don't believe verses would do him any harm at all, however fine and pointed they might be. So now, dear Amandus, you must just make up your mind to be contented with your lot, like a good fellow, and not be vexed with me that I am going to be a Queen instead of marrying you. Never mind, I shall always be your affectionate friend, and if ever you would like an appointment in the Carrot bodyguard, or (as you don't care so much about fighting as about learning) in the Parsley Academy or the Pumpkin Office, you have but to say the word and your fortune is made. Farewell, and don't be vexed with

"Your former *fiancée*, but now friend and well-wisher, as well as future Queen,

"ANNA VON ZABELTHAU.

"(but soon to be no more Von Zabelthau, but simply

ANNA.)

"P.S.--You shall always be kept well supplied with the very finest Virginia tobacco, of that you need have no fear. As far as I can see there won't be any smoking at my court, but I shall take care to have a bed or two of Virginia tobacco planted not far from the throne, under my own special care. This will further culture and morality, and my little Daucus will no doubt have a statute specially enacted on the subject."

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH AN ACCOUNT IS GIVEN OF A FRIGHTFUL CATASTROPHE, AND WE PROCEED WITH THE FUTURE COURSE OF EVENTS.

Fräulein Aennchen had just finished her letter to Herr Amandus von Nebelstern, when in came Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau and began, in the bitterest grief and sorrow to say, "O, my daughter Anna, how shamefully we are both deceived and betrayed! This miscreant who made me believe he was Baron Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, known as Cordovanspitz, member of a most illustrious family descended from the mighty gnome Tsilmenech and the noble Abbess of Cordova--this miscreant, I say--learn it and fall down insensible--*is* indeed a gnome, but of that lowest of all gnomish castes which has charge of the vegetables. The gnome Tsilmenech was of the highest caste of all, that, namely, to which the care of the diamonds is committed. Next comes the caste which has care of the metals in the realms of the metal-king, and then follow the flower-gnomes, who are lower in position, as depending on the sylphs. But the lowest and most ignoble are the vegetable gnomes, and not only is this deceiver Cordovanspitz a gnome of this caste, but he is actual king of it, and his name is Daucus Carota."

Fräulein Aennchen was far from fainting away, neither was she in the smallest degree frightened, but she smiled in the kindliest way at her lamenting papa, and the Courteous reader is aware of the reason. But as Herr Dapsul was very much surprised at this, and kept imploring her for Heaven's sake to realize the terrible position in which she was, and to feel the full horror of it, she thought herself at liberty to divulge the secret entrusted to her. She told Herr Dapsul how the so-called Baron von Cordovanspitz had told her his real position long ago, and that since then she had found him altogether so pleasant and delightful that she

couldn't wish for a better husband. Moreover she described all the marvellous beauties of the vegetable kingdom into which King Daucus Carota the First had taken her, not forgetting to duly extol the remarkably delightful manners of the inhabitants of that realm.

Herr Dapsul struck his hands together several times, and wept bitterly over the deceiving wickedness of the Gnome-king, who had been, and still was, employing means the most artful--most dangerous for himself as well--to lure the unfortunate Anna down into his dark, demoniac kingdom. "Glorious," he explained, "glorious and advantageous as may be the union of an elementary spirit with a human being, grand as is the example of this given by the wedlock of the gnome Tsilmenech with Magdalena de la Croix (which is of course the reason why this deceiver Daucus Carota has given himself out as being a descendant of that union), yet the kings and princes of those races are very different. If the Salamander kings are only irascible, the sylph kings proud and haughty, the Undine queens affectionate and jealous, the gnome kings are fierce, cruel, and deceitful. Merely to revenge themselves on the children of earth, who deprive them of their vassals, they are constantly trying their utmost to lure one of them away, who then wholly lays aside her human nature, and, becoming as shapeless as the gnomes themselves, has to go down into the earth, and is never more seen."

Fräulein Aennchen didn't seem disposed to believe what her father was telling her to her dear Daucus's discredit, but began talking again about the marvels of the beautiful vegetable country over which she was expecting so soon to reign as queen.

"Foolish, blinded child," cried Herr Dapsul, "do you not give your father credit for possessing sufficient cabalistic science to be well aware that what the abominable Daucus Carota made you suppose you saw was all deception and falsehood? No, you don't believe me, and to save you, my only child, I must convince you, and this conviction must be arrived at by most desperate methods. Come with me."

For the second time she had to go up into the astronomical tower with her papa. From a big band-box Herr Dapsul took a quantity of yellow, red, white, and green ribbon, and, with strange ceremonies, he wrapped Fräulein Aennchen up in it from head to foot. He did the same to himself, and then they both went very carefully to the silken palace of Daucus Carota the First. It was close shut, and by her papa's directions, she had to rip a small opening in one of the seams of it with a large pair of scissors, and then peep in at the opening.

Heaven be about us! what did she see? Instead of the beautiful vegetable garden, the carrot guards, the plumed ladies, lavender pages, lettuce princes, and so forth, she found herself looking down into a deep pool which seemed to be full of a colourless, disgusting-looking slime, in which all kinds of horrible creatures from the bowels of the earth were creeping and twining about. There were fat worms slowly writhing about amongst each other, and beetle-like creatures stretching out their short legs and creeping heavily out. On their backs they bore big onions; but these onions had ugly human faces, and kept fleering and leering at each other with bleared yellow eyes, and trying, with their little claws (which were close behind their ears), to catch hold of one another by their long roman noses, and drag each other down into the slime, while long, naked slugs were rolling about in crowds, with repulsive torpidity, stretching their long horns out of their depths. Fräulein Aennchen was nearly fainting away at this horrid sight. She held both hands to her face, and ran away as hard as she could.

"You see now, do you not," said Herr Dapsul, "how this atrocious Daucus Carota has been deceiving you in showing you splendours of brief duration? He dressed his vassals up in gala dresses to delude you with dazzling displays. But now you have seen the kingdom which you want to reign over in undress uniform; and when you become the consort of the frightful Daucus Carota you will have to live for ever in the subterranean realms, and never appear on the surface any

more. And if--Oh, oh, what must I see, wretched, most miserable of fathers that I am?"

He got into such a state all in a moment that she felt certain some fresh misfortune had just come to light, and asked him anxiously what he was lamenting about now. However, he could do nothing for sheer sobbing, but stammer out, "Oh--oh--dau-gh-ter. Wha-t ar--e y-ou--l--l--like?" She ran to her room, looked into the looking-glass, and started back, terrified almost to death.

And she had reason; for the matter stood thus. As Herr Dapsul was trying to open the eyes of Daucus Carota's intended queen to the danger she was in of gradually losing her pretty figure and good looks, and growing more and more into the semblance of a gnome queen, he suddenly became aware of how far the process had proceeded already. Aennchen's head had got much broader and bigger, and her skin had turned yellow, so that she was quite ugly enough already. And though vanity was not one of her failings, she was woman enough to know that to grow ugly is the greatest and most frightful misfortune which can happen here below. How often had she thought how delightful it would be when she would drive, as queen, to church in the coach and eight, with the crown on her head, in satins and velvets, with diamonds, and gold chains, and rings, seated beside her royal husband, setting all the women, the schoolmaster's wife included, into amazement of admiration, and most likely, in fact, no doubt, instilling a proper sense of respect even into the minds of the pompous lord and lady of the manor themselves. Ay, indeed, how often had she been lapt in these and other such eccentric dreams, and visions of the future!--Fräulein Aennchen burst into long and bitter weeping.

"Anna, my daughter Anna," cried Herr Dapsul down through the speaking trumpet; "come up here to me immediately!"

She found him dressed very much like a miner. He spoke in a tone of decision and resolution, saying, "When need is the sorest, help is often nearest. I have ascertained that Daucus Carota will not leave his palace to-day, and most probably not till noon of to-morrow. He has assembled the princes of his house, the ministers, and other people of consequence to hold a council on the subject of the next crop of winter cabbage. The sitting is important, and it may be prolonged so much that we may not have any cabbage at all next winter. I mean to take advantage of this opportunity, while he is so occupied with his official affairs that he won't be able to attend to my proceedings, to prepare a weapon with which I may perhaps attack this shameful gnome, and prevail over him, so that he will be compelled to withdraw, and set you at liberty. While I am at work, do you look uninterruptedly at the palace through this glass, and tell me instantly if anybody comes out, or even looks out of it." She did as she was directed, but the marquee remained closed, although she often heard (notwithstanding that Herr Dapsul was making a tremendous hammering on plates of metal a few paces behind her), a wild, confused crying and screaming, apparently coming from the marquee, and also distinct sounds of slapping, as if people's ears were being well boxed. She told Herr Dapsul this, and he was delighted, saying that the more they quarrelled in there the less they were likely to know what was being prepared for their destruction.

Fräulein Aennchen was much surprised when she found that Herr Dapsul had hammered out and made several most lovely kitchen-pots and stew-pans of copper. As an expert in such matters, she observed that the tinning of them was done in a most superior style, so that her papa must have paid careful heed to the duties legally enjoined on coppersmiths. She begged to be allowed to take these nice pots and pans down to the kitchen, and use them there. But Herr Dapsul smiled a mysterious smile, and merely said:

"All in good time, my daughter Anna. Just you go downstairs, my beloved child, and wait quietly till you see what happens to-morrow."

He gave a melancholy smile, and that infused a little hope and confidence into

his luckless daughter.

Next day, as dinner-time came on, Herr Dapsul brought down his pots and pans, and betook himself to the kitchen, telling his daughter and the maid to go away and leave him by himself, as he was going to cook the dinner. He particularly enjoined Fräulein Aennchen to be as kind and pleasant with Cordovanspitz as ever she could, when he came in--as he was pretty sure to do.

Cordovanspitz--or rather, King Daucus Carota the First--did come in very soon, and if he had borne himself like an ardent lover on previous occasions, he far outdid himself on this. Aennchen noticed, to her terror, that she had grown so small by this time, that Daucus had no difficulty in getting up into her lap to caress and kiss her; and the wretched girl had to submit to this, notwithstanding her disgust with the horrid little monster. Presently Herr Dapsul came in, and said--

"Oh, my most egregious Porphyrio von Ockerodastes, won't you come into the kitchen with my daughter and me, and see what beautiful order your future bride has got everything in there?"

Aennchen had never seen the wicked, malicious look upon her father's face before, which it wore when he took little Daucus by the arm, and almost forced him from the sitting-room to the kitchen. At a sign of her father's she went there after them.

Her heart swelled within her when she saw the fire burning so merrily, the glowing coals, the beautiful copper pots and pans. As Herr Dapsul drew Cordovanspitz closer to the fire-place, the hissing and bubbling in the pots grew louder and louder, and at last changed into whimpering and groaning. And out of one of the pots came voices, crying, "Oh Daucus Carota! Oh King, rescue your faithful vassals! Rescue us poor carrots! Cut up, thrown into despicable water; rubbed over with salt and butter to our torture, we suffer indescribable woe, whereof a number of noble young parsleys are partakers with us!"

And out of the pans came the plaint: "Oh Daucus Carota! Oh King! Rescue your faithful vassals--rescue us poor carrots. We are roasting in hell--and they put so little water with us, that our direful thirst forces us to drink our own heart's blood!"

And from another of the pots came: "Oh Daucus Carota! Oh King! Rescue your faithful vassals--rescue us poor carrots. A horrible cook eviscerated us, and stuffed our insides full of egg, cream, and butter, so that all our ideas and other mental qualities are in utter confusion, and we don't know ourselves what we are thinking about!"

And out of all the pots and pans came howling at once a general chorus of "Oh Daucus Carota! Mighty King! Rescue us, thy faithful vassals--rescue us poor carrots!"

On this, Cordovanspitz gave a loud, croaking cry of--"Cursed, infernal, stupid humbug and nonsense!" sprang with his usual agility on to the kitchen range, looked into one of the pots, and suddenly popped down into it bodily. Herr Dapsul sprang in the act of putting on the cover, with a triumphant cry of "a Prisoner!" But with the speed of a spiral spring Cordovanspitz came bounding up out of the pot, and gave Herr Dapsul two or three ringing slaps on the face, crying "Meddling goose of an old Cabalist, you shall pay for this! Come out, my lads, one and all!"

Then there came swarming out of all the pots and pans hundreds and hundreds of little creatures about the length of one's finger, and they attached themselves firmly all over Herr Dapsul's body, threw him down backwards into an enormous dish, and there dished him up, pouring the hot juice out of the pots and pans over him, and bestrewing him with chopped egg, mace, and grated breadcrumbs.

Having done this, Daucus Carota darted out of the window, and his people after him.

Fräulein Aennchen sank down in terror beside the dish whereon her poor papa lay, served up in this manner as if for table. She supposed he was dead, as he gave not the faintest sign of life.

She began to lament: "Ah, poor papa--you're dead now, and there's nobody to save me from this diabolical Daucus!" But Herr Dapsul opened his eyes, sprang up from the dish with renewed energy, and cried in a terrible voice, such as she had never heard him make use of before, "Ah accursed Daucus Carota, I am not at the end of my resources yet. You shall soon see what the meddling old goose of a Cabalist can do."

Aennchen had to set to work and clean him with the kitchen besom from all the chopped egg, the mace, and the grated breadcrumbs; and then he seized a copper pot, crammed it on his head by way of a helmet, took a frying-pan in his left hand, and a long iron kitchen ladle in his right, and thus armed and accoutred, he darted out into the open. Fräulein Aennchen saw him running as hard as he could towards Cordovanspitz's marquee, and yet never moving from the same spot. At this her senses left her.

When she came to herself, Herr Dapsul had disappeared, and she got terribly anxious when evening came, and night, and even the next morning, without his making his appearance. She could not but dread the very worst.

CHAPTER VI.

WHICH IS THE LAST--AND, AT THE SAME TIME, THE MOST EDIFYING OF ALL.

Fräulein Aennchen was sitting in her room in the deepest sorrow, when the door opened, and who should come in but Herr Amandus von Nebelstern. All shame and contrition, she shed a flood of tears, and in the most weeping accents addressed him as follows: "Oh, my darling Amandus, pray forgive what I wrote to you in my blinded state! I was bewitched, and I am so still, no doubt. I am yellow, and I'm hideous, may God pity me! But my heart is true to you, and I am not going to marry any king at all."

"My dear girl," said Amandus, "I really don't see what you have to complain of. I consider you one of the luckiest women in the world."

"Oh, don't mock at me," she cried. "I am punished severely enough for my absurd vanity in wishing to be a Queen."

"Really and truly, my dear girl," said Amandus, "I can't make you out one bit. To tell you the real truth, your last letter drove me stark, staring mad. I first thrashed my servant-boy, then my poodle, smashed several glasses--and you know a student who's breathing out threatenings and slaughter in that sort of way isn't to be trifled with. But when I got a little calmer I made up my mind to come on here as quickly as I could, and see with my own eyes how, why, and to whom I had lost my intended bride. Love makes no distinction of class or station, and I made up my mind that I would make this King Daucus Carota give a proper account of himself, and ask him if this tale about his marrying you was mere brag, or if he really meant it--but everything here is different to what I expected. As I was passing near the grand marquee that is put up yonder, King Daucus Carota came out of it, and I soon found that I had before me the most charming prince I ever saw--at the same time he happens to be the first I ever did see; but that's nothing. For, just fancy, my dear girl, he immediately detected the sublime poet in me, praised my poems (which he has never read) above measure, and offered to appoint me Poet Laureate in his service. Now a position of that sort has long been

the fairest goal of my warmest wishes, so that I accepted his offer with a thousandfold delight. Oh, my dear girl, with what an enthusiasm of inspiration will I chant your praises! A poet can love queens and princesses: or rather, it is really a part of his simple duty to choose a person of that exalted station to be the lady of his heart. And if he *does* get rather cracky in the head on the subject, that circumstance of itself gives rise to that celestial delirium without which no poetry is possible, and no one ought to feel any surprise at a poet's perhaps somewhat extravagant proceedings. Remember the great Tasso, who must have had a considerable bee in his bonnet when in love with the Princess Leonore d'Este. Yes, my dear girl, as you are going to be a queen so soon, you will always be the lady of my heart, and I will extol you to the stars in the sublimest and most celestial verses."

"What, you have seen him, the wicked Cobold?" Fräulein Aennchen broke out in the deepest amazement. "And he has----"

But at that moment in came the little gnomish King himself, and said, in the tenderest accents, "Oh, my sweet, darling *fiancée*! Idol of my heart! Do not suppose for a moment that I am in the least degree annoyed with the little piece of rather unseemly conduct which Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau was guilty of. Oh, no--and indeed it has led to the more rapid fulfilment of my hopes; so that the solemn ceremony of our marriage will actually be celebrated to-morrow. You will be pleased to find that I have appointed Herr Amandus von Nebelstern our Poet Laureate, and I should wish him at once to favour us with a specimen of his talents, and recite one of his poems. But let us go out under the trees, for I love the open air: and I will lie in your lap, while you, my most beloved bride elect, may scratch my head a little while he is singing--for I am fond of having my head scratched in such circumstances."

Fräulein Aennschen, turned to stone with horror and alarm, made no resistance to this proposal. Daucus Carota, out under the trees, laid himself in her lap, she scratched his head, and Herr Amandus, accompanying himself on the guitar, began the first of twelve dozen songs which he had composed and written out in a thick book.

It is matter of regret that in the Chronicle of Dapsulheim (from which all this history is taken), these songs have not been inserted, it being merely stated that the country folk who were passing, stopped on their way, and anxiously inquired who could be in such terrible pain in Herr Dapsul's wood, that he was crying and screaming out in such a style.

Daucus Carota, in Aennschen's lap, twisted and writhed, and groaned and whined more and more lamentably, as if he had a violent pain in his stomach. Moreover, Fräulein Aennchen fancied she observed, to her great amazement, that Cordovanspitz was growing smaller and smaller as the song went on. At last Herr Amandus sung the following sublime effusion (which is preserved in the Chronicle):--

"Gladly sings the Bard, enraptured,
Breath of blossoms, bright dream-visions,
Moving thro' roseate spaces in Heaven,
Blessed and beautiful, whither away?
'Whither away?' oh, question of questions--
Towards that 'Whither,' the Bard is borne onward,
Caring for nought but to love, to believe.
Moving through roseate heavenly spaces,
Towards this 'Whither,' where'er it may be,
Singeth the bard, in a tumult of rapture,
Ever becoming a radiant em----"

At this point, Daucus Carota uttered a loud croaking cry, and, now dwindled into a little, little carrot, slipped down from Aennchen's lap, and into the ground, leaving no trace behind. Upon which, the great grey fungus which had grown in

the night time beside the grassy bank, shot up and up; but this fungus was nothing less than Herr Dapsul von Zabelthau's grey felt hat, and he himself was under it, and fell stormily on Amandus's breast, crying out in the utmost ecstasy, "Oh, my dearest, best, most beloved Herr Amandus von Nebelstern, with that mighty song of conjuration you have beaten all my cabalistic science out of the held? What the profoundest magical art, the utmost daring of the philosopher fighting for his very existence, could not accomplish, your verses achieved, passing into the frame of the deceitful Daucus Carota like the deadliest poison, so that he must have perished of stomach-ache, in spite of his gnomish nature, if he had not made off into his kingdom. My daughter Anna is delivered--I am delivered from the horrible charm which held me spellbound here in the shape of a nasty fungus, at the risk of being hewn to pieces by my own daughter's hands; for the good soul hacks them all down with her spade, unless their edible character is unmistakable, as in the case of the mushrooms. Thanks, my most heartfelt thanks, and I have no doubt your intentions as regards my daughter have undergone no change. I am sorry to say she has lost her good looks, through the machinations of that inimical gnome; but you are too much of a philosopher to----"

"Oh, dearest papa," cried Aennchen, overjoyed; "just look there! The silken palace is gone! The abominable monster is off and away with all his tribe of salad-princes, cucumber-ministers, and Lord knows what all!" And she ran away to the vegetable garden, delighted, Herr Dapsul following as fast as he could. Herr Amandus went behind them, muttering to himself, "I'm sure I don't know quite what to make of all this. But this I maintain, that that ugly little carrot creature is a vile, prosaic lubber, and none of your poetical kings, or my sublime lay wouldn't have given him the stomach-ache, and sent him scuttling into the ground."

As Fräulein Aennchen was standing in the vegetable garden, where there wasn't the trace of a green blade to be seen, she suddenly felt a sharp pain in the finger which had on the fateful ring. At the same time a cry of piercing sorrow sounded from the ground, and the tip of a carrot peeped out. Guided by her inspiration she quickly took the ring off (it came quite easily this time), stuck it on to the carrot, and the latter disappeared, while the cry of sorrow ceased. But, oh, wonder of wonders! all at once Fräulein Aennchen was as pretty as ever, well-proportioned, and as fair and white as a country lady can be expected to be. She and her father rejoiced greatly, while Amandus stood puzzled, and not knowing what to make of it all.

Fräulein Aennchen took the spade from the maid, who had come running up, and flourished it in the air with a joyful shout of "Now let's set to work," in doing which she was unfortunate enough to deal Herr Amandus such a thwack on the head with it (just at the place where the Sensorium Commune is supposed to be situated) that he fell down as one dead.

Aennchen threw the murderous weapon far from her, cast herself down beside her beloved, and broke out into the most despairing lamentations, whilst the maid poured the contents of a watering pot over him, and Herr Dapsul quickly ascended the astronomic tower to consult the stars with as little delay as possible as to whether Herr Amandus was dead or not. But it was not long before the latter opened his eyes again, jumped to his legs, clasped Fräulein Aennchen in his arms, and cried, with all the rapture of affection, "Now, my best and dearest Anna, we are one another again."

The very remarkable, scarcely credible effect of this occurrence on the two lovers very soon made itself perceptible. Fräulein Aennchen took a dislike to touching a spade, and she did really reign like a queen over the vegetable world, inasmuch as, though taking care that her vassals were properly supervised and attended to, she set no hand to the work herself, but entrusted it to maids in whom she had confidence.

Herr Amandus, for his part, saw now that everything he had ever written in the shape of verses was wretched, miserable trash, and, burying himself in the works of the real poets, both of ancient and modern times, his being was soon so filled

with a beneficent enthusiasm that no room was left for any consideration of himself. He arrived at the conviction that a real poem has got to be something other than a confused jumble of words shaken together under the influence of a crude, jejeune delirium, and threw all his own (so-called) poetry, of which he had had such a tremendous opinion, into the fire, becoming once more quite the sensible young gentleman, clear and open in heart and mind, which he had been originally.

And one morning Herr Dapsul did actually come down from his astronomical tower to go to church with Fräulein Aennchen and Herr Amandus von Nebelstern on the occasion of their marriage.

They led an exceedingly happy wedded life. But as to whether Herr Dapsul's union with the Sylphide Nehabilah ever actually came to anything the Chronicle of Dapsulheim is silent.

During the reading of this the Friends had laughed a good deal, and they were unanimously of opinion that, though there was not a great deal in the plot, yet that the details were so humorous and droll that, as a whole, the tale was a success.

"As to the plot," Vincenz said, "there is rather a curious circumstance connected with that. Not long since, happening to be dining at the table of a certain lady of princely rank, there was a lady present who had on a gold ring with a beautiful topaz, of which the remarkably antique-looking form and workmanship attracted universal attention. We thought it had been some precious heirloom, and were astonished to hear that it had been found sticking on a carrot dug up on her property a few years previously. Probably it had been lying pretty deep in the ground, and had been brought towards the surface when the land was trenched, so that the carrot had grown through it.

"The Princess pointed out what a good idea for a story this suggested, and wished that I should set to work to write one at once on the subject. So, you see, I hadn't far to go for the idea of the 'Vegetable King and his People,' and I claim the invention of them for myself, for there isn't a trace of him to be found in Gabalis or any other book of the kind."

"Now," said Lothair, "I think we may say that on none of our former Serapion evenings has our fare been of a more various character than to-night. And it is good that we have managed to emerge from that gruesome darkness into which we had wandered somehow--I am sure it is hard to tell why--into the clear, brightsome light of day, although, no doubt, a serious, careful person might, with some reason, say that all the fantastic matter which we have so long been going on spinning and accumulating might have a considerable tendency to induce confusion of head, if not headache and feverishness."

"We should all do the best we can," said Theodore. "But let no one deem that his own particular qualities and powers constitute the norm of what the human understanding is to have laid before it. For there are people--good sensible folks enough in other respects--who are so easily made giddy in their heads that they think the rapid flight of an awakened imagination is the result of an unsound condition of mind. So that such people say, of this or the other writer, that he only writes when he is under the influence of intoxicating drinks, and attribute his imaginative writings to over-excited nerves, and a certain amount of deliriousness thence arising. But everybody knows that although a condition of mind raising from either of those causes can give rise to a happy thought, or fortunate idea, it is impossible that it can yield perfect and finished work, because that demands the very quietest study and consideration."

On this evening Theodore had set before his friends some remarkably superior wine sent to him by a friend on the Rhine. He poured what remained of it into the

glasses, and said:--

"I cannot explain why it should be so; but a melancholy foreboding comes upon me that we are going to part for a long time, and may, perhaps, never meet again. But surely the remembrance of those Serapion evenings will long live in our minds. We have given free play to the capricious promptings of our fancy. Each of us has spoken out what he saw in his mind's eye, without supposing his ideas to be anything extraordinary, or giving them forth as being so, knowing well that the first essential of all effective composition is that kindly unpretendingness which is the thing that has the power to warm the heart and please the mind. If Fate is about to part us, then let us always faithfully follow the rule of Saint Serapion, and vowing this to each other, drink this last glass of our wine."

What Theodore suggested was accordingly done.

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